

## Message from the Vice-chancellor



The central move for direct funding of Universities in 12<sup>th</sup> Plan is a welcome step indeed. Though primarily intended to strengthen conventional Universities in view of increased threat of foreign invasion in education, State Agricultural Universities in general and Kerala Agricultural University in particular should feel optimistic about this hopeful development.

Funding of Agricultural Education & Research should be a priority of all regimes. Despite advancements achieved in food grain production India still confronts many challenges and they are multiplying due to climate change issues. Advanced studies and research on techniques for adaptation and mitigation of challenges posed by Climate change is vital and imperative, to say the least.

In my experience and opinion funding of Agricultural Universities does not receive due attention. Otherwise, KAU, having been adjudged the best in

academic performance in the country for four years in a row should never have confronted financial instability. Persistent inadequacy of financial support has made the turf so slippery for this esteemed institution that it finds difficult even to stay steady, not to speak of making big & brisk strides ahead.

No one denies the fact that Agricultural Education and Research is the key to economic advancement and food sovereignty of the country. Yet when it comes to the funding of Farm Varsities generosity often paves way for stringency and neglect. Unless this scenario change, Agricultural education & research will not reach the levels it ought to and the modern day challenges will remain unanswered.

It is in this background that I welcome the new proposal. If it is realized and put into practice, Universities can breathe more comfortably, thereby inducing fresh air in to Education, Research & Extension activities which will ultimately benefit people and the country. I don't think anyone will disagree on the prominence and pertinence of such a development.

## SILK EXTRACTED FROM CASHEW PEST COCOONS

Dr. Gavas Ragesh and colleagues, scientists of Cashew Research Station (CRS) Madakkathara has identified silk production potential of a minor insect pest of cashew.



Preliminary visual and mechanical quality tests of silk threads from the cocoons of *Cricula trifenestrata*, have been successfully completed with the help of Silk Mark Organization of India and Central Silk Board. Durable silk threads/yarns obtained using spinning machines was successfully used for weaving silk clothes in power loom on an experimental basis. *Tasar*, *Muga* and *Eri* are the only Vanya silk sources currently exploited in India. The addition of *Cricula* as a possible Vanya silk source

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## Workshop on Planning

### Active Role for NGOs in Planning Stressed

The Planning Commission sponsored Workshop on 12<sup>th</sup> Plan - Concerns and Priorities of Agricultural Sector - Voluntary Perspective has stressed a prominent role for NGOs in planning process.

The workshop jointly organized by Directorate of Extension, KAU and Institute for Non-Formal Adult and Continuing Education (INFACE) was inaugurated by Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor on 23 November 2011.

Dr. Viswambharan in his inaugural address highlighted the role of NGOs in evolving ideas for planning.

'When Brains in planning realize pains of people, country is bound to gain. I hope to hear the voice of people here since the NGOs,

being closer to the masses can reproduce the tune and tenor of their feedback.' He said.



Vice-Chancellor inaugurating the workshop

Dr. H. S. Sur, Consultant, Planning Commission of India in his key note address said that the planning process is undergoing change by inviting the ideas of people.

Dr. V.V. Sadamate, Advisor to Planning Commission of India, in his valedictory address called upon NGOs to augment the developmental interventions in agriculture and allied sectors.

'The 12<sup>th</sup> Plan approach paper visualizes significant growth in the agricultural sector, which necessitates a sincere effort by NGOs as public sector alone will not be able to harness the diverse interventions in the primary sector.' Dr. Sadamate said.

M. P. Vincent, MLA presided over the inaugural function. K. V. Dasan, President, Thrissur District panchayat; K. Ranganathan, President, INFACE; Dr. P. V. Balachandran, Director of Extension; Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, and Dr. Jim Thomas, Associate Director of Extension participated.

The inaugural function was followed by technical sessions on the perceived roles of NGOs in planning and development.

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## DEATH OF CHANCELLOR MOURNED

Kerala Agricultural University condoled the demise of M O H Farooke, Governor of Kerala and Chancellor of the University, who passed away on January 26.

Addressing a condolence meeting convened at University Head Quarters on 27 January, Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice - Chancellor said that M. O. Hussain Farooke was a leader who proved his capabilities in various capacities such as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Member of Parliament, Central Minister and Chief Minister of Puduchery.

'As the chancellor he was very much interested in the affairs of KAU and keen to partake

in our Convocation programme. KAU mourns the demise of its Chancellor and joins the grief of bereaved family,' Vice-Chancellor said in the condolence message.



M.O.H. Farooke

All colleges, stations and offices under KAU remained closed on 27 January as a mark of respect to departed soul. All University functions and ceremonies including the foundation day celebrations scheduled till February 2 were cancelled.

## KAU Thesis Selected for Global release

The PhD thesis of Dr. Anitha S., Associate Professor (Agron.), KAU, Vellanikkara, Thrissur has been published as a monograph by the world renowned publishing house, M/s Lambert Academic Publishing (LAP) GmbH & Co. KG., Germany. The book entitled '**Concurrent growing of green manure crops in direct seeded rice - A cost effective management alternative**' based on her Ph. D. thesis is co-authored by her guide Dr. Jose Mathew, Professor & Head, CRS, Madakkathara.

LAP books are distributed by global wholesalers worldwide and can be viewed on [amazon.de](http://amazon.de), [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk), [amazon.com/bookbutler.de](http://amazon.com/bookbutler.de) & [www.lap-publishing.com](http://www.lap-publishing.com)

## JNMF Scholarship To KAU Researcher

Hema. M, Ph.D Research Scholar of College of Horticulture has won the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund (JNMF) scholarship on **Economic valuation of mangrove ecosystems in Kerala** under the guidance of Dr. P. Indira Devi, Prof., Dept. of Agri. Economics. JNMF is a memorial fund instituted in 1964 under the chairmanship of then President of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

## Accolade for Dr Shaji P James

The contributions of Dr. Shaji P James, Programme Coordinator, K V K, Palakkad in Research and development in bioenergy and energy conservation in agriculture has been recognised by the Government. Dr. Shaji received a plaque and commendation certificate from Aryadan Mohammed, Hon. Minister for Power, Kerala, during the National Energy conservation day celebrations at Trivandrum on Dec. 14. Actively involved in research activities as well as technology transfer in energy conservation and bioenergy, Dr. Shaji is also a recipient of the Jawaharlal Nehru award.

### ACADEMIC COUNCIL

## Farmers' Study Centre to be set up

The KAU Academic Council decided to establish a Farmers' Study Centre to equip the farmer community with advanced knowledge in scientific farming practices and technical advancements in the field of Agriculture.

Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor who chaired the 116th meeting of Academic Council on Dec 7 told the house that establishment of such a Centre would not only provide a useful window to farmers but also help to involve them in the agricultural research and studies of pests and diseases. Close interaction between farmers and the scientists would pave



Academic Council in progress

way for meaningful and result oriented research programmes pertinent to our crops, he explained.

The Council also decided to collaborate with state Sanitary Mission for the new course on Solid waste management launched by KAU.

The Council agreed to the

Proposal for a trifold increase in the seats reserved for children of farmers and farm labourers in the Courses conducted by the university. They will also get reservation of seats in B Tech (Agrl. Engg.) henceforth. Hitherto reservation was available for only BSc (Ag) Course.

The meeting was attended by Dr. P. B. Pushpalatha, Registrar; Dr. P. K. Asokan, Director (Acad); Dr. P. V. Balachandran (Director of Extension); Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan (Director of Research); Dr. Swerup John (Dean - Agri); Dr. M. Sivaswamy (Dean - Agri Engg); heads of Institutions and other members.

## Training on Conservation & Control of Rodents

A five day training programme in field techniques for survey, conservation and control of Volant & Non-volant small mammals was conducted at College of Forestry, KAU from 10 to 14 November '11.

The programme organized in collaboration with Zoo Outreach Organisation, Chester Zoological Gardens, Columbus Zoo, Knowsley Park and Conservation Breeding Specialist Group of the international Union for conservation of nature was attended by fifty odd wildlife scientists from South Asian Countries. The Training modules focused on techniques for conservation and identification of animals, collection of skin samples for DNA analysis, methods to ascertain age and reproductive status of animals and role of rodents in pollination and seed dispersal.

The trainers included international experts like Paul. A. Racey (Chair, IUCN Species Survival Group), Mike Jordan (Senior Advisor, National Zoo of South Africa) and Sanjay Molur (Executive Director, Zoo Outreach organization).

## Workshop on WTO Challenges

A state level workshop on *Enhancing Competitiveness of Agriculture to meet the challenges of WTO and other PTAs* held at College of Horticulture (CoH), Vellanikkara on 24 & 25 Jan 2012 was inaugurated by Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Vice - Chancellor.

The workshop jointly organised by WTO Cell (Agri), Govt of Kerala, SAMETI and Department of Agri. Economics, KAU was meant to educate senior level officers of the Dept of Agriculture, Soil Survey, Soil Conservation and Animal Husbandry on the neces-

sity and modality to spread awareness among farmers about the challenges of global market trends. The workshop helped to identify major constraints confronted by our farmers and chalk out ways and means to improve their competitiveness and equip them to cope with the post WTO market regimes.

Dr S Regeena, Special Officer, WTO Cell; Dr. C. T. Abraham, Assoc. Dean, CoH; K. Jessy Thomas, HoD, Agri. Economics; Dr. P. S. John; Dr. Satheesh Babu; Dr. K. P. Mani; Dr. Jim Thomas and Dr. C. R. Elsy participated.

## Winter School on Micro-irrigation

The ICAR Winter School on Advances in Micro propagation of Horticulture Crops hosted by CPBMB, CoH, Vellanikkara from 1-21 Dec 2011 was inaugurated by Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research in a function presided over by Dr. P. B. Pushpalatha, Registrar. 25 scientists from different ICAR Research Institutes and State Agricultural Universities from different parts of the country participated. Dr. G. M. Nair, former Director, TBGRI delivered the keynote address. Dr. P. K. Asokan, Director, Academic; Dr. C. T. Abraham, Assoc. Dean, CoH; Dr. R. Vikraman Nair and Dr. R. Keshavachandran, Course Director partook in the function.

## KAU GC to Meet on March 24

The 113<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Kerala Agricultural University General Council will be held at KAU Head Quarters on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012, informs the Registrar.

The Annual Meeting will consider and approve budget 2012-13' and revised budget 2011-12'.

## GENERAL COUNCIL MEET

## KAU to strengthen Faculties, Facilities & Projects

KAU proposes to strengthen the academic programmes and facilities and embark upon an ambitious research and extension agenda in the 12<sup>th</sup> plan period.

Dr.K.R.Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor informed the 112<sup>th</sup> meeting of General Council that establishment of new faculties, a new college for Horticulture studies and Agri Polyclinics attached to the Regional Stations is targeted during the period.

Plan proposals on research front include standardisation and popularization of bio alternatives

for banned chemicals, release of pest & disease resistant varieties, popularising safe & good food habits, establishment of a Kole Land Research Centre & Fruit Research station and promotion of farm mechanization.

In the extension arena, projects for innovation, adaptation, processing and evaluation studies on conceptual models, entrepreneurship development and consultancy will be taken up. All the seven K V Ks will be remodeled adapting region friendly practices. Centers for e-learning and creative extension will be streng-

thened and a Central technology Museum will be established, Vice-Chancellor said.

The meeting held on 26 November sensed the gravity of farmer distress cases in the state. While discussing a call attention motion moved by Dr.A.Anilkumar, the Council decided to depute a team consisting of Scientists, Peoples' representatives and students to study the issue and propose possible remedial measures.

M. P. Vincent MLA, Prof. M. Muraleedharan, K.SunilKumar, Dr.



Registrar, Vice-Chancellor and M.P.Vincent MLA at GC Meet

Jose Joseph, Dr. A. AnilKumar, V. S. Sathyaseelan, K. Gireendra babu, Dr. Arthur Jacob, Dr. Jiju P. Alex, Achyut J. Shankar, M. N. Mohanan, P. G. Baburaj and Avinash Reji Thomas attended the meet.

## Pepper price to creep up ; Coconut's to stay firm

Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre (AMIC) under KAU sees a steady trend in prices of ungarbled black Pepper (new crop) during the next three months from January 2012 to March 2012.

The Centre, attached to the Department of Agricultural Economics, CoH under the ICAR assisted NAIP project after assessing prevailing market sentiments and the econometric analysis of pepper prices at Kochi for a period of 17 years from January 1995 and factors linked with production and supply of pepper in the ensuing season predicts that a price of Rs. 310-330/Kg in January is likely to improve to attain a level of Rs.330-360/Kg in March 2012.

The studies conducted by AMIC finds that intensive speculation is being circulated systematically at the beginning of the season



aimed at bringing pressure in the market and to create panic. The untimely rains has delayed the harvest from November – December to January in the growing areas in Kerala, a major growing tract in India.

The erratic weather, shrinking acreage and declining productivity

is likely to result in a lower crop prospect than the last year. An in depth analysis of all factors prompts AMIC to predict an upward trend in prices during the first half of season, especially in April - May 2012.

### Coconut

Another market study by AMIC indicates that the coconut prices are likely to firm up in the short run, and may remain steady in a capped range of Rs. 19 to Rs. 23 in the coming months. After an econometric analysis of monthly prices for the past 12 years, other push and pull factors and recessionary signs AMIC concludes that the price pattern will prevail in the next quarter as well.

### Acarology Workshop

## Emerging scenario & entailments explored



Dr. T. P. Rajendran, ADG ICAR clarifying a point in the workshop

XII<sup>th</sup> Biennial workshop of All India Network Project on Agricultural Acarology held at CoH, Vellanikkara addressed the increasing threat to crop plants due to global warming.

The workshop hosted by KAU centre of AINPAA noted that newer problems have come up on garlic, betel vine, banana, sapota, sugarcane and arecanut. The meeting also took stock of the possibility of using mineral oils on a higher scale rather than acaricides.

The necessity of farmer education programmes on specific solutions to the problem of poly houses versus open fields and mites in higher elevation terrains and plains in the country was stressed. The danger of high tech plant nurseries serving as a source of mites was also discussed.

The workgroup appreciated the good work done by the predatory mites including *Neoseiulus longispinus* and species of other phytoseiidae in countering and controlling plant mites. The current status, need and future of resistant varieties in various crops were also discussed.

The technical sessions were led by Dr. T. P. Rajendran, ADG, ICAR; Dr. N. Sreenivas, Co-ordinator, AINPAA; Prof. Mohana sundaram; Dr. B. Mallick and Dr. N. K. Krishnakumar. The meet was attended by thirty odd acarologists from different State Agri. universities and ICAR institutes in India.

## National Book fair Held at CoH

National Book Festival conducted at College of Horticulture under KAU was inaugurated by Dr. P.V. Krishnan Nair, Secretary, Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy in a function presided over by Dr. K. R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor. K. P. Sathyan, University Librarian delivered the Key Note Address and Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research unveiled the portrait of Padmasree S. R. Ranganathan, Father of Library Science. M.V.Francis Master, noted artist was honoured in the function. Dr. C. T. Abraham, Associate Dean, CoH and Dr.A.T.Francis, College Librarian spoke.

## KAU School Student Tops Maths fest

The project *on Incommensurable magnitude and irrational numbers* presented by Ajay. S, X<sup>th</sup> std. student of KAU High School won first prize in 11<sup>th</sup> State Level Children's Maths Congress held at Kottayam on Dec 28. He also won first prize in Ramanujan paper presentation in the District Maths fest held on Jan 05 by presenting a paper on *Triangles, Polygons and Circles*.

## KVK helps SHG Reap rich harvest

The harvesting of cauliflower, cabbage, carrot and beetroot cultivated by women SHG group in Madakkathara Panchayat with the support of Thrissur KVK was a big popular attraction.



The harvesting festival was inaugurated by Panchayat President Sujatha Balakrishnan. Dr. Koshy Abraham, Programme Coordinator, KVK, Members of Panchayat, staff of KVK and others participated.

It was the first time that cool season vegetable cultivation was taken up by the enthusiastic members of Kudumbasree Unit in Madakkathara, KVK supported the farming with quality seeds, timely interventions and proper advice.

The success of maiden venture has prompted the village farmers to expand area of cultivation in the next season.

### FARMER DISTRESS

## KAU Team Visits Wayanad

A team of Scientists & peoples' representatives visited Wayanad district to study the root causes of farmer distress and suggest remedies, as decided by the 112<sup>th</sup> meeting of KAU General Council.

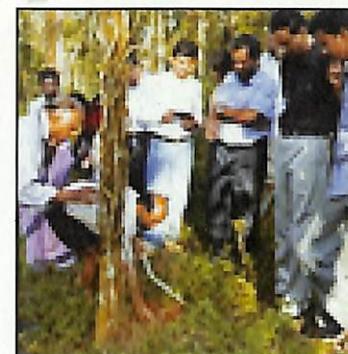
Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension coordinated the visit on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor.

The team conducted farm visits, held discussions with farmers and farmer groups as well as local leaders to comprehend the actual problems confronted by farmer community. Gathering the feed back from stake holders and tuning to the rural pulse, a broad based assessment was made.

It was unanimously agreed that any approach adopted should in-

volve capacity building of farmers for better financial planning, massive technical literacy on crop management technologies, crop insurance and farmer counselling. A farmer participatory mechanism for transparent analysis of the credit flow and utilization in agricultural sector by the financial institutions was also highly demanded.

The consensus evolved includes a multi-pronged action plan in which different agencies like KAU, Dept. of Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Fisheries, Forests, Minor irrigation & Industries, NABARD and VFPC. Major policy matters to be decided by the Govt of Kerala were also identified.



KAU Team on an on - farm trip in Wayanad

GC Members, Assoc. Director of Extension, Assoc. Director of Research and Scientists from DoE, CoH, RARS & KVK Ambalavayal partook in the exercise.

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## Silk from cashew pest ; Recognitions for CRS

will enable cashew farmers to derive additional revenue from their plantations as no adverse effect on normal growth of trees has been detected due to the rearing of *Cricula trifenestrata*, the wild silk worm.

Dr. Gavas Ragesh and team reported the presence of these worms in Cashew plantations of Kannur District. The dark grey caterpillars of the silk worm with red oral claspers on completion of larval phase makes a cocoon of golden yellow silk attached to the stem, branches and leaves of cashew trees. The cocoon in fusi form with network of yellow silk enclosing dark brown pupae are seen in masses on the trees, joined together, they said.

Research, made the announcement in the presence of Dr. S. Ayyappan, Director General, ICAR and Dr. H. P. Singh, DDG (Hort.), ICAR during the National Group Meeting of Scientists of AICRP on Cashew held at Puttur (Mangalore) during 25-27 Dec. 2011.

Earlier the papers presented by Dr. Gavas Ragesh and Sri. Gregory Zacharia of CRS won the Best Oral presentation & Best Poster presentation awards during the First International Symposium on Cashewnut 2011 organized by the International Society for Horticultural Sciences (ISHS) and TNAU at Agricultural College & Research Institute, Madurai, during 9-12 December 2011.

### RECOGNITIONS

CRS, Madakkathara has been selected as one of the best centres of the AICRP on Cashew. Dr. M.G. Bhat, Director and Project Coordinator, Directorate of Cashew



## Athul Krishna Adjudged Kalaprabhitha

Athul Krishna, second Sem student of ACCER won the Kalaprabhitha title in KAU Youth Festival 2011. He achieved this honour by securing first prize in Kuchippudi, dance & Mono act and second prize in Bharatha natyam and fancy dress. CoH, Vellanikkara won the overall championship with 75 points while Forestry College finished Runners up with 33 points in the fest conducted at KAU Campus from 17 to 22 Dec.

## Planning and Perseverance Lead to Success : Vice-Chancellor

Proper planning and perseverance will lead to success in all walks of life, said Dr. K.R. Viswambharan, Vice-Chancellor. Speaking after hoisting the national flag at the University HQ on the 63<sup>rd</sup> Republic Day of India he called on the KAU community to strive hard for greater objectives even while drawing inspiration from the achievements made.

Dr. K.R. Viswambharan recalled the sacrifices, persistent efforts and immaculate preparations freedom struggle was enriched with. "Though we began to celebrate Republic Day from 1956 only the decision to mark January 26 was made as early as 1929 in the Lahore session of Indian National Con-



Vice - Chancellor & Registrar after hoisting the tricolour

gress. This reflects the farsightedness and preparation our leaders had' he said.

Officers of the University, students, staff, labourers and school children participated in the parade held at KAU HQ.