

## **ICAR-DOGR Celebrates 29<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day with Focus on *Khet Bachao Abhiyan***

The 29<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day of ICAR-DOGR, Pune was celebrated with great enthusiasm and participation from scientists, farmers, extension personnel, and dignitaries. The programme highlighted the organization's achievements and its commitment to advancing sustainable agriculture, improving farmers' livelihoods, and promoting innovative research in onion and garlic cultivation. A total of 180 farmers and ICAR-DOGR staff attended the event. The programme was graced by Dr. Vilas Kharche, Vice-Chancellor, MPKV, Rahuri as the Chief Guest, while Dr. Sudhakar Pandey, Assistant Director General (FVS&MP), ICAR, and Dr. Vikramaditya Pandey, Principal Scientist (Horticulture) and Ex-ADG, ICAR, New Delhi joined online.

Welcoming the gathering, Dr. Ram Dutta, Director (Acting), ICAR-DOGR presented the major achievements of ICAR-DOGR, emphasizing its significant contributions to research, technology development and farmer outreach programmes. He highlighted the institute's efforts in developing improved crop production technologies and strengthening agricultural sustainability. Dr. A. Thangasamy, Principal Scientist, ICAR-DOGR shared several success stories demonstrating how the minimization of fertilizer use through scientific nutrient management has not only reduced cultivation costs but also enhanced crop productivity and profitability. The presentation showcased the benefits of balanced fertilizer application and precision nutrient management techniques. Dr. Shailendra S. Gadge, Principal Scientist, ICAR-DOGR elaborated on the activities undertaken under the Khet Bachao Abhiyan, stressing the importance of soil health conservation, judicious use of agricultural inputs, and awareness among farmers for sustainable farming practices. Highlighting inclusive agricultural development, Dr. Amar Jeet Gupta, Principal Scientist, ICAR-DOGR presented the various activities implemented under the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP). He described initiatives aimed at empowering tribal farmers through technology dissemination, capacity building, and improved access to agricultural resources.

Addressing the gathering as the Guest of Honour, Dr. Sudhakar Pandey, ADG, ICAR, New Delhi emphasized the importance of taking scientific innovations from the laboratory to farmers' fields under the "Lab to Land" approach. He discussed emerging challenges posed by climate change and underscored the need for climate-resilient agricultural practices. Dr. Sudhakar Pandey also highlighted the significance of efficient marketing system, precision farming, reduction in cultivation costs, and value addition through processing. He stressed the potential of meristem culture technology in garlic for producing disease-free planting material and remarked that "Kisan Samruddh to Desh Samruddh" (Prosperous Farmers Lead to a Prosperous Nation).

The Chief Guest, Dr. Vilas Kharche, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, MPKV, Rahuri congratulated ICAR-DOGR on its Foundation Day and appreciated its valuable contributions to agricultural research and farmer welfare. In his address, he emphasized the adoption of balanced fertilizer application to optimize crop nutrition while reducing excessive fertilizer use. He also advocated for crop diversification and the promotion of Integrated Farming System (IFS) to enhance farm income and sustainability. Furthermore, he encouraged stronger collaboration between ICAR-DOGR and MPKV to address future agricultural challenges and urged scientists to identify the thrust areas of research for the benefit of farmers and the agricultural sector. Progressive farmers with outstanding achievements in onion and garlic cultivation were felicitated during the programme and also released ICAR-DOGR publications.

In technical session, Dr. A. J. Gupta delivered a lecture on Commercial Cultivation of Onion and Garlic and Dr. Shailendra S. Gadge delivered a lecture on Balanced Use of Fertilizer in Onion and Garlic. At the end, onion seed of ICAR-DOGR was distributed to the farmers. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Rajiv Kale, Senior Scientist who expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest, Guests of Honour, dignitaries, scientists, farmers, and all participants for their valuable presence and support in making the event a grand success.

