

## Towards a dynamic agriculture...

India today is hailed world over as a grain power capable to export and donate food grains with magnanimity both in times of peace and disaster to any nation. No country will dare to term India as a begging bowl as was done in fifties, sixties and early seventies. When Indian grain harvest crossed 254 million tonnes, the food hungry importing countries were bubbling with joy to welcome the breakthrough as it will help them also to attain a better food security cover. Perhaps no achievement of Indian nation since independence is equivalent to this shining accomplishment. The source providing perennial strength to the nation to bring a Food Security Bill for making available the right of food to 80 crores people at a whopping cost of 1.34 lakh crores annually is again the above bumper grain production. Once implemented it will be more or less matchless model legislation to the world undertaken by a country with a population of over 120 crores and 100 crores domestic animals.

### **Behind the scene....**

The real heroes of the above fabulous achievement are our own untiring farmers, especially the small and marginal farmers. Seventy percent of our population was engaged in farming at the time of independence and now it has come down to 50 percent. But the real story has a different saga to narrate. The population was only 35 crores at the dawn of independence and now it is crossing 120 crores. So the number of people who earn their livelihood security from the farming has really increased from 20 crores to 60 crores. The farmers of India during the period has made India a very prosperous country by enhancing the production of not only food grains but also commodities like milk, spices, egg, meat, fish, beverage crops, industrial raw materials like cotton, export oriented crops like tea, coffee, cardamom etc., etc... India has also succeeded in the area of storage trade and export of these produce. The success accomplished in the sphere of developing value added products and manufacturing it for internal and external trade has made the country an industrial force, producing quality products and supplying around the world. But the sad fact is that farmers are getting only a meagre farm gate price which provide a pathetic profit incapable to meet their growing needs. The real profit makers of the above transformation of farm produce into value added high price materials are the trade and industrial forces whose style of living and asset generation has helped the country to 'produce' more billionaires in the list of economic giants of the world.

## **The Challenges...**

Today as mentioned earlier India occupies a prominent position in the world for its agriculture. The achievements made during the last six decades after independence has not only succeeded and making big rise in the agriculture production which in its totality has also helped to create a global image of self sufficiency in different spheres of agricultural production. "But India still is the home of more that 27 % of world's undernourished population and 79.2% of their children under the age of three, 56.2 % of women and 24.3% of men are malnourished and anaemic. It is shameful that India has the largest number of hungry people than any other country, 2.1 million of their children die every year before reaching 5 years of age, that over 60% of the children (under 5 years) are wasted, stunted underweight or a combination of these and that about 30% of the babies are born under weighed. Despite poverty removal being an important stake policy for a long time, the progress so far made towards having the number of hungry by 2015 under the UN Millennum Development Programme is of the track". (M.S. Swaminathan).

Mammoth challenges sighted above call for more vigilance and a visionary approach in framing and implementing future agricultural programmes. Already official agencies have gone on record that 40% of the farming population of the country are eagerly waiting for other opportunities to leave the profession. Several studies also indicate that farmers as well as agriculture labour are very particular not to lead or encourage the younger generation to take up farming as an enterprise to earn a livelihood security. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) may be the starting programme for such a novel change. Our future approach should be to empower the small and marginal farmer to take up farming, handling of the produce including processing product value addition and marketing and generate maximum profit by getting them organized with the assistance of the research development and funding agencies. The approach should not be to force the farmer and farm labour to leave the farming by transferring the land to rich tenant or corporate and work in the same as the paid labour or employees of the "new wave of cash rich tenant in which ever sweet- name they appear". The strength of Indian farmer must be assessed in a different context certainly not as a raw material producer and leave the produce after primary processing for a paltry profit and make the trade, technology and fund rich industrial force prosper.

## **Why a farmer oriented policy....?**

National policies should become more small farmer friendly as farmers unrests are erupting in the form of suicides, leaving villages en masse, large areas are left barren by calling "giving holiday to cropping", shortage of labour, escalation of wages, making production unprofitable etc. must be seen as undesirable developments which will make the agricultural production in

different sectors unsustainable. Quiet often market forces functioning at different levels are free from the calamities like various price falls and damages whereas these two challenges are making the farmer's capability to continuing the task impossible. But at the same time all forces working in the farm front are free from the effects of disasters. This creates a condition that when an agricultural calamity comes farmers are becoming the only group which is forced to bear the entire loss.

Indian farmers have truly brought in enormous economic prosperity to the country during the last six decades after independence. They could achieve the same due to the great progress made in research, extension, development sectors and administrative changes done in different areas of activities. But much more has to be done for the welfare of farmers to continue the existing efforts and produce more results for providing all round prosperity. To accomplish this ideal situation all the sectors assisting the farmers as listed above should be developed so that the existing infrastructure and situation will enable the farming community to fulfil the aspiration and trust expected from them by the nation. In short the effectiveness of the accomplishment of the above various sections will be evaluated by the influence it provides in enhancing the farmers income and profit and also their total prosperity. Farmers' prosperity generation will be the most important theme and goal of all future farm development projects since their welfare will keep the nation secure not only in the food front but also on all sectors which require farm oriented products for the betterment of the life of Indian people.

### **Kerala's Agricultural Development Policy...**

Kerala produced its first policy on agriculture in the year 1992. It was a welcome document providing a vision on the lines through which Kerala agriculture should be guided. As the first of its kind the policy has given guidance to frame different programmes of great use to the state. I take this opportunity to congratulate, Sri.K.Karunakaran, the then Chief Minister, Sri.P.P.George, the then Minister for Agriculture and Sri.M.S.Joseph, the then Agricultural Production Commissioner for producing and presenting such a valuable document. Since then 20 years have gone introducing significant changes in our farming sector.

Kerala government took a very bold step when it decided to make a farmer as the chairman of the committee to give shape to our future agricultural policy. I view it as a very welcome positive indication of the great faith and confidence the administration has got in the farming communities capability. I thank the Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri.Oommen Chandy, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Sri.K.P.Mohanan and all members of the cabinet for the great gesture and it has enhanced the responsibility of the committee to produce a document of immense value to the state.

***The genesis...***

We have interacted as stated in the introduction and several other pages in the report, with farmers, farmer leaders, farmers associations, leaders of three tier LSGs, development departments, corporations, scientists, academicians, media representatives, farm journalists, extension specialists, economists, labour organizations, service organizations, award winners, plantation representatives and several other agencies interested in agriculture to collect their suggestions at length.

I am personally indebted to them for the whole hearted co-operation extended to the committee for the suggestions, criticisms and visions presented before us. This has helped us in providing an in-depth study on the real farming situation of the state and to make farming a very charming enterprise of our state popularly described as 'Gods own Country'.

***The background...***

Kerala agriculture with all its critical tensions described at different quarters still continue to be the number one among the Indian states in generating maximum monetary return from a hectare of farm land. Kerala is producing over Rs. 53,000/- per ha of farm land now. No other state could reach this level so far. It is also a fact that, the farmers of Kerala irrespective of the happenings of large scale conversion of wet land and garden land for unavoidable social and community needs ranging from housing to transport, tourism and entertainment continue to produce quality agro produce which still fetch very high price at the terminal and export markets. For eg. when Palakkad Matta is sold in the upcountry metro markets for Rs.65/- to Rs.70/- per kg the producer in Kerala is selling at Rs.22.6/-. The difference goes as profit to one or two middle level trade agencies. Reason for the farmers' poor return from his very hard earned crop is the pathetic fact that he continue to be a simple raw material producer and supplier. This holds good in almost all the farm produce like pepper, rubber, cashew, coconut, vegetables, fruits, ginger, milk, meat and egg. This is a very serious weakness of the farming sector of Kerala.

In short though the farmers are producing quality goods and consumers are paying premium price to acquire them farmers are denied of the same and the market forces with very strong trade network, technology support and cash rich fund pools are amassing wealth using the farmers produce. No proper estimation on this trade secret is not even attempted. So the prime need should be to give shape to farmers own producer companies which will handle storing, processing, value addition, domestic marketing and export themselves or through their federation. This will facilitate the farmer to get a substantial income hike which will empower him to develop his enterprise and pass on the same to future generation and make them capable to have a decent living with social acceptance and respect. Future policy of all agricultural programmes

should have emphasis on these vital aspects i.e. the capacity of the project to provide more economic gain and profit to the farmer. The success of each programme should be evaluated based on its capacity to achieve the above objective.

### **Opportunities ahead...**

Kerala agriculture offers a very wide range of opportunities. At present farming has a very narrow interpretation as a profession. Large scale holdings has almost disappeared apart from the plantations in the state. Statistics reveals that out of the 66.5 lakh holdings, 95.17% of the same fall under the group of less than a hectare. Even in this group vast majority are with 5 to 25 cents. The topography of the land and the climatic condition of Kerala are conducive for several avocations which need little or even no land, like beekeeping, mushroom culture, floriculture, flower processing, stall fed goat rearing, cage layer poultry rearing system, two cow dairy units and ornamental fish rearing. This will generate a new vision among the masses especially those who with less or no land to become participants in production of quality food and interior decoration materials of biological origin which enable them to have a link with nature and earn an income with self respect. The idea is everybody who possess land or no land should get involved in one farming practice or other. The present unhealthy trend among the new generation is to go and buy everything from the market totally ignoring the health hazards, should change. So also all those who desire to have quality food should be a participant in producing any of the farm produce ranging from fruits and vegetables to egg and meat. In future this will gain more momentum since quality deterioration in food items is getting rampant and dreadful.

### **The approaches....**

In a land hungry state like Kerala bringing more land under plough is very difficult to even imagine. This calls for a very special approach regarding the plantation sector. Plantations are really centres where large scale mono cropping is practised and the produce are processed, packed and sent for domestic marketing and export. It was a creation of colonial rule and so had a special stature since it is owned by foreign companies especially British. This kept it aloof from the local farming population. Truly plantations come under the farming sector i.e. crop culture division.

A new development approach is urgently required regarding the preservation of plantations. Ecologically and climatologically all the conducive areas for growing plantation crops like tea, coffee, cardamom and now rubber has been brought in the state. Considering the strategic nature of the crops in its management and processing while passing the Land Reforms Act,

Kerala has given a special status to the plantations. In short they are exempted from the land ceiling. In the present context through a policy it must be insisted that in all the cultivable land belonging to the plantations the notified plantation crops should be planted since fresh planting areas are unavailable. On no account it should be used for growing any crop which is not notified before. Since land suited for cultivating the specific crops are unavailable it should not be used even for large scale cattle rearing or tourism or entertainment related centres. This is a must and plantations must be encouraged with soft loans, tax concessions and technology upgradation for the purposes like replanting, water conservation and value added products. Such an approach is necessary since the plant population in most of the estates has even crossed its biological life span. In several estates one could see 100 year old tea bushes still maintained.

Plantations provide great wealth to Kerala not as an agro produce alone, but also it provides employment to several thousand common people and also as a money spinner since different taxes the state and central government are getting over several crores of rupees annually. Hence plantation must be treated as a part of agriculture in its real sense and it must be preserved and helped to develop to meet the fast growing needs of the society, trade and exports, all bringing wealth to the state and nation.

#### **Need for administrative co ordination...**

A review through the organization of support for helping the farmer to produce more generating better cropping reveal that we have enough number of organizations engaged in the research, development, extension, processing, marketing and even export. With all the infrastructure providing agencies and availability of tolerably good financial support the physical production of the crops, livestock and other associated areas like bee keeping, floriculture, ornamental fish farming and mushroom culture. But what is totalling lacking in the functioning of the various agencies is co-ordination. Though much has been said it is a sad sight to observe that this is lacking from the top most level of the centre of power to the micro level. For example, there are about 30 agencies functioning in the state for the development of coconut culture and to help the farmer to earn more. Central sector agencies, state sector agencies co-operative sector agencies, financial agencies are the most important among the same, leave alone the voluntary agencies and farmers organization. The present stage of coconut in the state of Kerala is one which required no introduction for its sad and pathetic decline with all the agencies claiming to be active participants in its development efforts. At no point a working co-ordination is attempted. Huge sums of tax payers money though spent is not reflecting in the physical production hike of coconut or improving the interest of the farmer in taking care of the palm. Perhaps the most and neglected crop in Kerala after 6 decades of planned developed is coconut while technologies are utilised for successful growth in several other countries in the world bringing more benefit to

its producers. Hence producing co-ordinated efforts with committed reflection on production and welfare fund should form the motto and disputed guideline of all programmes done in the coconut sector. This may be treated as a warning coming from the intensive relationship the committee has developed after assessing and hearing the farmers reaction in all part of the state. This must be treated as a top priority hungry area.

### **Modern technology and growth...**

Progress in the farm front accomplished in all part of the world have derived from technological modernization and upgradation. These are mainly done not only to enhance the productivity but also to take away the drudgery associated with the various farm activities and also to hasten the speed of various associated jobs. Another area of modernization is the production of various value added products suited to the fast changing lifestyle and its sound, safe and quick marketing technologies to reach the needy client at his door step. Modernization is required at all levels viz. Research, transfer of technology, information and communication, product development, value addition, marketing, fund flow, co-ordination and administration at all levels. This also must be treated as a top priority area in the policy making as the competition between the countries and within the country becomes tight, swift and tactical. More is said than done in this vital area and we have sour experiences of defeat of this front which should not be tolerated and if allowed to continue may lead to more shocking experiences.

### **Prosperity due to livestock and dairy...**

Livestock development sector of Kerala has made significant contributions to the state's economy during the last 3 decades by equipping the farmers to accept and adopt modern technological methods combining with their traditional skills. But it has reached a real take off stage and that has to be exploited in a truly farmer welfare manner. The benefits of the livestock development must provide a sustainable income to the producer facilitating a steep hike in his returns. Productivity hike should be combined with product diversification, value addition and by-product utilization. Livestock development programmes should not be seen as a simple attempt aimed for poverty elevation. It should also be built up as a development vehicle by modernization, product development and marketing including exports. The policy should be moulded with this in view. At the same time the time tested, indigenous methods of livestock development must be preserved, encouraged and empowered with technology and funding upgradation so that our indigenous livestock wealth and different models of rearing them using the by-products of the farm adding a supplementary income to the rural force and helping the elevation of the nutritional status of their diet. This too must be given a place of importance in our future policy programmes since we hold 66.56 lakhs tiny land holdings which also form the home of our livestock population.

The basic necessity required for implementing any modern day livestock development is the availability of the livestock data and performance control mechanism. Many in Kerala is unaware of the fact Kerala is ripe for introducing such a sophisticated animal husbandry technique into our social system. Though it is sophisticated the information communication system developed in our state is a boon for the collection and transformation of the data generated. Quality up gradation of animals is a must for improving the productivity as well as profit from the minimum quantity of feed that we provide. One such a system induction of hi-techs like quality up gradation of animals, breeding performance, evaluation of returns and disease control measures could be made available at the door step of the farmer. Livestock sector like all sectors are experiencing very keen competition not from the organized producers alone. World over marketing of livestock produce are becoming more and more sensitive and dear. India is seen by several countries as a potential exporter meat, egg and even milk products. So there is every possibility of the present suppliers of animal products of the state may prefer export rather than internal trade. Kerala has to take very special care of this situation and so any investment done on this sector will be doubly beneficial to us. It will help us to provide a safe internal market and in the same time entire excess could be exported. The expenses required for the launching of such a programme covering the entire state should be viewed not as a state development programme by doing this we are creating a model for not only India but all developing countries. Hence this programme should be considered as an area deserving high policy priority.

### **Hatching the eggs of income...**

Kerala egg had a place of pride not only in India by the adjoining country like Sri Lanka. The present modern egg and meat production though has made the material available more its quality quiet often is in question. At the same time quality eggs produced in the traditional methods still possess an edge over than the one done in the modern way. In this context the State Animal Husbandry Department has come forward with a new programme for popularising Micro Cage Layer as an associate to the traditional backyard poultry. This programme has got a special significance as it will add to the income of the small and marginal farmer and even those who is not have much land for agriculture purpose. A small family could earn a minimum of 1500 rupees by practicing this programme with lakhs of small holdings Kerala stands to gain very much economically from this exercise.

### **The *Actio Apportum*...**

The draft policy document contains 331 policy approaches which are elucidated from the discussions, interactions, seminars, field visits and brain storming sessions with producer farmers, people's representatives, farmer leaders, professionals, individuals, organizations working

for the progress of the farm sector. One undisputed point which had total acceptance was the urgent need to keep the farmer who carries unique asset of work experience generated through several centuries needs more care and share of the enormous economic prosperity that he delivers to the country fighting all odds ranging from unpredictable climatic changes to uncontrollable price fluctuation. The economic prosperity generated and enjoyed by the society in different form should also be made available to the producer farmer by introducing an Actio Apportum\* a new methodology under which farmer get a legal right of share of profit generated out of his farm produce. This is a must to keep the farming and farmer active alive and productive atleast during the next 5 decades. The committee finds this must be accepted as an uncompromising policy to bring the smile of real prosperity in the farm front.

It is estimated that over 40 lakh tonnes of rice is being sold in Kerala. State could propose a cess of mere one rupee per kg of rice sold and can generate an amount of Rs.350 to Rs.400 crores every year. This could be used as Actio Apportum (Avakasa Labham) a legal right for sharing the profit generated out of the farm produce when it is traded at the terminal market. Every farmer who has given their produce to the state will be eligible to have Rs.5 per kg of paddy as Avakasa Labham. This may facilitate a farmer giving 3 tonnes of rice to earn a cheque for Rs 15,000 rupees as avakasa labham from the Department of Agriculture for every crop season. Similar exercises could be worked out for rubber, milk and other crops after detailed study. This will facilitate the farmer to invest more money to produce more paddy so that it offers a decent return as a right without fail. The unspent amount will remain as a 'Nidhi' for future utilization.

The contribution of agriculture labour in the developing strong and sustainable farming sector must be recognised. A farm labour working in the paddy culture for 50 days during a season must be eligible for a Avakasa Labham of Rs.2500/-. This will be sent him by cheque through Agriculture Department.

### **Farmlands as precious diamonds...**

The committee made a sincere attempt to go through the novel efforts made by other states in preserving farm lands for agriculture purpose since land is the most important input and an unavoidable asset for sustainable agriculture. We find that our adjoining state Karnataka has given a model act for land conservation and we very strongly recommend that a similar act should be given shape in the state also. A land hungry state like ours blessed with conducive climate for rising different types of crops of very great economic importance must take very special care in preserving the farm land against unplanned and haphazard use. We propose a clear cut policy on this aspect and its strict implementation. This is required even for the sustenance of crop and animal husbandry in the state.

### **Income is guaranteed...**

Fluctuations in the price of farm produce often cause havoc to the small farmer community eroding away their entire profit. This was the universal complaint raised in all the meetings wherever producer farmers participated. Farm economists and agronomist also suggested that unless a solution is found the farmer will not invest his hard earned resources for agriculture and livestock development. The committee after prolonged deliberations suggest that, a priority policy should be given shape to form a Price Fixing Authority and for the same an Income Guarantee Act may be passed.

### **Addressing the distressed...**

One of the most unfortunate and highly undesirable development crept into the agriculture development scenario of the country was the eruption of the new phenomena during the later part of 1990's i.e. farmers suicide. During the colonial rule India was branded as a country of starvation deaths and famine whereas this new phenomena has happened when the country had enough food grains in stock and was also doing exports. Several reasons are attributed for the shameful happenings but it remains a fact that farmer suicides are a reality and it has happened in Kerala also and continues to happen even now, but showing a decreasing trend. India today has the strength to put an end to this shock with its granaries full and various poverty alleviation programmes implemented through out the country. We have made very sharp and practical suggestions to face the challenge and certain methodologies and programmes for preventing the occurrence of the same. Instead of rushing to the scene after the damage has happened. This must be given a workable shape as early as possible since even official records at the national level prove that the number of farmer suicides are increasing even while the country holds over 60 million tonnes of grain as food reserve. If such a mechanism could be added to the existing food security bill it may be more useful.

### **A separate agricultural budget...**

The importance of farming sector in India is attaining new dimensions from a profession meant for simple sustenance and subsistence it has undergone a lot of changes. In all fields from the land ownership to ultimate sale of the produce at the export market this change is visible. Taking this into consideration a lot of transformation has taken place in providing a stature to the agriculture which was far beyond our imagination at the time of independence. Several States like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, etc., are presenting an exclusive agriculture budget in the legislature every year and all the agriculture and allied activities are brought under very strict and highly utilitarian scrutiny and support. Kerala with 80% of its agro produce finding market in other parts

of the country and in other nations should emulate this approach of having a separate Agriculture Budget and it will be a very bold and welcome step which will help us to hasten the efforts for creating real agriculture prosperity.

### **Sustaining the agricultural research...**

Agricultural education and farm research are two areas which deserve paramount importance both at times of crisis and prosperity. It could give more help, assistance, guidance and break through for the various problems erupted in the wide agricultural scenario of the state. In this context Kerala Agriculture University with a history of over six decades deserve a very vital role in finding solutions to the problems posed at present and the problems which may arrive in future. The economic recession experienced both in the developing and developed countries and its strangling effect in the farming sector needs a very purposeful strengthening of this vital area of activity. The present difficulties experienced by the Agriculture University mainly due to the acquired debt of above Rs. 265 crores should not be treated as an obstacle which could not be erased out making the university self reliant result producing and as an institution which could face any challenge and provides solution to the problems faced by farmers as well as the State. We observe that its present financial burden though acquired due to undesirable and unfortunate reasons must not be allowed to wither one of the resource rich institutions we have built up at a huge cost.

Kerala's farming sector according to certain estimate is contributing physical produce worth over Rupees one lakh crore. An institution like Kerala Agriculture University should be treated as a part of this great effort and it should be made capable to help the farmers to make the returns from farming sector cross two lakh crores in another two decades. The agricultural university may not be treated as a commercial organization and its contributions must be evaluated using different norms. It is an integral part of a development system that contributes enormous energy for achieving new vistas of progress which ultimately strengthen the economy both by physical, emotional and holistic manner. Our agriculture university today holds total staff strength of 4600 personage from Vice Chancellor down to the farm labourer. Though the agriculture university has been trifurcated the staff strength of the university till remains 4230 with 40% of it posts are still remaining vacant. At present the university is finding it extremely difficult to push through the programmes which are capable to produce rich results and breakthroughs due to the fund crisis. Delivery of vital contributions for the farming sector is still continued by the institution and its stature as the best agriculture university maintaining high teaching standards remains a well recognised national honour.

## *Towards a dynamic agriculture.....*

The state should take a positive view to wipe off the debt and provide enough fund to put it back to rails to make rich contributions enabling the farming sector to progress faster, helping the farmer, and State economy more prosperous. The agriculture university is an organization which the farmers and all those who love farming, want to function and produce promising results for the progress at present and in the days to come. The committee is of opinion that the crisis faced by the university at present must be sorted out and it should be made courageous, bold and capable to function as a provider, guiding spirit and friend in need to the farmers of the state. This must be treated as a high priority area.

### **Improving the quality of research...**

In this context Indian Council of Agriculture has given shape to Model Bill for agriculture Universities of the country after assessing the various challenges and responsibilities facing in the farming situation of the country. Our initial reaction is that the state may welcome the Model Bill and accept the same with appropriate modification which may suit the peculiar agriculture situation, crop and animal husbandry systems followed in the state and the marketing and value addition prospects and above all farmer's welfare. This is an area where more intensive studies are required and we hope government will take appropriate advises to give shape a new agriculture / veterinary / fisheries University Bill.

### **'Neera' can tap income...**

Neera has ultimately recognised by the Government of Kerala as a non alcoholic beverage it must be popularised. The Committee from its very commencement of working, initiated steps with Government to materialise the same. Neera according to experts as well as experienced farmers is sure to give anew economic prosperity to coconut grower. In several other parts of the world Neera has proved to be a very valuable export earner both of Neera and a syrup and a sugar. In Kerala it must be reiterated that the ultimate right on Neera production rest with farmers this must be recognised without any doubt because farmer takes care of the palm from the very first day of is farming and every products coming out of the same belongs him since it is a products of his care and attention. The next should be a united effort by the Department of Agriculture, coconut board and KAU for producing Neera and allied products and successfully marketing the same for providing good income to the farmer good wages to the labour and substantial income as taxes to the government. This area is also facing a lot of challenges like production of planting materials, care of gardens, producing varieties and treatment to produce more Neera and also its marketing and value added material production and even exports. This calls for vigilance support to the FPO and its federation. The Neera business is opening up a billion dollar business in the state if handle properly which appropriate policy support it will bring an era a prosperity and welfare to the coconut growers and all those who are associated with this production. Appropriate policy support perhaps the most vital input.

**Heartfelt gratitude....**

I am very much indebted to the esteemed members of the committee senior officers of the Agriculture University, Veterinary University, Fisheries University, Department of Agriculture, and Animal Husbandry, Dairy, Soil Conservation and Soil Survey, Chairmen and Managing Directors of all the corporations and boards in the farming sector of the state for the very kind co-operation extended to the committee. Officers of Government of India, different commodity boards, input agencies, farmers, farm leaders, farmer's organization representatives, farm journalists, economists, both print and electronic media in the public and private domain for the very active help given to us. Committee is extremely thankful to all the District Panchayat Presidents, Block Panchayat Presidents, Grama Panchayat Presidents and the members and officials who provided as a great forum in each district for open free and frank discussion with the farmers and peoples representatives. The committee is very much indebted to all the officers who provided wonderful and purposeful assistance to make this job a very fruitful one. I have a word of very special thanks to the Department of Agriculture and State Agricultural Management Extension and Training Institute (SAMETI) for providing the secretarial assistance of high standards for completing the great work keeping a tight time schedule.

I wish to place heartfelt thanks to Sri. K.Divakaran, M.L.A., and Former Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairy for supporting the Committee with valuable suggestions.

The committee wish to submit its profound gratitude to the farming community and all those who love farming for the patience, co-operation, help and suggestions extended to us. The farmers and people representatives very realistic, though at times were "explosive" in narrating the difficulties experienced compelling a few of them to woo even extreme steps of suicides were kind enough to provide very sober suggestions of great practical value and credited the utility value of this report is really due to their large hearted contribution.

I dedicate this humble document for the welfare and prosperity of the hardworking farming community and their labour associates who keep Kerala evergreen, prosperous, progressive and a biodiversity paradise.

**K. Krishnankutty (Chairman)**  
**Ezhuthani House**  
**Perumatty**  
**Palakkad.**

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