

**PRESS NOTE**

**Meghalaya Agriculture Minister acknowledges the impact of KVKs in agricultural transformation in her inaugural address during IX<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day Celebration of ATARI, Umiam**

The ICAR-Agricultural Technology Application Research Institute (ATARI), Zone VII, Umiam, marked its IX<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day with a significant celebration on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The event brought together key stakeholders and visionary partners from research organisations and state line departments in the domain of agriculture and allied sectors from 5 states of the zone on a common platform, focusing on past accomplishments of the institute, expressing gratitude to the predecessors, realignment of the thoughts with new visions and redesigning the future programmes with renewed commitments blended with technological innovation, farmer empowerment, and the sustainable hill agriculture in Northeast.

Here was a green inauguration of the programme by the Chief Guest, Dr. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Health & Family Welfare, IPR & Law, Government of Meghalaya in presence of Hon'ble Vice Chancellors, AAU, Jorhat; Director, ICAR RCNEH, Umiam; Director (Agril), Govt. of Meghalaya; Director, ICAR ATARI, Umiam and all other dignitaries by watering the sapling that marked the auspicious beginning of foundation day celebrations aligned with commitment to sustainability.

The Chief Guest, Hon'ble Minister Dr. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh in her inaugural address emphatically stated that "The Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) are the unique institutional innovations at micro level considered as the strong frontline extension mechanism that transformed the status of the country from 'food deficit' to 'food surplus' amidst the wide diversity and risk prone agriculture scenario of the country. Lauding the continued collaboration between KVKs, state departments, ICAR institutions, and farmers, Dr. Lyngdoh sincerely acknowledged the impact of KVK as 'every Rs 1 invest earns a return of Rs 12' as per the study conducted by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). She reiterated the Government of Meghalaya's commitment to supporting KVKs through convergence with state schemes, implementing farmer-centric innovations to reach the grassroots. The Minister specifically commended the impactful work of Meghalaya's KVKs aligning with state priorities

in promotion of niche crops like buckwheat, advancing mushroom cultivation, implementing fish post-harvest technologies and establishing Biotech-KISAN hubs. She also highlighted the significant expansion of the natural farming movement in Meghalaya, positioning the state as a leader in developing climate-resilient and chemical-free farming systems.

Initially, extending a warm welcome to the guests Dr. A.K. Mohanty, Director, ICAR-ATARI Umiam accentuated the institutional accomplishments in micro level reach of the advanced farming techniques through its network of 43 KVKs across five states namely Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. He further briefed the recent initiatives like establishment of agro-climate based IFS model, quality seed production, Rural Agri Business Incubation centre (RABIC) and interface with state line department to make the KVK system of the region more vibrant.

The highlight of the ceremony was conferment of the "KRISHI GAURAV" (Best Innovative Farmers Award) by the Chief Guest to outstanding farmers, recognizing their excellent contribution in adoption and dissemination of innovative agricultural practices. The Chief Guest also inaugurated the exhibition stalls arranged by 43 KVKs of ICAR ATARI Umiam with impressive display of farm innovations and improved technologies.

The Foundation Day keynote address on "Northeast Agriculture for Vikshit Bharat @2047" was delivered by Dr. B.C. Deka, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat. He presented a strategic vision outlining the pathways for the region's agricultural development aligning with the ambitious national goal of Vikshit Bharat @2047. Dr. A.K. Tripathi, former Director of ICAR-ATARI Umiam, provided a historical perspective on the institute's journey and contributions.

Dr. S. Ghatak, Director (I/C), ICAR-RCNEH, Umiam underscored the importance of animal husbandry for the socio-economic development of the Northeast and highlighted the critical role of KVKs for bringing a transformation. Ms. J.R. Blah, General Manager of NABARD, Shillong, shed light on various developmental schemes implemented by NABARD for the agricultural sector. Mrs. J. C. Lyngdoh, Director of Agriculture, Government of Meghalaya, elaborated on the ongoing efforts and achievements in agricultural growth and development within the state.

The programme marked the participation of about 250 Scientific, technical and administrative staff from nearby ICAR research institutes, CPGS-AS, CAU, Umiam; state agriculture departments and KVK officials from states of Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura,

The IX<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day celebration also featured a comprehensive array of events like Foundation Day Lecture, Technology showcasing, Scientist-KVK interface and Felicitation of distinguished achievers throughout the day. The inauguration programme was concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Dr. A.K. Singha, Principal Scientist, ICAR-ATARI Umiam.



Fig 1: Inauguration of the Exhibition Stalls of KVKs under ICAR-ATARI, Zone-VII, Umiam



Fig 2: Visit by the Chief Guests accompanied by other guests to KVK Stalls



Fig 3: Green Inauguration of the IX<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day Celebration



Fig. 4: Guests on the Dias during inaugural function





Fig.5: Conferment of Innovative Farmer Award (*Krishi Gaurav*) across the NE Region