

**Golden Jubilee and XXXI ANNUAL GROUP MEET OF  
ALL INDIA CO-ORDINATED RESEARCH PROJECT ON PALMS  
Inaugural Function – September 16, 2022  
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The **31<sup>st</sup> Annual Group Meeting** of All India Co-ordinated Research Project on Palms was inaugurated at Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod on Sep. 16, 2022, the Golden Jubilee Year of AICRP (Palms) since its genesis in 2022. Dr. V. Geethalakshmi, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore was the Chief Guest of the event and Dr.P.Rethinam, Former Executive Director, ICC (APCC), Jakarta, Dr.S.Arulraj, Former Director, IIOPR, Pedavegi, Dr.H.Hameed Khan Former Project Co-ordinator of AICRP (Palms) and Dr.H.P.Maheswarappa, Director of Research, UHS, Bagalkot were the Guest of honour. Dr.R.K.Mathur, Director, IIOPR, Pedavegi, Dr.V.S. Korikanthimath, Former Director, ICAR Research Complex for Goa and Dr. P. Chowdappa, Former Director, ICAR – CPCRI Kasaragod, did participate in the inaugural session. The Inaugural Session had a magnificent beginning with Invocation and ICAR theme song.

Dr.P. Ravi Bhat, Acting Head (Crop Production) and Scientist in-charge, Project Co-ordinator Cell, CPCRI, Kasaragod welcomed the dignitaries and delegates in which he illuminated and cherished the yeomen service and spade work of the Former Project Co-ordinators of AICRP (Palms) in moulding the programme to hit several milestones in the Plantation Crops Sector. The Project Co-ordinator screened the Action Taken Report on the Recommendations of the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Group Meet on AICRP (Palms) of November 2021 and presented a brief note on the mission of the Project Directorate since its genesis in 1972 on five mandate crops - Coconut, Oil palm, Palmyrah, Arecanut and Cocoa distributed across 28 AICRP centres of 14 States, 13 State Agricultural Universities, 4 ICAR institutes and one Central Agricultural University of the nation. He overwhelmed that Oil palm variety NRCOP – 4, identification of the precocious coconut hybrid Godavari Ganga and Tall x Tall hybrid combinations of coconut, Coconut based multispecies cropping system models in transformation of unproductive ecosystems to vibrant environment, Integrated Nutrient Management for higher productivity and profitability of dwarf coconut, Development of location specific Integrated Farming System models, Integrated Pest and Disease Management modules for the management of stem bleeding, leaf blight and Rugose Spiraling Whitefly in coconut stands testimony to the technological resilience. Intercropping of Burmese Coriander in Arecanut System, multiplication of outperforming cocoa clones VTLCH 7 and 14 and export of a consignment of

Dehydrated tuber and tuber flour of Palmyrah to UK were underlined by him. Taking technology to the farmers' door steps and to the technologically deprived through series of trainings under SCSCP / TSP mission, supply of biocontrol agents to curb pest and disease menace, supply of elite seedlings of plantation crops remain added strength of the programme.

Dr.V.Geethalakshmi, Vice Chancellor, TNAU, Coimbatore in her Inaugural Address applauded AICRP (Palms) for the release of 21 varieties of coconut and 11 varieties of arecanut and a bouquet of crop production technologies towards improving the standard of living of the plantation crop growers. Non scientific management and senility of the palms remain major impediments towards achieving higher productivity. She also emphasized the need for developing varieties tolerant to pests, diseases and to weather extremities. She invited the palm researchers to enlighten the farmers on crop diversification and value addition to overcome the frequent depression in price chart of copra and also to devise strategies to enhance water use efficiency. She outlined the scope for oilpalm and palmyrah and tinted the need for Mechanization and Artificial Intelligence with robotics and sensors in the era of labour scarcity. Following the Inaugural Address, Dr.P.Rethinam, Founder Director, IOPR, Pedavegi in his Golden Jubilee Lecture "Reminiscences on Research Imprints of AICRP (Palms)" listed the glorious achievements of AICRP (Palms) in its 50 years journey interms of release of improved varieties catering to the demands of the farmers, path breaking research technologies like Cropping Systems Approach, Eradication of Tatipakka disease of Andhra Pradesh and effective management of Basal Stem Rot of Coconut. He set forth the need for establishment of Centre of Excellence in Palmyrah as this drought hardy crop provides livelihood security to the rural unemployed. He congratulated all the torch bearers of the AICRP (Palms) scheme for placing the programme in the pinnacle of grandeur.

Dr.H.Hameed Khan, Former Project Co-ordinator in his felicitation appreciated the rigorous efforts of palm scientists in addressing location specific problems and for improving the production base. He rolled out a red carpet to intensify research in value addition of coconut. Dr.S.Arulraj, Former Director, IOPR in his felicitation expressively looked back the social concern of the palm scientists in overriding the emotional setbacks of the farmers in the events of natural disasters. Dr.H.P.Maheswarappa, Former Project Co-ordinator, AICRP (Palms) and Director of Research, University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot attributed the accolades like Best AICRP Centre of ICAR during 2015 and 'OUTSTANDING' rank of Quinquennial Review Team of 2020 to the exemplary guidance of the predecessors together with the industrious efforts of the palm scientists garnished with enthusiasm across the nation.

Dr. Anita Karun, Director, CPCRI and Project Co-ordinator (Acting), AICRP (Palms) in the Presidential Address extended profuse gratitude to the entire palm scientists for the achievements of AICRP (Palms) which helped transform the lives of the palm growers towards economic prosperity. She also wished that all the palm scientists should join hands to take the AICRP (Palms) programme and plantation crops sector to greater heights in the nation. The inaugural session concluded with the formal vote of thanks by Dr.P.Subramanian, Principal Scientist (Agronomy), CPCRI, Kasaragod. About 100 participants from across different AICRP centres of the nation attended the Annual Group Meet. Navsari Centre, Gujarat received the Best AICRP (Palms) Centre Award for the year 2021. Bouquet of publications interms of Technical Bulletins, booklets and folders prepared by the palm scientists were released in the event. The inaugural session was followed by technical sessions on Genetic Resources and Crop Improvement, Crop Production, Crop Protection and Post Harvest Technology.

### **During the meeting three coconut varieties releases**

**Dweep Haritha and Dweep Sona - A dwarf tender nut variety with green coloured fruits for cultivation in Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Kerala**

**Kalpa Raja (WCT x WCT) Hybrid-** The WCT X WCT progenies are superior in terms of higher yield (80.1 nuts/palm/year) and have recorded less root (wilt) disease incidence (<20%) as compared to WCT (OP) and WCT (Self) progenies.



