



Fair price to seeds to policy backing: ASC session hears farmers' concerns

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AROUND 200 farmers from 17 states and Union territories have demanded steps to ensure fair price and markets for their produce. They were interacting with scientists and policy makers at the Farmer-Scientist Interface session held as part of the 16th Agricultural Science Congress (ASC) in Kochi on Thursday. A policy that will address issues faced by small and marginal farmers was another key point raised at the session.

Seeds are not commodities to be sold, but valuables that need to be passed on to generations, said Padma Shri-winning tribal farmer Cheruvayal Raman. "Seeds are nature's blessing. But I am not sure if the new generation will take efforts to



Farmer Cheruvayal Raman speaking at the farmer-scientist interface

conserve the nature-friendly agricultural practices and biodiversity," he added.

Padma awardees Seth Pal Singh and Chandrasekhar Singh from Uttar Pradesh, Kumari Sabarmati and Batakrushna Sahoo of Odisha also shared their experience with farmers

and scientists. Kumari Sabarmati urged scientists to develop women-friendly agricultural equipment. Steps should be taken to ensure nutritional value of crops, she said.

"The government should ensure social dignity to farmers, sought Vani, a farmer from Haripad. She said banks are reluctant to provide loans to farmers even against their property.

The farmers also demanded the promotion of local varieties of paddy. Interest-free loans should be provided to farmers' cooperatives.

There should be a mechanism to distribute agricultural products through the public distribution system. Coconut farmers are in crisis due to decline in prices and diseases, said delegates.