

Call for transforming agri-food systems through innovations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kochi

IN view of the increasing food demand, environmental degradation and the challenges posed by climate change, there is an urgent need to transform agri-food systems into sustainable enterprises through scientific innovations, Union Minister for Fisheries Parshottam Rupala has said.

After inaugurating the 16th Agricultural Science Congress in Kochi on Tuesday, he said traditional varieties like pokkali rice need to be promoted and measures should be taken to ensure better prices to farmers. Minimising post-harvest losses is equivalent to boosting production, and this can be achieved by focusing on advanced technological interventions. The minister also urged the scientists to develop and popularise specialised farm implements for women in agriculture.

Pointing out that marine and inland water pollution has seriously affected aquatic life and coastal ecology, he exhorted the scientists to find lasting and sustainable solutions to address the threat.

Secretary to the Department of Agricultural Research and Education Himanshu Pathak said the government has made it mandatory that seed varieties that are more than 10 years old should be withdrawn.

The plan is to reduce the usage of new varieties of seeds to five years.

“We have developed more than 2,000 varieties of seeds for all crops, and around 1,800 varieties are climate resilient. These varieties are either resilient to high temperature, drought, submergence or biotic stress. We have made it mandatory that whatever variety of seeds we are releasing from now onwards, there should be at least one component of climate resilience. The climate resilient varieties are available for wheat, rice and horticultural crops,” he said.

Himanshu Pathak said India’s foodgrain demand will increase to 340-355 tonnes by 2033.

Research on genomics and genome editing would be the core focus for technological breakthroughs in agriculture.

Kerala Agriculture Minister P Prasad, Ernakulam MP Hibi Eden, ICAR deputy director J K Jena, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) secretary W S Lakra and CMFRI director A Goplakrishnan spoke.

Over 1,500 delegates from India and abroad are attending the four-day event, which is taking place for the first time in Kerala and hosted by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).



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Himanshu Pathak,
Secretary to the
Department of
Agricultural Research
and Education



Union Minister Parshottam Rupala interacting with scientists after inaugurating the Agricultural Science Congress and Expo at Hotel Le Meridien in Kochi on Tuesday | EXPRESS