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KAU NEWS

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Message from the Vice-Chancellor

The effects of climate change and its repercussions on the environment are becoming more and more apparent day by day. The unprecedented floods, droughts, rains and snow falls have not only caused a reversal in human development achieved by perseverance of decades but also throws up acute risks for our future generations.

Inadequate response to this situation will lead to irreversible catastrophic effects on our planet. It must be borne in mind that the human race by various actions initiated to secure more comfort and pleasures sown the seeds for this alarming



situation. We are therefore duty bound to try our best for restoring the balance for

the sake of our children and grandchildren. The adverse effects of global conclave notwithstanding, common man and agricultural experts can strive to arrest the ill effects of climatic change by adopting a nature friendly approach. Nature, by nature, reciprocates with a natural reaction appropriate to the actions on it and hence by a nature friendly approach we only stand to gain.

So let's go back to nature. Love it, nurture it and care for its treasures. Let's pledge to desist from harming the nature so that it does not harm us. That is the easiest and best option for us.

KAU WINS ICAR PERFORMANCE AWARD AGAIN

By winning the ICAR Performance Award for the year 2010-11, KAU created history by being the only State



Vice-Chancellor receives the award from Union Minister

Agricultural University to get this recognition for four consecutive years. This year KAU won 46 Junior Research Fellowship

(JRF) to top the list. Earlier, KAU won the award during 2007, 2008 and 2009.

The Award was received by the KAU Vice-Chancellor from the Union Minister of Agriculture, Sri. Sharad Pawar, in a glittering function organized by the ICAR at New Delhi on 23-2-2011. This year the second position is won by Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University (ANGRAU), Hyderabad and the third prize by GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology.

This award is given by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to the Best State Agricultural University, considering the number of JRF won by its students in the All India competitive exam conducted by ICAR. KAU received rich tributes and

accolades for winning the first position for the fourth year in a row. Accepting the award, Vice-Chancellor Dr. K.R. Viswambharan said that the achievement is the fruit of hardwork done by KAU community. "Winning this recognition for fourth successive year is a rare feat indeed. But it also bestows more responsibility on KAU. Keeping up the high standards set is a more difficult task", he said.

Propagate organic farming: Agricultural Minister

Agricultural Minister Sri. Mullakkara Retnakaran called upon the scientists to promote organic methods in place of productivity centered and pesticide oriented farming practices. He was launching new schemes and facilities at BRS, Kannara under KAU.

'Spreading organic practices should not mean bringing down the productivity. Scientists should be able to identify effective bio-pesticides and bio agents to sustain productivity and ensure harmless crops', minister explained.

The minister pointed out that Kerala had abundant natural resources like water, land and a favourable climate for food grain production. 'In spite of challenges posed by climate change, Kerala remains most cordial place in terms of temperature variation. The challenge lies in bringing youth to the farms. Once it is done, no one can pull us back. Food security of the state will be in safe hands.' He said.



Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor explained the agricultural progress state has achieved in the past four years. He stressed the importance of banana in food content of common man. Sri. P.V. Pathrose (Pananchery Panchayat President), Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan (Director of Research), Dr. P.V. Balachandran (Director of Extension), Dr. K. Aravindakshan and Dr. S. Leenakumari (Members, KAU EC), Dr. K. Pratapan (Director, SHM), Dr. I. Johnkutty (Assoc. Director) and Dr. K.C. Aipe (Station Head) were present.

ICAR Sports Meet: PAU Retains Overall Championship

The XII All India Inter Agri. University Sports Meet (ICAR Sports 2010), was hosted by KAU from 16 to 19 Feb 2011.

Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, retained overall championship by securing 64 points in the meet held at KAU Central Stadium, Vellanikkara, Thrissur. UAS, Bangaluru with 58 points finished Runners up and GADVASU, Ludhiana with 42 points came third.

Rajkamal Singh Dhillon of PAU was adjudged best men athlete and Gauthami R. Bhaskar of UAS as best women athlete. TNAU, Coimbatore with 21 points won the athletic championship (Men) and UAS Bangaluru with 38 points athletic championship (women). PAU (16 points) and GADVASU (18 points) finished runners up in mens division and womens division respectively.

The valedictory function was cut short on account of the demise of Olympian Suresh Babu. The gathering observed silence and passed a condolence message. Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor, KAU and Sri. Rajaji Mathew Thomas MLA gave away the prizes.

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON WASTE MANAGEMENT

Call to strive for cost effective, sustainable and locally adaptable techniques

Dr. N.R. Madhava Menon, Former Vice-Chancellor, National University of Law called for Sustainable, Cost effective and locally adaptable waste management techniques.

Inaugurating a National Symposium on Waste Management held at College of Horticulture (CoH) under KAU, Dr. Menon said that KAU should aspire to be a full fledged knowledge centre for Waste Management and it can work with institutions like CDS and KILA to spread awareness about the hazards of waste accumulation.

Technical sessions on Urban and Municipal Waste, Livestock waste, waste water management, non bio degradable

waste, post harvest waste management, environmental issues, legal and social issues and farmers' innovations. Were held as part of the three day symposium sponsored by

Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India and organised by the Dept. of Agricultural Microbiology, CoH.

Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor, KAU presided over in the valedictory function. He stressed the commitment of KAU in evolving new waste management techniques and willingness to work with Local Self Government institutions.



KAU hosts Srilankan delegation

A high level delegation from Sabaragamuwa Provincial Council of Sri Lanka, led by Smt. Sujatha C. Palleshna, Deputy Chief Secretary, was on a six day visit for interactive internalization experience to Kerala Agricultural University.

The delegation, on a mission to experience 'Agricultural and rural development in India' visited various farms, farmers' co-operatives, KAU stations and laboratories during their stay from 27 January to 2nd February 2011.

Smt. Sujatha C. Palleshna, said that they were highly motivated by the experience. She particularly recalled the visits to farmer's fields and farmers' co-operative societies. The marketing facilities rendered by co-operative movement is very impressive, she said. 'We learnt valuable lessons from the advancements in farming techniques achieved by KAU. We will certainly go back with an enriched mind and refreshed soul', she added.

Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor, who was the chief guest at the valedictory



function said that KAU is willing to collaborate with all provincial councils of Sri Lanka for advancements in agricultural sector. "We had already proposed an MoU in this regard. We can also provide educational facilities to Sri Lankan students and scholars. An exchange programme for students is also feasible", He said.

The interactive internalization programme was co-ordinated by Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension and Dr. Joy Mathew, Head, Central Training Institute, KAU.

Dr. Pushpalatha, First Woman Registrar of KAU



Dr. P.B. Pushpalatha, has taken over as Registrar of Kerala Agricultural University. She is the first woman to hold this post. She took charge from Dr. T.R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, who was holding the additional charge of Registrar.

A Professor in the Dept. of Processing Technology, College of Horticulture, Vellanikkara, Dr. Pushpalatha is the recipient of several recognitions like Young Scientist award (2000), AFSTI award etc. She is also a former member of KAU GC and has published fifty odd research papers and several books. Dr. Pushpalatha is a popular guide of Women self help groups in food processing industry.

Recognitions for KAU Scientists



Dr. Jiju P. Alex, Associate Professor, Dept. of Agricultural Extension, College of Horticulture, Vellanikkara has received the best poster award in the 23rd Kerala Science Congress held at Thiruvananthapuram from 28 to 31 January 2011.



Dr. Pradeepkumar, T., Associate Professor, Dept. of Olericulture, College of Horticulture, Vellanikkara has received the best poster award in the fourth Indian Horticulture Congress held at NPL, New Delhi from 18 to 21 Nov. 2010.

Cashew Apple Candy, Vinegar Jam and Pickle

Cashew Research Station (CRS), Madakkathra of KAU has launched cashew chocolate, cashew apple syrup, vinegar, pickle and jam. These products were launched on January 15, Cashew Day, by Sri. Rajaji Mathew Thomas MLA in a low key function held at CRS.

As an attempt to boost income from cashew apple farming, diversified products have been developed from hitherto wasted cashew apple. Cashew apple, rich in nutrients and vitamins weigh 10 times that of the nut and one hectare of plantations produce eight to ten tonnes of Cashew apple.

KAU scientists have developed effective technologies for removal of astringency and storage of cashew apple pulp and juice for off season processing. Natural and mostly organic with medicinal as well as nutritive qualities, the new products are expected to find favour with consumers.

Brighter Days for Pepper predicted

Based on the market survey and the analysis of pepper prices at Kochi the Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre (AMIC) under KAU predicts that pepper price will go northward during the summer.

The prediction is on the basis of a detailed study of pepper prices for the past 16 years.

AMIC estimates the following prices may prevail during the next four months from February 2011 to May 2011.

As per the report it would be advantageous for the farmers to store the commodity for better prices in April-May 2011 as there is no selling pressure.

Month	(Rs / Kg)
Feb'11	185 - 200
Mar'11	180 - 195
Apr'11	200 - 215
May'11	215 - 230

Three more from CoF Enter IFS

Three students of College of Forestry, KAU, Vellanikkara came out with flying colours in the Indian Forest Service (IFS) examination 2010. Shilpa V. Kumar, Vismiju Viswanathan and Shabab Mohammed earned the distinction by securing the 9th, 20th and 31st ranks respectively. Last year seven students from CoF secured IFS while five from the college had achieved this distinction in 2005.

New Coconut Climbing Device Developed

KAU's Agricultural Research Station (ARS), Mannuthy has developed a lighter and easier to operate coconut climbing machine.

The demonstration of the new device was inaugurated by Sri. Rajaji Mathew Thomas MLA. He also released the logo of Food Security Army and Uniform for the cadets.

The device made of stainless steel consists of two parts, a seat unit and a pedal unit. By working the pedal unit in a seating position the climber can slide up or down. A trained person will be able to climb a coconut tree of average height in 90 seconds.

Commercial production of the device will commence after evaluating the feedback from training and testing sessions, said Dr. T.R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, KAU.

Apart from coconut harvesting, the device is useful for cleaning crowns and cross pollination activities also.

Dr. U. Jaikumar, Professor and Head informed that ARS, Mannuthy will provide one week training to desirous youths in the operation of the machine as well as its maintenance.

Parasitoids to check Papaya Mealybug

Parasitoids to curb papaya mealybug was released by Mullakkara Retnakaran, Minister for Agriculture.

The parasitoids (*Acerophagus papayae*) originally imported from Puerto Rico by NBRI, Bangalore were multiplied in the laboratories attached to Dept of Entomology, College of Horticulture (CoH) of KAU. The Minister handed over parasitoid packages to District officers of Dept. of Agriculture in a function held at KVK, Malappuram on December 9.

The control of mealy bug using the parasitoids is the most effective and harmless option available to farmers.

KAU Team visits Snail infested farms

A team of scientists from ARS, Thiruvalla and officers from Department of Agriculture visited agricultural lands of Konni Panchayat in Pathanamthitta District in the wake of giant African snail infestation. Local farmers have been complaining about the wide spread crop destruction by the snails.

The team suggested organic remedy for snail eradication. Farmers have also been advised to take up large scale cultivation since fallow wet lands serve as breeding ground for snails.

Best KVK Award for Kannur Kendra

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Kannur of Kerala Agricultural University has won the best KVK National award for 2009 among 589 KVKs in India.



Dr. Kareem and Dr. P.V. Balachandran receives the award from President of India

The award was presented during the National Conference of KVKs at Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture, Udaipur, Rajasthan by Her Excellency Pratibha Patil, the President of India in a function presided over by the Union Minister for Agriculture Sri. Sharad Pawar and attended by the Governor and Chief Minister of Rajasthan. Dr. K. Abdul Kareem, Professor and Programme Coordinator of KVK, Kannur and Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, received the award from Her Excellency, President of India. The award consisted of a memento, certificate and Rs. 1 lac.

As per the norms of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) a KVK should have completed 5 years before it

becomes eligible for the consideration of award. KVK, Kannur, which became functional in 2004 is the youngest ever KVK to bag the award. Ever since its inception in 2004 the Kendra has been exerting a powerful influence on the other extension systems of the district by playing a leadership role in the agricultural development process of the district. It has made exceptional achievements in accordance with the expectation of ICAR within a short span of five years with novel initiatives and successful project models in farming.

Paddy Task Force (PTF) the novel initiative of the Kendra to address the alarming decline in area under cultivation due to labour shortage, was the first ever mechanized labour force in Kerala. Compact Area Group Approach (CAGA), an innovative extension approach for combating endemic problems like coconut mite and bud rot disease of coconut is included in the organic farming policy of Government of Kerala.

So, also the Kendra has been able to introduce and popularize several new technologies compatible to the district. For instance, the rope culture of green shell mussel farming, an ideal income/employment generating livelihood option for the resource poor capitalizing the hitherto unexploited 11 river estuaries of the coastal district has found favour with the rural population.

Agri-food technology meet

MINISTER LAUDS PRACTICAL INVENTIONS

Industries Minister Sri. Elamaram Kareem lauded the scientists and entrepreneurs who successfully launched agri food technologies in rural sector. He was inaugurating the three day Agri Food Technology meet jointly organized by the Industries Department and Kerala Agricultural University at Thrissur.

'Research findings should not be put to rest in steel shelves. They should be put into practice. The Government is extending all possible helps to entrepreneurs and encouraging practical inventions. The offer of Rs. Ten lakhs for coconut climbing machine and cooling jacket is still unclaimed. I am eagerly looking for successful claims for these offers', Minister said.



Minister in KAU Pavilion

Later the Minister accompanied by Industries secretary T.O. Sooraj IAS, Vice-Chancellor Dr. K.R. Viswambharan and Director of Extension Dr. P.V. Balachandran visited stalls in the KAU Pavilion.

The Minister also handed over the production rights of a wetland puddler developed by KAU scientist Dr. Shaji James to Metal Industries, a public sector company. The puddler designed to enable smooth operation of tractors and tillers in marshy wet lands has been found very useful for the farmers.



Dr. Shaji James



KAU Puddler

Republic day celebrations:

ENSURE FOOD & LIVELIHOOD SECURITY : VC



Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor greeted one and all on the occasion of 62nd Republic Day of India.

Extending good wishes for prosperity and success, the growing resilience of India and happiness for all, Vice-Chancellor recollected the contributions of India to the world polity, economics, science, sports and peace. He stressed relevance of agricultural development in country's progress and highlighted the role of State

Agricultural Universities and other institutions under ICAR umbrella in India's development.

'Yet it is a matter for introspection whether we have earnestly prepared ourselves to confront the modern day challenges of climate change, food security, etc. The republic status of India should be reflected in the area of food security and livelihood security. Only then can the agricultural scientists claim to have earned an 'agrarian republic' status. Let's all pledge to strive for this and be proud of our country', he said.

APA meet : Minister calls for Ecofriendly Fish Farming Package

Fisheries Minister Sri. S. Sarma called for a comprehensive package for fish farming involving eco friendly farming techniques, prevention of over exploitation of ocean wealth and protection of aquatic fauna and flora.

Inaugurating the Asia Pacific Aquaculture meet jointly organized by KAU's College of Fisheries, Asian Chapter of WAS (World Aquaculture Society) and Fisheries Department, he said scientific studies to protect. Aquatic wealth from the effects of global warming and climate change has become imperative.

Farmer's meet organized in connection with the symposium was inaugurated by Dr. P. Krishniah IAS, CEO, National

Fisheries Development Board (NFDB). Dr. Krishniah called upon rural farmers to take advantage of the knowledge and experience shared in the meet.

Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor, KAU stressed the need to enhance fish production as part of the intense drive for assuring food security. He also said that the general public should be made aware of the nutritive and medicinal values of fish.

Roy Palmer, Chairman, Asia Pacific Chapter of WAS delivered Key Note Address in the valedictory function. Michel B. New, Chairman, Giant Prawn 2011, summed up the papers presented in the symposium.

Rice Day Celebrated in RRS, Moncompu

Rice day, the annual Farmer-Scientist interactive meet of RRS, Moncompu was inaugurated by Sri. Mullakkara Retnakaran, Minister for Agriculture. He also laid the foundation stone for the new Laboratory Complex proposed under Kuttanad Package.

In the function presided over by Sri. Thomas Chandy MLA, Soil Health Cards



Agricultural Minister, MP, MLA, Vice-Chancellor and District Collector at the Rice Day Celebrations

for Champakkulam and Veliyanadu blocks were released by Sri. Kodikkunnil Suresh MP. Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor, KAU released the new short duration rice variety, Prathyasa.

The mushroom lab and the new threshing floor were inaugurated by Sri. P. Venugopal IAS, District Collector, Alappuzha and Sri. K. Dinesh Babu, Executive Committee Member, KAU respectively. A pamphlet delineating the research achievements of the station for the last 70 years was released during the occasion by Sri. R. Heli, Former Director of Agriculture while the exhibition was inaugurated by Sri. P.K. Subhash, Director, Doordarshan, Thiruvananthapuram. Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, Dr. Padmakumar, ADR, Dr. S. Leenakumari and peoples representatives participated.

Boost organic Content of soil: Agri Minister

Minister for Agriculture, Sri. Mullakkara Retnakaran, urged agricultural scientists to formulate a nature friendly package of farming practices to stimulate organic enrichment of soil.

Addressing a meeting of scientists for high level discussion on proposed Package of Practices (crops), minister said that, Bio-fertilisers, Bio-insecticides and other Bio-control agents should be promoted in place of hazardous pesticides.

Scientists from KAU, CPCRI, VFPC, Spices Research Centre and officers of State Agricultural Department took part in the meeting meant for refining the package of practices formulated in a state level workshop conducted earlier. KAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Director of Research Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan and Director of Extension Dr. P. V. Balachandran piloted the discussions.

KAU Launches Information Service on Mobile

Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) has launched an innovative system through which farmers can gather information on availability of seeds, seedlings and other KAU products, training programmes, new technologies, pest control methods, as well as contact numbers of scientists for special guidance through mobile sms.

All that farmers need to do for availing this Mobile Technology Information Service is to register their names with Agricultural Technology Information Centre, Mannuthy, said Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension. This can be done either by providing the required information (Name, address and mobile number of the information seeker), by post, over phone or by sms.

KAU GC to meet on March 26

The 110th meeting of KAU General Council (Annual meeting 2011) will be held on 26 March 2011 at KAU Conference hall, Vellanikkara, Thrissur, informs the Registrar. Budget for 2011-12 will be the main agenda of the annual meeting.