



Union Minister for Agriculture Radha Mohan Singh inaugurating an international symposium on Coconut Research and Development as part of the valedictory session of the centenary celebrations of CPCRI in Kasaragod on Saturday.— PHOTO: K. VINAYA KUMAR

Valedictory session of centenary fete of Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) launched

The valedictory session of the year-long centenary celebrations of the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) here was launched on Saturday with Union Minister for Agriculture Radha Mohan Singh lauding the contribution of scientists and innovative farmers for helping the country become the global leader in coconut production.

“As per the data by the Coconut Development Board for 2015-16, the export of the produce was to the tune of Rs.1,450 crore. Coconut farming is taken up in 1.97 million hectares, producing 20,439 nuts with the per-hectare production touching the 10,345- mark,” he said. Under the coconut technology mission, the Centre had set up 43 coconut-processing units in the country, he said after inaugurating an international symposium on coconut research and development on the CPCRI premises here.

“Data related to agricultural census during 2010-11 suggest that the average land size holding in Kerala is 0.22 hectares against the national average of 1.15 hectares. It, therefore, is imperative to adopt high-value crops and a unified agriculture system to turn the sector remunerative,” he said.

There was a need to adopt multicrop cycle system by including pepper, banana, pineapple, ginger, turmeric, in coconut gardens, he said. The Centre has initiated a very ambitious scheme, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana, for improving water resources, the Minister said. He also inaugurated a Kisan mela.

The Centre has initiated 99 macro-irrigation schemes in Kerala that are expected to be completed by March 2018. He said fields would lose fertility due to imbalanced use of chemicals and fertilizers. Keeping this in view, a soil health card scheme for farmers was launched in 2014-15.

The initiative would help farmers assess soil fertility along with recommendation of appropriate quantity of nutritious elements. The imbalanced use of fertilisers of different types was another area of concern resulting in soil erosion, he said. The Centre had initiated two schemes to promote organic farming —Paramparagath Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and Bio Value Chain Project for the northeastern States.