

Minister urges farmers to utilise technologies extensively

Releases 13 new crop varieties, two new implements

Farmers told to make use of the subsidies extended by the Government

Five farmers received Velaan Semmal awards



A DAY FOR FARMERS: Minister for Agriculture Veerapandi S. Arumugam (second right) releasing new crop varieties at the Farmers' Day at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore on Wednesday. Agricultural Production Commissioner and Agriculture Secretary K. Nanda Kishore (third left) is seen receiving them. Vice-Chancellor P. Murugesha Boopathy (second left), Commissioner for Agriculture

COIMBATORE: Farmers and their wards who have completed Standard X can pursue a three-year degree course in agriculture – Bachelor in Farm Technology (B.F. Tech.) – in the distance education mode at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University or in any of its constituent colleges from this year, Veerapandi S. Arumugam, Minister for Agriculture, said here on Wednesday.

He was speaking at the inauguration of the two-day Farmers' Day organised at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

He said that since even the children of the poorest of labourers too desired to get an education and not take up agriculture, it was decided by the State Government as early as 1996 that use of machines was the only solution for addressing the labour shortage.

Water scarcity

“Fear of water scarcity in five to 10 years is looming large. Hence farmers should extensively make use of technologies like System of Rice / Sugarcane Intensification by which they can increase the production and also improve their livelihood with limited water resources,” Mr. Arumugam said.

Subsidy

Listing out the concessions and subsidies that had been extended to the farmers over the years by the State Government, he urged to put them to good use to increase the quality of farming.

K. Nanda Kishore, Agricultural Production Commissioner and Secretary to Government, Agriculture Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, said new technologies had helped increase the production in the State.

“Rice production has increased from 236.56 lakh tonnes in 2001-05 to 240.02 lakh tonnes in 2006-09. Food grain production has gone up from 287 lakh tonnes in 2001-05 to 318.9 lakh tonnes in 2006-09. Vegetable production has increased from 268.7 lakh tonnes to 290.88 lakh tonnes. Same has been the case for fruits. Total agricultural production has increased from 2,236 lakh tonnes in 2001-05 to 2,450 lakh tonnes in 2006-09. This is all due to the hard work of the State farmers and departmental staff,” he said.

P. Murugesu Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor of the university, spoke on the benefits of the research programmes undertaken by the scientists of the university.

Exhibition

He urged the farmers to get knowledge about them from the exhibition put up as part of the farmers' meet.

Atul Anand, Agriculture Marketing and Agri-Business Commissioner, said 151 Uzhavar Sandhais were operating in the State. Of these, 22 had cold storage facilities. It was being extended to more Sandhais to benefit the 3,86,000 consumers.

P. Chandra Mohan, Director of Horticulture and Plantation Crops, said good seeds and planting material were essential for obtaining high yield in horticultural crops. High-density planting for mango and cashew had helped achieve a high yield of 12 tonnes a hectare as against the past years.

Also, a large area had been brought under horticulture under the National Horticulture Mission. S. Kosalaraman, Commissioner of Agriculture, said National Food Security Mission would be extended to all districts in the State from the present 12.

The Minister gave away the Velaan Semmal awards to five farmers from as many districts. He released 13 new crop varieties, two new implements, and a new technology, an annual training calendar, and some hand-outs. He also laid the foundation for new buildings and 12 buildings will come up at a cost of Rs. 1.70 crore.

An exhibition on crop varieties, implements, and technologies, was inaugurated by him.