

# State to fund launch of new agri centres

TOI



**WAY FORWARD:** Chief minister Siddaramaiah has a word with Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University delegates Mark Hussey (left), interim president, in the presence of Bhimu Patil, director of Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Centre, in Bangalore

## Opportunities

The Foods for Health initiative of Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University's Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Centre and Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture will play key roles as strategic partners for these new centres and will provide training opportunities for scientists and students from University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad and University of Horticultural Sciences at Bagalkot.

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Dharwad:** The state government will fund the establishment of two new centres at the University of Horticultural Sciences at Bagalkot (UHSB) and the International Centre for Agriculture at the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced that the state government will fund the setting up of these centres. The declaration comes in the wake of a meeting the CM had with the delegates of Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (TAMU), USA, at Bangalore earlier this week.

TAMU delegates Mark Hussey, interim president, and Bhimu Patil, director, Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Centre, met Siddaramaiah, along with D P Biradar, vice-chancellor of UAS, Dharwad.

Patil had initiated collaboration between TAMU and UAS-Dharwad (UAS-D) 12 years ago with a memorandum of understanding, under the guidance of Dr Norman Borlaug, Nobel laureate.

Based on the over a decade-long exchange activities among students and faculty, and reciprocal visits of administrators between the two institutes, the CM declared that Karnataka will immediately provide funding to start two new centres.

Patil told TOI that TAMU's Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Centre's (VFIC) Foods for Health initiative and Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture will play key roles as strategic partners for these new centres and will provide training opportunities for scientists and students from UAS-D and UHSB. These interdisciplin-

ary centres will collaborate with other agricultural and horticultural universities, institutes and centres related to medical sciences, food, and nutrition sciences, in Karnataka and beyond.

The Foods for Health Centre will enhance the addition of value to fruits and vegetables, and food in general, by conducting research both at VFIC and at the new centre of excellence in Bangalore.

The new centre will leverage research conducted at VFIC using the 'consumer to farm' approach, including pre- and post-harvest aspects of retaining health-promoting compounds, examining their roles in human health to reduce risk from chronic diseases, and increasing food and nutritional security using commercial crops and unexplored vegetables and fruits.

This centre is expected to focus on research and edu-

cational activities to reduce the risk of malnutrition, increase the value of produce grown in Karnataka, and enhance the export potential of specific crops.

"TAMU leads the world in international agriculture through Norman Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture. This new international centre at Dharwad, under a strategic partnership with TAMU, would be a win-win situation for both the institutes and the countries. The immediate goal of this centre will be to host international scientists after their retirement, to help them continue to contribute towards improving global agriculture. This new centre will emulate and remember the legacy of Dr Borlaug, who worked till the age of 95 in international agriculture, specifically in Indian agriculture and feeding the world," said Patil.