



Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Radha Mohan Singh speaks at the valedictory of centenary celebrations of Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) in Kasargod on Saturday. (Right) Minister waters a coconut sapling.

‘Help small farm landholders increase yield through technology’

KASARGOD: Scientists should help the small and medium farm landholders to increase their output through advancement in technology and research activities, said Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Radha Mohan Singh.

He was speaking at the valedictory of centenary celebrations of Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) in Kasargod on Saturday. He said there is a lack of technology for small farm landholders to use in their

farm land. As a result, their condition has not changed even after several decades of independence.

The minister said that the Centre is committed to improve the agriculture sector and has given thrust on research in agriculture sector. It has decided to implement 100 mega irrigation projects in the country including Karapuzha and Muvattupuzha Irrigation Projects in Kerala.

The government has earmarked Rs 69 crore for the two projects in Kerala. The average land holdings by farmers in Kerala is 0.22 hectare

while the nation's average is 1.15 hectare. The farmers in Kerala should take up mixed cropping along with coconut, they should cultivate ginger, turmeric, black pepper, banana, pineapple and clove to increase their income, he said.

Stating that India is the largest producer of coconut and its products, Singh said 24% of the coconut products in the country comes from Kerala.

Coconut products worth Rs 1,450 crore was exported during the year. The Centre will provide assistance to the Coconut Producers' Societies

functioning in Kerala.

He said though 4,577 minor irrigation projects were sanctioned in 2016-17 to Kerala, only 280 projects have been implemented. The government has chalked out programmes to supply water to all the farm land in the country in the next five years.

Singh said the Centre has started a drive to issue soil health cards to farmers to improve the quality of soil. Out of 7.05 lakh farmers in Kerala, soil card has been distributed among 1.33 lakh farmers only. He charged the Kerala government of failing to utilise the

funds sanctioned to the state under various projects. The state government should also focus on implementing insurance schemes for farmers.

The union minister also inaugurated the centenary park, centenary building and millennium guest house and Krishi Mela on the occasion. Campco's 'Kalpa,' a dark chocolate with palm sugar, was also released on the occasion.

MP P Karunakaran presided over the programme. Revenue Minister E Chandrashekhara and others were present.

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