**PUNJAB RAJ BHAVAN, CHANDIGARH**

**GOVERNOR INAUGURATES KISAN MELA AT GURDASPUR**

**ADVISES FARMERS TO FOLLOW PAU RECOMMENDATIONS**

**CHANDIGARH, SEPTEMBER 11:** The Kisan Mela of Punjab Agricultural University held at the Regional Research Station, Gurdaspur today witnessed a heavy footfall. The Mela with the theme “Manage Crop Residue Efficiently; Enhance Soil Fertility” was inaugurated by the  Chief Guest, Sh. V.P. Singh Badnore, Governor of Punjab and Chancellor, PAU;

 In his inaugural address, Sh. V.P. Singh Badnore appreciated the commendable outreach of the university through its Kisan Melas and emphasised on the need of strengthening the farmer- scientist interaction. He also called upon the farmers to follow PAU recommendations and advised them to keep themselves abreast of the latest farming techniques. Sh. Badnore stressed upon the need to form Farmers’ Producers’ Organisations (FPOs) which are the futuristic trend to step into active marketing and which serve as a solid market interface, generating more profits. He further suggested the farmer audience to regularly participate in Kisan Melas and other transfer of technology programmes of PAU.

 Dr B. S. Dhillon, Vice Chancellor, PAU, Ludhiana congratulated the farming community for rice and wheat yield increase which went up to 12 tonnes/h in the previous year. He also urged them to manage stubble and paddy straw by adopting Super SMS, Mulcher, Cutter and Happy Seeder technologies developed by PAU. He further advised them to go in for diversification of crops as well as adopt subsidiary occupations for enhanced income and profit. Dr Dhillon pressed upon the attending farmers to associate with PAU through their digital newspaper ‘*Kheti Sandesh’* delivered through WhatsApp and which had already more than 5 lac farmers linked to it.

 The Guest of Honour, Dr S.S. Gosal congratulated the Regional Research Station, Gurdaspur which had been serving the Kandi area for the past 108 years. Referring to the Kisan Mela as *‘Gyan da Mela’*, he stated how useful they were in the dissemination of knowledge related to recent farm research and technologies. Dr Gosal exhorted the farmers to read more farm literature to enrich their knowledge, shun stubble burning which is toxic to the atmosphere, adopt drip irrigation as a measure to use water judiciously, practice precision farming and grow their own vegetables and pulses to check adulteration.

 On a special request made by the Governor , a cultural song, *‘Sadin Na Parali Veera’*,composed at the University, was played to sensitize the farmers towards environment conservation.  Dr Jaswinder Bhalla, HoD, Extension Education, PAU urged the audience to listen to other songs on soil, water and environment conservation which were being played in the Exhibition Van stationed at the Mela premises.

 There was a huge rush of farmers for the purchase of seeds of Rabi crops. Around 100 stalls put up at the KVK, Gurdaspur witnessed teeming crowds. Farmers also purchased farm literature and fruit – vegetable – pulses kits from the sale outlets that were set-up for the purpose. Technical experts of PAU interacted with the farmers to dispel their apprehensions and provide information on useful technology aids. They also educated the farmers on various aspects of cultivation of forthcoming Rabi crops.

 Dr Navtej Singh Bains, Director of Research, PAU while highlighting the research programmes of the University, said that they were devised as per the feedback received from the farmers. He also pointed out that the present day research is focused on making farmers economically strong and encouraging them to conserve natural resources in view of  climate variations. He stressed the need to curtail farm expenditure and adopt a novel look towards agriculture.

 Prominent amongst others who were present on the occasion included Shri Vipul Ujwal, Deputy Commissioner, Gurdaspur, Dr R S Singh, Director, Regional Research Station, Dr SS Aulakh, Incharge KVK and Dr Bhupinder Singh, Associate Dean, IOA.

The students of Institute of Agriculture, Gurdaspur enthralled the audience with a spirited bhangra performance, adding much grace and fanfare to the eventful day.

