

Regional Agriculture Fair (Eastern Region), 2024 (February 03-05, 2024)

The glimpses of the fair:

The Regional Agriculture Fair (Eastern Region), 2024 was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India and convened by the ICAR-National Institute of Secondary Agriculture, Namkum, Ranchi at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Diyankel, Torpa, Khunti, Jharkhand during 03-05 February, 2024. The theme of the fair was “*Sustainable & Circular Bioeconomy – A Catalyst for Atmanirbhar evam Viksit Bharat*”. The fair was inaugurated by the chief guest Hon’ble Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare & Minister of Tribal Affairs, Shri Arjun Munda *jee* on 3rd February, 2024. Padma Bhushan Shri Kariya Munda *jee*, former Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha was the guest of honor on the occasion. Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR, Shri Koche Munda, Hon’ble MLA, Torpa, Shri Ravindra Rai, former MP, Koderma also graced the occasion. Public representatives and officials of central and state government, ICAR dignitaries were also present during the inaugural session. The minister also inaugurated the newly established Administrative Building of the KVK.



The Regional Agriculture Fair aimed to sensitize the farming community in the eastern region of India to the latest agri-technologies and farming practices. The fair provided an exclusive platform for agricultural transformation to different stakeholders, especially the farmers regarding the modernization of traditional practices. This fair also focused on enhancing farmers’ income and profit through technological interventions from the grassroots level. The prime goal of the fair was to generate awareness about Govt. policies, disseminate information about the latest technologies, and create meaningful linkages between the farming community, and public or private sectors to uplift the living status of tribal farmers in particular and other farmers in general.

During his speech, the honorable minister highlighted the importance of the fair and central government's effort to make the farmers self-sufficient by doubling their income. He also emphasized that integrating science and technology into traditional farming can make farmers self-reliant which will positively impact the country's economy. He expressed his concern about India's growing population, climate change, and environmental pollution. The minister said that science and technology should be focused on increasing productivity, organic farming, nutrition, and agro-processing.

The fair featured 139 stalls by ICAR institutes (28), KVKs (25), FPOs (5), other government organizations (21), SHGs (11), and NGOs (41) each offering insights into various farming aspects. A total of 13 *Kishan Gosthis* were organized on various topics like natural farming, cropping systems, farm mechanization, nutrient management, Nutrigarden, crop production, animal husbandry, poultry science, minor forest produce, mushroom production, fishery, tasar and lac production, etc.

More than 600 farmers were distributed various inputs like agricultural tools, machinery, animal feed, mineral mixture, fishing net, etc. worth more than ₹. 40 Lakhs (Rupees Fourty Lakhs Only) by various ICAR Institutes as well as central and state government agencies.



Around 10000 farmers from various parts of Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal attended and participated in the fair. Majority of the farmers belonged to tribal communities. Farm equipment, seed bins, animal feeds, fish nets, cattle feed and medicine kits etc. were distributed among many farmers by the honorable minister during the inauguration session of the fair. The farmers interacted with scientists, entrepreneurs, company representatives, NGOs, FPOs and gained knowledge about the latest agricultural technologies related to seeds, varieties, production processes, farm machinery, fertilizers, crop and soil management, use of drones in agriculture, etc.



His Excellency, the Governor of Jharkhand, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan *jee* was the chief guest of the closing ceremony of the fair on 5th February, 2024. The Vice-Chancellor of Birsa Agricultural University, Dr. S. C. Dubey also graced the occasion. During his speech, the Governor said that organizing a grand fair of this capacity on the soil of Bhagwan Birsa Munda *jee* is appreciable. He highlighted that along with crop farming farmers should adopt alternate income sources like animal husbandry, poultry farming, horticulture etc. to improve their income. He also said that central schemes like *PM Kisan Samman Nidhi* and *PM Fasal Bima Yojna* helped the farmers immensely. He hailed the *annadata kisan* for their role in improving the country's economy. Many progressive farmers, stalls were awarded by him during the program.

1. Impact:

The fair created awareness which had large and visible impact among the various stakeholders specially the farmers. It was a complete farmers fair in all respect, properly planned and executed. The participation by various research organizations, public and private agencies, banking organizations has given a wholesome effect to the fair and farmers could get exposure to diverse sphere of agriculture and interact with the experts and clarify their doubts physically. They have learned and practically experienced the recent development in agriculture, collected

the information and details of required technologies from the exhibitions and technical experts, which will have a long-lasting impact in developing agriculture in the region. FPOs and SHGs could use the platform to show case their own products and sell the products leading to wider dissemination and earning.

2. Brief summary of the regional farmers fair (Eastern region)-2024 and its impact

- More than 10000 farmers from various districts of Jharkhand and neighboring states like Bihar, West Bengal, and Odisha participated in the fair.
- Majority of the farmers belonged to tribal communities.
- Farmers interacted with scientists, Govt. officials, private organizations and gained knowledge about the latest agricultural technologies.
- Interest among the farmers was observed regarding the application of drones in agriculture.
- Farmers visited the stalls and got exposed to the exhibits.
- Experts from different organizations shared their knowledge about specific topics during *Kisan Gosthis* and answered the queries raised by the farmers.
- Best Progressive farmers/ Best Entrepreneurs/ Best Startups were identified and awards are given by Hon'ble Agricultural Minister in inaugural session.
- KVK at a Glance prepared by Head, KVK, Khunti was released in the inaugural session by Hon'ble Agricultural Minister and other dignitaries.
- Out of 139 stalls fifteen stalls awarded with first, second, third and appreciation award and the awards were distributed by His Excellency Governor of Jharkhand in valedictory session.

3. How farmers benefitted:

- About 139 stalls by ICAR institutes (28), KVKs (25), FPOs (5), other government organizations (21), SHGs (11), and NGOs (41) show case different technologies for farmers.
- Enhanced skill and capacity of farmers in advanced based farming through exposure and interaction with experts/resource persons

- Live demonstration of Agri-drones in agriculture was carried out in the mela ground for the benefit of farmers.
- Farmers interacted with different exhibition stall for gathering more knowledge about new technology, varieties and farm implements
- About 13 *Kishan Gosthis* were organized on various topics like natural farming, cropping systems, farm mechanization, nutrient management, crop production, animal husbandry, fishery, tasar and lac production, etc. through which farmers got benefitted.

4. Strengths and how to improve it further

Strength:

- The major strength of the Fair was participation of large number of organizations covering diverse fields like Research Organizations, private and public organizations, Universities, Seed Companies, Fertilizer Association, FPOs, Universities, SHGs and above all the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs through ATARI). Thus, team effort along with proper coordination led to the success of the regional farmers' fair-2024.
- Participation by a large number of Farmers > 10000 is the major success and strength of the fair.
- Involvement of different ICAR institutes, SAUs, ATARI, Patna, ATARI, Kolkatta was a major strength mainly for exhibition, coordination and farmers participation through KVKs.
- The large ground, adequate pandal/stalls, proper preparations, wide media coverage and publicity,
- Involvement of higher authorities and executives in planning led to the success of the fair.

5. How to improve it further:

- There is always scope for improvement of any event by proper planning and effective implementation. In case of present event hardly three weeks was available for preparation, thus most activities were performed very hurriedly. If sufficient time was given some more improvement could have been possible.
- Due to shortage of time, technical sessions were organised very briefly and there was less time available for interaction with farmers.

- Coordination with Ministry, State departments, Central Govt. agency and other stakeholders may further improve the effectiveness.
- Empowering farmers about recent technological advancement and marketing of their produce
- Creation of facilities for reduction in post-harvest losses of produce at village level- is a major challenge in the area where programme was organised. Thus, this aspect needs more emphasis in future.
- Farmers are demanding shops/ vendor at their vicinity for procurement of required inputs (seeds, pesticides, nutrients, etc) with proper guidance.
- Farmers voiced a demand for the establishment of cold storage and warehouse structures within the fair area which can be addressed in the future.

6. Gaps and how to fill those gaps (feedback of farmers)

- Securing funding for organizational and farmer mobilization remains a pressing concern.
- Adequate time, ideally at least two months, is necessary to efficiently organize an event of such scale and breadth like the Regional Agriculture Fair.
- The challenges posed by remote locations hinder the mobilization of farmers, necessitating additional funding.
- Enhancements in coordination among various departments are imperative.
- Bad weather (rainy days) two days before was also an important issue.
- The promotion of artisan skills should be integrated into the local fair.
- Farmers seek more comprehensive information on utilizing solar pumps and fencing to protect their crops from wild animals.
- The mela could have provided a platform to showcase farmers' produce and receive recognition for their efforts.