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## A word for farmers



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at the 86th ICAR Foundation Day event in New Delhi on Tuesday, urged scientists to ensure that research reaches farmers. - PHOTO: PTI (REPORT ON PAGE 10)

# 'Farmers deserve a standing ovation'

Gargi Parsai

**NEW DELHI:** Underscoring the capability of Indian farmers to enhance production for domestic as well as global markets, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked the scientific community to ensure that research reaches farmers and helps raise their incomes.

Addressing the 86th foundation day of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) here, Mr. Modi said Indian farmers deserved a standing ovation for providing for the nation and changing the face of the country. Yet, there was potential for more, not only in crops but in fisheries and animal hus-

### Ensure your research reaches farmers, Modi tells scientists

bandry, where a global market was available, he added.

In his first public event since becoming Prime Minister, Mr. Modi told the farm researchers and scientists upfront that it was not enough to sit in five-star seminar rooms and analyse why something could not be done but to think how it could be done. "Design programmes for the people and bring solutions."

### Innovation, the future

Emphasising the need for

raising productivity when land is shrinking and population increasing, he said with the traditional knowledge of farmers and scientific intervention, this challenge could be addressed. "There is no other way out. Scientists must come out with innovations that can produce crop in lesser number of days without erosion of quality."

Bemoaning the supply-demand gap in pulses and edible oilseeds, Mr. Modi asked scientists to dedicate themselves to the research of suitable varieties so that the country was not dependent on imports. "The poor get their protein from pulses. Take it as a challenge that in a few years there will be no

need to bring edible oils and pulses from outside," he said.

### Wanted: risk-takers

Recognising that traditional farmers lacked the risk-taking mindset, he asked the ICAR and farm universities to draw a list of young, educated progressive farmers who were willing to take risk and experiment with innovations and new technology.

"Each university should draw out young researchers and use the community radio to reach out to farmers. Give them hourly updates on crop, fertilizer, weather and pests. You will be more powerful, credible and popular than the regular media barons," he told farm scientists.

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