

### **Visit of Dr. Harsh Kumar Bhanwala, Chairman, NABARD and his team to AAU, Anand**

Dr. Harshkumar Bhanwala, Chairman, NABARD with a team of officers including Shri H.R. Dave, DMD; Shri Sunil Chawla, CGM; Shri Mukesh Thakkar, GM; Shri S.D. Ravikumar, DGM and Shri V. Nageshwar Rao, DGM visited AAU, Anand on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2018. Dr. M.K. Jhala, Associate Director of Research, AAU, Anand welcomed the NABARD team and University officers of AAU. Dr. N.C. Patel, Hon. Vice Chancellor, AAU, Anand, in his opening remarks, welcomed the Hon. Chairman of NABARD and esteemed members of the delegation and briefed them about the salient features and activities being undertaken at AAU with emphasis on food processing activities, transfer of technology to the farmers and rendering skilled manpower for the food industry. Dr. N.C. Patel showed the keen desire to have prolific association with NABARD for synergistic development of both the organizations. He stressed the need for a separate cell for women as 80% women are associated with agricultural activities including honeybee rearing. Further, Dr. Patel emphatically mentioned that AAU's strong extension activities have helped decreasing the gap between potential and actual yields of crops. He also informed the house about the All India Coordinated Research Projects and Solar Agrifarm research at AAU.

Dr. N.C. Patel greeted Dr. Bhanwala with bouquet followed by shawl and memento. Dr. Kathiria, Director of Research, AAU, Anand greeted rest of the team members including Shri H.R. Dave and Shri Sunil Chawla with bouquet and memento. After floral welcome, all the members briefly introduced themselves in the interaction meet. Dr. R.S. Pundir, Professor & Head, IABMI, AAU, Anand presented the brief overview of AAU, Anand to the august gathering.

Dr. H.K. Bhanwala, Hon. Chairman, NABARD in his address expressed that he was delighted to visit AAU, Anand. He strongly felt that investing in Agriculture was the best means of gaining returns through multiplier effect. He stressed that two fold programmes namely Education with Research and Irrigation lead to productivity enhancement and revenue generation in Agriculture. While focusing on the growing significance of adoption of modern information technology, including mobiles, he informed that NABARD is deeply interested in this kind of collaborative projects. He further said that NABARD is 33 years old institute and strongly believe in adopting modern information technologies to reach out to farmers. These technologies have enabled improving bank linkages to 60%. Other most- sought- after areas of research and collaboration, according to Dr. Bhanwala, include generation and use of solar energy by farmers following principles of producers' organization, water use efficiency and virtual water trade. These apart, as the dietary habits are changing fast, the scientists need to work with prime focus on coarse cereals based products including millets, jowar and, bajra. He also said that instant products with innovative packaging are also an area of topical importance.

Dr. Bhanwala suggested following few areas for MOU with NABARD:

- (i) Training of farmers by AAU scientists
- (ii) Advisory service to farmers
- (iii) Agribusiness incubation center
- (iv) Water use efficiency and virtual water trade

The meeting ended with discussion from the members. This was followed by visit to Sardar Patel Educational Museum, Tissue Culture Laboratory and finally Experiential Learning Unit and Food Quality Testing Laboratory at College of Food Processing Technology and Bio Energy.



