

## KVK should act as friend

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INVC NEWS New Delhi, The Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for increasing the acreage and productivity of pulses for achieving self-sufficiency and urged agricultural universities to step up research on improving their yields. Speaking at the Inaugural session of All India Coordinated Research Group's Annual Group Meet on MULLaRP & Arid Legumes workshop, at Guntur, Andhra Pradesh today, the Vice President said there was a need to introduce high-yielding, disease and pest-resilient seed varieties. There was also a need to improve crop production techniques and bring additional fallow lands under pulses production, he added. Pointing out that pulses were an inexpensive source of plant-based proteins, vitamins and minerals for people, Shri Naidu said they provide green, nutritious fodder for animal and also enrich soil through biological nitrogen fixation. "Some legumes are known to have medicinal and therapeutic properties also. Hence, they were rightly termed as 'Unique Jewels' of Indian crop husbandry", he added. Observing that legumes were an essential component in Indian cropping pattern, especially in dry land farming, Shri Naidu said India was the world's largest producer, accounting for 34% of the area and 24% of production followed by Myanmar, Canada, China, Nigeria, Brazil and Australia. Referring to his recent visit to Vietnam, the Vice President mentioned about crop production differentials between India and Vietnam. He said that Vietnam produces 5 tons of rice per hectare and 1.5-tonne soya bean per hectare, while India was producing only 3 tons of rice per hectare and only one ton of soya bean. While the average productivity of pulses has increased to 841 kg/ ha, it is well below the global average and in some States, the yield is much higher as compared to others, the Vice President said. There was a need to learn from the best practices from around the world and within the country to improve crop productivity, he added. Shri Naidu said that the Universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and the government must come together with long term strategies for producing new high yielding varieties, which are resilient to diseases and climate change. There was also a need to create value addition and proper marketing facilities for pulses. Saying that climate change was adversely impacting the marginalized people in dry land areas due to the shifts in moisture and temperature regimes, the Vice President called for a new paradigm in agricultural research that makes full use of science and technology in conjunction with traditional knowledge to cope with the challenges of climate change and achieve food and nutritional security was necessary. Shri Naidu said that the water shortage was becoming a serious problem and that it was

getting compounded due to population growth and climate change. He called for developing crops that use less water. Observing that there was an urgent need for new knowledge, alternative policies and institutional changes to improve productivity from agricultural crops, the Vice President advised agricultural universities, research institutions and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) to play a big role in improving the lot of the farmers and empowering them. "Agricultural Universities need to focus more on improving the yields of pulses, while KVKs should act as a bridge between scientists, governments, and the farmers" Shri Naidu said. The KVK should act as friend and guide of the farmer, he added. Underscoring the important role of pulses in promoting a healthy diet, Shri Naidu cautioned the people, particularly the youth against eating junk food in the wake of growing incidence non-communicable diseases. The three-day event was jointly organized by Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). The DDG(CS), ICAR, Dr. A.K. Singh, the Vice Chancellor of ANGRAU, Dr. V. Damodara Naidu, the Director, ICAR-Indian Institute of Pulses Research, Kanpur, Dr. N.P. Singh, the Director of Research of ANGRAU, Dr. N V Naidu and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

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