XXX Annual Group Meeting of AICRP on Palms

The 30th Annual Group Meeting of All India Co-ordinated Research Project on Palms organized by the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod, through virtual mode was inaugurated on November 22, 2021. Dr. B. K. Pandey, Assistant Director General (Horticultural Sciences II), ICAR, New Delhi was the Chief Guest of the event. Dr. R. K. Mathur, Director, ICAR-IIOPR, Pedavegi and Dr. Eaknath B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI, Port Blair participated in the inaugural session. Dr. Anitha Karun, Director and Project Co-ordinator (Acting), CPCRI, Kasaragod welcomed the dignitaries and delegates in which she applauded the unstinted support rendered by the Deputy Director General (Horticultural Sciences) and the Assistant Director General (Hort. Sci. II) for the progress of the AICRP (Palms) scheme by providing first-hand information on diverse arenas. She presented the report of the AICRP (Palms) for the year 2020–2021.

The action taken report of the recommendations of the AGM held on 10th–11th August 2020 was presented by Dr. Ravi Bhat, Acting Head (Crop Production) and Scientist In Charge, PC Cell. The Assistant Director General (Horticultural Sciences), in his inaugural address, suggested bringing out a publication on "Fifty Years of AICRP (Palms)" on the eve of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of AICRP (Palms). He envisaged the need for collection, conservation and evaluation of trait-specific germplasms devoid of duplicates, enhancing input use efficiency with special reference to micronutrients, identification of alternatives for red-labelled chemicals towards hassle-free plant protection, demonstration of cutting-edge research technologies to the farm front through KVKs of the states, and digitization of data for easy reference by scientists. He appreciated the exemplary work of AICRP (Palms) centres and wished the palm scientists success on the technological platform.

Development of T × T coconut hybrids, coconut-based multispecies cropping systems, location-specific integrated farming system models, management of stem bleeding disease in coconut through *Trichoderma harzianum* and *T. reesei*, a technology capsule for the management of rugose spiraling whitefly in coconut, integration of coriander in arecanut systems, bioagents for the control of crown choke disease in arecanut, and identification of best-performing cocoa clones viz., VTCH-2, 16, 20, 17 and 4 for intercropping in coconut gardens were the noteworthy contributions made during 2020. Effective transfer of technology from lab to land through diverse tools and modes and need-based diagnostic field visits despite COVID curfew remained the major strengths of the programme.

Dr. R. K. Mathur, Director, ICAR-IIOPR, Pedavegi invited researchers to explore alternative pesticides, develop cropping system approaches and enhance resource use efficiency. Dr. E. B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI, Port Blair appreciated the work of palm scientists and requested them to come out with location-specific farming system models that can double the income of small and marginal farmers.

About 72 participants from different AICRP centres and ICAR-CPCRI were connected through virtual mode. Crop experts also provided valuable suggestions and recommendations for further

improving the efficacy of AICRP on Palms. The detailed progress made during 2020–21 was presented, and the technical programmes for the ensuing year were finalized during the meeting. The inaugural session was followed by technical sessions on genetic resources and crop improvement, crop production, crop protection, post-harvest technology and transfer of technology.