



3 new varieties of forage crops identified for release

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 20. - The Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) has identified 3 new varieties of forage crops for release suitable to various agro-climatic conditions in the country. Identification of these high yielding varieties of forage crops is expected to meet the feed requirements of animals in the country for their sustainable rearing and upkeep.

The ICAR said today that the decision about the release of the new varieties was taken at the Annual Group Meeting of All India Coordinated Project for Research on Forage Crops (Rabi) held last week in Bikaner, Rajasthan.

BL-180 variety of Berseem has been identified for North Western Plain and North Hill Zone due to its consistent superiority for green fodder; dry matter and seed yield over the check varieties. Developed by Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, this variety is suitable under irrigated condition and matures in 260-265 days.

Average yield of BL-180 under normal conditions is 625 q/ha of green fodder and 3.4 q/ha of seed yield in North Western Zone. It is capable of supplying green fodder late in the season when there is scarcity of it.

JHO 99-1 (single cut) variety of oats has been identified for North Hill Zone. Developed by Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute (IGFRI),

Jhansi, this variety is suitable for cultivation in temperate and sub temperate areas during Rabi season. It is moderate-

ly to highly resistant against leaf blight, moderately resistant to nematodes and grasshoppers and matures in 150-155 days.

RO-19 (multicut) variety of oats has been identified for the national level across the zones because of its high yield potential, quality parameters and resistance to major diseases and pests.

The variety has been developed by All India Coordinated Research Project on Forage Crops at Mahatma Phule Krishi

Vidyapeeth, Rahuri and is suitable for winter season under irrigated condition. The average yield of RO-19 is 495 q/ha for green forage and 94.5 q/ha for dry

matter yield. It has high leaf to stem ratio and is resistant to leaf blight disease.

What food grain crops are to the human beings, forage crops are to the livestock. Therefore, increased forage crop production is basic to improved livestock health and productivity.

Fodder for livestock in our country is provided mainly through cereal crops like paddy, sorghum and pearl millet. However, oats could also be a good green fodder crop during winter season. In the areas where irrigation water resources are not sufficient to grow Berseem, oats are good substitute.

In many regions of the country, livestock-based farming is a way of life. Any strategy aimed at ensuring the livelihood security of people in such regions has to take into account the importance of livestock. Realizing this, ICAR had started All India Coordinated Project for Research on Forage Crops in