

Innovative Farmers Meet Organised at Pusa Institute

New Delhi. On June 6, 2024, a conference of progressive farmers from across the country was held at the Dr. B.P. Pal Auditorium of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (Pusa Institute) in the capital. On this day, an Innovative Farmer Conference was organized at the Pusa Institute, in which 7 farmers from 6 states were honored as IARI Fellow Farmers, and 33 farmers from 22 states were awarded as Innovative Farmers. This included 9 women farmers from 8 states and 6 tribal farmers.

All the awarded farmers had developed various farming models in their respective regions, incorporating locally integrated farming systems, including food crops and horticultural crops. Many successful farmers adopted crop diversification to increase their income. Additionally, they adopted high-tech agricultural practices such as protected cultivation, non-conventional energy sources, solar systems, water resource conservation, and techniques to improve utilization efficiency. Various farmers also integrated IPM, advanced agricultural machinery, and hydroponics into their farming.

Several farmers innovated in production, processing, value addition, and marketing. They significantly contributed to seed production in the field of food crops. They adopted sustainable agricultural practices, including the use of biopesticides, biofertilizers, vermicompost, and biogas slurry, and established production units. Many of the innovative farmers used the Pusa Decomposer for crop residue management and made compost from stubble. A major achievement of these farmers was that they not only adopted these advanced methods themselves but also transferred them to fellow farmers. Among the most notable achievements of large number of them was formation of farmer producer organizations and self-help groups, creating employment opportunities.

The Indian Agricultural Research Institute annually identifies and honors about 40 farmers. The Innovative Farmer Award was started in 2008, and the Fellow Farmer Award began in 2012. To date, more than 400 farmers from various states across the country have been honored as Fellow Farmers and Innovative Farmers by the institute.

Four Padma Shri-awarded farmers were also invited to this event. The main attraction of this one-day program was the "Farmer-Scientist-Student Dialogue." The program included the participation of Dr. U.S. Gautam, Deputy Director General (Agricultural Extension) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Dr. A.K. Singh, Director of the Pusa Institute, all Joint Directors, Heads of Divisions, and agricultural students. This exchange of knowledge provided an opportunity for honored farmers to interact with each other, helped experts in determining the direction of future research, and inspired the students.

This multi-dimensional program was organized under the leadership of Dr. A.K. Singh, Director of the institute, and Dr. R.N. Padaria, Joint Director (Extension) of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi.

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