

The Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board (ASRB) has undertaken a number of reforms to make assessment and recruitment more transparent and efficient. The highlights of various activities undertaken during 2014–2015 are briefly described.



Chairman, ASRB presenting Annual Report 2013–14 to the Agriculture Minister and President, ICAR

## ARS Examination 2013

The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) (preliminary) Examination was held on 29 December 2013 at 33 centres, in which 12,841 candidates appeared in 48 disciplines; 3,638 candidates qualified for the main examination and 3,239 actually appeared for the main examination, held on 9 March 2014 at 12 centres across the country; 1,104 candidates were called for interview against 506 vacancies in 48 disciplines. Eventually, 362 candidates could be recommended by the Board for appointment. Among the 362 selected candidates, there were 113 female candidates.

## National Eligibility Test (NET)– 2014 (I)

For the first time, National Eligibility Test (NET)-2014(I) was conducted completely in an online mode from 26 March 2014 to 4 April 2014 in 55 disciplines at 23 centres across the country. Submission of application, registration, payment of fees, issuance of admit cards, test administration and result declaration were all handled in the online mode. A total of 18,245 candidates registered for the examination and 14,178 (77.7%) appeared, and 2,712 (19.13%) candidates qualified for NET certification.

The highest qualified candidates were in the discipline of Poultry Science (75%), followed by Floriculture and Landscaping (55.6%), and Fish Genetics and Breeding (53.3%). In Animal Reproduction and Gynaecology and Home Science, though 94 and 133 candidates respectively appeared for the examination but none could qualify. In more than 19 disciplines,

the success rate was less than 10%. Highest number of candidates (2,325) appeared, in the discipline of Agricultural Biotechnology, i.e. 16.4% of the total candidates who have appeared and the lowest percentage (0.04%) was in Agricultural Structures and Environment Management.

## Direct recruitment

The direct recruitment action was initiated for filling up 193 scientific posts including research management positions. A total of 1,921 applications were received and after a thorough scrutiny by the screening committees, 768 candidates were called for interview. Only 551 candidates were appeared for interview and 135 posts could be filled. In 14 cases of senior scientists, no candidates were available for interview. No suitable candidates were found in 44 cases which included the posts of Directors, Head of Divisions, Senior Scientists and Programme Coordinators.

## Revised Career Advancement Scheme (CAS)

A total of 47 scientists were assessed and interviewed for promotion from Senior Scientist to Principal Scientist grade in 17 disciplines. Similarly, 3 assessment/reassessment cases in three disciplines were taken up under the old career advancement scheme which was effective till 31 December 2008.

## Reforms

### Online examination system

The ASRB has successfully commissioned an online examination system with a network of 2,020 computer nodes at 23 examination centres at ICAR institutes and SAUs across the country for conducting computer-based examinations. All centres are well-equipped with state-of-the-art hardware and software tools. The system also includes online submission of applications, payment of examination fees, allotment of examination centres, generation of admit cards, declaration of results etc.



Inauguration of online examination system



Software module for creating a question bank and generating question papers using the question bank has also been developed.

A large repository of questions has already been digitized in each of the 56 disciplines. The entire examination system has been audited by the third party auditors to ensure quality and security. The nodal officers and technical staff of the examination centres have been duly trained in the process of online examination. The automation of registration process, generation and issuing of admit cards, conducting of examinations and result declarations have all saved significant amount of manpower, time and costs. The first complete online examination was conducted successfully for NET-2014(I) from 26 March 2014 to 4 April 2014, for which the online registration process was started in February 2014.

#### **Committee for Revision of Score Card for Direct Recruitment**

The ASRB constituted a committee of senior outside experts with Dr S.K. Bandyopadhyay, Member, ASRB as the Convener to review the present score card for direct recruitment to various scientific positions under ICAR. The committee has already held six meetings and finalized a draft revised score card which is under validation process.

#### **Committee to Review Disadvantageous Units/Centres/ Stations of ICAR**

A meeting was held on 15 April 2014 under the Chairmanship of Dr S. K. Bandyopadhyay, Member, ASRB, for reviewing the disadvantageous units/centres/stations of ICAR based upon feedback from various quarters.

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