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Drone Pilot Training Centre & Sale Counter inaugurated at ICAR-IISWC



By OUR STAFF REPORTER
DEHRADUN, 9 Oct: The ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation (IISWC), Dehradun, successfully inaugurated its Drone Pilot Training Centre and Information and Sale Counter, today, at the IISWC Research Farm in Selaqui.

Dr Suresh Kumar Chaudhari, Deputy Director General (NRM), ICAR, New Delhi, inaugurated a series of facilities and infrastructures including drone pilot training centre, training hostel, sale-cum-information counter of IISWC at Selaqui research farm.

In his inaugural address, Dr Suresh Kumar highlighted the critical role of drones in revolutionising agriculture, fostering employment opportunities, and promoting environmental conservation. He informed the gathering that use of drones may solve problems of undulating terrain, manpower shortage and effective resource use, though it may not be a solace for all the problems of agriculture. Dr Suresh Kumar expressed his

interest in establishing this sort of drone training centres in a few other ICAR institutes.

Dr Mahendra Kumar Verma, Director, ICAR-CITH, Srinagar (J&K), a Guest of Honour, spoke about the uniqueness of drone training at ICAR-IISWC that would cater to the need of the training to people of Himalayan states. He appreciated the inauguration of sale-cum-information centre, which would provide products and information that are available with other ICAR Institutes including CITH. Dr Lakshmi Kant, Director, ICAR-VPKAS, Almora, shared his and his Institute's experience in hill agriculture.

Dr M Madhu, Director, welcoming the dignitaries and participants, informed them that the drone training centre in collaboration with Dronier Aviation, New Delhi, is meant for agriculture uses, surveys, sprays and management of area. He stated that this is the first of its kind in all the ICAR institutes.

RS Singh, CEO, Dronier Aviation, stated that this is the 3rd

training centre being organised by his firm in collaboration with institutions or universities. He spoke on the importance of drone pilot training as without this training and licensing no one is allowed to fly drones in the country. He shared that the drone training centre at IISWC was highly appreciated by the team of Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), while assessing for issue of approval as it has all paraphernalia meant for the training.

Dr PR Ojasvi summed up the programme with a formal vote of thanks. Earlier, Dr M Sankar, OIC Research Farm welcomed the participants and conducted a field visit and demonstration.

The training centre will address safety, risk management, compliance with regulatory standards, enhancing skills, repair and maintenance and assistance in employment for the trained pilots. With an increasing demand for drone pilots across agriculture, infrastructure, and disaster management sectors, this initiative will create new job opportunities, particularly for youth in rural

communities.

The Drone Pilot Training Centre will equip individuals with the skills to operate these advanced technologies, creating a new generation of skilled drone pilots, crucial for modern agriculture. This shift to technology-driven farming will boost agricultural productivity and empower farmers with efficient tools for resource management. Drones reduce water and pesticide usage through targeted spraying, which in turn supports sustainable agricultural practices by minimizing environmental harm.

The newly inaugurated Information and Sale Counter under ONE-ICAR initiatives has already received positive feedback from farmers and stakeholders. The Information Centre will serve as a knowledge hub, offering expert advice and updates on modern agricultural techniques, thus fostering a collaborative learning environment for farmers.

Deepa Tomar, a progressive farmer, spoke on organic farming and the benefits she reaped. The programme was attended by 350

participants including 50 farmers, 20 entrepreneurs, state government officials from line departments, NABARD, KVK, Dkarani, local academia, staff and scientists of IISWC, regular trainees of the Institute, BTech students, other ICAR Institutes, retired scientists and staff of IISWC.

The programme marked the inauguration of an Information and Sale Counter, where farmers and stakeholders can have access to prime farm inputs like seeds, modern tools and equipment. Besides this, demonstrations of agricultural drones, showcasing their practical applications in field conditions were exhibited. During the event, 2 research publications were also released and scientists and staff were felicitated for their contribution to the training centre and R&D activities at the Institute. Women farmers performed a folk dance to mark the inauguration. Farmers were given improved seeds and farming kits under the SCSP scheme of the Institute.