

## National tuber crops food festival at Kanakakkunnu palace during 24-25 November 2015 (Tuber Food Fest 2015)

Agriculture and allied sectors contribute 18 per cent of the total GDP of our country. The total food grain production in India during 2014-15 was 257.1 million tones, and together with horticulture production of another 250 million tones, we are able to meet most of our food and nutritional requirements. Tropical tuber crops, which include cassava (tapioca), sweet potato, elephant foot yam (chena), yams (kachil), taro (chempu), koorka etc., form an important group of crops which are produced with very low inputs, are consumed by tribals and economically backward sections of the population, contribute significantly to food and nutritional security and are also used for animal feed or as raw material for processing industries. Many of these crops are considered as **household food bank** because of their ability for staggered harvesting.

It is predicted that climate change will reduce the yield of most of the grain crops such as rice and wheat, to the extent of 2-6% by 2030 and 5-11% by 2050 relative to what would otherwise have been the case. **At the same time, studies conducted at CTCRI clearly show that tuber crops such as cassava, elephant foot yam and yams are climate resilient crops as they are little affected by the future climate of 2030 or 2050.** Most of the currently growing areas of tuber crops will remain unaffected with regard to yield of these crops or in certain cases, areas will become more suitable for tuber crops due to climate change. Also, there will be huge demand for food grains in the energy sector. More than half of cereal produced in 2006-07 was used for non-food purpose including bioenergy and this may aggravate by 2050 when fossil fuel is predicted to be exhausted. The likely demand-supply gap of major food grains can be effectively bridged by tuber crops that are concentrated source of carbohydrate. It is also predicted that cereal consumption in India will decline from 60% of total calorie uptake at present to 48% by 2050. On the contrary, there will be considerable increase in vegetable consumption including tuber crops that are rich in minerals, vitamins, antioxidants and dietary fibre.

In order to highlight the importance of different food preparations of tropical tuber crops across the country, the *Central Tuber Crops Research Institute* (CTCRI), Sreekariyam in association with the Departments of Agriculture and Scheduled Tribes Development, Government of Kerala has organized a *Tuber Crops Food Festival – Tuber Food Fest 2015* - in the premises of *Kanakakunnu Palace, Thiruvananthapuram* during 24-25 November 2015.

The food festival was inaugurated by **Sri. K.P. Mohanan**, Hon. Minister for Agriculture, Government of Kerala. **Sri. Adoor Prakash**, Hon. Minister for Revenue and Coir and **Sri. Anoop Jacob**, Hon. Minister for Food and Civil Supplies graced the occasion by their presence. **Dr. S.K. Chakrabarti**, **Director, ICAR-CTCRI**, **Dr. James George**, Project Coordinator, AICRP on Tuber Crops, Sri. R. Ajithkumar, Director of Agriculture, Government of Kerala, Dr. K. Prathapan, Mission Director, State Horticulture Mission, Government of Kerala, Shri N.K. Manoj, Managing Director, Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium and Sri. Sharan Kumar, A.J., Managing Director, The Kerala Agro Industries Corporation Ltd. Also attended the inaugural function.

This festival was organized in connection with the ***Tuber Crops Day (Thrikkarthika)*** celebrations which falls on 25 November 2015. In the malayalam month of Vrichikam (Nov-Dec) on the Karthika nakshatram (star) which mostly falls on the full moon day is celebrated as Thrikkarthika. In Many parts of Kerala instead of the regular food, on this day they make rice soup (Kanji) with '***Karthika Puzhukku***', a vegetable preparation of a mixture of several tuber crops such as yams (kachil), elephant foot yam (chena) and tapioca (kappa).

Farmers from 18 States of India have participated in the grand gala and exhibited various forms of their ethnic and modern food preparations made of different tuber crops. The Scientists of All India Coordinated Research Project on Tuber Crops (AICRPTC), from 18 States brought farmers along with their tuber based food products for display at the exhibition. They also prepared fresh tuber based foods for tasting by visitors to their stalls.

The ***Tuber Food Fest 2015*** was the first of its kind in our country and there were about 40 stalls where different tuber crops food preparations were exhibited and the recipes of the various preparations were also displayed as charts. The public who visited the stalls were offered samples for them to have a taste of the different tuber crops food preparations. Besides the exhibition, a food court was arranged where there were five stalls arranged by ICAR-CTCRI, Mascot Hotel under the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation Ltd., Kudumbasree and Mahila Samakhya (NGO working for the tribals of Nilambur, Kerala) where the visitors had a very rare opportunity to buy important tuber crops dishes such as cassava (kappa) and fish (meen) curry, elephant foot yam payasam, cassava (kappa) puzhukku etc. and an array of value added food products from tuber crops developed by ICAR-CTCRI such as Nutrichips and Tapioca Pakkavada. It was a unique occasion for the foodies of Thiruvananthapuram city to taste a variety of food preparations made out of different tuber crops grown in different parts of the country. The ICAR-CPCRI, Kasaragod, ICAR-NRCB, Trichy, ICAR-CIFT, Kochi, ICAR-IISR, Kozhikkode and ICAR-IIOPR, Pedavegi also participated in the food festival by displaying their products and technologies in the exhibition stalls. About 10000 people from various walks of life visited the stalls and food court.

The mega event was also supported by Department of Agriculture, Kerala, Department of Scheduled Tribes Development, Kerala, The NABARD, Kerala State Horticulture Mission, Farm Information Bureau, Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium, The Kerala State Agro Industries Corporation, Indian Society for Root Crops and State Bank of Travancore.

**Dr. James George**  
Convener, Food Fest-2015

## Glimpses of Tuber Food Fest 2015



