

Review of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (New Delhi)

The Government of India is undertaking a review of financial prudence and value of all autonomous institutions prior to implementation of 7th Pay Commission. Accordingly Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare has directed a review of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, one of the largest networks of institutions and an autonomous society. The review committee commissioned to review the autonomous Council has been interacting with a number of internal and external stakeholders and gaining a feedback. The committee has also been advised by the Ministry to seek public opinion. This consultation with the public has been motivated by the desire of the Ministry and the committee to arrive at a set of practical recommendations which are implementable but at the same time they would enable ICAR deliver its fullest potentials in agricultural research and thereby serve the National aspirations for agriculture sector.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research is a body of more than one hundred research institutions including 4 Deemed Universities and is working with 63 State Agricultural Universities and 696 KVKs in extension of research results. ICAR is hence engaged in Education, Research and Extension on all aspects of agriculture. The total staff strength is 25000. Annual budget of ICAR is about Rs 6800 crore. The Council is presided by the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. There are about 5000 scientists in ICAR and KVKs deploy about 4000 scientists. Hence ICAR is vast knowledge network in physical presence in every district and is able to deliver research results in the laboratory to the land in real time.

Indian agriculture sector is going through a phase of recovery since 2004 after it suffered a setback during a short the post reform period. Agricultural growth is close to 4%, largely contributed by the growth in total factor productivity. The Government of India aims to double Farmer's income through delivery of scientific and technological inputs to the agriculture sector. ICAR, State Agricultural Universities and KVKs need to undergo creative transformation for being able to deliver the values expected of them in strengthening the national agricultural economy in a time bound manner. Several private players have entered the fray of Indian agricultural research landscape. At the same time the populations of India which are vulnerably dependent upon agriculture for livelihood is large at ~54%. Large segment of the farmer population remains below the poverty line mark. The economic status of weak and marginal farmers needs to be raised rapidly.

Recognizing the indomitable challenge of delivering research and development outputs to Indian agriculture for desired outcomes in a sustained manner, the committee is faced with the difficult assignment of developing suitable recommendations for readjusting the Education, Research and Extension network and position ICAR correctly in such a powerful design, development and delivery system. A short write up on ICAR is attached and further information is available on website (www.icar.org.in).

The review committee seeks public opinions and feedback on the some key issues concerning ICAR. They include the role and need for autonomous structure, the financial administrative arrangements along the ICAR-SAU-KVK chain, levels of internal autonomy within ICAR, governance systems in agricultural research, potentials of creating revenue from external sources outside the Government, right sizing the education, research, extension system, creative modes of financing the agricultural research systems, performance-reward relationships and incentive mechanism and restructuring and reengineering ICAR is needed and any other relevant to strengthening of ICAR.

In order to ensure that the recommendations are implementable, the committee plans to restrict the total number between 10 and 12. Opinions and suggestions are solicited from those who are in or know of the needs of Indian Agricultural Research Systems and desirous of enabling the committee in coming out with some enabling recommendations. A frame of reference for expressing opinions and suggestions is proposed by the review committee.

- A. Roles and levels of autonomy relevant to the work of ICAR
- B. Functional work efficiency of the Education, Research and Extension system working currently through ICAR network
- C. Means for improvement of functional efficiencies of ICAR, SAU and KVKs
- D. The current levels Lab to Land connectivity and conversions and improvements there of
- E. Levels of research needs of the Indian Agricultural systems being currently met through the ICAR network of education, research and extension and suggestions for improvements if needed any
- F. New modes of financing ICAR system
- G. Potentials for Public Private partnerships in agricultural research
- H. Enabling weak and marginal farmers through research as public and social good activity and resource mobilization mechanisms for such actions
- I. Preparing Indian Agricultural sector toward next generation technologies in molecular breeding and modern technologies
- J. Addressing agriculture-water-energy interconnections and offering new research-led solutions
- K. Role of ICAR in increasing the agricultural GDP of India
- L. Right sizing of R&D investments as a percentage agricultural GDP.
- M. Role of ICAR in the national mission of doubling the farmer's income and rendering agriculture a remunerative socio economic activity and
- N. Any other suggestion that is likely to enable Indian agricultural research system.

Since the Committee proposes to submit its report and recommendations within one month, those desirous making suggestions along the above frame of reference may kindly send the suggestions to Member Secretary, ICAR Review Committee, National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, DPS Marg, Pusa, New Delhi-12 (email: icar.review2017@icar.gov.in) within the next three weeks.