

The eighteenth Convention of Indian Agricultural Universities Association was held at Dr Yashwant Singh Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan during 30 November – 3 December 1990. The following topics were selected for discussion at the Convention.

THEME

National Agriculture Policy and the role of agricultural universities.

SUB-THEMES

1. Diversification of agriculture.
2. Export oriented agriculture.
3. Post-harvest and processing technology.
4. Agro-based industries.
5. New approach to agricultural research with employment orientation.
6. Agricultural education.
7. Vocational training.
8. Institutional linkage.
9. Research planning.
10. New agricultural policy document.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The agricultural universities should direct their research and extension efforts to develop labour- absorbing and cost-effective technologies for small, mixed farming units to suit the varied farming systems and situations where family labour too can be utilized gainfully.
2. Export potential of agricultural produce and products should be tapped for horticulture, aquaculture, agri-cultural biomass- based commodities etc.
3. Proper processing and improvement in shelf-life of perishable farm produce (fruits, vegetables, fish etc.), which account for 30% of production, can help in 100-200% value addition and provide additional avenues for rural employment.
4. A neglected field with great potential is agro-based industries, where applied and adaptive research and development activities can increase employment as well as production and productivity of value-added products. The areas needing attention are large-scale production of improved implements for small-scale machines and the mechanization of farm operations, as well as agro-based activities like sericulture, mushroom cultivation, home, and village level processing of grains and perishable products, cotton ginning and spinning, agro-waste/by-product processing and recycling etc.
5. The universities should focus on research that is more applied and employment oriented, to develop technologies that are ecologically sound and knowledge intensive, paying greater attention to frontier areas like biotechnology, bio-processing, computer technology, satellite imagery, micro-electronics etc.
6. Agricultural education has to be dynamic, need-based, farmer oriented, keeping pace with change in time and demand, with development of courses on management, energy mobilization, agro-based enterprises etc.

7. New technologies need to be developed with increased modernization of agriculture, requiring more skilled and efficient manpower. Appropriate vocational training is therefore required and has to be generated by extension agencies, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, agricultural polyclinics etc.
8. Research should be planned on the basis of agro-ecological and agro-climatic zones to develop location-specific technologies, especially for rainfed agriculture. Besides, basic research is needed in advanced areas like biotechnology, genetic engineering etc. in collaboration with other similar organizations.
9. The Agricultural Policy Document of the Government of India should specify the role of State agricultural universities in raising the rate of growth of national agricultural products, and they should be involved in decision making related to implementation of the policies on all important aspects of farmers and farming.