

Press Release from ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Sikkim Centre
Farmers' fair cum awareness programme on Conservation and use of millet landraces of North-Eastern Himalayas organized at Dzongu, North Sikkim

ICAR NEH Sikkim center in Collaboration with ICAR- National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi, ICAR-Indian Institutes of Millet Research, Hyderabad and Department of Agriculture/ Horticulture, Govt. of Sikkim organized Farmers' fair and awareness programme on Conservation and use of millet landraces of North-Eastern Himalayas on 27th November 2025 at Lingdong village, Dzongu under NEH programme of CRP Agro-biodiversity project.

Total 132 farmer participants attended the programme. Mrs. Rachna Gurung (Additional Director, Agriculture & Director, SAMETI, Dept. of Agriculture, Govt. of Sikkim) graced the programme as the Chief Guest; Shri Dup Tshering Kazi (Joint Director, Dept. of Horticulture, Govt. of Sikkim), Dr. Sushil Pandey (Principal Scientist, ICAR –NBPGR, New Delhi) and Dr. Chitra Devi Pandey (Principal Scientist, ICAR –NBPGR, New Delhi) embellished as the 'Guest of Honor'. Seven display stalls with farmers produce dominated by millet based products were inaugurated by the chief Guest and other dignitaries. Mr. Sonam Tshering Lepcha (Sangtok village) and Mr. Chewang Lepcha displayed their diverse millet collections; whereas, traditional post-harvest options were displayed by Eden garden group and Upper Dzongu farmer clusters from Lingkoo and Kussong Group. Mr. Tahering Ongden Lepcha exhibited trout -millet momos along with traditional millet based Lepcha preparations and snacks.

In the Farmer- Scientist interaction session, Dr. Ashok Kumar (HoRC, ICAR Research Complex for NEH region, Sikkim Center, Tadong) greeted the gathering and focused on the importance of conserving, managing, and sustainably involving the genetic resources of different agricultural crops involving multi stakeholders and the Line Department. He also expressed major concern on the present rate agro-biodiversity loss as experienced in Dzongu over past few decades Mrs. Ongkit Lepcha (Chairman FPO) focused on the prospects of marketing of millet products. Ms. Hessey Bhutia (Inspector, Horticulture Department, Govt. of Sikkim) emphasized the importance of collaborative venture between ICAR and Line Departments towards the improvement of farmers' livelihood. Dr. Chitra Devi Pandey (Principal Scientist-ICAR-NBPGR) emphasized the potential prospects of millet popularization towards facilitating climate resilient agriculture in the Sikkim Himalaya region. Dr. Sushil Pandey (Principal Scientist-ICAR-NBPGR), emphasized the importance of Genetic resource conservation through participatory approach involving both younger and older generations, Proper Documentation and field scale germplasm evaluation for developing climate resilient farming systems for improve farmer livelihoods and income was also emphasized.

In her concluding remark as the Chief Guest, Mrs. Rachna Gurung (Additional Director, Agriculture & Director, SAMETI, Dept. of Agriculture, Govt. of Sikkim) emphasized the future need for development of climate resilient millet varieties of the Sikkim Himalaya, with the potential prospects and constraints in post-harvest processing and value addition for millets towards raising the farmers income through watershed development approach. Finally formal vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Saurav Saha (Senior Scientist, Agricultural Physics), followed by farmers' field visit at Dzongu, North Sikkim.