

## **Inaugural session of 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Rice Research Group Meeting**

The inaugural session of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Rice Research Group Meeting was held in the SVS Shastry Auditorium, Indian Institute of Rice Research, Hyderabad on April 14, 2018 (Saturday) at 10.30 AM, with ICAR Song followed by lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries. Dr. S.R Voleti, Director, IIRR welcomed the dignitaries and delegates of AICRIP co-operators and seed industry. He thanked the support and cooperation of all senior members of AICRIP who had contributed immensely to the success of AICRIP for more than five decades.

Dr. I.S. Solanki, ADG (FFC). ICAR in his remarks mentioned the importance of AICRIP as the largest of All India Coordinated Programme addressing the technology development and dissemination in the major staple food of Rice in India with largest production and area. He stressed upon the low productivity of rice in the many ecologies which needs to be enhanced. Being a crop participated in India's Green revolution, productivity improvement in rice is the major requirement. Even though about 1200 varieties have been released through AICRIP, there is a need to address the new challenges due of climate change, requirement of production technologies, more number of resistant varieties for biotic and abiotic stress with more emphasis to extension. He pointed out that it is not only important to develop varieties /technologies but, it should reach the ultimate beneficiaries i.e. farmers. He suggested that breeders also should take responsibility of popularizing their varieties. Research priorities should essentially focus on site specific varieties, input use efficiency, water use efficiency and farmer friendly production technologies. AICRIP has to go a long way to meet the challenges due to climate change and address the drudgeries faced by the farmers.

Dr. A. K. Singh, DDG (Crop Science & Horticulture Science), ICAR in his remarks complimented the AICRIP as the oldest coordinated programme and contributed much to the country's food production and a lot more to be done in the coming years to meet the farmers demands and new challenges. He pointed out that time has arrived for diversification and motivated rice scientists to do more efforts to make farmers life better. Tackling the needs of farmers through market realization, climate resilient technologies, crop competitiveness and doubling the farmer's income are the major priorities. The technologies developed should be economically viable and socially acceptable. He asked to gather past successful experiences to realize these goals. He assured that ICAR is committed to support the activities and institutional innovations towards achieving the goals.

### **The following publications were released during the occasion:**

1. Roots of Prosperity: An Integrated Technology Approach to Double Farmer's Income
2. Biological Control of Plant Disease with reference to Rice: The way forward  
Economic Evaluation of Rice Production Technologies
3. Frontline Demonstrations on Rice
4. Software, CDs and Leaflets on Nutrient Expert –Rice
5. A mobile App on ICAR Profile



Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Director NRRI appreciated the contribution of AICRIP in India and the varieties released for increased protein, zinc and micronutrients along with 1200 high yielding varieties. He emphasised that the achievements of rice research should be reflected in rice farmers lives as 50% of Indian farmers are rice farmers with a low percentage of GDP. He stressed upon the need for identification of a few objectives and goals, for the coming years with targets of more than 10 t/ha production in rice. Stable varieties with high productivity in bad climate years with at least 4 t/ha, should be achieved He also emphasized to find ways for mitigation of methane emission in a mission mode programme to reach the farmers. Collaboration of national, international and university system to achieve these goals are the need of the hour. Re-organising the AICRIP programme is required for site specific research and efficient mobilisation of resources. He also congratulated AICRIP co-operators and IIRR team for conducting this programme so efficiently all these years.

Dr. V. Praveen Rao, Vice Chancellor, PJTSAU and the Chief Guest, addressed the gathering as AICRIP was one of the most powerful tools and a transparent systems as the system provided opportunity for the country wide scientists, to share their knowledge and technologies which benefitted the country as whole. He praised the AICRIP system as a model system which was adopted by many other countries. He pointed out that in the era of constraints and challenges, the exchange of technologies and knowledge through AICRIP was helping the farmers throughout the country. As the rice is the only crop consumed in a large scale and in spite of productivity increase over the years, much more improvement is required. Scientists should be sensitive to the social changes, urbanisation, wage increase, water level drop in rice growing regions and reorient their research goals accordingly. Less water, less land, less labour technologies are essential. Doubling of farmers income by 2022 require characterisation and mapping of resources and recommendation to the farmers. Genetic and agronomic interventions, mechanisation, climate change adaptation, mitigation and trade offs in these technologies are to be considered. Profitability of rice and diversification, niche markets for organic and speciality rices, conversion of C3 rice to C4 through technologies like genome editing, rice genetic engineering, estimated assessment of

water balance component of different rice ecosystems are to be addressed in future. Small holders are to be grouped as functional aggregates to increase the farm income. Value addition policies, use of ICT tools with profile of all the varieties are required. Research is to be linked to extension through e agriculture and digitization involving scientists, stakeholders and policy makers.



The inaugural session ended with vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Gururaj Katti Convenor, 53<sup>rd</sup> ARGM.