National Science Day was celebrated at ICAR – Indian Institute of Rice Research, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad on 28th February 2019. 60 students from local engineering colleges along with mentors and 20 scientists from IIRR participated in the science day celebrations. Program started with the visit of students to ‘Rice Museum’ and welcome address by Dr Ch Padmavathi. Dr SR Voleti, Director (A), IIRR welcomed the students and apprised them of IIRR research and co-ordination (AICRIP) activities and significant achievements. He gave a brief introduction about artificial intelligence (AI) and said that India ranks third in terms of high quality publication in artificial intelligence. He emphasised the need to work hard in this area. The chief guest, Dr SK Soam, Joint Director (acting), NAARM, Hyderabad delivered a special lecture on “Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture”. He elaborated on identified potential areas for development of AI based applications in Agriculture with few examples. He emphasised the need to focus on image analysis based applications and block chain technologies. He said that “Capability of machine is more than capability of man” and finally advised students to read three books viz., Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence by MaxTegmark, Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies by Nick Bostron and Darwin among the Machines: The Evolution of Global Intelligence by George B Dyson.

As a part of National Science Day celebrations, ICAR-IIRR organised a Smart Rice Hackathon 2019 for 24 hours continuously during 9 – 10 February 2019 involving local engineering college students for development of “Mobile based AI module for Rice pest detection”. Dr B Sailaja explained about this event. This was the First twenty four hours Hackathon in ICAR for developing IT based solutions to farmers using Artificial Intelligence. Through this mobile App, pest detection by the farmers can be done with real time images captured at field level using deep learning techniques of Artificial intelligence. The awards were distributed to winning teams JNTUH College of Engineering (first prize), G.Narayanamma Institute of Technology and Science (second prize), Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Technology (consolation prize) and Vasavi College of Engineering (consolation prize). Finally, vote of thanks was presented by Dr D Krishnaveni.