

National Review Meeting on Cactus pear organized

A National Review Meeting on Cactus was organized by the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Regional Research Station, Bhuj during 16-18 January, 2017 to review the progress made in cultivation of Cactus pear (*Opuntia ficus-indica*). About 100 delegates from ICARDA, ICAR Institutes, State Agricultural Universities, several Government Departments, NGOs and Cooperatives participated in the meeting. On this occasion, Chief Guest, Dr. C.B. Jadeja, Vice Chancellor, KSKV Kutchchh University stressed on making comprehensive efforts to supplement the existing fodder supply in Kutchchh region through cactus especially during dry and lean periods as the livestock play a major role in income generation and sustenance to climatic vagaries. He pointed out that dairy and animal husbandry organizations need to take this crop forward for large scale adoption.



Dr. O.P. Yadav, Director, CAZRI reviewed the progress of cactus introduction, evaluation and upscaling in different regions of country by various institutes and stakeholders. He emphasized to undertake systematic and concentrated efforts to explore the possibility of cactus expansion for the benefit of farmers. He informed that this meeting is one of the first of its kind in India, which brought all organizations together working on cactus introduction, evaluation and utilization.



Dr. Sawsan Hassan from ICARDA, Jordan elaborated on ICARDA–India collaborative programme on cactus and pointed out that cactus is a climate smart crop with potential to mitigate the effect of climate change in the drylands.

Dr. N.V. Patil, Director, NRC on Camel highlighted the importance of the meeting for sharing the experiences by different organizations. Dr. P.K. Ghosh, Director, IGFRRI complemented CAZRI and ICARDA to initiate first review meeting on cactus in India. He highlighted that at present the target land for cactus could be wasteland and degraded lands. This will ensure revival of degraded lands by arresting soil degradation and at the same time providing green fodder during lean periods.

A road map was developed for further upscaling and to address various areas of research with respect to adaptation, agronomic interventions, multiplication and alternate uses of cactus such as fruits and medicinal purposes. That there is a need to develop linkages among different organizations such as ICAR institutes, ICARDA, Universities, SAUs, NGOs, Govt. departments, Cooperative bodies, Dairy enterprises and Farmers.

Dr. Devi Dayal, Head, RRS, Bhuj proposed vote of thanks.

