

VAIGA brings cheers to farmers

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Thrissur: Assembly speaker P SreeramaKrishnan on Sunday said the international conference-cum-exhibition on value addition for income generation in agriculture (VAIGA 2017) has opened the avenues for prosperity of farmers.

Speaking after inaugurating the valedictory function of VAIGA 2017 at Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) Central auditorium, Sreeramakrishnan highlighted the role of value addition and marketing avenues to extricate farmers from financial burdens.

'There is a gross mismatch between the quantum of research and extension programmes undertaken by different agencies and growth rate in agricultural sector. Agriculture will prosper only if it is remunerative and post-harvest processing is inevitable to enhance farmers' income. The agricultural development programmes being implemented in the state deserves appreciation and I congratulate one and all who made VAIGA 2017 a grand success.', he said.

Industries Minister A C Moideen, who distributed prizes for best pavilions, said that the government is keen to support agribusiness enterprises.' The current eco-

nomic policies in the country have broken the back bone of farming sector. Therefore alternate options have to be explored to help farmers. Value addition technologies have to be converted into successful enterprises and the Department of Industries will extend full support to agri entrepreneurs. The government is striving hard to make the state entrepreneur friendly and a new legislation to facilitate granting industry licence within 30 days is being enacted', he said. Moideen also released four processing technologies developed by KAU.

Minister for agriculture V S Sunilkumar in his presidential address announced that concrete steps will be initiated to boost processing industry in Kerala. 'Technologies for value addition of more or less every crop has been developed by KAU. Sixty six such technologies are available now. These technologies will be propagated to farmers across the state through ATMA units in districts. The target is to achieve better conversion rate. For example at least Forty percent of coconut should be processed,' he said.

KAU bagged the first prize for stalls put up by research organisations whereas VFPCCK got first position among public sector undertakings.