



# ARICARE *news*

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3. Dr. B. K.  
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### **From the Desk of President**

The Govt of India has implemented the recommendation of the seventh pay commission giving benefits to the central Govt employees while the same have not been extended to the employees of all autonomous bodies including ICAR which are under the central govt. Earlier ICAR employees including pensioners used to get the benefits of pay commission within a month as a matter of routine after the issue of Govt order. This time, however, even though the central Govt employees received it about one year back but that for other autonomous bodies employees have been put on hold without presenting any reason thereof. This has created apprehension in the minds of autonomous bodies' pensioners that the Government may have some other plan up its sleeve, which may exclude them from its ambit for the exclusion of pay commission benefits. The apprehension is based on the central Govt's recent statement regarding revisit of autonomous bodies function to make them financially less dependent on govt. Further, till today the payment of two instalments of dearness relief due from 1st July, 2016 and 1st January, 2017 have not been paid to the pensioners

ICAR serves the technology and information needs of over half of the Indian population that lives in rural areas and predominantly cultivates small and marginal farms. ICAR together with her partner institutions has developed a number of technologies in various fields of agriculture including crop production, horticulture, dairying, poultry and fishery sciences as result of which the country experienced green revolution, white revolution, yellow revolution and pink revolution. India is now the second largest producer of wheat and rice in the world and is among the top exporters of rice. The scientists and staff of Indian council of research have been at the forefront to lead these agricultural revolutions in the country. The contemplated restructuring exercise to revamp the autonomous organizations is highly irrelevant as far as the retired personals of these organizations are concerned.

While the pensioners/family pensioners of Indian council of Research, most of whom are in the of their lives yearning for betterment of their finances for a peaceful retired life have been frustrated, on one hand by the inordinate delay in the extension of 7th CPC orders to them. They have been further disappointed by the government's not granting the dearness relief due to them with effect from 1/7/2016 & 1/1/2017. Repeated representations and memorandums at various levels, following the failure to implement the pay commission recommendation in the case of pensioners have not elicited any response. We have been pained by the non addressal of these basic demands. It is therefore humbly requested that the higher authorities of ICAR pay serious attention to these and take immediate action to issue the long overdue orders for the payment revised pension as per the 7th CPC and dearness reliefs for ICAR pensioners without

**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH EMPLOYEES  
(ARICARE)**

**C-43 New Garia Development Co-Operative Housing Society, Kolkata- 700094  
Phone: +91-3324324110, Mob:+91-9830044110, E-Mail-aricarekolkata@gmail.com  
(Registration No. S/2L NO.29668 of 2014-2015)**

### **From the desk of secretary**

We started our journey in December 2014 with the objective of creating a common platform for retired employees of ICAR who, all on a sudden, found him detached from all his life-long linkages by a single event 'superannuation'. In the present day, the superannuated person finds himself isolated both in family and society. He experiences gradual decline in self-esteem, self-confidence and health although, he still possesses a lot of physical and mental potentiality. He is shattered to face roughs & toughs of life in isolation. Yes, to meet the harsh weather of life in pleasant and mirthful manner collectively ARICARE was born. We are in the third year of our journey and within this very short life we have achieved many successes. The different subcommittees formed under ARICARE for various activities are doing splendid jobs. The 'e-Journal & Facebook' subcommittee is a bright example, which is presently publishing its 2<sup>nd</sup> issue of volume-1 after the excellent success of 1<sup>st</sup> issue published in January 2017. A short tour is being organized recently by the 'Short tour and picnic' subcommittee. The 'National and International tour' subcommittee is planning for a National and an International tour as per the schedule.

The burning problem recently being faced by Retired ICAR employees is non-implementation of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC recommendations for ICAR pensioners although, it is granted to the serving employees. Surprisingly, the Dearness Relief which was being paid under 6<sup>th</sup> CPC has been stopped for pensioners. This never happened during the last 1<sup>st</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> CPCs. This is highly illegal, pension is not a mercy of Govt., it is the right of the pensioners as per the conditions of service. The Govt. has accepted one-post-one-pension principle for defence personnel, the pay & perks of law makers are frequently increasing by several folds by their own votes but the solders of Green-White-Blue-Pink Revolutions are being deprived. In reality, the financial status of ICAR pensioners are on sharp decline due to stopping of Dearness relief, decline in interest on Bank deposits and rise in medical expenses. Representations have been sent to ICAR authorities and Ministries but we experienced unreceptive attitudes. We are in contact with all India bodies of ICAR pensioners. In the event of unchanged situation we have to go for legal solution collectively in near future. Thus, I appeal to all the ICAR pensioners to join us for a united fight.

### **From the desk of editorial board**

Hearty welcome to the esteemed members of our association to the second issue of our Newsletter. However, the Editorial Board reserves its dismay over non-receipt of comments/ remarks from any member on the inaugural issue of our News Letter, which could have certainly helped us to improve the quality of the current issue. Valuable commets, information, news features will have a special mention under the caption "Feedback from Members" Through this issue, we appeal again to each and every member of the association to play a stellar role in bringing out emerging issues which are confronting the growth of Indian Agriculture and allied sectors. The current issue of the Newsletter may also lack quality output which certainly demands quality upgradation based on your critical analysis and valuable comments. The Editorial Board likes to seek your encouraging suggestions to enrich also News Round up Section with extracts from your quality inputs.

# **MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

## **PICNIC AT ICAR – CRIJAF, BARRACKPORE, 22<sup>ND</sup>. JAN., 2017**



## **GOVERNING BODY MEETING, ICAR-IVRI, KOLKATA, 25<sup>TH</sup>. FEB., 2017**

An extended Governing Body meeting was held on 25.02.2017 (Sat.) at 02:30 P.M. at the Eastern Regional Station of IVRI, 37- Belgachia Road, Kolkata in which the activities and future road-map of different sub-committees of ARICARE were discussed and formal introduction of retired employees of IVRI was made by Dr. S. Bandyopadhyay, Head of the Regional Station who briefly outlined the activities of IVRI, Kolkata. On behalf of ARICARE, both President and Secretary expressed thanks and gratitude to Dr. Bandyopadhyay for hosting the meeting of ARICARE at IVRI, Kolkata.

## **BANGLA NABABARSA CELEBRATION, 2<sup>ND</sup>. MAY, 2017**

Bengali New Year (BANGLA NABABARSA)1424 was celebrated with much pomp and show at a get-together of ARICARE members alongwith their families at 5:00 PM on 2<sup>nd</sup>. May, 2017 (Tuesday) at Food Court of Bigbazar, Highland park, Kolkata (Near Satyajit Roy Institute of Film and Television). Members and their families participated actively and made the event a memorable one with a no. of cultural activities like singing, reciting etc.

## ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING, ICAR-NIRJAFT, KOLKATA, 27TH. MAY, 2017



The Annual General Body Meeting of the Association was held at ICAR-NIRJAFT, Kolkata on 27<sup>th</sup>. May, 2017 under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. K. Satapathy, President of the Association, who, in his welcome address thanked the members for their active participation in meetings and events organized by the Association. This was followed by Report of Hony. Secretary, Dr. Bimal Bandyopadhyay briefly mentioning salient features of activities undertaken by the Association. The Treasurer, Sh. Sumit Ranjan Sarkar presented his report on detailed accounts including Income and Expenditure Statement. Then the house discussed on "Status on Pension Revision as per 7<sup>th</sup>. CPC". New Governing Body for 2017-18 was elected and different sub-committees were formed on e-Journal and Facebook, Pension, administration and medical issues, national and international Tours, Picnics and Short Tours and Monthly Get-togethers.

## GOVERNING BODY MEETING, ICAR-ATARI, KOLKATA, 15<sup>TH</sup>. JULY, 2017



An extended Governing Body (GB) meeting of ARICARE was held on 15.07.2017 (Saturday) at 11:30 A.M. at ICAR- ATARI, Kolkata. Besides GB members, members of different subcommittees attended the meeting. The following issues were discussed as per the agenda.

- (i) 7<sup>th</sup> CPC and DR payment to ICAR pensioners
- (ii) future activities of sub-committees
- (iii) Finalization of tour destination and date
- (iv) Review of membership subscription

# ***NEWS ROUND UP***

## **Union Budget 2017 looks to push digital India in hinterland**

With successful implementation of demonetisation, the current Budget allocates the available resources to build the inherent strength of the economy by focussing on agriculture, rural India, SMEs and infrastructure. With the impetus on digital platforms for financial inclusion, this Budget is in sync to transform traditional Bharat to a digital India towards a cleaner and transparent economy. With the environment of easy lending and easy access to credit set up through MUDRA and the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), rural India's growth story has now got its firm footing, enabling it to take the country's economic growth to a new trajectory. The digital initiatives in unbanked and hinterland areas give access to formal credit that will go a long way in building cashless culture nationwide. The successful implementation of MNREGA has enabled increase in rural employment and women empowerment. The government's continuous thrust will facilitate rural productivity and develop quality infrastructure. It has focussed on key social spending like education and healthcare, thereby improving the quality of life. The Budget aims at inclusive growth, with reforms, by generating employment and supporting the bottom of the pyramid entrepreneurs.

***(The Financial Express, New Delhi, 02 February 2017)***

## **'Farmers, trade must innovate to reclaim Spice Route'**

Innovation is the key for setting international quality benchmarks in spice farming and trade, according to Suresh Narayanan, Chairman and Managing Director, Nestle India. Inaugurating the second edition of the International Spice Conference here, he said that disruptive innovation is the only way forward for sustainable growth in the sector. The theme for the three-day event itself is '21st century Spice Industry: Disrupt or be Disrupted.' "We must innovate also on connectivity to achieve a robust supply chain and set suitable benchmarks to conquer international markets and reclaim the Spice Route with all its splendour and charm." The sector needs disruption in terms of introducing innovative ways of cultivation, addressing quality concerns, and meeting parameters to remain internationally competitive. "The country retains repute as the largest producer, exporter and consumer of spices. Times and benchmarks have changed but we cannot lose out in cultivation and trade." The market is signalling a growing need to embrace scientific technology in production and quality enhancement even as food and beverages, medicine and cosmetics, hold huge opportunities, he added.

***(Business Line, Thiruvananthapuram, 15 February 2017)***

## **CEA for phasing out minimum support price**

After stirring up a debate on Universal Basic Income, Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian suggested phasing out of Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers. But Subramanian admitted that politics in India was not yet mature to do that. MSP is a kind of market intervention through which the government insures agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices. "MSP came into being because of lack of self-sufficiency in food grains. We had Green Revolution and in addition we wanted to incentivize production of some food grains. But, the problem with all these policies is that they should not remain forever. There must be an expiry date and the time has come when India needed to have a mature political discussion on MSP. Even the current form of MSP has led to distortions as it is not

applicable to a few crops. There is a big disparity in the way the de facto policy favours some cereals and does not favour others. Get rid of MSP and provide incentives through other means of technological research etc., But politics is such that it is always difficult to get rid of what started earlier”.

*(Deccan Herald, Bengaluru, 17 February 2017)*

### **Soil Health Card issue behind target**

With barely two weeks to go for the target date to issue Soil Health Cards to all 140 million farmers in the country, the Centre has collected about 25.3 mn soil samples, enough to generate a card for all. Officials say almost 80 per cent of the samples have been tested. The samples are valid for three years; recollection is then needed, to check for changes in nutrient content. However, issue of cards is still behind schedule. As of March 7, a little over 55 mn cards had been issued, around 40 per cent. The programme was announced in 2015. The Union Budget for 2016-17 had allocated Rs 368 crore. The one for 2017-18 says mini labs were to be set up in all 648 KrishiVigyanKendras. And, to fund the setting up of 1,000 mini labs by qualified local entrepreneurs, for which a credit-linked subsidy will be given

*(Business Standard, New Delhi, 16 March 2017)*

### **By 2020, area under organic farming may treble to 20 lakh hectares**

With organic farming reviving across India, and the world, the area under such cultivation is expected to increase from 7 lakh hectare (ha) now to 20 lakh ha by 2020. Before the onset of Green Revolution in the 1960s, organic farming was widely in use, but productivity was low. India was forced to depend on imports due to acute shortages. During the Revolution (1960s-1980s), food production increased but its benefits did not reach farmers.

Besides, soil fertility and ground water quality and volumes, due to excessive use of fertilisers and irrigation, were impacted very negatively... In 2001, the Government of India announced a national policy on growth of organic products. The confirmed area under certified organic farming increased from just 42,000 ha in 2003-04 to 11.8 lakh ha in 2016-17. Among the organic crops, the largest area, at 3.8 lakh ha, is under cotton cultivation. Other popular organic agro-products include high-value soyabean, fruits and vegetables, cereals and basmati rice, tea, coffee and milk, he said. The high cost of certification is a major reason for these products being expensive. Besides, issues like logistics and supply chain management also add to the price. Thus, organic products are priced anywhere between 20 per cent and 75 per cent higher than the conventional ones. The Indian market for organic products is export-focused. Out of the estimated Rs 5,000-crore market, Rs 3,800 crore comes from exports. It is expected to cross the \$1.50 billion (about Rs 10,000 crore) mark by 2020.

*(Business Line, Ahmedabad, 06 April 2017)*

### **Swaminathan against tax on farm income, waivers**

Amid a growing debate over the issue of taxing agricultural income, eminent agriculture scientist M S Swaminathan said that other methods could be explored to “tax rich farmers with multiple sources of income”. “I do not agree with tax on agricultural income since agriculture is the major source of livelihood for over 50% of our population. It is a livelihood industry with multiple impact (sic) on human life,” said Swaminathan, popularly known as the father of India's Green Revolution, in a series of tweets. In subsequent tweets Swaminathan also voiced his opposition to farm loan waivers, which, he emphasised, were an easy method of solving debt problem of farmers but would “in the long run... come in the way of establishing a viable agriculture credit system”. He tweeted: “Remunerative pricing and procurement are the answers to farmers' problems, not loan waiver.”

*(The Times of India, New Delhi, 01 May 2017)*

### **Government planning 'one nation, one market' in agriculture sector**

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government is working on creating a common agricultural market that will improve the lot of farmers and the efficiencies of India's notoriously inefficient farm-produce markets. The government put out a model law proposing a fundamental reset in the way agricultural markets operate on 24 April. It proposes to replace existing fragmented and over-regulated markets for agricultural produce and allow farmers a wider choice of markets beyond the local mandi or wholesale markets. A model Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) law was first proposed in 2003 but made little progress. The prime minister himself briefed chief ministers on the reforms that are pending, fast-tracking the entire process. The process was set in motion after Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched an electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM) platform in April 2016 and later set an ambitious target of doubling farm incomes by 2022. This was followed by a model law on land leasing (making it easier for tenant farmers to access credit and insurance) and another on agriculture marketing. A law on contract farming is in the works

*(Mint, New Delhi, 02 May 2017.)*

### **Govt to utilise tribal farmers' skill to push organic farming**

Acknowledging the role of farmers of tribal areas in generation and conservation of biodiversity, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said that new technological innovations in agriculture must reach to the fields of tribal areas as they contributed a lot in protecting the environment. Stressing on utilisation of their knowledge of natural resources, Singh said, "The tribals have unique knowledge of climate suitable varieties. We must utilise their expertise and knowledge, gathered while living in the same area for ages, roaming around forests and living in close contact with nature, to promote organic farming in tribal areas." "Prior to introduction of new technologies in tribal areas, the agencies must keep in mind the unique conditions of these areas, which are the gift of nature," Singh said in a national workshop on empowerment of farmers of tribal areas. "In last three years, tribal farmers have submitted more than 5,000 plant varieties through KVKs for registration at Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers Rights Authority. This will play an important role in the development of climate resilient and sustainable varieties in future," the minister said.

*(Millennium Post, New Delhi, 09 June 2017)*

### **Activists urge Vardhan to reject GM mustard commercialisation**

Anti-GM activists asked Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan to reject the application seeking commercialisation of genetically-modified mustard, saying there is no "scientific, ethical and socio-economic" justification for it. "We urge you to reject this application in toto, keeping in mind the present and future interest of our nation," the 'Coalition for a GM-Free India' said in the letter. "There is no scientific, ethical and socio-economic justification for this mustard. From all available information, it is clear that this GM mustard is neither safe, nor beneficial nor needed," the letter said. India's GM crop regulator had recently recommended the commercial use of genetically-modified mustard in a submission to the environment ministry. It is now upto the environment minister to give his approval. The Coalition also asked the minister to take up "meaningful and serious" consultation processes on the matter, by having widespread consultations with the public and not just a set of "handpicked

stakeholders". The Coalition asked the minister to take a "re-look" at the BJP's manifesto commitments and stick to the promises made in it.

*(Millennium Post, New Delhi, 21 June 2017)*

### **NITI aayog sowing seeds of agrarian reforms**

The agrarian agitation in Madhya Pradesh may finally force the Centre and states to embark on surgical reforms to give a long-lasting cure to the ailing farm sector. With onions procured by the MP government allegedly rotting when most parts of the state are under a strong spell of monsoon, the state has told the Centre to take drastic measures, including complete transfer of values of crops to farmers without procuring anything from them. "On the recommendation of the NITI Aayog, MP will become the first state to completely compensate farmers for loss of income. Areas under cultivation for a crop will be fixed, which will act as the ceiling and average yield of the crop determined along with the average market price for the last three years to arrive at the sum to be paid to the farmers," said the official. Farmers will be free to sell their crops in the market. The government will also specify how much land can be used for sowing of a specific crop to avoid the nightmare of 2017 repeating itself. Farmers will be forced to diversify crops, which can help them earn more while avoiding bumper crops leading to price crash. With Assembly elections looming in MP, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan next year, BJP-led governments in these states are gearing up to embrace radical reforms in agriculture to stay clear of the farmers agitation.

*(The Sunday Standard, New Delhi, 10 July 2017)*

### **Potential of farm exports not fully tapped, says study**

The domestic prices of key agricultural commodities were below the export-parity prices during most of the time in the decade 2004-2014, according to a new study by Icrier and World Bank. However, the export/import opportunities were not always used as restrictive trade policies played spoilsport; for instance in the 2007-08 global food crisis, though rising global prices made many Indian products export-competitive, rice and wheat exporters among others were prevented from fully exploiting the trade opportunity. The study recommended phasing out of "in-built consumer bias and anti-farmer nature" in India's agriculture trade policies and creation of a predictable and stable policy.

In the decade mentioned above, 72% of the time domestic prices of 15 commodities, including wheat, rice, maize, potato, mango, buffalo meat and banana, were 'exportable', while only 11% of the time they were above import-parity prices and were therefore competing within imports. In the remaining 17% of the period, these domestic commodities were in the 'non-tradable' zone as their prices were between the relevant exportable/importable reference prices, according to the study titled 'Price distortion in Indian agriculture.' It has stated in case of commodities like rice, groundnut, cotton, buffalo meat, onion, banana and potato, the Indian prices were 90% to 100% of the time below their corresponding export parity prices. "For sugar and skimmed milk power, domestic prices were above import parity prices in most of the years. Soyabean, maize and wheat prices were largely in the non-tradable band," it noted. On the positive impact of the global food crisis of 2007-8, the study has stated that it made many Indian products very export-competitive. "In case of rice and wheat, the restrictive trade policy prohibited the exporters from fully exploiting the trade opportunity, but for other agri-commodities like buffalo meat, onion and groundnut, the crisis translated into greater export opportunities," according to the study.

*(The Financial Express, New Delhi, 20 July 2017)*