

Inaugural Session of 54th Annual Rice Research Group Meeting

The inaugural session of the 54th Annual Rice Research Group Meeting was held in the New Auditorium, National Rice Research Institute, Cuttack on May 31st, 2019 at 10.00 AM, with ICAR Song followed by lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries.

Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Director, ICAR-NRRI welcomed the dignitaries and delegates of AICRIP, seed industry and students. He mentioned about genesis of AICRIP and its contribution towards the service of farming community despite the plethora of challenges of climate change, low income and other issues. Dr. S.R. Voleti, Director, ICAR-IIRR briefly presented the research highlights of AICRIP and IIRR. He thanked the support and cooperation of all the members of AICRIP who contributed to the success of AICRIP for more than five decades.

Dr. D.K. Yadava, ADG (seeds), ICAR, complimented NRRI team for conducting Annual Rice Group meetings first time in NRRI. He underscored the significance of rice crop as one of the most important crops in India with largest area and production. He also highlighted importance of the largest network of AICRIP having 45 funded and more than 100 voluntary centers conducting 939 experiments every year. He pointed out that the rice research at ICAR is complimented by CRPs on biofortification, molecular breeding and Hybrid Rice in addition to high end research projects like C3-C4 and biological nitrogen fixation (BNF). Though several varieties have been released through AICRIP, the need for varieties addressing challenges like salinity, drought, submergence and short duration varieties was reiterated. Dr. Yadava lauded the efforts of public sector competing with the private sector in hybrid rice development. New initiatives addressing Genetic gain through BMGF and digitalisation of AICRIP were also mentioned. He cautioned the group about the seed replacement and varietal mismatching of DAC indents. He commended and called for the collective efforts and reorientation of AICRIP to meet the future challenges of rice crop.

Dr. Dinesh Kumar, ADG (FFC) applauded NRRI team convening 54th ARGGM despite the recent Fani cyclone. He pointed out that despite tremendous efforts by scientists under AICRIP system, most of the released varieties did not find place in the National Seed System. He urged that scientists should develop varieties with yield potential of 10-12 tonnes by insulating the varieties with disease and pest resistance for diverse ecologies taking advantage of new scientific tools and techniques.



Dr. H.S. Gupta complimented the tremendous contribution of AICRIP system over 50 years and informed that this AICRIP system was often quoted as an example of efficient research networking. He was concerned that rice productivity of India was abysmally low of 2.5 t/ha compared to countries like China, Vietnam, Indonesia and Bangladesh and 15 to 20 million tonnes of additional rice is required to be produced by 2030. While appreciating the efforts of rice scientists sustaining the rice production since 1950, he called for the need to relook at the entire rice research system in the country. Hybrid rice program also requires proper attention and adequate financial support. He was very happy about Basmati rice export which alone fetched the country more than 33000 crores in contrast to Government's spending of more than 75000 crores towards the import of edible oil. He suggested a possible emulation of National Rice Wheat Consortia (RWC) inline of CG system. He urged for formulation of road map to meet the target production.

Thirteen Publications from NRII (6), IIRR (5) and CSKHPKV, Malan (2) and two android mobile apps from IIRR were released during the session. A Video presentation of ongoing activities and facilities of NRII was also shown.

The program ended with vote of thanks by Dr. Gururaj Katti, IIRR, Convener, 54th ARGM.