

Bangalore's farm fair promotes organic farming

Experts at the ongoing Krishi Mela or agricultural fair here are trying hard to convince farmers of Karnataka about the benefits of switching to organic farming, which is high yielding and eco-friendly.

'There is a lack of knowledge among farmers about the benefits of organic farming,' R.S. Kulkarni, director of extension, University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bangalore, told IANS.

'We are trying to promote organic farming among the state's farmers as it is the best eco-friendly method of cultivation,' he said.

The four-day annual event, organised by the UAS-B, along with several allied government departments, started Thursday at the sprawling UAS campus here.

According to Kulkarni, farmers are interested to 'learn organic farming methods, and are participating at the fair from across the state'.

However, they are confused whether their crop yield would go down if they switch to organic farming.

Dispelling such doubts, experts at the UAS cited examples of model organic farms at Hiriyr town, around 160 km from here, where use of cattle urine has enhanced crop production.

Earlier at the inaugural function of the mela, state Agriculture Minister S.A. Ravindra had said the farmers should follow 'healthy and eco-friendly' agriculture methods.

'This can be achieved by adopting organic farming and bio-pesticides,' Ravindra said.

The university has pioneered in research and development on organic farming in tune with the state government's policy.

A premier research institute has been established at the Gandhi Krishi Vikasa Kendra (GKVK) campus here by UAS to promote multidisciplinary research on organic farming.

More than 200 stalls were set up at the agri fair to provide information to farmers on organic farming, hybrid cultivation, integrated cultivation, new modern technologies and equipment, bank loans, animal husbandry, horticulture and fishery.

Farmers have also been briefed about the modern and improved ways of reaping maximum benefit from subsidiary occupations like animal husbandry, dairy farming, sheep rearing, poultry farming and pisciculture at the fair.

An interaction meet between farmers and experts has also been organised as a part of the event.

'It has been a good learning experience for me,' said Bhaagavva, a farmer from Nitturu village in Davangere district, around 260 km from here.

A total of 150,000 people visited the fair in the last three days.

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