PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 4.12.2017 of Thiru Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, New Delhi.

“In continuation of my earlier DO letters dated 23.11.2017 and 24.11.2017, addressed to the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare based on the representations received from the Chennai based Agricultural Research Scientists Forum and media reports, I would like to bring to your notice that three Premier Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Institutes namely a) Sugarcane Breeding Institute functioning at Coimbatore, b) National Research Centre for Banana functioning at Tiruchirapalli and c) Central Institute of Brackish water Aquaculture (CIBA) functioning at Chennai, are likely to be closed or merged with other ICAR Institutes across the country.

In this regard, the Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore has been serving the farming community since 1912. The sugarcane varieties released by this Institute are very popular among sugarcane growers of not only Tamil Nadu, but also in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. With an aim to increase the cane yield / high sugar recovery and to enable better remuneration to the Sugarcane growers, the Government of Tamil Nadu is keen that the Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Coimbatore is not closed or merged with other ICAR Institutions.

The National Research Centre for Banana established in 1993 at Tiruchirapalli, is contributing very significantly in increasing the production and productivity of banana so as to meet the growing demand of our varieties in India and abroad. The R&D work and research station is of immense importance. Tamil Nadu stands first in banana production and export. The coordination and handholding support extended by the Banana Research Institute, Tiruchirapalli is acknowledged by the Government of Tamil Nadu. I, therefore, request you not to close or merge this Institute with other ICAR Institutions.

I would like to inform you further that CIBA, Chennai provides regular technical support to Tamil Nadu and all other coastal States especially in brackish water aquaculture. As you may be aware lakhs of people in Tamil Nadu are engaged directly or indirectly in cultivation of Vennnamei shrimp, which has boosted the economic contribution of Tamil Nadu Fisheries sector considerably. The continuous handholding support of such a premier institution to aquaculture farmers is inevitable in sustaining the aquaculture production of the State. Import and quarantine of Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) mother shrimps are
allowed by Government of India only through the Chennai International Airport. Due referral services for pathogens are being provided by ICAR-CIBA to DADHDF, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India and to the aquaculture community of the whole country. Now, aquaculture is blossoming into sustainable livelihood option for fishermen in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, that too along 1076 Km long coast line of Tamil Nadu, which has 56000 hectares of potential brackish water area.

In the above circumstances, the **closure or merger of the said ICAR Institutes namely Sugarcane Breeding Institute at Coimbatore, National Research Centre for Banana, Tiruchirapalli and Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (CIBA) at Chennai will have a detrimental impact on the interest of the farmers and fisher folk of Tamil Nadu.** In this regard, I have already addressed the Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare to help in retaining these Premier Institutes as such. Decision in this regard is still awaited.

Now, I reiterate my demand for your kind consideration and request you to kindly issue necessary instructions to Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare to continue the activities of these prestigious Institutes to function as such without closure or merger with other institutions, in order to safeguard the interest of farmers and fisher folk of Tamil Nadu.”

*****

Issued by: Director of Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9
Dated : 4.12.2017