

78th Foundation Day Celebrations Held at ICAR–CPRI, Shimla

The 78th Foundation Day of the ICAR–Central Potato Research Institute (CPRI), Shimla, was celebrated today at the Institute auditorium. Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap, MP, Shimla, was the Chief Guest, while Prof. Mahavir Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, attended the event as the Guest of Honour. Scientists, officers, employees, farmers, students and other stakeholders participated in the celebrations with enthusiasm.

Welcoming the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour, Dr Brajesh Singh, Director, ICAR–CPRI, highlighted the Institute's remarkable journey, major research achievements and its continued efforts in potato research, production of quality seed potato and promotion of farmer-oriented technologies. He said that through scientific research, technological innovations and effective extension programmes, the Institute has made significant contributions towards improving potato productivity and quality in the country and connecting farmers with improved technologies.

Chief Guest Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap said that during its nearly eight-decade-long journey, CPRI has made notable contributions to potato research and production through excellence in research, technological innovation and farmer-centric extension activities. He noted that technologies and scientific achievements developed by the Institute have benefited farmers in major potato-growing regions of the country, contributing to improvements in potato production, productivity and quality, as well as enhancing farmers' incomes. Shri Kashyap particularly highlighted the modern seed plot technique as an important achievement of the Institute and emphasized that the availability of healthy and quality seed potato is the foundation of the entire potato production chain.

Referring to various initiatives and programmes of the Government of India for agriculture and farmers' welfare, the Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap said that the government is continuously working to enhance farmers' incomes, increase agricultural production and productivity, ensure the availability of quality agricultural inputs, expand irrigation facilities, conserve soil health and make agriculture more sustainable and remunerative. He urged farmers to make greater use of farmer-oriented schemes of the Central and State governments and adopt new technologies. He emphasized that stronger coordination among agricultural research institutions, scientists, government departments and farmers is essential to take Indian agriculture to new heights. Shri Kashyap also called upon scientists to give greater priority to farmer-centric and need-based research, keeping in view emerging challenges such as climate change, conservation of natural resources, water availability, reduction in production costs and sustained availability of quality seed potato. Appreciating CPRI's contribution to the development of potato-growing regions, including Himachal Pradesh, he expressed confidence that the Institute would continue to play a leading role in strengthening the country's food and agricultural security.

On the occasion, outstanding employees of the Institute and progressive farmers were felicitated for their commendable contributions. Dr Dalamu was honoured in the Scientists category, Shri Neem Chand in the Technical category, Shri Om Prakash in the Administrative category and Shri Padam Chand in the Skilled Support Staff category. Five outstanding farmers from the Shimla region Smt. Asha Devi, Smt. Reena Devi, Shri Layak Ram, Shri Joginder and Shri Heera Singh were also felicitated for their notable contributions. Agricultural implements were distributed to the farmers by the Chief Guest.

Guest of Honour Prof. Mahavir Singh congratulated CPRI for its contributions to the development of improved potato varieties and the dissemination of scientific technologies and varieties among farmers. He observed that India is currently the world's second-largest potato producer and expressed confidence that, with continued scientific research, modern technologies and effective coordination with farmers, the country could soon achieve the top position in potato production.

Prof. Singh also emphasized the importance of harmonizing science and spirituality, noting the significance of *food, conduct and thought* in the Indian way of life. He highlighted the deep relationship between human life and the five elements of nature—earth, water, fire, air and space—and stressed the need to maintain harmony with nature for a balanced and healthy life.

Students of Government Senior Secondary School, Fagli, Shimla, also participated enthusiastically in the programme. The event was conducted by Dr Som Dutt. Dr Alok Kumar, Head, Division of Social Sciences, delivered the vote of thanks and expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest, Guest of Honour, farmers, students, scientists, officers, employees and all other participants. He appreciated the continued support and active participation of all stakeholders in advancing the achievements and mandate of the Institute.



