

Shortage of saplings: research institutions' support to be sought

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Two-day International Coconut Conference concludes in city

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Responding positively to the call of farmers to ensure steady supply of hybrid coconut saplings, the State government has decided to seek the support of premier agricultural research institutions in the country and meet addi-

tional requirements in time.

A decision to this effect was taken at the two-day International Coconut Conference, which concluded in the city on Sunday.

The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) in Kasaragod district will play the lead role in the

area with the facilities at its Coconut Research Station. Also, the cooperation of farmers from other States, who have proved their skills in nurturing high-yielding varieties to boost production, will be sought.

Shortage of quality saplings for the State government's latest coconut farming promotion projects also is a reason for seeking better participation of research in-

stitutions in the sector. Mainly, it has been affecting the government's ongoing project to supply at least 75 quality saplings each to all grama panchayat wards.

Nurseries

Officials of the State Planning Board who attended the conference said nurseries in private and public sectors had been found failing to cater to the ever-increasing de-

mands for good saplings with high resistance to threatening infestations. Several farmers are even unhappy with the quality of saplings they get from various locations, they added.

Help from TN farmers

A Planning Board member said some farmers in Tamil Nadu who had already experimented with high-yielding local varieties would offer as-

sistance to Kerala in addressing the shortage.

Agriculture Department officials said high-yielding varieties were largely required to meet the replanting requirements of thousands of farmers in the sector.

With the government's decision to promote dwarf varieties, even urban farmers were found keen on taking up small coconut farming projects, they said.