



KAU NEWS

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Twenty Five More Varieties of Crops released

Twenty Five new Crop varieties developed by KAU have been approved for release by the state variety release committee. The Crop wise list of new varieties include five of Rice; five of Cocoa; two each of Sugarcane, Garcinia, Seedless watermelon and Cucumber; one each of Jackfruit, Chilli, Mushroom, Cowpea, Ashgourd, Brinjal and Tomato.

The State Committee on Variety release which met at Thiruvananthapuram on April 25 under the chairmanship of Agricultural production Commissioner was attended by KAU Director of Research, Director of Agriculture, representative of National Seed Corporation as well as farmers' representatives. The respective scientist presented each variety before the committee.

KAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran said that the new varieties approved for release reflect the university's commitment to farming community and consistent research output. 'The main characteristics of these varieties are resistance and tolerance to abiotic stresses. The new F1 hybrids symbolize our initiative to develop F1 Hybrids of various crops.', he said.

Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research said that release of twenty five varieties at a stroke is a landmark achievement by the university. 'With this the total number of crop varieties developed by KAU has reached 308. The very fact that development of a variety takes five to seven years explains the effort and value of a new one. Many of the new varieties are ideal for the emerging farming patterns and hence assumed great relevance.', he said.

Cont'd on page 3

Seedless Hybrid Cucumber Developed

KAU has developed seedless hybrid Cucumber ideal for polyhouse cultivation. This is the first such Cucumber hybrid developed in South India by a Public sector research team.



The new Parthenocarpic hybrid is a blessing to farmers, who now depend on costly hybrid seeds sourced from multi nationals, as it offers increased availability of indigenously developed hybrid seeds at affordable rates.

KAU Parthenocarpic Cucumber Hybrid-1 (KPCH-1) is found to be significantly superior to commercial hybrids with respect to fruit number,

Cont'd on page 2

Inside

Page 2

Cucumber hybrid, Pesticide residue analysis, Herbal face pack , Straw bale Loader & Students' harvesting operation.

Page 3

New Varieties, Awards and Recognitions.

Page 4

Message From Vice-Chancellor, MoU with SBT, Students' Union.

Page 5

Agrifiesta concludes, Biotechnology seminar and Library workshop.

Page 6

Inauguration of lab at Kayamkulam, Award for Pattambi Centre, Cocoa seminar and Women's day at KAU.

Page 7

Research Council, Guest house planned at Anakkayam, Seed lab inauguration and KVK Meet.

Page 8

Academic Council, Organic farming Seminar, Young Farmers' meet and Njavara farming workshop.

Non deficit Budget aimed at Reforms

The non deficit Budget for 2015-16 presented by Thomas Unniyadan MLA in the 41st Annual meeting of KAU General Council held at Vellanikkara on 28 March 2015 envisages reforms in academic, research and extension fronts.

The meeting chaired by Dr. P. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor approved the balanced budget with an outlay of Rs. 496.64 Crores including non plan expenditure of 285.04 Crores and plan expenditure of 56.62 crores.

An amount of seven crores have been earmarked for academic activities while the research and extension programmes have been provided with 28 crores and 10 crores respectively. The budget proposed affiliated colleges and courses, which is a major shift from the policy hitherto followed and setting up of four agri polytechniques in the state. Thomas Unniyadan MLA said that the University is hopeful of getting additional financial support from the state government for clearing the accumulated liability of 265 crores.

Vice-Chancellor assured the house that steps are on to solve acute manpower deficiency confronting the University. The meeting also approved minutes of two previous meetings, award of degree to students passing out of



Thomas Unniyadan MLA presents KAU Budget 2015-16 in the GC meet held on March 28

constituent colleges and working report of the University up to 2014 December 31.

Executive Committee members M. P. Vincent MLA, K. A. Sheeba, P. A. Salam, Dr. Jose Joseph and Aji Francis took part. General Council members Dr. S. Devanesan, Dr. Jiju P. Alex, Dr. A. Prema, Dr. R. Krishnakumar, V. S. Sathya-seelan, Fransis Kombara, Soumya Krishnan, Vishnu Narayanan, C. H. Muthu, Adv. Sony Sebastian, Varghese Ollukkaran, Rajiv Nellikkunnel, Anil Pulikkal, Dr. T. N. Jagdeesh Kumar and M. A. Yohannan participated in the discussions. Registrar Dr. P. V. Balachandran, Comptroller Dr. Joy Mathew, Faculty Deans and Directors of Research, Extension, Physical plant and Planning were also present.

Cont'd from page 1

Seedless Hybrid Cucumber Developed



Dr. Pradeepkumar T.

yield and earliness as it produced five tonnes from a 10 cent polyhouse in 3 months. KCPH-1 fruits are green, 20 cm long and 240 g in weight, which can be stored up to 1 week at room temperature without any loss in quality. KCPH-1 exhibited fair degree of tolerance against Downy mildew caused by *Pseudoperonospora Cubensis*, a major limiting factor for cucumber cultivation during rainy season inside naturally ventilated polyhouse in Kerala. The Research Extension Advisory Council of KAU has recommended this hybrid for multilocational testing across polyhouse in all districts in the state.

Research team lead by Dr. Pradeepkumar T., Associate Professor, Department of Olericulture, CoH Vellanikkara developed the hybrid through technique for F1 hybrid seed production in parthenocarpic cucumber. The same team had earlier developed seedless hybrids of yellow and red watermelon, first seedless watermelon in India.

Seeds of the new hybrid Cucumber are expected to reach the farming community within a year.

Pesticide residue Kerala Vegetables found safe

Vegetables produced within Kerala have been certified safe to eat, following a rigorous analysis for pesticide residues conducted at KAU's Pesticide Residue lab at Vellayani.

The periodical tests conducted at the lone public sector lab in the state has found that almost all vegetable samples collected from various sources from different districts, except for three samples of cowpea and one sample of snake gourd from Thiruvananthapuram district, are devoid of hazardous material. The residue found in the four samples collected from Thiruvananthapuram has been identified as that of Chlorpyrifos. In the light of test results, KAU has advised farmers' to avoid hazardous chemicals and use safer alternatives for pest control.

Farmer's can avail the free testing facility extended by pesticide testing lab attached to College of Agriculture, Vellayani. One Kilogram of vegetable sample safely packed in materials other than plastic along with a certificate from agricultural officer of the Krishibhavan concerned can be taken to the lab for free testing and certification. For further details farmers are advised to contact Dr. Thomas Biju Mathew, professor, Pesticide residue Testing lab, Vellayani on phone 0471-2380520 (Office).

Herbal Face pack from Medicinal Plant Unit

KAU Medicinal Plant research unit has come out with a herbal face pack on the world health day. The new product indigenously produced from herbs cultivated within the unit is the Sixth commercially viable product from the AICRP unit at CoH. Dr. Koshy Abraham, Associate Dean officially released the product, christened *MUKHASREE*, by handing it over to Kum. Pournami, Students' Union Joint Secretary.

The AICRP on Medicinal Plants at CoH is well known for collection and conservation of all medicinal plants. Apart from producing planting materials of medicinal plants, the unit has already launched unique products like popular cool drink concentrate *Naruneendi Syrup*, Skin cure oil *DanthapalaVelichenna*, Hair nourishing oil *Keraraksha*, herbal shampoo *Kerasudhi* and *Vasikachooranam*, a herbal remedy for cough.



Straw Bale Loader Successfully Tested

The Food Security Army of the ARS, Mannuthy conducted the testing and evaluation of the Straw Bale Loader in Kole Lands at Padijare Karimpadam under Venkitangu Krishi Bhavan in Thrissur.

Kartar Straw Loader which costs around Rs. One lakh can lift and load straw bales weighting upto 50 kg to the trucks within 12 seconds. The operational cost of this machine including the fuel charges, Operator's service charge and depreciation comes around to Rs. 155 per hour. 300 straw bales can be loaded to a truck in an hour. This translates in to

a loading cost of 51 paise per bale which is only 10 % of manual loading costs. The identification and successful testing of the machine is another significant achievement of ARS, Mannuthy in developing a complete package for mechanized agricultural revolution.



Testing operation of Straw Bale loader
In progress at Kole lands

STUDENTS SAVE PADDY CROP

A team of students from College of Forestry, Vellanikkara executed an emergency harvesting operation to save paddy crop in eight acre field at Nadathara. They jumped in to save the crop raised by



CoF Students engaged in
emergency harvesting

four women farmers' in leased land with Joint Liability Group Loan. Their crop ready to be harvested was submerged by unseasonal rains and machine harvesting being impossible and manual

harvesting being not feasible due to lack of labour force, the desperate women group sought the help of KAU's Centre for Gender Studies in Agriculture. The centre managed to rope in the help of NSS students and Bhoomithra Sena of CoF to save the crop. Dr. P. S. Geethakutty, Dr. A. Prema, Dr. A. V. Santhosh Kumar and Dr. Bino guided the team.

Cont'd from page 1

Twenty Five More Crop Varieties released

The new Rice varieties are MO-22 developed at RRS, Moncompu by Dr. R. Devika; Amritha, developed by Dr. M. R. Bindu, ORARS, Kayamkulam; Ezhome 4 and Jaiva developed by Dr. T. Vanaja, CoA, Padannakkad and VTL9 developed at RRS, Vyttila by Dr. K.S. Shylaraj.



Sindoor

MO-22 is a dwarf, medium duration variety with medium bold red kernel grains and moderately resistant to sheath blight, sheath rot, BLB and false smut and a grain yield of 7-7.5 t/ha. While Amritha is a red kernelled long duration salt tolerant variety suited for Oru mundakan tract producing 4.88 t of grains and 8.8 tonnes straw/ha Ezhome 4 is a long duration non lodging paddy suitable for Kaipad lands with white kernels. VTL 9 is long duration paddy variety with saline tolerance up to 12 dsm and 10 % extra yield over existing varieties for Pokkali fields. Jaiva, a semi tall, long duration variety with short bold golden yellow grains with white kernel is a photo insensitive rice variety developed for organic farming in non-saline wet lands.

Sindoor is a Jackfruit ideal for table purpose with attractive sunset orange flakes and distinct aroma, taste and sweetness developed at Farming Systems research Station, Sadanandapuram by Dr. S. Regeena. It bears fruits of medium size (average 11Kg) twice a year.



Subhra

Shonima and Swarna, the water melon hybrids developed by Dr. T. Pradeepkumar, CoH, Vellanikkara are the first seedless hybrids developed in the country. While the former with dark

green rind colour is redfleshed, the latter with striped green rind is yellow fleshed. The Cucumber Varieties Harith with light green fruits and Subhra with greenish white fruits ideal for open and rain shelter conditions were also developed at the CoH by Dr. T. Pradeepkumar.



Manuprabha

Keerthi, the new Mosaic tolerant Chilli variety developed by Dr. M.C. Narayanankutty, RARS, Pattambi produce green coloured, semi-wrinkled pendent fruits, 10-12 cm in length. The Ashgourd Thara developed at Pattambi by Dr. M. L. Jyothi gives small fruits (1.22 kg) with an average yield of 22t/ha is a variety suited for homestead and commercial cultivation. The mosaic resistant yard long bean Githika developed at Vellayani by Dr. P. Manju has long thick green fleshy pods with reddish brown seeds and gives an average yield of 27.6 t /ha.

Manuprabha, the wilt resistant Tomato variety developed at ARS, mannuthy by Dr. M. C. Narayanankutty gives round shaped fruits. The Sugarcane varieties Abhay and Aromal developed by Dr.V.R. Shajan, ARS, Tiruvalla are flood resis-tant with higher yield. Ponny, the Brinjal Variety from Tiruvalla ARS developed by Dr. Jessy M. Kuriakose is a non spiny, bacterial wilt resistant variety with vigorous growth producing light green fruits of 24cm average length. Garcinia varieties Amrutham and Haritham developed by Dr. Alice Antony, RARS, Kumarakom, while the five Cocoa varieties were developed by Dr. Minimol.J.S ,Cocoa Research unit, Vellanikkara. Bheema, the pure white milky mushroom variety weighing almost half a Kg was developed at CoA, Vellayani by Dr.D.Geetha.



Bheema

Awards and Recognitions

Dr. A. Sakeer Hussain, Assistant Professor, CoH, Vellanikkara has been awarded the All India Best Publication Award-2014 by the Society for Advancement of Human and Nature (SADHNA), Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. This award was for his research paper *Scientific rationality and evaluative perception on indigenous plant protection practices on coconut (Cocos nucifera L.)* published in the *Journal of Plantation Crops* 39 (2) : 290-298.

Dr. Ameena M., Assistant Professor, Department of Agronomy received the Best Poster presentation in the Second National Biodiversity Congress held at Kanakakkunnu, Trivandrum during 26-27 February. The award was presented by Hon.'ble Governor Justice P. Sathasivam.

Reeba Jacob, PG Scholar, Department of Extension, CoA, Vellayani won the Best Paper Award in the National seminar on Environment organised at TNAU, Madurai Campus in December 2014 for the paper on *Home gardens : Armament of biodiversity* coauthored by Dr. Allan Thomas, Assistant Professor.

Noobiya Basheer, PG Scholar, Department of Extension, CoA, Vellayani won the Best Oral presentation Award in the Indian Biodiversity Congress held at SRM University, Chennai during December 2014. The award was for the presentation on *Gender defined roles in home gardens for food security and biodiversity management* co authored by Dr. Allan Thomas, Assistant Professor and Dr. R. Prakash, Professor.

The paper on *Economics of Kerala home gardens, Evidence from southern Kerala* co authored by **Dr. Allan Thomas**, Dr.S.Bhaskaran, Dr.Usha C Thomas and Reeba Jacob won the best paper award in the Indian Biodiversity Congress held at SRM University, Chennai during December 2014.

Divya Vijayan, PG Scholar, CCBM, Vellanikkara received Best paper award in the National Seminar on Recent trends in Eco friendly Farming Practices for Food security conducted by Gandhigram Rural Institute during March 12-13.

Dr. Vandana Venugopal, Associate Professor (Agronomy), RARS, Kumarakom got the best poster award under Agriculture and Food Sciences in the 27th Kerala Science Congress from 27 - 29 January, 2015 held at Alappuzha. The award was for her paper on *Utilization of Water Hyacinth (EichhorniaCrassipes) for Open Water Vegetable Farming - A Novel Concept* co authored by Shynamol. P. Rajan, Noble Abraham, A. V. Mathew and K.G. Padmakumar.

Dr. Anu. G. Krishnan, Assistant Professor (Horticulture), RARS, Kumarakom won the best oral presentation award in the National Symposium on Modern Agro technologies for nutritional security and health at Y. S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan from 21-23 April, 2015. The award winning presentation on *Variability studies in physic chemical qualities of indigenous Jack types (Artocarpus heterophyllus Lam) of Kuttanad region in Kerala* co.authored by K. T. Suman, G. Jayalekshmi and Ashly. V. Thomas.

Minister moots Pesticide residue Laboratory at Onattukara



Agri Minister inaugurates Lab complex at ORARS, Kayamkulam

Minister for Agriculture K.P. Mohanan inaugurated the laboratory complex constructed at ORARS, Kayamkulam under RKVY project (Kuttanad Package) on 22nd April 2015.

The Minister offered to establish a pesticide residue laboratory for Onattukara at a cost of five crores.

The function was presided over by Shri. C. K. Sadasivan MLA. KAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran delivered keynote address. N. Padmakumar IAS, District Collector, Alappuzha; Rajasree Komalath, Municipal Chairperson, Kayamkulam; Rajeev Nellikunnel, General Council Member, KAU; Kandalloor Sankaranarayanan, Vice Chairman, Onattukara Vikasana Agency; A. Nazarulla ward councilor, Kayamkulam Municipality; U. Muhammed, Vice Chairman, Kayamkulam Municipality; Dr. V. R. Ramachandran, DPP, KAU and Renjith, DDA, Alappuzha spoke. Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research welcomed the gathering and Dr. A. V. Mathew, ADR, Kumarakom proposed vote of thanks.

Pattambi adjudged Best AICRIP Centre



Dr. R. Beena receives the award for Best AICRIP centre in Plant Pathology on behalf of RARS, Pattambi

The Annual rice research group meeting organised at Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad adjudged the All India Coordinated Research Project at RARS, Pattambi as the best AICRIP centre in plant physiology.

Dr. R. Beena, Assistant professor received the citation on behalf of the centre during the 50th annual rice research group meeting held at Hyderabad.

Cocoa Farmers' seminar Call for Producers' Company



Vice Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran inaugurates Cocoa farmer's seminar

KAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran mooted a Farmer producer company of Cocoa cultivators for enhancing prospects of cocoa farming in the state.

Addressing the farmers after inaugurating the two day farmers' seminar conducted by KAU's Cocoa research station in Collaboration with Directorate of Cashew Cocoa development

(DCCD), Kochi at Vellanikara, Dr. Rajendran said that such a single door marketing mechanism would enhance the bargaining power of farmers and ensure benefits of farmers' cooperative movement.

KAU Director of Research Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan in his presidential address called for cottage industry units based on Cocoa using the foolproof technologies developed by KAU. Dr. Koshi Abraham, Associate Dean, CoH; Dr. T. N. Jagdeeshkumar and Dr. A. Prema, members of KAU General Council; Dr. Venkatesh N. Hubbaalli, Director, DCCD; M. R. Rajesh, Manager, Mondeez India Food limited; Dr. B. Suma, Head, Cocoa Research Station and Dr. Minimol spoke. Technical sessions on Cocoa farming, processing, pest and disease management were held after the inaugural session. Dr. R. Vikraman Nair, former Director of Research and founder of Cocoa research station was honoured at the function.

Women's Day celebrated



Yogasilpam presented by KAU women During the women's day celebrations

The women's day celebrations organised by Centre for Gender Studies in Agriculture and Farm Entrepreneurship Development (CGAFED) at KAU central auditorium on March 18 was inaugurated by Dr. P. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor. Highlighting the role of women in social welfare, the Vice-Chancellor pointed out that KAU is the first University to have a Centre for Gender studies.

The lead talks by Dr. Lalitha Lenin and Sreeja Arango-ttukara stressed the need to sensitise the society on women's roles and rights. Women's day celebrations should not hinder proper analysis of women's issues as women's insecurity reflects the immaturity of society at large, they said. *Yogasilpam* presented by women in KAU stood out among several programmes presented on the day. Registrar Dr. P. V. Balachandran, CCBM Assoc. Dean Dr. A. Sukumaran, CGAFED head Dr. P. S. Geethakutty and Joint Registrar K.S. Vijayalakshmi spoke.

Research Council Propose Study on Social impact of Research outputs



Dr. S. Edison and Dr. T.R. Gopalakrishnan at the Research Council meeting

KAU Research Advisory Council stressed the need for a state research policy *vis a vis* selection of crops and farming practices in the state.

The council chaired by Dr. S. Edison, former Director of CPCRI, Thiruvananthapuram, also recommended social impact study of research outputs, technologies including new varieties and extension activities.

KAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran suggested introduction of innovative input methods like micro nutrient capsules, fertiliser sprays and combined plant protection chemicals in paste form as well as tools, machines and equipment appropriate for small farms and orchards.

The council also observed that inadequate financial support under plan mode hampers research on filed

problems. It also proposed reorientation of activities in research stations in tune with emerging trends and farmers' interests without compromising on focus.

Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, highlighted the research achievements of the University. KAU has released 17 improved varieties of different crops during 2010-2013 alone and the total number of crop varieties developed is 283. Twelve more varieties are ready to be released in 2015. KAU is focusing on development of F1 hybrid of rice as well as hybrids of common vegetables resistant to pests, diseases and abiotic stresses,' he said.

The council also took note of the need to popularize open field hi tech cultivation practices and develop technologies on post-harvest handling of spices and common agricultural produces of Kerala. Director of Extension Dr. P. V. Balachandran proposed that the KVK network can be effectively used for on farm testing of farm implements developed by Agricultural engineering faculty.

The meeting was attended by Associate Directors of research, Deans of Faculties, Senior scientists from CPCRI, CTCRI and VFPCCK, heads of colleges and research stations under KAU, Project coordinators as well as farmers' representatives.

New Guest House at Anakkayam ARS



Minister A.P. Anilkumar laying the foundation stone for a Guest House at ARS, Anakkayam

Minister for Tourism A.P. Anilkumar laid the foundation stone for a Guest house at ARS, Anakkayam on March 29 in a function presided over by P. Ubaidulla MLA.

Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran inaugurated the renovated sales counter and delivered the key note address.

KAU Executive Committee member P.A. Salam, Panchayath president K.V. Muhamadali, District Panchayath member Sekkinapulppaadan, Panchayath member P.T. Asraf, Director of Physical Plant Dr. V.R. Ramachandran and Associate Directors Dr. M.C. Narayanankutty and Dr. Rajendran.P spoke. Dr. V. M. Abdul Hakim offered welcome and Dr. Musthaffa Kunnathadi proposed vote of thanks.

KVKs told to Restructure modules

The two day workshop on formulation of action plan of KVKs in Kerala and Lakshadweep for 2015-16 was held at the Directorate of Extension, KAU on 24 and 25 March. The annual workshop organised by ICAR Zonal Project Directorate in collaboration with KAU was inaugurated by KAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran in a function presided over by Dr. P. V. Balachandran, Director of Extension.

In his inaugural address Vice -chancellor called upon the KVK scientists to restructure extension modules without compromising on the focus and objectives and aim at holistic development of farming sector. Principal Scientist at ICAR Zonal Project Directorate Dr. C.V. Sairam, Technical Officer Ramamurthy, Associate Director of Research Dr. I. Johnkutty and Associate Director of Extension Dr. Jose Mathew spoke.

The workshop assessed and evaluated ongoing projects under different KVKs in zone VIII and proposed new programmes for the ensuing year. Integrated pest and disease management in different crops, correction of soil acidity and micro nutrient deficiency, column method of Pepper propagation, performance assessment of varieties in different situations, wild boar management using repellents and value addition and marketing approaches. involving SHGs were discussed in detail.

Seed Testing Lab inaugurated



Vice-Chancellor at the inaugural function of the Hi-Tech Seed lab

A High-tech seed testing laboratory attached to the Department of Olericulture, CoH, Vellanikkara was inaugurated by Vice Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran on March 26. He also released the first seed test result,

The Vice Chancellor in his inaugural address highlighted the need to ensure quality of vegetable seeds, which is the basic input for better vegetable production. 'The new seed testing lab will help us to maintain and establish assured quality of our seeds. It will also augment higher seed production through contract farming as the seeds thus produced also can be tested here,' he said.

Director of Research, Dr. Gopalakrishnan said that seeds produced in all centers of KAU will be subjected to mandatory tests at the new lab set up under a State Government funded project. The lab will facilitate quality assurance of all released vegetable varieties cultivated in Kerala as well as prevention of illegal migration of transgenic seeds from un assured sources.

General Council members Dr. T. N. Jagadeeshkumar and Dr. A. Prema; Dr. V. S. Devadas, Associate Director of Research (Seeds), Dr. Koshy Abraham, Associate Dean, CoH and Dr. T. E. George, Head, Department of olericulture spoke.

Academic Council decides to ensure Productive Research, Preclude Plagiarism



Vice-Chancellor clarifies a point in the Academic Council meet held on March 7 at Vellanikkara

examine all theses with the aid of plagiarism finder and furnish an affidavit to that effect', said Dr. P. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor. 'Each Researcher should attempt to generate either a solution to existing field problems or a technology beneficial for our farming system. In order to facilitate this data of existing field level issues will be consolidated and a project bank will be prepared. The project bank will be periodically revised. PG research will have to be based on topics identified and enlisted in the bank. The Director of Research will chair college level faculty meetings to finalise technical programmes of PG Students so as to ensure compliance of this condition. Apart from ensuring quality research, it will also provide solution to existing problems.', he said.

The meeting approved the Prospectus for admission to KAU courses in 2015-16 as well as a proposal to hold faculty interaction sessions. The council also decided to co-opt Associate Deans of Colleges and other Heads of academic centres as members.

The meeting was attended by Dr. P. V. Balachandran, (Registrar), Dr. T. E. George (Director, Academic), Dr. Sverup John (Dean, Agriculture), Dr. M. Sivaswamy (Dean, Agri Engineering), Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan (Director of Research), Dr. K. Vidyasagar (Dean i/c. Forestry), Dr. P. Sreekumar, Dr. A. V. SanthoshKumar and Dr. K. P. Visalakshy (elected members) and Dr. A. T. Francis (Librarian i/c).

The 124th meeting of the Academic Council held at University HQ, Vellanikkara resolved to institutionalise plagiarism finder software to preclude plagiarism and streamline PG and P.H.D research.

'Henceforth Chairman of advisory committee will have to

Organic Farming Seminar at Vellayani

The two day seminar on organic farming organised by southern region research station, Vellayani was inaugurated by Dr. Jameela Prakasam MLA on March 20.

Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, in his keynote address highlighted the contributions of KAU in promoting organic farming. The inaugural function presided over by Dr. Sverup John, Dean (Faculty of Agriculture) was attended by District Panchayat Vice president Roufas Daniel, Grama Panchayat president S.Udayakumar, GC members N. L. Sivakumar and Vishnu-narayanan and Dr. L. Rajamony. Associate Director Dr. S. Devanesan offered welcome and coordinator Dr. K. Ushakumary proposed vote of thanks.

Two hundred and fifty farmers participated in the seminar organised with the support of SHM and State planning Board.

An exhibition of organic farming technologies was also held as part of the seminar which concluded on March 21.

Young Farmers' meet moots Change in farmers' Profile



Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran speaking at Young Farmers' meet

Young farmers' meet organised by KAU's Centre for Excellence in Environmental Economics and AIR has highlighted the relevance of a change in the profile of farmer.

'The Indian farmer is always portrayed as a lonely, tired and distressed figure whereas the days of manpower driven farming is history and present day agriculture is technology driven. Present day agriculture is drudgery free and driven by technical knowhow, competence and intellectual ability. Projection of a smart profile of farmer will attract more and more youngsters in to farming. The successful examples of IT professionals take up farming as fulltime vocation should be projected and popularised.', said KAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran in his inaugural address.

AIR Thissur programme head M. N. Rajiv, in his presidential address highlighted the role of youth in resurrecting the lost glory of agriculture and the sustained support to agriculture rendered by AIR

KAU Director of Extension Dr. P. V. Balachandran honoured state award winner and traditional farmer Cheruvayal Raman as well as Master Suraj, who won the state award for best organic farmer.

KAU General Council member Dr. A. Prema, Associate Director of Research Dr. V. S. Devadas, CoH Associate Dean Dr. Koshy Abraham, Dr. Latha Bastine and AIR Programme Executive S. Narayanan Namboothiri spoke. Dr. P. Indiradevi welcomed the gathering and V. Udayakumar proposed vote of thanks.

Workshop on Njavara farming Calls for Strategical Support



Dr. Ramankutty Warriar, Dr. P.V. Balachandran, Dr. T.R. Gopalakrishnan and Dr. C.R. Elysa at Njavara farming workshop

The state level workshop on Prospects and Possibilities of Njavara rice farming held at CoH on March 10 highlighted the need of proper branding and marketing strategies.

The workshop organised by KAU Centre for IP Protection took note of the mismatch between persistent demand for quality Njavara rice on one hand and the difficulty confronted by genuine Njavara farmers in selling their products on the other.

KAU Registrar Dr. P. V. Balachandran, in his inaugural address stressed the need to validate scientific data on medicinal value of Njavara to convince International society. The traditionally known medicinal properties of Njavara has to be validated with scientific data., he said.

Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research in his presidential address called for collaboration between KAU and Ayurvedic research institutions to identify the genetic elements responsible for the medicinal properties of native varieties like Njavara and Pokkali. Dr. Ramankutty Warriar, Chief Medical Officer, Vydyarathnam Ayurveda foundation, Thycattussery, delineated the different treatments using Njavara and its properties exploited in dealing with different diseases.

CoH Associate Dean Dr. Koshy Abraham offered welcome and IPR coordinator Dr. C. R. Elysa proposed Vote of thanks.

Message From the Vice-Chancellor Support Urban & Peri urban agriculture



The urban population used to believe that food production is the duty of their rural brethren, but the stress on food safety and nutritional security has caused a change in their perception. Food consumption patterns of urban households are undergoing a paradigm shift. More and more urban families are evincing keen interest in homestead farming, whether it is in the backyard, terrace or poly houses.

The increased awareness on pesticide residue in agricultural produces from unidentified sources has prompted the urban people to spare some efforts for family farming. The trend is so apparent that a small vegetable garden has become a thing of joy and pride for most homes. The efforts to increase food safety, household food security and child nutrition combined with a fondness for pollution free environment has driven the cause further.

In this context, our university is bound to explore the possibility of integrating hydroponics and aeroponics also in these farming practices. KAU's technology for the composting of wastes will be commercially utilized to help popularize urban and peri-urban agriculture in an organic mode. Urban and peri-urban agriculture has the potential to succeed in our state as around 35% of the agricultural activities in Kerala is currently done by womenfolk. The university can also tie up with Kudumbashree and Janashree missions to create a revolution in this front. Urban and peri-urban agriculture will redeem the greener environment which was lost due to un-sustainable intensification and extension of cities. Urban agriculture can also make productive reuse of urban wastes. But this now largely informal activity has to be transformed into a commercial and professional initiative through scientific interventions and development of specific package of practices.

Kerala's narrow urban-rural divide is a strength as well as weakness as far as strategies to strengthen urban agriculture are concerned. Yet it is easily possible to promote homestead cultivation of leafy vegetables, mushrooms, cucurbits and protein rich vegetables. Nutrition garden in housing colonies is another feasible and attractive option. However, we need to sensitize our planners and policy makers about the socio-economic and ecological potentials of urban and peri-urban agriculture and also take conscious efforts to include the same in our urban planning processes.

I have no doubt that urban and peri-urban agriculture can make significant social, economic and ecological contributions which will help us to achieve sustainable urban development. This practice can also become a complimentary system of our rural agriculture. I am asking my scientists to view the urban and peri-urban ecosystems as providers of healthy, nutritious and safe food that will boost local well-being and reduce the ecological footprints of our cities and towns.

Corporate Internet Banking Package KAU Signs MoU with SBT



KAU and SBT signed a MoU to help the University Community enjoy all advantages of advanced Corporate Internet Banking Package (CINB).

The MoU was signed by KAU Registrar Dr. P. V. Balachandran and SBT DGM A. Sathyanarayana in a function presided over by Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran. SBT

General Manager S. Harisankar, AGM John Varghese, KAU Comptroller Dr. Joy Mathew, Director of Research Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Physical Plant Dr. V. R. Ramachandran, Director of Students Welfare Dr. Jagdeesh Kumar and other University functionaries were present.

The Vice-Chancellor termed the MoU as a decisive step in the right direction. 'The package not only expedites all banking services for University Community including employees and pensioners, but also compliments the e governance package implemented by the University. I look forward for more effective linkages with SBT, the premier banking partner of KAU,' he said.

S. Jayasankar, GM, SBT said that the CINB package offers instantaneous fund transfer to KAU Units and salary accounts and pensioners eliminating delay in realization of instruments like cheque and draft. All employees and retirees will be provided with zero balance accounts with several facilities and special concessions.

Students' Union Inaugurated

KAU Students' Union 2015 and Arts club was inaugurated on April 25 in a colourful function held at CoA, Vellayani. Inaugurating the University union, Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran called upon the student community to explore and exploit the innumerable career opportunities offered by agri education. Sopana Sangeetham maestro Njeralath Harigovindan inaugurated the Arts club. Singer Arun Alat was the chief guest in the function presided over by Union president Melwin.



The University Union also launched programmes for Organ donation and Palliative Care. Honouring farmers was another programme initiated by the students' union. Inaugural function was followed by art programmes presented by students from different colleges under KAU.

Agrifesta 2015 & Pooppoli Concludes Mega Research project Launched at Ambalavayal

A mega research project for poverty alleviation in Wayanad through technology intervention and people's participation was launched at the valedictory function of Agrifesta and Pooppoli on February 2, 2015 held at RARS, Ambalavayal.

Launching the project, KAU Vice-Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran said that a multi-disciplinary and realistic approach backed by appropriate technology is inevitable for successful extension of knowledge generated through research. The project combining training and demonstration of viable technologies with entrepreneurial capacity building will do wonders in empowering rural population,' he said.

The 775 lakh worth mega project envisages establishment of a technology centre for research and demonstration of hi-tech farming at Ambalavayal. The RKVY project has components like advanced centre for horticultural research, hi-tech fabrication and model training unit, commercial processing unit, modern mist chambers, green houses, poly houses and rain shelters. It aims at large scale production of quality planting materials of vegetables, spice crops and fruit plants.

The valedictory function presided over by District Panchayat President N. K. Rasheed was inaugurated by I. C. Balakrishnan MLA, Chairman, Organizing committee. Block panchayath President A. S. Vijaya, Ambalavayal gramapanchayath president M. U. George and other people's representatives as well as KAU Officers took part in the function as well as the pageantry preceding it. RARS head Dr. Rajendran P. welcomed the gathering and KVK head Dr. Radhamma Pillai proposed vote of thanks.

More than ten lakh people including experts from different agricultural research organisations in the country and functionaries of international organisations like Society for Horticultural Sciences and ICRISAT visited the fair.



Special Postage Stamp



The Postal Department honoured Dr. Rajendran P., Associate Director, RARS, Ambalavayal by bringing out a stamp on him. The stamp was released by Postal authorities during the valedictory function of Agrifesta and Pooppoli on February 2, 2015. The Vice-Chancellor, members of Executive Committee and General Council as well as officers of the University appreciated the efforts of Dr. Rajendran in successful organisation of Agrifesta involving all sections of staff.

Seminar on Agricultural Biotechnology Relevance of Modern tools highlighted

The national seminar on New frontiers in Agricultural Biotechnology organised by KAU's Centre for Plant Biotechnology and Molecular Biology (CPBMB) stressed the need to transform research findings into tangible deliverables for the benefit of farming community.

Inaugurating the event, Dr. M. Maheswaran, Director of Research, TNAU called for integration of Biotechnology and Plant production as well as plant protection disciplines to counter the emerging challenges in augmenting food production, quantity wise as well as quality wise. Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, KAU Director of Research presided.

The relevance of Biotechnology tools in combating multiple challenges posed by fast changing physical, economic and social environs was highlighted by experts. All possibilities to improve the stress tolerance and pests and disease resistance of food crops and introgress stress tolerant characteristics into traditional varieties of food grains should be explored and fully exploited to ensure food and nutritional security of mankind., they said.

The Farmers' seminar held as part of national seminar was inaugurated by Vice-



Dr. M. Maheswaran, Director of Research, TNAU inaugurates the Biotechnology seminar

Chancellor Dr. P. Rajendran. The Seminar proposed to Prioritize biotechnology for high tech' Agriculture, explore possibilities in Nano biotechnology, encourage production of disease free quality planting material exploiting biotechnology tools like ELISA test and develop diagnostic tools for the estimation of aflatoxin in spices like pepper, ginger etc. for ensuring food quality.

The valedictory function was presided over by Dr. K. S. Subramanian, Professor & Head, Dept. of Nanotechnology, TNAU delivered the valedictory address in the function presided over by Dr. P.V. Balachandran, KAU Registrar. Dr. P. A. Valsala, Dr. P. A. Nazeem and Dr. P. S. Abida spoke.

National Training On Digital Library Management

The two day national training programme in advanced digital library management organised by Kerala Agricultural University Library on 24 and 25 April was inaugurated by Dr. T. R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research. The programme conducted with the support of Academic Library Association was meant to train library professionals in digital management of Libraries using D space.

Dr. Sajan Kurien, Director (Planning) presided in the inaugural session. KAU General Council member Dr. A. Prema, CCBM Associate Dean Dr. A. Sukumaran, Course coordinator Dr. A. T. Francis, Dr. C. Veerankutty and Dr. K. A. Shanavaz spoke.