

At the end we need food

Department of Applied Engineering, Vignan University celebrated 'National Agricultural Day 2015' on March 18th. Sh. Kanna Lakshminarayana, Former Agricultural Minister served as the Chief Guest for the event. During the inaugural ceremony, the chief guest said that understanding the problems of farmers and providing the right solution at the right place is the need of the hour. Universities, like Vignan, have great role to play in addressing social issues related to agriculture.



He emphasized on the need of mechanization in crops like cotton, which play a major role in the region, to which the department of Agriculture is trying to come up with a solution soon. "When it is lucrative, people will automatically come forward for farming", echoed Sh. Lakshminarayana.

In our country, 60% of population depends on agriculture. While stressing on development of nation we, many a times, forget to give importance that is due to agriculture, but essentially we need food to survive. One of the major issues of the today is value addition to farming.

A poignant fact is that there is a wide gap between Government policies and the requirement of farmer, said Dr. Lavu Rathaiah, Chairman, Vignan's group. He told that the life style of the farmers need to be improved for retaining them in agriculture and the only option for this is mechanization. Dr. Rathaiah emphasized that the department at the University has been formed with a mission of introducing the latest technology into agriculture in the most efficient way. He also assured the farmers that the University will

act as a hub of necessary crop specific implements, which farmers can lend on a nominal rent.

Forgetting farmers is like forgetting our own parents, which is an unpardonable mistake, said Prof. Purushotham, In-charge, Vice-Chancellor. Prof. Aum Sarma, Principal, Institute of Agricultural Engg. & Technology, Telangana Agricultural University presented the farm mechanization statistics of Andhra Pradesh. Having vast experience in farm mechanization especially in the State of Andhra Pradesh, he told that having subsidy is essential to encourage farmers for adopting mechanization for agriculture. On the other hand at times availability becomes a problem even when a farmer would want a machine. Mr. Praneeth Reddy, Area Manager, John Deere requested farmers to report the problems to the Universities so that necessary solutions can be found and provided to the farmers through Research & Development. He said that all mechanization solutions are available with John Deere for farming in addition to a wide range of tractors.

Dr. Manoj Samuel, Principal Scientist, NAARM expressed his concern over the increasing depletion

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of water level. He said that water application techniques are to be employed for all the crops to overcome the problem. "Next world war, if at all happens, would be for water", he feared. Judicious water retention techniques are also essential, like water harvesting to reduce over exploitation of ground water, he mentioned.

ZPTC, Chairman Jani Mun and Mr. Poorna Chandra Rao, Member ZPTC also attended the function. They interacted with farmers and requested them to take help from institutions for overcoming farming problems.



In his introduction, Head of Department, Dr. Vidhu Kampurath informed the house that the function had been envisaged, planned and executed by the students of Applied Engg department. *"We want to connect to the farmers, understand their problems and apply the techniques we study in the class for the best effective usage in real situation"*, he pointed out.

Expo conducted during the event:

The Department arranged an expo of tractors, implements, pesticides, pumps etc during the event. Sizable number of farmers from nearby villages visited the event. They were enthusiastic in sharing experiences and requirements to university.

Industries came forward in sponsoring for the National Agriculture Day. *John Dheere Tractors, TAFE Farm Equipment Ltd, Eicher tractors, Bayer Pesticide Ltd and Tropical Agro* sponsored the event.

Technical Sessions

In the afternoon session, three technical seminars were conducted by field experts. **Prof. Aum Sarma** introduced crop specific machines, starting from land preparation to harvest with their advantages and limitations. He stressed the importance of group farming since owning a machine may not be a feasible idea for mechanization. He urged the young student

fraternity also to engage themselves in understanding the practical aspects of farming rather than mugging the theory.

Explaining the mechanics of water management, **Dr. Manoj P Samuel** stressed on importance of water retention measures. Cherrapunji in Assam, which till recently was having the highest rainfall (11700 mm) falls short of water during summer as all the water drains out to sea. Effective retention measures like check dams, vegetative pathways etc are the solutions so that more precipitation will occur and ground water recharge

will enhance, he told.

Listening to continuous lectures warrants higher patience which lacks in today's students said **Mr. Praneeth Reddy**. He gave a motivational speech to students, stressing on the importance of practical knowledge rather than marks and grades. He visualized that in the near future, it would be the person with practical knowhow getting job rather than the class topper.

The enthusiasm of the students was evident till the very end of the programme. The sports jersey of the Department was also released during the session by the experts. Head, Dr. Vidhu thanked all the participants and experts for their continued support.