

# Farmers demand fair price, reliable market for their produce

Kochi: Farmers from different parts of the country who gathered here on Thursday for an interface with scientists and policymakers as part of the 16th national Agricultural Science Congress demanded that they must get fair prices as well as a reliable market for produce. Farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep attended the meet, said a communication from the organisers of the meet here on Thursday.

The farmers emphasised the importance of considering the needs and challenges faced by small and medium-scale farmers when formulating agricultural policies. They underlined the need for these policies to address issues such as fair pricing, market access, and financial support for the agricultural sector.

The farmers stressed the significance of social dignity, especially when dealing with financial institutions and government offices. They called for the development of local varieties of paddy and the provision of interest-free loans to farmer producer organisations (FPOs). They also advocated the inclusion of farmers' produce in the public distribution system (PDS) to enhance their market reach.

One pressing issue highlighted during the meeting was the crisis faced by coconut farmers, resulting from falling prices and disease outbreaks. These concerns were shared by the farmers to emphasise the urgency of addressing the challenges faced by agricultural communities across the regions.

The meet felicitated five Padma awardees Cheruvayal Raman, a tribal farmer from Wayanad; Sabarmatee Tiki, Batakrushna Sahoo both from Odisha; and Seth Pal Singh and Chandrasekhar Singh from Uttar Pradesh. Hosted by Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), the Agricultural Science Congress will conclude on Friday.