

## ICAR-CSSRI's Kharif Kisan Mela and Foundation Day-2023

On the occasion of 55<sup>th</sup> Foundation day of ICAR-Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Karnal on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023, Kharif Kisan mela was organized at the institute. Shri Dinesh Kulkarniji, National Organizing Secretary, Bhartiya Kisan Sangh inaugurated the *Kisan Mela*. Shri Dinesh ji urged the farmers to remain in close contact of the scientists for enhanced farm profits. He encouraged the farmers to adopt sustainable crop intensification practices to enhance crop yields while arresting land degradation and saving water. He further briefed about the merits of Conservation Agriculture (CA) and Natural Farming. He reiterated that CA is a promising approach to farming that offers a range of benefits for farmers such as improved soil health, reduced labour and fuel costs, improved biodiversity etc. He added that Natural Farming can help in mitigating the impact of drought, reduce the pressure on water resources and promote resilient and sustainable food systems. He invited the farmers of the region to place major focus on allied sectors like horticulture, dairy, fishery, natural farming for handsome returns. He said that government has initiated many programmes to fast track the development and extension of farmer friendly technologies, high yielding varieties, processing and value addition, reform of agricultural markets and infrastructure development enabling to doubling the farmers' income. Shri Kulkarniji lauded the efforts of CSSRI in reviving the productivity of more than 2 million ha barren salt-affected lands in different parts of country, and exuded confidence that untiring efforts will be made to bring additional salt-affected lands under cultivation. On this occasion, Dr T. Mahapatra, Ex-DG, ICAR & Secretary, DARE and Dr S. K. Chaudhary, DDG (NRM, ICAR) were the Guests of Honor. Dr. T. Mahapatra lauded the efforts unleashed by CSSRI in reclaiming the salt affected lands and the tireless efforts showcased by the scientists under the stewardship of the Director. He also stressed the need for farmers to embrace sustainable agricultural practices. Dr. S. K. Chaudhary appealed to farmers to keep connected with CSSRI to reap the benefits of the land reclamation technologies and salt tolerant varieties developed by the Institute. Dr. Gurbachan Singh, Ex-ASRB Chairman and Shri Aditya Dabas, Deputy Director, Agriculture, Haryana were also present and addressed the farmers on the importance of adoption of salt tolerant varieties in augmenting crop yield.

Earlier, Dr. P. C. Sharma, Director, ICAR-CSSRI, Karnal, in his welcome address, briefed about the objectives of the Mela. He also highlighted the role of CSSRI in reclaiming technologies and developing salt tolerant varieties of wheat, rice, mustard, chickpea, lentil and specially, Basmati CSR 30 in making Haryana a leading state in export of Basmati rice. About 1500 farmers from villages adopted under MGMG and other areas, school children and about 300 women farmers/SHG also, participated in this Kisan Mela. The Mela showcased improved technologies for salinity management, crop diversification, integrated farming, horticultural crops, agroforestry and milk production. Free analysis of soil and water samples; exhibition of improved agricultural technologies developed by ICAR institutes, government agencies and private companies; sale of high yielding salt tolerant seeds of rice and Farmer-Scientist Goshthi were the main attractions of the Mela. A total of 21 innovative farmers from villages adopted under MGMG, and other stakeholders were also felicitated on this occasion.

The Kisan Mela was followed by celebration of Institute's 55<sup>th</sup> Foundation day. Dr T. Mahapatra, Ex-DG, ICAR & Secretary, DARE chaired the programme and Dr S. K. Chaudhary, DDG (NRM, ICAR) graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. The chief guest congratulated the Director and staff of CSSRI for

their work in development of various reclamation technologies, new varieties for different climatic eco-regions and other initiatives towards the progress in recent soil map. Dr S. K. Chaudhary praised the institute's progress in the recent years in addressing the changing climate issues and sustainable goals through various approaches and encouraged the staff to step forward to meet the need of hour.

*(Source: ICAR-CSSRI, Karnal)*