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MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to know that an "International Congress on Post Harvest Technologies of Agricultural Produce for Sustainable Food and Nutritional Security" is being jointly organized by UPCAR and IIAST in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh) from 10-12 November 2016 to provide a platform for in-depth interaction among stakeholders and to formulate strategy for minimizing post harvest losses of agricultural produce through innovative technologies.

In this context, it is pertinent to mention that in spite of climatic uncertainties, Indian agriculture has made considerable progress and agriculture sector is not only feeding the ever increasing country's population but also at surplus stage in food grain production. India is the first country enacted 'National Food Security Act 2013' which not only provide right to food for the citizens but also access to quality food at affordable price. In food and nutritional security, the horticulture is playing a pivotal role. India has witnessed voluminous increase in horticulture production over the last few years and outpaced the food grain production since 2012-13. In 2014-15, India's horticulture production reached to 281 million tones and even after consecutive droughts during 2014 and 2015, horticulture sector registered record production.

Despite of the higher production, there are heavy annual wastages of agri-horticultural produce to the tune of 5-30%. The losses are not only confined to agriculture and horticulture but also in almost all sectors of agriculture like dairy, poultry, fisheries, sericulture, piggery etc. This is not only the loss of output but also loss of input and energy used for the production and thereby reduces farmers income and increased consumers expenses. There are various pre and post harvest factors including non adoption of good agricultural practices, improper harvesting, poor handling and transportation, inappropriate packaging, inadequate storage facilities etc responsible for the quantum wastage of valuable produce.

The theme of the congress is apt and need of the hour. I am sure the deliberations in this International Congress will come out with tangible suggestions for reducing the production, productivity and post harvest losses in agri-horti sector. I take this opportunity to wish the International Congress a grand success under the leadership of Prof. Rajendra Kumar, Director General, UPCAR and Prof. S.W. Akhtar, Vice Chancellor, Integral University, Lucknow.


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