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ARICARE *news*

From the Desk of President

The terms 'senior citizen' and 'elderly' used interchangeably are coined for the persons who are retired or are on the verge of retirement. In countries across the world, retirement age of working citizens differ in accordance with their respective socio cultural atmosphere and varies from 60 – 65 years. The number of elderly in India is rising rapidly and is expected to increase from 8.3 percent in 2011 to 12.6 percent in 2026. About two third of elderly live in villages and nearly half are of poor socio-economic status. Lack or absence of financial capacity creates a stressful life and invites plethora of problems other than physical and mental health issues. Many senior citizens of the age group 60 – 70 are however physically fit and prepared to work and earn for their living utilizing their skill and experience. Unfortunately, our community is yet to recognize this as a social problem and come forward to provide opportunities for seniors to work and earn.

Financially insecure senior citizens expect social security, free health care and subsidies to enable them to lead a comfortable and respectable life in old age; On the other hand older people with sound financial health look forward to risk free investment to earn good returns for meeting financial needs in old age. Over the years an oft use strategy was to invest lifelong savings in fixed deposits in nationalized banks and live on the interest generated by it. With today's interest rates near record lows and life expectancies expanding, the money policy of public sector banks has destroyed meaning ful returns from bank deposits. The expenditure on health care is expected to be high for elderly because of chronic diseases. India's inefficient public system of health care has led to unregulated and mostly expensive private sector healthcare leading to onerous health care costs.

The government needs to consider a focused policy for elderly in terms of their social security, long term financial sustainability, health care and shelter homes given the family structure towards nuclearisation. Some of these may be as follows:

- Immediate implementation of senior citizen maintenance act, 2007
- Elders right similar to child right must be recognized
- National elders commission (similar to women's commission) must be set up
- Both state and central govt must allocate funds for senior citizen's welfare
- Old age pensions must reach all deserving persons
- Separate medicare policy must be available to older persons

**ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH EMPLOYEES
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From the desk of secretary

I congratulate the 'e-Journal & Face book' sub-committee of bringing out the first issue of 2nd vol. of *ARICARE news*. The previous issues of 'ARICARE news' earned overwhelming appreciations from large section of people even, from outside the State and the limit of ARICARE circle. I like to mention that all our sub-committees are working very efficiently. Recently, with the initiative of 'Picnic and short tour sub-committee' we had a very enjoyable picnic & family get-together at Panihati, on the bank of the Ganges on 28.01.2018. Earlier, with initiatives of the sub-committee on 'National and International Tours' we had an excellent International Group tour to Malaysia and Singapore during 22-29 November 2017.

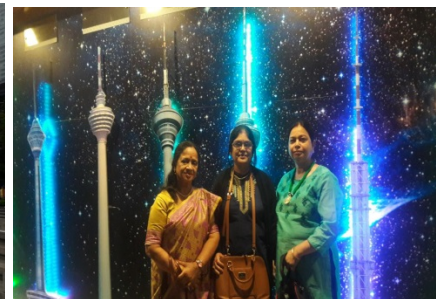
When the last issue (Vol. 1 /2) of ARICARE News was published in July 2017 the retired ICAR employees were in great anguish and destitution as the 7th CPC was not implemented for retired employees of ICAR. All were in great depression if the same will at all be implemented for us. Added to that the Dearness Relief (DR) as was being paid as per the 6th CPC was also stopped for retired ICAR employees for unknown reasons although, the working employees of ICAR were getting DR regularly. This caused great despair and dismay among all of us. Later on, 7th CPC was implemented for the non-scientific staffs of ICAR and DR was being paid to the ICAR scientist as per the old rates. ICAR authorities had been showing very lukewarm responses to all our representations. Constant orchestra of efforts like, meetings and representations to Financial and Administrative authorities of ICAR/ DARE, GOI, Parliamentarians, parliamentary committees, Central Gov. ministers including PM and FM etc. by Retired ICAR employees Associations at different locations of the country, particularly, those at Hyderabad, Kolkata and Delhi had resulted great success that pension to Retired ICAR Employees including the Scientists were granted as per the 7th CPC recommendations w.e.f. August 2017 with notional multiplication of a factor of 2.57 with the basic of 6th CPC, as applied to GOI employees. The implementation of 7th CPC for all retired employees of ICAR (retired before 01.01.2016) including the Scientists was effective w.e.f. August 2017 even when the ICAR Scientists (both in-service and retired) are under the scheme of UGC scale and 7th CPC has not yet been implemented for working ICAR Scientists. This is an un-precedent success achieved by any Association of Retired employees. Now, the ICAR has released payment of arrears w.e.f. 01.01.2016, as per 7th CPC, to its pensioners. For this success the greatest credit goes to the Hyderabad unit of Retired ICAR Employees Association (RICAREA), particularly to its President Dr. M. V. Prasad for his enormous untiring efforts. Profuse thanks are also due to Shri Devender Kumar, Director (Finance), ICAR and Shri Sunil Kumar Singh, F.A. & Addl. Secretary DARE/ICAR and many others in ICAR/ DARE, GOI, Parliament, etc. for their very sympathetic and active supports. This has shown that how the formation of Retired ICAR Employees Association was necessary and is extremely important for future. I am sure, if there were no Association of Retired ICAR employees the implementation of 7th CPC for Retired Employees of ICAR would have remained a dream till now like most of the other Autonomous Bodies who are yet to get the benefits of 7th CPC. It is now felt that formation of an All India body of 'Retired ICAR Employees Association' is extremely necessary for our future days. However, the same could not yet see light due to sluggish response from some units. Since, the Life Membership fee of RICAREA is only Rs. 2000/-, I share the view of many of us that till such an All India Organization is formed, a good number of us in ARICARE can voluntarily (spending a very small portion of our enhanced pension/ arrear) take the dual membership of ARICARE (Kolkata) and RICAREA (Hyderabad) to strengthen and to enable us to work in association with larger bodies of Retired ICAR Employees Association in resolving many of our pending issues. This will also be a step forward towards formation of a larger body of 'Retired ICAR Employees Association' as followed by several others in different States.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

VIJAYA SAMMILANI AT ICAR-NBSS&LUP, KOLKATA ON OCT. 27, 2017



INTERNATIONAL TOUR- SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA , NOV. 22 – 29, 2017



PICNIC AT "MOHOTSAY TOLA", PANIHATI NEAR ISCON TEMPLE, JAN. 28, '18



NEWS ROUND UP

ICFA joins hands with German Agribusiness Alliance for accelerating agriculture growth

Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with German Agribusiness Alliance (GAA) with the aim to promote trade, technology and business cooperation in food and agriculture sector of the two economies by providing policy advocacy, promoting investments. GAA is an initiative of leading associations and companies in the agro-food industry which aims towards improving fundamental national and international framework conditions for facilitating economic activities in and with the partner countries. Ms Alina Gumpert and Mr NS Randhawa on behalf of GAA and ICFA respectively signed the MOU.

ICFA is an apex policy research and advocacy body for food and agriculture sector. This collaboration will make efforts to accelerate the growth of Indian Agriculture and will address to various issues that may facilitate greater cooperation between India and Germany and generate reciprocal awareness among the industries, investors, Government and other stakeholders about each other country for better understanding and cooperation. ICFA is a national level platform in India with the mandate for policy research and advocacy, trade, technology and investments facilitation in food and agriculture sector towards empowering the farmers and addressing the issues of agriculture development, global food security and environmental sustainability.

(Agriculture Today, New Delhi, 12 September 2017)

World Food India 2017 to strengthen India's role in transforming Global Food Economy

As India gets ready to host its biggest food event aiming to transform the food economy and double farmers' income, the Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal gave a glimpse of the grandeur and the immensity of World Food India 2017 to industry leaders, foreign missions and media in an interactive session. The session was a precursor to World Food India 2017, a three-day business platform scheduled from November 3rd to November 5th, 2017 in Vigyan Bhawan and India Gate lawns adjoining India Gate in New Delhi. The Curtain raiser session coincided with the celebration of World Food Day, wherein the Minister pledged to wage a war against food wastage with 'No Waste On My Plate' campaign. The campaign lends itself to the strategic intervention that World Food India 2017 will provide in achieving two most critical goals of the Government - doubling farmers' income by 2022 and reducing post-harvest losses - by bringing together global and Indian leaders to collaborate and co-develop solutions across India's food value chain.

(Agriculture Today, New Delhi, 17 October 2017)

India's dairy sector offers numerous possibilities for entrepreneurs globally: Radha Mohan Singh

Union Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Minister, Radha Mohan Singh said that India is the 'Oyster' of the global dairy industry with opportunities galore for the entrepreneurs globally. Since last 15 years, India continues to be the largest producer of milk in the world. This phenomenal increase is contributed to the several measures initiated by the Government of India to increase the productivity of livestock.

Singh said that increasing the milk production significantly from 137.7 million tonnes in 2013-14 to 164 million tonnes in 2016-17. Milk production increased by 18.81% in 2016-17 when compared to 2013-14. Similarly, the per capita availability of milk increased from 307 gram in 2013-14 to 351 gram in 2016-17. Annual growth rate of Milk Production during the period 2011-14 was 4%, which has increase to 6%

during 2014-17. The annual growth rate of world milk production has increased by 2% during 2014-17. The Minister said that Livestock sector contributes significantly towards livelihoods and security net for the landless and marginal farmers. About 70 million rural households are engaged in dairying in India with 80% of total cow population. The strength of women in Dairy has reached to the 70% of the total work force (about 44 lakh) of which 3,60,000 women are in leadership roles in village dairy cooperatives and 380 women on the boards of Union and State Federations.

(Business Standard, New Delhi, 27 November 2017)

Israel to launch new phase of agriculture cooperation with India

Israel will launch the 2018-2020 phase of its agricultural cooperation with India this week, ahead of its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's New Delhi visit on January 14. The MASHAV, an Israel Government agency for international development cooperation, will launch the new phase of Indo-Israeli Agricultural Project (IIAP) during the visit of its chief Gil Haskel to India.

Haskel commenced his visit to India on Monday. He will visit Bengaluru and Mumbai before concluding the visit on Thursday. "The IIAP is MASHAV's biggest project outside of Israel, and it holds a significant portion of our bilateral relations. The success story of our agricultural cooperation is second to none, and it is only the beginning," Daniel Carmon, Israel's ambassador to India, said. "We hope to see the same achievements in the fields of water, innovation and academia." The MASAV chief will inaugurate a Center of Excellence for flowers in Thally, Tamil Nadu. He will also award two \$10,000 grants to MASHAV Alumni to continue their projects in women empowerment and farmer empowerment in India, a spokesperson of the Embassy of Israel India said. He will meet officials overseeing the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture of the Union Government, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of External Affairs during his visit. Modi's visit to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in July this year was the first by an Indian prime minister. He and Netanyahu witnessed signing of a new three-year work programme in agriculture. Netanyahu is likely to start his visit from Ahmedabad, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will receive him.

(Deccan Herald, New Delhi, 05 December 2017)

'Stagnation in output, degrading soil major concerns'

Trilochan Mohapatra, Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), has said that India's agriculture sector is currently at crossroads. Degrading soil health and dwindling fresh water availability are posing major concerns for agricultural sustainability in the country. Low soil organic matter and imbalanced use of fertilisers are affecting crop productivity. "Stagnation of production in most of the crops, erratic behaviour of climate, degradation of natural resources, higher production cost, lower farm income, inadequacy for quality seed and planting material, and diminishing land holdings are some of the major concerns that require our urgent attention," he said. Addressing a convocation at the Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU) here on Wednesday, he called for the creation of employment opportunities in the non-farm and manufacturing sectors, especially in agro-based rural industries.

"Over half of India's total population is under the age of 29. Of this, of over 60 per cent live in villages. Migration of youth from villages to towns and cities is the most serious form of brain drain, which leads to regional imbalances and adversely affects the rural India's development. We need to harness their energy and enthusiasm for betterment of the society," he said. Mohapatra, who is also the Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education, said that the upcoming Higher Agricultural

Education (NAHEP) Project should be seen as an opportunity to attract talented students, competent faculty and innovative researchers into the field of agriculture.

(Business Line, Hyderabad, 15 December 2017)

Govt. Looks For Start Ups to Come Up With Agril Solutions

Could startups solve complex issues in India's agriculture sector, which supports 49% of the workforce? The agriculture ministry thinks so and is hunting for "commercially viable" proposals in 12 pre-identified areas. The Narendra Modi government's Startup India scheme, which has a ₹10,000 crore war chest managed by the Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi), is seeking to incubate farm-solution startups through a contest called Agriculture Grand Challenge. "I urge young entrepreneurs to participate in our newly launched Agriculture Grand Challenge and join forces to make agrarian sector technologically sound and commercially viable," farm minister Radha Mohan Singh said. The idea is to enable entrepreneurship and innovation, he said.

A handful of startups for the rural economy are already a part of the growing ecosystem. India has more than 19,000 startups, led by consumer Internet and financial services apps, according to the Economic Survey 2015-16. From 220 in 2014, the number of startups funded in the first 10 months of 2017 stood at 482, according to data from Tracxn. As of December 2015, eight Indian startups belonged to the so-called Unicorn category, a club of ventures valued at \$1 billion or more. Yet, fewer than 10% of these cater to the farm or social sector, according to Tracxn. A government document, which Hindustan Times has reviewed, states that private-sector startups could offer viable interventions in an array of areas, notably linking farmers to markets and offering extension services. It seeks to rev up an emerging niche area that's being dubbed as farming as a service, or FAAS. Proposals are being invited for simplified, sensor-based quick testing of soil samples as well as real-time assaying and grading of food commodities in electronically linked eNAM markets.

(Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 27 December 2017)

'Agri growth likely to be higher than estimates'

Two days after the Central Statistics Office (CSO) pegged the country's agriculture growth rate in 2017-18 at 2.1% compared to 4.9% in the previous year, the agriculture ministry said the actual growth would be higher when the final figures are released incorporating performance of the Rabi sowing season.

Since the estimated 2.1% growth rate projection carries field inputs till August 2017, the ministry believes that the rate would be revised upwards once it considers the actual field situation till the end of Rabi sowing operation (first week of February). It is of the opinion that the lower coverage of area by August, 2017 on account of delayed onset of monsoon caused a poor reflection in the CSO's first estimate for the sector. "We are optimistic of achieving a high growth year for 2017-18. We had good Kharif production in 2017. Besides, the Rabi sowing has been very encouraging and is progressing well. Once these factors are taken into account, the growth rate figure would hopefully be higher (than the estimated 2.1%)," agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh told. Noting that the estimated production of livestock and fishery was very positive even by August and the crop had bounced back by December, the ministry said, "If this amended and actual field situation are taken into account in computation of the Gross Value Added for agriculture sector as a whole, its growth rate can be estimated to be much higher than the Advance Estimate of 2.1%."

(The Times of India, New Delhi, 09 January 2018)

How Sikkim succeeded in blooming orchid cultivation

Sikkim, a hilly state in the Eastern Himalayas, have five climatic zones consisting of lower hill, middle and higher hills, alpine zones and snow bound land. Nearly 82% of the land is forest covered and the unique biodiversity of state is well known throughout the world and covers 0.2% of national geographical area only, however, harbours 26% of the India's total biodiversity that accounts 7–8% of recorded species in the world.

In Sikkim, Agriculture and tourism are the main economic activity of the people. The pace of agriculture, horticulture and other farming practices are not uniform. Natural climatic conditions, sloping topography of land, narrow strip terrace cultivation, very low per capita land availability are limiting the scope of cultivating any single crop or variety to grow at different slopes. Modern agricultural techniques have opened avenues and scope for promoting high value crops like flower crops.

Even though, East Sikkim has advanced in floricultural crops due to marketing avenues and urbanisation, the potential of commercialisation has not been fully exploited. The state government agencies laid basic foundation for horizontal expansion with infrastructural facilities like polyhouse cultivation and input material supply.

ICAR-National Research Centre for Orchids, Sikkim played a crucial role in imparting training and extension for its stakeholders, progressive orchid farmers and staff from state department, on orchid production and protection technologies. Model Floriculture Unit was showcased and demonstrated at institute on orchids and roses. Large scale quality plating material of Cymbidium hybrids was distributed to the group of farmers, apart from providing seedlings of early flowering and scented Zygopetalum orchid. Recently, the village cluster from Rai Gaon, East Sikkim was adopted for Orchid technology demonstration and assistance under 'Mera Goan Mera Gaurav' scheme. Declaration of Sikkim as organic state by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 18 Jan 2016 added feather in the cap to the on-going programmes aiming for premium returns through small scale enterprise.

(Rural Marketing, Jan. 11, 2018)

GST on drip irrigation tools & equipment to be curtailed: Minister

GST rates on tools and implements applicable for drip irrigation would be brought down to popularise and propagate the drip irrigation in the country, Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India on Wednesday assured India Inc.

Addressing the Members of the Managing Committee of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi today, Meghwal though did not specify as to which slab the new GST rates would be settled but categorically stated that since drip irrigation needed to be promoted in India, the GST rates on equipment and tools pertaining to drip irrigation and currently pegged at 18% would be reduced.

He also called upon the India Inc. to come forward and adopt a landscape across the Ganga and Yamuna rivers for their cleansing and maintain it with their own resources and in return the government will permit them to claim that particular portion with their names and brands inscribed with billboards in that particular range.

The meeting was presided over by the President of the Chamber, Anil Khaitan in which Sr. Vice President and Vice President of the Chamber Rajeev Talwar and DK Aggarwal along with its Secretary General, Saurabh Sanyal were also present among the Managing Committee Members.

(Rural Marketing, Jan. 25, 2018)