

Seed Store inaugurated by Director ICAR-IARI at *Rakhra Kisan Mela* of Punjab

The Collaborative Outstation Research Centre (CORC) of the ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, organized a *Kisan Mela* on March 17, 2026. Hosted at the Young Farmers Association Punjab (YFAP) premises in Rakhra, the event served as a vital platform for knowledge exchange between agricultural scientists of ICAR-IARI, New Delhi and the farmers of Punjab. The primary objective is to reach out to the farmers with improved technologies including seeds of crop varieties, crop production and crop protection technologies for sustainable development and boosting the profitability of farmers.

Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao, Director of ICAR-IARI, engaged directly with the farmers to showcase the latest breakthroughs in crop varieties and agro-technologies. During the interaction, Dr. Rao lauded the "exemplary role" of Punjab's farmers in India's agricultural development. However, considering changing climatic patterns and global uncertainties, Dr. Rao emphasized that crop diversification and climate-resilient farming practices are now "the need of the hour."

An important highlight of the event was the inauguration of a new Seed Store at the YFAP, Rakhra, meant to improve local access to quality seeds of crop varieties.



The event was also attended by a team from ICAR-IARI, New Delhi including Dr. C. Viswanathan (Joint Director, Research), Dr. Gopala Krishnan S. (Head, Genetics Division), and Dr. Akshay Talukdar (Principal Scientist & Nodal Officer, CORC). Representing the YFAP were the President Mrs. Preetpal Kaur Cheema, Secretary General Sh. Bhagwan Dass, and the Board of Directors.

Farmers were apprised of new ICAR-IARI varieties of Basmati and non-Basmati rice, as well as wheat, which offer early maturity and higher yields. while significantly reducing water consumption. The Director urged the judicious use of agro-chemicals to ensure the long-term security of human, animal, and soil health. He further stressed on the importance of high-quality seeds as the foundation for better yields and profitability.

The Mela underscores ICAR-IARI's "lab-to-land" commitment, ensuring Punjab's farmers access to improved technologies developed by ICAR-IARI, New Delhi.