

Centres of excellence to promote agri, horticulture products

UAS, Dharwad and Bagalkot Horticulture University identified for the same as per MoU signed with Texas A&M University

DHARWAD: As per a Memorandum of Understanding signed with Texas A&M University in USA years ago, the State government declared the opening of centres of excellence-- one each at the University of Agriculture Sciences, Dharwad (USAD) and the University of Horticulture Sciences, Bagalkot (UHSB) to promote agriculture and horticulture in the State.

The Center of Excellence in Foods for Health which will come up in Bangalore and administered by the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, will give a fillip to cultivation of fruits and vegetables with high quality and rich nutritional value and the International Center for Agriculture Development, which will come in Dharwad and administered by the UAS, Dharwad will give a boost to modern agriculture.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah officially announced the opening of the centres at a formal function held in Bangalore recently. Interim President of Texas University (TU) Mark Hussey, TU's Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center (VFIC) director Bhimu Patil, UAS, Dharwad Vice-Chancel-



lor D P Biradar were present. Mr Siddaramaiah said, the State government would ensure that the necessary funding for the centres would be released soon. The TU's Foods for Health Initiative and The Borlaug Institute of International Agriculture will play a key role as a strategic partners for these new centers and provide training for scientists and students from UASD and UHSB. These interdisciplinary centers will collaborate with other agricultural and horticultural universities, institutes and centers related to medical sciences, food, and nutrition sciences across the country.

The Foods for Health Center will add value to fruits and veg-

etables, and food in general, by conducting research both at the VFIC and at the new Center of Excellence in Bangalore. The new center will leverage research conducted at the VFIC using the 'Consumer to Farm' approach, including pre and post harvest aspects of retaining health-promoting compounds, examining their role in human health to reduce risk from chronic diseases. It is anticipated that these center will focus on research and educational activities to reduce the risk of malnutrition, increase the value of produce grown in Karnataka, and enhance the export potential of specific crops.

The immediate goal of these centers will to host internation-

al scientists after their retirement, to help them continue to contribute for improving global agriculture. These new centers will emulate and remember the legacy of Dr Borlaug, who worked until the age of 95, in international agriculture, specifically in Indian agriculture and feeding the world. Other activities planned in partnership with these two centers include developing a Dual Certificate Programme in food, nutritional security, and sustainability, and training selected scientists at the VFIC in the area of foods for health, with courses from Horticultural and Agricultural Universities in the state.

DH News Service