

Scientists, experts call for cutting edge R&D to raise cotton yield

Our Bureau

Chennai

India should focus on cutting edge research and development to increase cotton productivity and farmers' income, the country's top agricultural scientists and experts said at a national conference on "Pioneering the future of cotton research" in Salem, Tamil Nadu.

The conference was organised by Rasi Seeds as part of its Golden Jubilee celebrations in collaboration with the Federation of Seed Industry in India (FSII).

About 150 top researchers and scientists working on cotton from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) and experts from



across the nation took part.

KEY FACTORS

One of the key recommendations at the conference was the need to increase cotton productivity in the country from the current 447 kg per hectare.

This is despite India topping other nations in acreage (136.1 lakh hectares) and production (342 lakh bales of 170 kg).

Experts and scientists pointed out that factors such as shifting weather patterns, increasing pest and disease challenges and slow adoption of advanced technologies have hindered the growth in yield, resulting in productivity plateauing over the past 5-7 years.

"This national conference is aimed at reiterating the significant role and urgent need of cutting-edge R&D in the cotton crop in India, exploring holistic solutions to increase cotton productivity.

"Specific focus on enabling technological and policy interventions is the need of the hour to ensure India's cotton sector remains sustainable, profitable and globally competitive," said M Ramasami, Chairman of Rasi Seeds, a veteran with over 50 years of experience in the seed sector.