PRESS RELEASE FROM AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, NAMCHI

Krishi Mela 2026 Organised at KVK Namthang

Namchi, 18 November: The Krishi Mela 2026 was successfully organised at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Namthang, Namchi District, under the theme “Himalayan Women in Agriculture: Rooted in Tradition, Growing with Innovation.” The programme was organised by ATMA Namchi District, Department of Agriculture, Government of Sikkim, in collaboration with KVK Namthang.

The programme was graced by Smt. Doma Lepcha, Chairperson, AH&VS, as the Chief Guest, in the presence of Ms. Anupa Tamling, District Collector, Namchi; Shri Pravin Gautam, SDM Namthang; Smt. Nirmala Moktan, Additional Director, Agriculture & Horticulture; Shri I.P. Shivakoti, Senior Scientist and Head, KVK Namthang; Joint Directors and Deputy Directors of various departments, Fisheries Block Officer, ADOs, HDOs, Inspectors, departmental officials, scientists and farmers.

The event featured exhibition stalls showcasing various activities and initiatives of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, SHGs and FPOs. Technical booklets and extension literature were released, and progressive farmers were felicitated with awards and certificates.

Addressing the gathering, Ms. Anupa Tamling, District Collector, Namchi, emphasised the importance of crop insurance as an essential safeguard for farmers against agricultural losses and uncertainties. She also highlighted the persistent issue of crop damage caused by wildlife and referred to the Hon'ble Chief Minister's intervention with the Forest Department to explore practical solutions to this concern. She appreciated the exhibition stalls showcasing various departmental initiatives and highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts among departments and farming communities in strengthening the agricultural sector.

Shri I.P. Shivakoti, Senior Scientist and Head, KVK Namthang, highlighted the various activities undertaken by KVK in supporting the farming community through scientific farming practices, farmer training programmes, field demonstrations, technology dissemination and farmer-scientist interactions. He emphasised the importance of connecting agricultural research with its practical application at the farmers' field level.

Smt. Nirmala Moktan, Additional Director, Agriculture & Horticulture, shared her valuable experiences and insights gained over 32 years of dedicated service in the Agriculture and Horticulture sector. Reflecting on her professional journey, she spoke about the evolution of agriculture, the challenges faced by farming communities and the importance of sustained efforts towards agricultural development. She encouraged officers and field functionaries to remain committed to their responsibilities, maintain close coordination with farmers and ensure that departmental initiatives and government schemes reach the intended beneficiaries.

The Chief Guest, Smt. Doma Lepcha, encouraged farmers to continue their agricultural activities with dedication and urged the younger generation to take greater interest in farming. Referring to the successful cultivation of finger millet during the current year, she encouraged farmers to continue traditional crops while exploring high-value crops such as turmeric and ginger. She also highlighted the potential of animal husbandry, particularly sheep rearing, considering the growing demand for medicinal and high-value meat products. She stressed the importance of crop insurance and encouraged households to grow their own vegetables for healthier and organic consumption. She further urged farmers to remain committed to agriculture and contribute towards self-reliance. Highlighting the presence of ten farmers' federations in Namthang, she encouraged farmers to make greater use of government support and available opportunities.

A dedicated awareness session on the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) was delivered by Shri Wangyal Lepcha, Deputy Director, Agriculture Department, explaining the importance of crop insurance, farmers' premium contributions, notified crops, insurance coverage and the procedure for enrolment and reporting crop losses. Farmers were encouraged to take advantage of the scheme to safeguard their agricultural livelihoods.

A financial literacy and banking awareness session was also conducted by Smt. Chongmit Lepcha, State Bank of India (SBI), Namthang Branch, who briefed farmers and SHG members on banking facilities, agricultural loans, credit opportunities and the importance of maintaining a good CIBIL score. She also emphasised timely loan repayment, financial discipline and responsible credit management to improve farmers' access to institutional finance.

The technical session covered scientific crop production, horticulture, plant protection, animal husbandry, integrated farming practices and financial literacy for farmers and SHGs. The gathering also emphasised project development, investment in farms, conservation of agricultural land and the potential of vertical farming to address future land constraints.

The programme was conducted by Smt. Karma Peden Kaleon, SMS (Extension), KVK Namthang, as the Master of Ceremony. The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Smt. Meena Sharma, Agriculture Development Officer, Namthang, who expressed gratitude to all dignitaries, participating farmers, departmental officials, scientists and stakeholders for their valuable contributions towards the successful organisation of the event.

The Krishi Mela 2026 reaffirmed the collective commitment towards empowering farmers, encouraging agricultural entrepreneurship, strengthening women's participation and promoting sustainable agriculture in Sikkim