सत्यमेव जयते
डॉ. एम. एल. जाट
सचिव (डेयर) एवं महानिदेशक (भाकृअनुप)
Dr. M. L. Jat
SECRETARY (DARE) & DIRECTOR GENERAL (ICAR)

भारत सरकार
कृषि अनुसंधान और शिक्षा विभाग एवं
भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद,
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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
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Dear Colleagues,

वंदे मातरम्

Warm greetings and best wishes to all of you for a happy and productive **New Year 2026**.

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank each one of you for your dedication and continued support in advancing our shared mission of agricultural development in the country. A new year brings with it renewed energy and a valuable opportunity to reflect on our achievements while setting an outline for priorities for the year ahead.

Over the past year, we have recorded steady and tangible progress across key areas, including development of new and impactful technologies, rollout of innovative programmes, strengthening of the agricultural education system, and firm adoption of the principle of "*One Organization–One Purpose–One Narrative*". Importantly, 2025 emerged as a landmark year, with record levels of production in foodgrains, horticultural crops, and milk. These accomplishments powerfully demonstrate the collective strength of our scientific, academic, and extension systems and the dedication of our teams across the country.

New Initiatives

All major Agriculture Missions announced by the Government of India in the Union Budget of 2025-26, align with ICAR's mandate and ICAR is serving as the main scientific anchor for their accomplishment. These include the *Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses* (to achieve self-reliance in tur, urad, and masoor through improved seeds, productivity, post-harvest management); *Mission for Cotton Productivity* (to enhance cotton yield and sustainability through climate-resilient varieties, mechanization, and best agronomic practices); *National Mission on High-Yielding Seeds* (strengthening R&D and commercialization of high-yielding, pest-resistant, and climate-resilient crop varieties); *National Makhana Board* (institutional support for makhana production, processing, value addition, and marketing) and the *Second National Genebank* (for safety duplication of important crop germplasm). Further, through focused initiatives in natural farming, Clean Plant Program, and nano research, ICAR is driving science-led sustainability, productivity, and resilience in Indian agriculture.

The nation-wide *Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan* (VKSA) (29 May to 12 June 2025), emerged as an unprecedented, convergence-driven national outreach under the unifying theme "*One Nation–One Agriculture–One Team.*" Through the coordinated efforts of 2,170 multidisciplinary teams, the VKSA delivered an extensive outreach by organizing 60,917 awareness programmes across 728 districts, directly engaging and benefiting over 1.35 crore farmers nationwide. Beyond outreach, the campaign generated substantial actionable intelligence, with more than 500 research, extension, and policy-relevant issues systematically documented, providing critical inputs for future strategy, innovation, and reform.

In a transformative move, ICAR for the first time introduced comprehensive "*Gender*" and "*Communications*" policies while reinforcing its *"Research Data Management*" framework, advancing its commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and data-centric operations. The Gender strategy promotes equity and integration of gender perspectives across research and extension, enhancing participation, leadership diversity, and relevance for women farmers. The Communication strategy ensures unified, proactive engagement with stakeholders, reinforcing "*One Organization–One Purpose–One Narrative*". Meanwhile, the upgraded Research Data Management Policy standardizes data generation, curation, and sharing, enhancing research transparency, reproducibility, and evidence-based policymaking.

Strengthening global partnerships remained a key focus during the year. Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed with the Pennsylvania State University, USA; Federal State-Financed Institution "Federal Centre for Animal Health" (FGBI "ARRIAH"), Vladimir, Russia; Togolese Institute of Agronomic Research (ITRA), Togo; African Plant Nutrition Institute (APNI), Morocco; Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA), Brazil; and Murdoch University, Australia. Work plans were also finalized with the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI), International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), USA, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington DC, USA, and National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), Argentina. In addition, a MoU was signed between ICAR and Western Sydney University, Australia, further strengthening academic and research collaborations.

In administrative matters Zonal interactive meetings on administrative, financial, and related issues were initiated to improve coordination, strengthen team spirit, and ensure ease of doing business. Direct consultations between scientists and senior officials of ICAR were conducted to align research outcomes with policy frameworks.

For the first time, DARE/ICAR participated in the Conference of Chief Secretaries to the Government of India (Chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister), presenting its workplan related to *Agricultural Higher Education* and *Skilling in Agriculture*.

Major Research and Academic Achievements

During 2025, a total of 366 agri-horticultural crop varieties and 152 production and protection technologies were developed. Notably, the world's first genome-edited rice varieties DRR Dhan 100 (KAMLA) and Pusa DST Rice-1, were developed, along with the world's first registered breed of mithun and the world's first genome-edited buffalo. The unprecedented increase in pulse production to 25.24 Mt and the highest-ever oilseed production of 42.61 Mt stand as clear testimony to the effectiveness of our technological innovations and their widespread adoption by farmers.

In animal sciences, significant achievements include the development of vaccines for Foot-and-Mouth Disease, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), and Canine Parvovirus, the development of two chicken varieties, and the registration of 18 indigenous breeds of livestock, small ruminants, and poultry. The fisheries sector also recorded important milestones, including breeding and seed production technologies for four ornamental fish species, the development of *ArguVax-1* - a peptide-based vaccine for controlling the fish ectoparasite Argulus, and the introduction of a potent GnRH formulation, *Ovaqua*, for induced breeding in fish.

In all, 792 partnership agreements were forged with 600+ public and private organizations, farmers, and entrepreneurs. This collaborative effort involved 66 ICAR institutes and enabled the transfer of 475 technologies spanning a wide range of disciplines. The Indian Patent Office granted 55 patents, which made ICAR's cumulative number of granted patents to 733.

Through the development of location-specific agricultural protocols and the implementation of large-scale field demonstrations across diverse agro-ecological zones, we have facilitated measurable improvements in soil health, reduced input costs, and strengthened overall farm sustainability. Furthermore, the creation of a nation-wide land degradation database, integrated with high-resolution soil spectral data, will enable the advancement of non-contact diagnostic tools and targeted strategies for soil remediation and ecosystem restoration at scale.

During the year, 2,40,900 Front Line Demonstrations and 73,063 training programmes were conducted for rapid lab-to-land transfer of location-specific technologies, climate-resilient crop varieties, and improved livestock practices through our nationwide network of research institutes, agricultural universities, and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). Under the Crop Residue Management initiative, a remarkable reduction of 90 per cent in fire incidents, particularly in Punjab and Haryana, highlights the success of sustained awareness efforts, technological interventions, and policy convergence, reinforcing ICAR's leadership in translating science into national development outcomes.

Leading agricultural institutions, including ICAR–IARI, New Delhi; PAU, Ludhiana; TNAU, Coimbatore; SKUAST, Kashmir; and UAS, Bengaluru, secured high NIRF rankings, enhancing India's preparedness to address emerging global challenges in agriculture through quality education. Concerted efforts were also made to strengthen undergraduate programmes, improve coordination with State Agricultural Universities, and streamline undergraduate admissions and academic alignment of agricultural institutes with ICAR.

To enhance capacity building of all staff of ICAR, *Mission Karmayogi* was successfully implemented with the onboarding of more than 11,000 employees on the i-GOT platform, who collectively completed over 49,000 courses. During 2025, training programmes were organized for 540 employees of ICAR Headquarters, DARE, and ASRB, and 116 Master Trainers were trained and developed to build the capacity of all cadres of DARE/ICAR under the *Rashtriya Karmayogi Jan Seva* Program of the Capacity Building Commission, Government of India. More than 20,000 undergraduate students also completed RAWE activities with a special emphasis on natural farming.

For better monitoring and performance tracking, we have established a dedicated Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment (MELIA) unit at ICAR HQ under direct supervision of Director General and to be facilitated by NIAP.

Administrative Reforms

In 2025, ICAR inducted 206 scientists, 13 AO/FAOs, and about 52 Assistants, all of whom successfully completed FOCARS training, while 219 Senior Scientists were posted across ICAR institutes. Results for recruitment of 21 Assistant Director (OL) and 293 Assistants were also notified, with joining expected by February 2026. A new scorecard under the Career Advancement Scheme for assessment and promotion of scientists was developed and notified. Procedures for foreign visits were simplified, and a new transfer policy for ICAR scientists has been introduced.

In line with the "*One India-One Examination*" policy, ICAR implemented major reforms in direct recruitment for administrative posts in coordination with DoPT, UPSC, and SSC. Recruitment through UPSC and SSC panels for Group A, B, and C posts was notified to reduce delays, save resources, and ensure timely filling of vacancies.

Cadre Review Committees for technical and administrative cadres were constituted, administrative work was decentralized to Subject Matter Divisions (SMDs), KVK-related court cases were reduced by nearly 50%.

Looking Ahead

While we take pride in the achievements of the past year, we must also remain focused on our commitments for the year ahead. Each institute is encouraged to set specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound targets. As we are in the process of EFC preparation, institutes are requested to include the highest-priority researchable issues in their documents and to avoid duplication or repetition of research efforts. Our key priorities include achieving *Atmanirbharta* in fertilizers, promoting 'agriculture for health' through agri-food system approach, advancing precision farming, accelerating the use of artificial intelligence, robotics, machine learning, and digital delivery in agriculture, and strengthening initiatives in genome editing, bio-engineering, secondary agriculture, bio-based food product development for agri-food transformation, along with the initiation of dedicated plant health missions and strengthening KVKs as district level skill and knowledge centres. The way forward for agriculture lies in building a 100% skilled human capital to lead a digital, AI, and data-driven transformation, ensuring climate-resilient systems that produce nutritional and healthy food within planetary boundaries, thereby achieving self-reliance and export promotion through a strengthened public-private-peasant partnership.

As we enter 2026, let us unite in the spirit of "***One ICAR***" to drive innovation, excellence, and lasting impact in agriculture aligned with vision of Viksit Bharat. Together, through focused, outcome-driven efforts, we can build a globally respected organization that serves people and the planet. Let's move forward with energy, purpose, and shared commitment to make this year truly transformative.

शुभ नव वर्ष (2026) और जय हिंद!

Yours sincerely,

(M. L. Jat)