

Dr. R.S. Paroda, Former secretary (DARE), GOI and Former DG (ICAR) visits ICAR-CAZRI

Padma Bhushan Dr. R.S. Paroda, Former Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), GOI, and Former Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) visited CAZRI on 8-9 February 2024. Dr. Paroda visited the experimental field and appreciated the working models of integrated crop cafeteria, low-cost polyhouses, automatic input delivery system in precision farming block of the institute. He also appreciated the work done on systems of integrated farming and new innovations in arid horticulture (having orchards of dragon fruit, fig etc.), agri-voltaic system, cumin breeding experimental block, Introduction of new perennial species of *Melia dubia* and *Gmelina arborea*, alternate fodder resources like spineless cactus, moringa, and napier grass and crops breeding. During the discussion with scientists, he was also informed, about the impact of these interventions on farmers' income, livelihood, and nutritional security in the drought-prone regions.

Dr. Paroda appreciated the role of the institute in enhancing the shifting of sand dunes of the Thar Desert into greenery in arid regions and in developing and deploying the agri-technologies that not only increased productivity but also enhanced the resilience of farming in one of the most challenging agro-eco-system of the world. He emphasized that India's advancements in agriculture have made the country self-reliant and enabled the export of various agricultural products such as paddy, pulses, and fruits. Dr. Paroda appreciated the innovations being undertaken by the institute in the area of seed spices, fodder production, and protected cultivation of high-value crops. The country's progress and development have been driven by the green revolution, blue revolution, and milk revolution. Dr. Paroda emphasized the importance of innovation in increasing farmers' production and income, providing access to markets and the latest knowledge, and inspiring youth to engage in farming and agricultural entrepreneurship. The Covid pandemic has highlighted the need to focus on local food items, implement post-harvest processing, and value-added agricultural produce.

Earlier, Dr. Paroda was accorded a warm welcome by the Director and whole staff of the institute. Director Dr. O.P. Yadav presented an overview of research strategies and achievements of the institute. Dr. Paoda also addressed the staff at the new auditorium of the institute. He cherished the overall development of research infrastructure created in the recent past and loaded the recognitions of the institute by winning several awards.

