

Webinar – “Rice cultivation with drip irrigation and fertigation” by Dr P Soman, 24-06-2021

As part of the “*Bharat Ka Amrut Mahotsav*” - celebration of 75th years of India's Independence, ICAR-IIRR in association with the Society for Advancement of Rice Research (SARR), Rajendranagar, Hyderabad organised a webinar on 24th June 2021 at 11 AM on the topic "Rice cultivation with drip irrigation and fertigation". The key speaker of the webinar was Dr P Soman, Vice President & Chief Agronomist (Global), Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd. More than 100 participants joined the online platform to attend the webinar from India and other countries like Iran and Israel. The webinar was started with the welcome greetings by Dr A P Padmakumari, Chairperson, Seminar Organising committee followed by the introductory address by Dr R M Sundaram, Director, IIRR. In his introductory remarks, Dr Sundaram pointed out the role of conventional and molecular breeding techniques in improving the water use efficiency of rice crop. He also mentioned that drip irrigation has a potential role in reducing water use. This was followed by the formal introduction of the key speaker by Dr A P Padmakumari.

In his talk, Dr Soman mentioned. the efficient use of irrigation water in agriculture and the progress of irrigation technologies in the modern world. He clarified the basics of drip irrigation technology very briefly and emphasized the advantages of the technology over the conventional irrigation methods. He explained in detail the relationship between the soil type, texture and water holding capacity and the various factors to be considered for installation of drip irrigation. He also showcased experimental outcomes of implementing drip system in direct-seeded rice conducted in different locations. According to him, the foremost factor in the successful implementation of the drip system in any crop lies in the understanding of the soil-plant-water relationship. He mentioned that there are challenges such as micronutrient deficiency *viz.* zinc and iron and timely control of weeds in the crop but the most difficult problem is the mindset that rice can only be grown under flood irrigation.

The talk was followed by a question answer session wherein Dr RM Kumar, PS & Head (Agronomy) served as a moderator for this session. In response to audience queries, Dr Soman replied that there is no established fact to date on the relationship of duration of rice varieties and drip irrigation, so as in case of implementing the drip system in different soil types although sandy soils may not be suitable for cultivation of rice under drip system. He indicated that there are a lot of opportunities to study the root architecture of the crop as well as the insect pest dynamics influenced by drip irrigation.

The webinar was attended by more than 100 participants and nearly 81 views were recorded on YouTube.

The program ended with a formal vote of thanks by Dr S K Mangrauthia,, SS.

