

## National Conclave on Micro Irrigation 2011

5<sup>th</sup> July 2011, New Delhi

Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) with the support of Ministry of Agriculture, GoI, National Committee on Plasticulture Applications in Horticulture (NCPAH) and National Horticulture Board (NHB) organized one day national conclave on Micro Irrigation held in Hotel Ashok, Delhi. This is second event during the year 2011 to organize national level event on micro irrigation after the centrally sponsored scheme was up-scaled as the National Mission.

Hon'ble Union Agriculture Minister, GoI inaugurated the national conclave in which representatives from Micro Irrigation Industries, State Govt.s, Research Bodies, Farmers, Entrepreneurs, Scheme implementing agencies, Financial Institutions etc were present for sharing present status, growth & future prospects in India.

The Joint Secretary (NHM) and Mission Director (NMMI) welcomed the delegates and Hon'ble Union Agriculture Minister for the inauguration of the national conclave on micro irrigation as water is becoming scarce both in terms of demand & availability. He was appreciative of the efforts of Indian Chamber of Commerce to take the initiative with the support of NCPAH, NHB and leading Micro Irrigation companies as the sponsors for the conclave so that the road map can be helpful for the XII plan period.



Speaking at the conclave, Hon'ble Union Agriculture Minister assured his ministry will take up the issue of banks hesitating in extending loans to farmers for purchase of micro-irrigation equipments like drip & sprinkle.

He pointed out that the country has potential to bring 69.5 million hectare under micro-irrigation and there is still a lot more to achieve. Most of the banks are still not comfortable with extending



loans to farmers for purchase of micro- irrigation equipment & he assured to take up the matter in right earnest. He further mentioned that it is through micro-irrigation technology, small and marginal farmers can enhance crop yields, improve their incomes and motivate the next generation to continue with farming in a modern way.

The minister assured both the industry & implementing agencies that the micro-irrigation sector will get the top most priority both in terms of policy support and financial outlays" as the government recognizes that water is not only becoming scarce but also highly unpredictable on account of climate change. He urged all the states to take advantage of this technology to ensure higher productivity and save natural resources & called for replicating successful examples of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and Karnataka etc to remaining states under the mission.



Union Agriculture Secretary, Gol, reiterated about increased outlays and focusing on state wise higher coverage of area under the drip & sprinkler irrigation, which would help in meeting food demand in the country. He said that the outcome of the MI conclave would provide forward path for planning resources for micro irrigation under the XII five plan period. He urged the companies to join hands with State Govt.s to ensure resource mobilization for increasing coverage and ensure timely availability, after sale services, operation & maintenance and training programmes for the beneficiaries so that it would help the farmers to take maximum benefit of the MI system. He said looking at last couple of year the progress under micro irrigation has been laudable while plenty of work is still ahead looking at the national potential of 69.5mha.

The conclave was divided into following technical sessions to understand micro irrigation status in different states, issues concerning industry, research & farmers prospective etc.

### **First Session - State & Progress of Micro Irrigation - State Experiences**

The representatives of State Mission Directors from Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu & Rajasthan provided the progress, coverage, diversification of crops, cost-economics in different crops, registered MI suppliers & manufactures etc between 2005-06 to 2009-10. The experiences of these States provided about higher subsidies allocations, utilization, higher demand by the beneficiaries, State like AP, Gujarat & Tamil Nadu has taken the implementation of micro irrigation as

special purpose vehicle. The progress has been encouraging both in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. All these States requested GoI for higher allocation of funds looking at the demand & urged the micro irrigation industry to provide timely after sale service and training on operation & maintenance of the system.

The State departments were appreciative of extension and training programmes conducted by the Precision Farming Development Centers (PFDCs) in popularizing modern irrigation methods and developing package of practices on State focused crops. The session was chaired by the Adtl. Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, GoI.

### **Second Session - Research, Finance & Farmers prospective**

Director, Water Technology Centre (WTC), Orissa provided status of irrigation efficiency of micro irrigation in different crops & availability of ground water for the irrigation need in coming time. He mentioned about depleting water resources and climate change would add pressure for the increased adoption of MI system in different States. Representative, NABARD talked about the role of financial institutions for popularizing adoption of MI system in the country. The farmers prospective were shared by the M/s VNR Seeds. They showed the use of drip & fertigation in different Orchard Crops & inter-crops to maximize land, water efficiency, crop period & higher yield with better returns in Bastar dist. of Madhya Pradesh. He proposed before the august audience for providing subsidy allocations based on demography.

### **Third Session - Industry & Technical Perspective**

The importance of water & its requirement in Indian agriculture was told by the Acting Director, WTC, IARI. He showed the irrigation efficiency in micro irrigation Vs conventional method of irrigation. He emphasized looking at the depleting ground water levels in India and looking at the food demand of 550gms per person by 2050 calls for adoption of micro irrigation and urged policy planners, industry representatives to make the system available at a cost which a farmer can afford. He mentioned about the 22 Precision Farming Development Centres(PFDCs) located in 22 States of the country is the only scientific network working closely on precision farming & improved irrigation methods on State focused crops. He talked about the importance of automation, fertigation & use of non-conventional energy sources such as Solar for uptake of micro irrigation in the rural areas of the country.

The industry perspective was shared by the M/s Netafim, M/s Premier Adritec, M/s Harvel Agua, M/s Automat and M/s Jain Irrigation Systems. Each of one of them shared the latest development in the field of micro irrigation, technology - trend & updates, efficiency of system in different crops, role of automation & fertigation, selection of pump & filters for irrigation efficiency & use of traveler rainguns

system in agri / horti crop for uniform wetting pattern. Industry representatives talked about higher subsidies, pendency, awareness & information reach, BIS, registration procedures etc. They urged the Govt. to increase allocation and ensure participating States to provide payment on time after successful installation of the system. All of them urged for on-line monitoring system so that farmers / suppliers can track beneficiary status for bringing transparency and increased coverage of the system in different States.

### **Valedictory Session**

The special address at the conclave was given by the the Minister of State(MoS), Ministry of Agriculture, GoI. He urged the micro irrigation industry to be more responsive to farmers and joins hands with his ministry to make the national mission meet its desired mandate across the States. The experience and success of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka etc need to reach hinter lands and help the rural economy to grow so that agriculture meets set growth rate during 2011-12. Looking at the natural calamities and climate change, highlighted the judicious use of water for increasing productivity. He called the industry to reduce the cost of systems so that it reaches to all the needy in different part of the country. The focus of micro irrigation needs to be seen in North-eastern and hilly states as well so that it would usher second green revolution in the country. He was appreciative of the steps taken by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) so that the road map drawn from the experiences of famers, researchers, policy makers and industry would provide much needed fillip for preparing comprehensive road map for the XII plan period.

The Chairperson, Agro & Food Processing Committee, ICC, gave vote of thanks to all eminent speakers and Hon'ble Ministers, Ministry of Agriculture, GoI for participating in the national conclave to provide much needed direction so that the national mission on micro irrigation meets its mandate in ensuing years.