

## Chairman, NABARD visits ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur

Dr. G.R. Chintala, Chairman, National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) and several regional officers visited ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur on September 30, 2021.

The Chairman visited the research farm of the institute where several state-of-the-art experiments on Integrated Farming System, water harvesting for crop production, precision farming, gum garden, agri-voltaic system and agri-business incubation centre of the institute. Integrated Farming System showed a luxuriant growth of palmarosa on marginal lands under arid conditions and also demonstrated the utility and scope of growing chamomile in this region. The Chairman showed his interest in inclusion of medicinal and aromatic plants in the IFS for improving the farmer's livelihood and equitable utilization of farm resources.

Dr. Chintala took keen interest in institute efforts for improving production technologies of fruit crops such as ber, anar and datepalm through scientific management of scarce water resources and use of renewable energy resources) have improved the productivity of these crops. He was impressed by the Gum exudation technique of CAZRI and how such techniques experimented on trees like *Acacia senegal* have enhanced the gum production to benefit the small and marginal farmers in the desert districts of Rajasthan. He was also informed about the economics involved for such gum production.

While visiting precision farming block having fully automated drip and fertigation system for efficient management of water and facilitate precise use of nutrients, he was overwhelmed to see the polyhouse-based vegetable production system having grafting technique for cultivation of cucumber, tomato and capsicum. He appreciated CAZRI's Low Cost Protected Structures which are relevant in arid region where water is a scarce resource. These structures are being widely received by different sections of farming community. Scientists also discussed about the results of phosphatic and potassic organo-mineral fertilizer (OMF) production technique and the chairman was highly impressed to know how such low-quality minerals have been used to develop OMF.



Dr. Chintala also saw a live demonstration of an ongoing experiment using Thermocol ball technique that reduces water evaporation from Diggies or small farm ponds. He discussed how such experiment could be reciprocated on a large scale. He was also explained about commercial utilization of newly developed carrier for production of microbial cultures for their use at farm level. These cultures have longer viability of microbial spores in this carrier suitable for being used in arid and semi-arid areas for a longer period.

The Chairman also visited experiment on pearl millet breeding, use of solar gadgets and Agri-Voltaic System that provides opportunity of generating electricity, crop production and efficient utilization of water resources. At the post-harvest technology lab, the pearl millet extruder machine and its operation was demonstrated for making several value-added and healthy products such as karkure, chocolates and cookies. At ABI centre, activities carried out at this centre for entrepreneur development through need based training were also shared.

The Chairman mentioned that NABARD has a high priority in dairy farming, conservation agriculture and post-harvest technologies. He was categorical about how the state of dairy farming and animal health could improve through proper cleanliness. He mentioned that benefit of research should reach the farmers and stated that he was impressed with institute's ongoing research. CAZRI kisan mitra and progressive farmers shared their experience.

Earlier, Dr. Chintala was accorded warm welcome by Dr. O.P.Yadav, the Director of the Institute and Heads of the Divisions.