



Dr.H Shivanna, Vice Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore

Wide ranging conversation on the university's achievements so far and the challenges ahead

What are the main achievements in UAS in the short while you have been the VC?

Yes, it has been just six months. During this year our students have performed well in the Junior Research Fellow exam. For the first time a Common Test for Admission to PG courses for Masters degree in four State Agricultural Universities was organized successfully. Also, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Hadonahalli, Bangalore Rural has been adjudged as best KVK at national level by ICAR, New Delhi, for the year 2014. The award was presented by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 25th July 2015 during the foundation day celebrations of ICAR held at Patna. These are some of the highlights of our achievements recently.

Are there any unique features of UAS that set it apart from other agriculture universities in India?

Definitely. University has evolved dynamic academic programmes. Presently University offers six Bachelors, 22 Master's and 14 Doctoral degree programmes. We have introduced a new system where Master's degree students to have to present and defend their research findings to their peer and faculty. This is a unique feature we have introduced this year. Apart from this,

automation of student's progress from entry to graduation has been under taken.

UAS Bangalore is the most sought after destination for students from Africa, Middle East, South and South East Asia to pursue their Higher Education. It is also most sought after destination after IARI to pursue agricultural education within the country.

Our student competence in terms of securing national competitive fellowships for postgraduate studies, admissions to universities abroad, clearing the ARS and civil service examinations has been excellent over the years. The University has attracted several national and international collaborations over the years to complement the education and research programmes of the University.

What are the ongoing research projects in UAS that you feel is worth talking about in the media?

Over the past five decades, UASB has developed several locally relevant production technologies that have substantially enhanced farm productivity

in the State and beyond. Our University has released 180 varieties in different crops which are tailored to diverse agro-ecological conditions of the state. Forty varieties of finger millet developed by the University have contributed immensely to the food security of the region.

The University has the distinction of being the first institution in the coun-

Dr. H Shivanna, Vice Chancellor, joined UAS as an undergraduate student in 1972. From a humble student to a top position of the same university is no mean achievement!

try to develop high yielding hybrids in sunflower and hybrid rice. Country's first Aerobic rice varieties were developed at UASB.

A basket of sustainable farming technologies developed by the scientists have transformed the landscape of the rain fed agriculture in Southern India by ensuring livelihood of farming community.

Recently University has given emphasis on using renewable energy especially solar energy in agriculture and production of electricity from bio waste. We have established Research Institute on Organic Farming (RIOF). There is also comprehensive drought tolerant crop Research to comprehensively

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address the interrelated activities of drought research.

There is also research going on now aimed towards capacity building in taxonomy of Insects and Mites. This serves as the nodal centre for research on systematic, provide identification service, training and technical guidance, develop print and web-based content, conduct taxonomic studies (traditional and molecular), maintain and strengthen the repository.

I should also mention the Model Bio-fuel Park at the Agricultural Research Station, Madenur, Hassan has been established to improve Bio-fuel production without interfering with food production by use of marginal lands.

What employment opportunities are available for UAS students? Is the university helping them with job placement?

So far up to 2012 and 2013 we have only produced around 30,000 agriculture graduates in the university. This is a very low number compared to the other engineering and medical colleges in our country. Most of our graduates are finding a place in the public and private sector companies. We do not have an unemployment situation for agriculture graduates. Infact for the past three, four years, we are getting highly meritorious students for are B.Sc agri, many of them with even more than 90% in PU examinations.

What are the goals you like to achieve?

I want to give more emphasis to improve faculty competency through periodical upgradation by creating opportunity to get adequate exposure in frontier areas in respective disciplines. I want to give emphasis on enhancing productivity of water (more output per

About Karnataka agriculture

What are the top three problems in Karnataka agriculture today?
Karnataka State being predominantly rainfed, development of dry land areas are to be given utmost importance. It is important to recognize the untapped potential of the dry land regions and design suitable strategies and policies for stimulating sustainable development of dry land areas. Of late the area under Maize is increasing in the State. Supply may far exceed the demand which may put farmers in jeopardy. It is essential to educate farmers to diversify their cropping pattern to enable them to get remunerative prices to their produce. Linking farmers to market has to be given at most priority.

Your response on the recent reports of farmer suicides
Observations are many. We have to take up concentrated efforts to address this problem. Individual university alone or the government alone cannot solve the problem – everybody has to put their hands together to solve this crisis otherwise it is really, very, very disastrous situation. Concerted efforts have to be made to arrest this trend.

Your response on the sugar cane farmer dues problems
Farmers are landing in debt crisis largely because of the delayed cane payments, even after 18 months. This has made them default on loans and borrow from private money lenders to keep going. We need to ensure proper utilization of institutional credit. Commercial Banks must appoint Agricultural Officers which was in vogue earlier, presently their number has reduced, to interact with farmers. We must also encourage farmers to grow alternate crops which are short duration and remunerative. Banks must avoid providing onetime credit especially for long gestation period crops like sugarcane to reduce misutilization and stagger the flow of credit based on agricultural operations to be undertaken.

unit of water). Importance will be given to reduction in post harvest losses and value addition, use of renewable energy in agriculture, mechanization of small farms. I also want to give a great push to community-driven and farmer-led extension activities.

Tell us briefly about yourself? What inspired you to take up agriculture research career.

I joined this university in 1972 as a BSc Horticulture student. At that time I

never imagined or anticipated that around 40 years later I will one day rise to the level of Vice Chancellor! After my BSc, I went to Dharwad to start working in agriculture research. There were eminent professors like Dr. V Gowda and Dr. Parmeshwarappa and team who encouraged me a lot and helped me to equip myself as a scientist. How much they encouraged me is really remarkable. It is only because of their encouragement that I have been able to come up to this level. I worked there in Dharwad for nearly 16 years. Then I got the professor post at a fairly early age of 39. I was a professor at one of the colleges in Shimoga for 11 years. Afterwards I came to the Bangalore main campus. Here I worked in several roles including director of research and dean before becoming the Vice Chancellor.

This interview was conducted by Kartik Isvarmurti – Managing Editor, AgricultureInformation.com

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