



KAU NEWS

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Message from the Vice-Chancellor



The pros and cons of Organic farming is the most talked about topic today and every alternate person you meet sounds an expert.

Though the vast majority is appreciating the move to popularise Organic farming practices a sceptic minority is still harping on the improbable adverse effects of it. They say that Organic manures cut down productivity, which in turn will render all attempts to achieve food security ineffective. Another contention is that Organic pesticides may have to be used in larger quantities than chemicals and hence pose a greater threat to the environment.

But these apprehensions could not and should not dilute the the enthusiasm with which a ban on Red & Yellow pesticides have been imposed and avenues to identify organic substitutes being explored. Pests and diseases are part and parcel of the Universe and their control is absolutely unavoidable. Inspite of the Plant protection techniques in vogue, it is estimated that Indian crop yield potential is crippled by 30% due to pests and diseases.

Protection of crops should not be at the cost of protection of environment. Indiscreet use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides not only cause severe damage to the environment, but also destroy non-target beneficial organisms thereby upsetting natural biological balance. Residue effect and loss of soil fertility are other vital risks.

In short public need to be made aware of the hazardous elements as well as the viability of organic substitutes. Indiscreet use of chemicals should be discouraged and identification and popularisation of organic substitutes should be encouraged. After all we have to live and we will have to let our future generations also live. Live peacefully and prosperously. Let's not degenerate the soil and denigrate the environment. Let's welcome an organic plant protection regime.

State set to attain self sufficiency in vegetable production: Agricultural Minister

Minister for Agriculture, Sri. K.P.Mohan declared that the Government has formulated an action programme to make the state self sufficient in vegetable production. The Minister was inaugurating the Interface of Krishi Vijnana Kendras (KVKs) in Kerala and Lakshadweep convened by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) at KAU Central Auditorium on July 7.

Better coordination

'KVKs should reach out to the rural population and spread awareness on scientific farming and development practices among them. Being not a stranger to agriculture, I believe that development should begin from the

villages. Though Kerala is proud to have KVK in each district, I request the ICAR to sanction additional KVKs in underdeveloped districts such as Malabar and Idukki. With better coordination with line departments KVK can pave way for faster progress.' He said.

The Minister also released a kit designed by scientists of KAU Communication Centre to promote roof top vegetable cultivation. The inaugural session was presided over by Sri. M. P. Vincent MLA, member, KAU Executive Committee.

Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor delivered the key note address. Dr. P. B. Pushpalatha, Registrar, KAU and



Sri. K.P. Mohanan, Minister for Agriculture releasing the kit designed to promote roof top vegetable cultivation

Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, KAU, were present.

Technical Session

Dr. K.D. Kokkate, Deputy Director General, ICAR chaired the technical session. Dr. S. Prabhukumar, Project director, South Zone, ICAR and Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, KAU, piloted the discussions on KVK functioning and coordination with other line departments.

Dr. A. Jalaluddeen, Director of Extension, Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University; Dr. Sairam, Principal Scientist, ICAR; Programe coordinators of all KVKs in Kerala and Lakshadweep; Officers of State Department of Agriculture; lead farmers; scientists from ICAR institutes and KAU also participated in the deliberations.

KVK Scientists, Lead farmer felicitated



Dr. Abdul Kareem and Sri. Jayachandran receiving the mementoes from Minister

Minister for Agriculture felicitated the Scientists of KVK, Kannur which won national award and Sri. Jayachandran,

Karshakothama and Karshakrathna award winner during the KVK interface on July 7.

The Minister also launched new programmes initiated by the University as part of state Government's 100 day programme. The new programmes envisaged are 'At least one Tissue culture banana in every homestead' operated from Banana Research Station, Kannara and Food Security Army training to 700 youths in Thrissur, Palakkad and Malappuram districts organised at ARS, Mannuthy.

KAU Budget 2011-12

Thrust on Organic Farming and Food Security

A pesticide policy designed to extricate earth and its habitants from impending danger of acute poisoning due to indiscrete use of pesticides and chemicals and a promise to streamline agricultural education were the highlights of KAU budget 2011-12. The budget envisages over all agricultural development with special attention to food security, environmental protection, poverty eradication and gender justice.

Presenting the budget with a total outlay of 275 crores in the 110th General Council Meeting Vice-Chancellor Dr. K.R.Viswambharan said that the non plan expenditure for the next fiscal is envisaged as 146.36 crores while the expenditure under plan is Rs. 66.01 crores and the external aided projects will cost Rs. 62.75 crores. The grant in aid under non plan is Rs.115.608 crores and that under plan is Rs. 45 Crores.

Highlighting the research accomplishments of KAU, he said that the University,

having released 14 varieties in 2010, is concentrating on developing more area specific, high yielding and pest resistant varieties.

'Obtaining GI registration for native varieties and products is a priority activity. Academic Software will be modified, mid semester exams will be made on line and Convocation reintroduced to aid prompt result declaration. A campaign for attracting school children to agricultural courses will also be taken up. Extension activities will be revamped. A vision document is under preparation. A farmers' training Centre and HR development facility for scientists, agricultural officers, farmers and farm workers will be set up' Vice-Chancellor said.

Quoting a poem of Vylloppilly, which delineates hope of a farmer keeping a handful of grain from his limited resources for sowing, so as to reap better harvest next time, Dr.Viswambharan concluded the budget speech on an optimistic note.

Dr.N.P.Kumari Sushama Endowment Awards distributed



Kum. Vaijyanthi P.V. receives the best student award from Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor

The endowment awards instituted in memory of Dr. N. P. Kumari Sushama, Former Professor, CoA, Vellayani, was presented by Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor in a function held at the College on 13th July.

Kum. Vaijyanthi P. V. got the best student award while Dr. K. Umamaheswaran received the best teacher award. Dr. Abdul Salam received the award for best Department on behalf of Dept. of Agronomy.

Dr. Sverup John, Dean (Agri) presided. Dr. P. B. Pushpalatha, Registrar and Dr. Anilkumar A, Dr. Arthur Jacob. J. and Mr. Achuth J. Sankar, GC members felicitated. Dr. E. Komala Amma, Professor (Academic) welcomed the gathering and Dr. D. Wilson, Associate Patron, Students' Union proposed the vote of thanks.

Course on Bioinformatics

A two week long course on Bioinformatics was organised by Bioinformatics Centre, Centre for Plant Bio-Technology & Molecular Biology of KAU. The course was inaugurated by Dr. Praveen Survajhala, Founder, Bioclues.Org in a function presided over by Dr. P. B. Pushpalatha, Registrar, KAU.

Dr. Praveen dwelt on the challenges before the branch of Bioinformatics. 'Application of Bioinformatics in Agriculture is still in its infancy. Data integration from Genomes to Phonemes is yet to gather momentum', he said.

The function was attended by Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research; Dr. P. V. Balachandran, Director of Extension; Dr. P.K.Asokan, Director, Academic; Dr. C. T. Abraham, Associate Dean, CoH; Dr. P. A. Nazeem, Head, CPBMB and Dr. Keshav Chandran, Course director.

CONSERVE CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES: ENCON

The first National Energy Congress (ENCON 2011), jointly organised by Energy Conservation Society (ECS) and Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) called for legislations and statutory mechanisms to conserve all conventional energy resources through efficient environmental management for sustainable development and economic growth.

'Every grain of soil, every drop of water and every blade of grass should be conserved using organic production systems. Awareness on energy efficient home appliances, green umbrella to replace CO2 cover and vegetation to trap CO2 emission should be given due emphasis' ENCON declaration stated.

Sri.PC.Chacko,MP inaugurated(ENCON) in a function presided over by Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor, KAU.

Dr. Ajith Prabhu, Joint Director, Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), delivered the key note address. Chairman of Legislative Committee on Environment, Rajaji Mathew Thomas, MLA presided over the valedictory session and administered an energy conservation oath.

Dr. P. B. Pushpalatha, Registrar, KAU released the proceedings of the Congress. Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, KAU; Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, KAU; K. Soman, Secretary, ECS; Dr. Kumar Gopal; C. Jayaraman, Vice President, ECS; Dr. Jim Thomas, Prof. and Head, Comm. Centre; Dr. P. S. John, Professor, CoH; Prof. P. I. Varghese, Prof. Abdul Latheef; Prof. C. P. Muhammed; Santy Mathew, PRO, ECS and B. Ajith Kumar, PRO, KAU participated.

New initiatives in Vellayani Campus Launched

Mr. Rufus Daniel, Vice-president, District Panchayat, Thiruvananthapuram laid the foundation stone of Golden Jubilee Memorial Post-graduate Block at CoA, Vellayani. The foundation stones of Ladies Hostel (Annex) and second floor of UG Men's Hostel of the college were laid by Dr. Leenakumari, member, KAU Executive Committee and Mr. P.V. Unnikrishnan, Member, Kerala State Planning Board, respectively.

The new PG Diploma course on Solid Waste Management was launched by Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, KAU while the new training programme

on Geographical Information System was kicked off by Dr. P. Rajasekharan, Chief (Agriculture), Kerala State Planning Board. The CD containing 16 topics on agriculture, meant for Farmers' Clubs in NABARD projects was released by Dr. Sverup John, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture.

Adv. George Mercier, MLA; Mr. Sha. A and Mr. Sivakumar. N.L, Members of KAU General Council; Mr. K. Suresh Babu, DPP; Mr. Jayan. G.J, Ward member, Kalliyoor Grama Panchayat and Mr. Henri Nicholas, Joint Secretary, Students Union participated in the function.

XII Plan to focus on Agriculture : NIRD Chief



Agriculture and Education, will be the main thrust areas under XII Plan, said Sri. Mathew C. Kunnumkal IAS, Director General, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad. He was inaugurating a three day training programme meant for Lead bank managers, DRDA Project Officers and selected

Elected to KAU GC

Dr. A. Anil Kumar, Dr. Arthur Jacob, Dr. Jose Joseph and Dr. Jiju P. Alex have been elected to the Kerala Agril. University General Council (KAU GC) from the constituency of Teachers of the University.

While Sri. P.G. Baburaj and N. M. Mohanan won the elections from the constituency of farm labourers, Sri. V.S. Sathyaseelan and Sri. K. Gireendrababu as well as Sri. Achuth J. Sankar and Avinash Reji Thomas were elected unopposed from the constituencies of Non Teaching Staff and Students respectively.

Ollur MLA M. P. Vincent is a member of the council by virtue of his office. The remaining positions in the 49 member council will be filled by elected representatives of Kerala Legislative Assembly and Panchayathiraj institutions of the state and representatives of farmers and scientists nominated by the Chancellor.

Production of Arecanut Dehusker: KAU Signs MoA with RAIDCO

KAU and RAIDCO entered into an MoA for commercial production of Arecanut dehusker developed by the University. The MoA was signed by Dr. P.B. Pushpalatha, Registrar, KAU and N.L. Suresh, MD, RAIDCO on March 7.

The simple device which can be operated by even children and women is considered as a boon to areca farmers, was developed by K. Aravindan, Technical Supervisor, Kelappaji College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, Tavanur under the University.

After the signing of the MoU, a model device was handed over to RAIDCO officials by Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research.

Kudumbasree executives jointly organized by NIRD and KAU at Thrissur from June 27 to 30.

'India is set to achieve a growth rate of 8.2% by the end of XIIth plan. But for our inability to achieve targeted growth in Agriculture and manufacturing sectors and inflation we could have at least touched 8.5%. Noting that Agricultural growth has critical influence on overall growth rate, Agriculture has been selected as a thrust area in next plan document. Greater focus will be on Horticulture as it is easier to achieve targets in this arena' said Sri. Kunnumkal.

Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, KAU presided over the inaugural function. Sri. P.J. Thomas, District Collector and Dr. Joy Mathew, Head, CTI, KAU participated.

Best Poster Award for KAU Scientists

The poster based on the RKVY project entitled "Genetic Upgradation and Seed Production of Vegetable varieties" implemented in KAU, authored by Dr. Pradeepkumar T., Associate Professor, Dept. of Olericulture, Veilanikkara and Dr. T.R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research bagged the best poster award in the National Symposium on Vegetable Biodiversity held at JNKVV, Jabalpur on 4th and 5th April, 2011.

Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, KAU has also been nominated as the national councillor of Indian Society of Vegetable Science.



Director of Research hands over model device in the presence of Registrar and Aravindan, the inventor

Workshop on Women's Media Policy

A workshop organized by Kerala State Women's Commission, KAU and Kerala Sahitya Academy mooted a comprehensive women's policy for media to ensure a fair and balanced gender perspective in news coverage.

Justice D. Sreedevi, Chairperson, Kerala Women's Commission, while presenting the draft policy, said that women's perspective and their voices are seldom reflected in mainstream media.

The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor, KAU. T. Devi, P.K. Sainaba & Meenakshi Thampan, members of State Women's Commission; Mridul Eapen, member, State Planning Board; Leela Menon, Journalist; Muse Mary George, women activist and Dr. P. S. Geethakutty, Head, KAU's Centre for Gender Studies participated in the discussions.

KAU Pavilion Adjudged the Best



KAU Pavilion was adjudged as the best among major pavilions in the Thrissur Pooram Exhibition 2011. KAU had obtained this distinction in earlier editions of the expo as well.

Dr. Jyothi Bhaskar, Assoc. Professor, Comm. Centre and Convenor, Exhibition received the trophy and citation from Sri. I. P. Paul, worshipful Mayor of Thrissur and Therambil Ramakrishnan MLA.

Seminar on RTI Act

A seminar on Right To Information was organised on 24 June by KAU in association with RTI Council, an NGO and Jeevan TV.

The workshop was inaugurated by Sri. K. Natarajan, State Information Commissioner.

Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor, KAU presided. Sri. P. N. Vijayakumar, former state Information Commissioner explained salient features of the Act. Dr. P. V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, Sri. A. M. Varghese, President, RTI Council and other officers of the University participated.

Agricultural Minister Accorded Grand Reception



Minister releases organic plant protection kit

Sri. K. P. Mohanan, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture and Pro Chancellor of KAU was accorded a grand reception by the University Community on June 10. Sri. Mohanan, on his first visit to the University, was received by Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor. The Minister also held discussions with the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor and senior officers of the University.

Replying to the reception the Minister said that he intends to impart a new thrust on agricultural development of the state. 'Even while persisting with the good programmes already initiated I wish to institutionalize a mechanism wherein overall agricultural development is ensured', he said.

The Minister released an organic plant protection kit, 'Bhouma jeevakam',

prepared by scientists of KAU's Communication Centre.

'Organic practices are not new. Our ancestors were expert exponents of such practices. Having realized the hazards of dangerous chemicals and pesticides we are re-inventing their knowledge. Let's popularize such practices', Minister said while handing over the first kit to M. P. Vincent MLA.

The meeting was presided over by Ollur MLA and EC member M. P. Vincent. Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor offered welcome and Dr. P. B. Pushpalatha, Registrar proposed vote of thanks.

Rare Recognition for KAU student

Jyothi Sara Jacob, MSc student of College of Horticulture, KAU earned a rare recognition by way of her Thesis being selected for publication by world renowned publishing house, M/s LAP Lambert Academic Publishing GmbH & Co. KG., Germany.

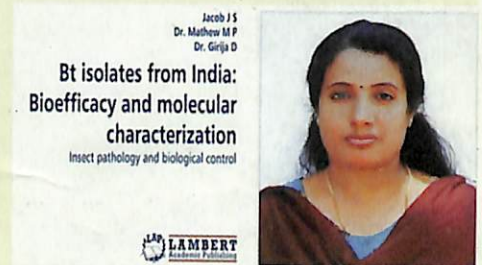
The book titled '**Bio isolates from India: Bioefficacy and Molecular Characterisation**' based on her Thesis is co-authored by her guide Dr. Maicy Kutty P., Mathew, Professor of Entomology and Dr. D. Girija, Professor of Microbiology. It is published as a monograph by LAP, the leading

KAU to develop safe alternatives

KAU will formulate crop specific organic plant protection methods in line with the State Government decision to phase out hazardous chemicals in farming and introduce an organic farming policy.

KAU has formulated research groups to identify and recommend organic pesticides, manure and bio agents for all crops in a workshop held on 19 May.

The workshop inaugurated by Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor also called for a state legislation to control use of untrusted bio pesticides flooding the market. Testing and recommendation of products should be made mandatory and items without KAU certification should be banned, the workshop resolved.



academic publishing house in Germany and associate member of American Book Sellers Assn. (www.bookweb.org) and Book Sellers Assn. of UK & Ireland (www.booksellers.org.uk).

AGROFORESTRY WORKSHOP:

Call to Revamp Curriculum, R&D projects

Strengthening and streamlining Education, Research and Development in Agroforestry has become imperative in the light of emerging world scenario, said Dr. V. P. Singh, Regional Representative, South Asia World Agroforestry centre. He was inaugurating the national workshop on All India Coordinated Research projects in Agroforestry being held at College of Forestry (CoF) of Kerala Agricultural University, Vellanikkara, Thrissur.

Dr. Singh said that a revamp of Agroforestry education is the first and foremost need of the hour as new knowledge and new thinking is desperately needed in this field.

'Agriculture is the only enterprise where producers have no stake in fixing price of their produces. Despite being major producer of grains, pulses, cereals and vegetables India lags behind in terms of value generated due to lack of value addition, branding and marketing techniques. This is where apt and adequate technologies/strategies for value addition,



Dr. V.P. Singh inaugurates the Workshop on Agroforestry

packaging, branding and marketing attain relevance.' Dr. Singh explained.

Dr. S. K. Dhyani, Director, National Research Centre for Agroforestry (NRCAF), Jhansi said that the next five year plan will be used to translate the

experience gained from experiments in to technologies and provide alternative livelihood, employment and better net return opportunities to different clientele, especially the farming community. Emphasis will be on tree improvement and Germplasm conservation, he said.

Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, KAU presided. Dr. J. C. Dagar, Assistant Director General, ICAR; Dr. B. Mohankumar, Associate Dean, CoF and Dr. Kunjamu, Officer i/c, All

India Co-ordinated Research Projects in Agroforestry in Kerala Agricultural University spoke. A compendium of research papers and reports on Agroforestry edited by Dr. Mohankumar and Dr. Kunjamu was also released in the function.