

First Circular

# GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS (GCWAS-2026)

DRIVING PROGRESS,  
ATTAINING NEW HEIGHTS



March 12-14, 2026



Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam Hall, ICAR  
Convention Centre, National Agricultural  
Science Complex (NASC), Pusa Campus,  
New Delhi-110012, India

## ORGANIZERS



## Co-Organizers



## Sponsors



## Knowledge Partners





## BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The representation of women and gender parity in all spheres is critical for overall growth and success for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unless there is equal representation, we will not be able to achieve our desired goals. Women, who constitute nearly 50 per cent of the population and are engaged in all fields, must have equal representation in leadership and decision making. Women in agriculture are of special importance. To meet our agricultural growth targets, the full participation of women is essential. Women are active in every aspect of agricultural development, from research to industry and farming, contributing to increased productivity and production. However, their numbers are often small, especially in decision-making roles, leading to a clear absence of gender balance. To meet our agricultural growth targets, therefore, full participation of women cannot be overlooked.

It is unequivocally agreed that women's empowerment is key to strengthening their participation in decision-making, which is crucial for socio-economic development. Research has shown that empowering women accelerates a country's economic growth. While we focus on empowering women in leadership, we cannot lose sight of their important role at the grassroots level. To build effective women leaders, implement gender-sensitive policies, and achieve progressive outcomes, we must nurture women leaders and empower women at the grassroots level, both technologically and socially for promoting diverse agri-food systems.

For many years, we have discussed gender diversity and agreed on the need for more women in leadership and decision-making roles. We have also agreed

on the need for empowerment to facilitate this process. What we now need is to collectively deliver on the ground. The Global Conference on Women in Agriculture organized in 2012, brought together a large number of women who shared their success stories and examples of their major role in agricultural development through new technologies, research, extension services, and industry activities. There is need for a greater focus now on sharing experiences and success stories of women leaders, entrepreneurs and farmers for promoting diverse agri-food systems and developing enabling policies to make it happen.

Women contribute across the agri-food system, ranging from production (crops, livestock, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries) to post-harvest handling, transport, processing, consumption, and disposal. Understanding these systems is vital to tackling global challenges of food security, sustainability, and economic growth, especially in low- and middle income countries. Since all parts are interconnected, changes in one area impact the whole system. Agri-food systems must be sustainable, ensuring food security while reducing environmental impact, promoting equity, and remaining resilient to shocks such as climate change, disease, or economic crises. Moving toward circular systems that minimize waste and repurpose byproducts is equally essential.

The recognition of **2026 as the International Year of Women Farmers** serves as a global milestone that can spark policy reforms, public awareness campaigns, and international collaboration, while also providing an opportunity to mobilize resources, forge partnerships, and create a shared agenda for advancing women's role in agriculture. Access to modern agricultural technologies, training programs, and digital tools can further improve women's efficiency, increase their incomes, and strengthen their decision-making power, with digital platforms offering ways to amplify their voices and link them to broader markets.

Building on the successes of the 2012 Global Conference, a renewed platform in New Delhi can focus on moving from discussions to action-oriented implementation, serving as a space to showcase success stories, exchange best practices, and launch progressive policy frameworks. At the grassroots level, targeted training and mentorship programs for rural women can nurture a pipeline of skilled women and future leaders, with women-led cooperatives, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and self-help







groups strengthening collective bargaining power and ensuring that progress reaches even the most marginalized communities. Meaningful collaboration between key stakeholders can help build sustainable support networks, while public-private partnerships can accelerate transformation through combined technical expertise and funding. Empowering women isn't just about ensuring equity, but making them a

catalyst of change for food security, economic growth, and climate resilience. The year 2026 must mark the year when we move from rhetoric to real results. The Global Conference will provide an opportunity to have in-depth discussions on all these aspects and will pave the way for developing a clear road map for concrete actions supported with enabling policies.

## ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Keeping the above in view, a 3-day '**Global Conference on Women in Agri-Food Systems (GCWAS-2026)**' is being organized by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers Rights Authority (PPV&FRA), in collaboration with other organizations in the **Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam Convention Hall at National Agriculture Science Complex (NASC)**, Pusa Campus, New Delhi, during 12-14 March 2026. Over 500 participants, including researchers, policymakers, leaders, representative of CGIAR centres, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Farmers Organizations (FOs), women farmers, industry, start-ups, entrepreneurs and students are expected to participate.



## OBJECTIVES

- To bring together stakeholders – women leaders, scientists, entrepreneurs, farmers, students to share experiences and case studies.
- To showcase inspiring success stories of women's empowerment and leadership in agriculture to provide replicable and scalable models.
- To identify and promote national and global best practices for nurturing women's leadership and fostering mentorship and networking for the next generation of women leaders.
- To discuss measures for strengthening the policy framework and ecosystem for mainstreaming gender and empowering women technologically and economically.
- Identify Emerging and disruptive technologies for gender transformative change.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Comprehensive report on success stories across research, industry, farming, and education.
- Road Map to strengthen women's participation and leadership, empower women for economic inclusion, and mainstream gender in policy, market access, and new technology development.
- Identification and dissemination of global and national best practices for women's inclusive participation and empowerment.
- Compendium of new technologies that have technologically and financially empowered women in the agri-food sector.
- Strategy and roadmap for institutionalizing gender initiatives across global, regional, and national programs.



## TECHNICAL SESSIONS

### Session 1: Interface with Global Women Trailblazers

- **Focus:** Highlighting leadership lessons from global women leaders.
- **Description:** Candid conversation with renowned international women leaders who achieved significant success.

### Session 2: Driving Progress, Attaining New Heights

- **Focus:** Successful case studies by women leaders.
- **Description:** Hear from accomplished women scientists, farmers, and industry professionals as they share their inspiring journeys and showcase how they achieved success and broke barriers in the agri-food sector.

### Session 3: Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

- **Focus:** Integrating gender-sensitive approaches in agri-food systems, gender equity in agri-food policies and institutions.
- **Description:** This session will explore strategies and best practices for effectively incorporating gender equality and social inclusion into agricultural policies, programs, and institutions to create a more equitable system for all.

### Session 4: Emerging and Disruptive Technologies for Gender-Transformative Change

- **Focus:** Scope for mainstreaming gender-sensitive agricultural technologies, women-friendly tools for drudgery reduction to digital inclusion (ICT, AI, IoT, and climate-smart technologies tailored to women farmers).
- **Description:** This sub-theme will highlight the importance of developing and implementing technologies and practices that specifically address women's needs, enhancing their productivity, efficiency, and empowerment.

### Session 5: Building Future Leadership in the Agri-Food Sector

- **Focus:** Nurturing the next generation of leaders.
- **Description:** Discussions will focus on building mentorship platforms, creating opportunities for young women in agriculture, and equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to become the future leaders of the agri-food sector.

### Session 6: Empowering Women through Economic Inclusion

- **Focus:** Entrepreneurship, Employment, and Financial Models for market linkages, cooperatives, e-commerce and microfinance innovations.
- **Description:** This session will delve into the critical role of economic empowerment, exploring successful models of women's entrepreneurship, access to finance, and employment opportunities that strengthen their position in the agri-food value chain.

### Session 7: Gender Dynamics in Policy and Market Access

- **Focus:** Policy Influence on food security and market opportunities.
- **Description:** Experts will analyze how gender-responsive policies can improve food security and ensure that women farmers and entrepreneurs have equal access to markets, resources, and decision-making processes.

### Session 8: Youth Forum – Nurturing Next Generation of Agri-Food Leaders

- **Focus:** Empowering young professionals and students with skills and vision
- **Description:** Networking, skill development, collaboration, connecting aspiring minds.

### Session 9: Women Farmers' Forum: From Field Challenges to Global Influence

- **Focus:** Bridging farm challenges with policy frameworks to amplify the economic and social influence
- **Description:** Sharing best practices, ground realities and actionable strategies to ensure women farmers secure fair market access, technology and policy support.

### Session 10: Way Forward and Valedictory Session

- Summing up and outlining key recommendations.

### Exhibition & Networking Zone

- **Description:** Exhibiting technological developments that could empower women in agri-food system, and showcasing women-led agri-tech startups, NGOs, FPOs, SHGs, and researchers. It also offers networking space to promote collaborations.



## CATEGORIES OF PRESENTATIONS

**Keynote Lectures:** Eminent experts, scientists from academia and industry, policy makers and farmers will be invited to deliver special lectures on various thematic areas related to agri-food systems. Keynote lectures will be for 15-20 minutes.

**Invited Lectures:** Each invited lecture will be a concise presentation of 10-15 minutes, highlighting emerging technologies and recent scientific advancements.

**Panel Discussions:** Panel discussions will be organized; eminent Panelists will discuss the thematic issues related to role of women in agri-food systems.

**Rapid Oral Presentations:** Papers will be shortlisted by a designated committee based on the significance of the topic and its alignment with the themes/subthemes. Authors of the selected papers will be notified well in advance to prepare for a brief oral presentation of 5-6 minutes.

**Poster Presentations:** All delegates will have the opportunity to showcase their contributory research through poster presentations. Posters should be brief, self-explanatory and informative.

## OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The official language of the symposium will be English for all communications and presentations.

## REGISTRATION FEE

Categories	Registration Fee for Indians (INR)	After Due Date or On-Spot Registration (INR)	Registration Fee for Foreigners (USD)	After Due Date or On-Spot Registration (USD)
Participants from Public Sector/Faculty/ Start-ups/ NGOs	8,000	10,000	120	150
Students/Research Fellows/Associates	3,500	4,000	80	100
Farmers	1,000	1,200	20	25
Industry and Private	10,000	12,000	300	350

**Registration will open by Dec. 1, 2025, through website (<https://gcwas.taas.in>).**

\*The accompanying person who wishes to attend the symposium has to pay extra INR 4,000 (Indians) or USD 60 (for foreigners) to cover the dinner, lunch, and tea/coffee only.

The registration fee for the participants will cover registration kit, participation in all scientific sessions, a copy of the proceedings, and other soft and printed

material concerning the Symposium, dinner, lunch, and tea/coffee. Please note that accommodation charges are not included in the registration fee. Participants and their accompanied persons have to make their own arrangements for accommodation. Details of accommodation (hotel etc.) will be provided later.

**Note:** E-Certificate will be issued to the registered participants only on request.



## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

(Platinum, Diamond, Gold and Silver)

There is an opportunity to give advertisements in the Abstract Book of the Conference, which will contain messages from VIPs and articles from renowned scientists from India and Abroad. Interested companies may contact TAAS Secretariat (taasiari@gmail.com) for giving their advertisements. Details of sponsors will also be displayed on the backdrops during the Symposium and included in the proceedings of the Symposium.

### Platinum Sponsorship (INR 10 lakhs)

- Name/logo of sponsor to be displayed at prominent places including backdrop of the dais/website
- Participation opportunity in the exhibition during the workshop.
- Advertisement in souvenir (full page colour, special insertion)
- Exemption of Registration Fee for six participants

### Diamond Sponsorship (INR 5 Lakhs)

- Name/logo of sponsor to be displayed at prominent places including backdrop of the dais
- Participation opportunity in the exhibition during the workshop.
- Advertisement in souvenir (full page colour, special insertion)
- Exemption of Registration Fee for four participants

### Gold Sponsorship (INR 3 Lakhs)

- Name/logo of sponsor to be displayed at prominent places
- Advertisement in souvenir (full page colour)
- Exemption of Registration Fee for three participants

### Silver Sponsorship (INR 2 lakhs)

- Name/logo of sponsor to be displayed at prominent places
- Advertisement in souvenir (half page colour)
- Exemption of Registration Fee for two participants

## ADVERTISEMENT OPPORTUNITY

The Conference Souvenir, featuring messages from dignitaries and articles by renowned scientists and policymakers, serves as a lasting reference for delegates. Institutes, organizations, and companies are invited to place advertisements in the souvenir to gain visibility among a wide academic and professional audience. Interested parties may contact the organizers for booking. Advertisement rates are listed below:

- **Cover page:** INR 50,000
- **Full page insertion:** INR 25,000
- **Half page insertion:** INR 20,000

## ACCOMMODATION

Limited accommodation is available at the NASC International Guest House and other Guest Houses at Pusa Campus, New Delhi. There are several hotels located nearby in Patel Nagar at reasonable rates. Participants other than invited speakers and Co-chairs, are advised to make their own arrangements for accommodation. Details of hotel will be provided later.

## VENUE

ICAR Convention Centre, National Agricultural Science Complex (NASC), Pusa Campus, New Delhi, INDIA

## WEATHER

The weather in Delhi during March is expected to be very pleasant; for a typical day average temperature ranging from a high 29°C (84°F) to low 16°C (61°F). Rainfall in March is minimal, with averages around 15-20 mm, as it marks the transition from winter to a warmer, summer season with low precipitation likelihood.







## ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

**Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi**, is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. The Council is the apex body for co-ordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in the entire country. The ICAR has played a pioneering role in ushering Green Revolution and subsequent developments in agriculture in India through its research and technology development making a visible impact on the national food and nutritional security. It has played a major role in promoting excellence in higher education in agriculture. It is engaged in cutting edge areas of science and technology development. For more information, please visit: <https://icar.org.in/>

**Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), New Delhi**, is a neutral and vibrant Think Tank for strengthening agricultural research and innovation for development (ARI4D). This was established on 17 October, 2002 with its Headquarters at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, with vision that India becomes a prosperous agricultural country through a science-based crusade for elimination of poverty, hidden hunger and malnutrition. It executes its programs and activities through collaboration and innovative partnerships with other national, regional and international organizations and networks. Its major strategic thrusts are; Policy advocacy, Technology transfer, Information dissemination/knowledge sharing, Human resource development/capacity building. For more information, please visit: <https://www.taas.in/>

**Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), Montpellier**, is a global partnership dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis. It brings together international organizations, research centers, and partners to advance agricultural innovation, enhance food security, reduce poverty, and promote sustainable natural resource management. With a strong focus on science-based solutions, CGIAR addresses challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and nutrition through collaborative research and innovation. The organization's efforts aim to create a more resilient and equitable global food system. For more information, please visit: <https://www.cgiar.org/>

**Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPV&FRA), New Delhi**, is a statutory body in India created under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001. Its core function is to implement the Act's provisions. The Authority's primary objectives are to establish an effective system for protecting new plant varieties and to recognize and protect the rights of farmers. By doing so, it aims to stimulate investment in agricultural research and development, fostering the creation of new plant varieties and accelerating agricultural growth. This protection facilitates the growth of the seed industry, ensuring farmers have access to high-quality seeds. The PPVFR Authority is responsible for the registration of plant varieties, granting intellectual property rights to breeders for new varieties, and also recognizing and registering traditional varieties developed by farmers. For more information, please visit: <https://plantaauthority.gov.in/>





## CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

### Chief Patron

- **Dr RS Paroda**, Chairman, Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), New Delhi, India

### Patrons

- **Dr ML Jat**, Secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR, New Delhi, India
- **Dr Ismahane Elouafi**, Executive Managing Director, CGIAR, Montpellier, France
- **Dr T Mohapatra**, Chairperson, PPV & FRA, New Delhi, India

### International Advisory Committee

• <b>Dr ML Jat</b> , Secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR, New Delhi, India	Co-Chairperson
• <b>Dr Ismahane Elouafi</b> , Executive Managing Director, CGIAR, France	Co-Chairperson
• <b>Dr Aly Abousabaa</b> , Director General, ICARDA, Lebanon	Member
• <b>Dr Nick Austin</b> , CEO, ACIAR, Australia	Member
• <b>Dr Bram Govaerts</b> , Director General, CIMMYT-BISA, Mexico	Member
• <b>Dr Himanshu Pathak</b> , Director General, ICRISAT, India	Member
• <b>Dr Prabhu Pingali</b> , Director, TCI, Cornell University, USA	Member
• <b>Dr Juan Lucas Restrepo</b> , Director General, Alliance BI-CIAT, Italy	Member
• <b>Dr Somya Swaminathan</b> , Chairperson, MSSRF, India	Member
• <b>Dr Renu Swarup</b> , Former Secretary, DBT, New Delhi, India	Member
• <b>Dr Eliane Ubalijoro</b> , CEO, CIFOR-ICRAF, Kenya	Member

### Steering Committee

• <b>Dr Renu Swarup</b> , Former Secretary, DBT, New Delhi, India	Chairperson
• <b>Dr Rajbir Singh</b> , DDG (Ag. Extension), ICAR, New Delhi, India	Co-Chairperson
• <b>Dr Vibha Dhawan</b> , Director General, TERI, New Delhi, India	Member
• <b>Dr BS Dhillon</b> , Trustee, TAAS, New Delhi and Former VC, PAU, Ludhiana, India	Member
• <b>Dr Nicoline de Haan</b> , Gender and Youth Accelerator Director of CGIAR Platform, Kenya	Member
• <b>Dr Srivalli Krishnan</b> , Deputy Director, Agriculture Development - Asia, Gates Foundation	Member
• <b>Dr Timothy J Krupnik</b> , Country Representative, CIMMYT, Bangladesh	Member
• <b>Dr Anjali Makhija</b> , CEO, SM Sehgal foundation, Gurugram, India	Member
• <b>Dr Karim Maredia</b> , Director of International Programs (Agriculture), MSU, USA	Member
• <b>Dr Purvi Mehta</b> , Senior Advisor, Global Center on Adaptation, New Delhi, India	Member
• <b>Dr Purnima Menon</b> , Senior Director, IFPRI, South Asia Office, New Delhi, India	Member
• <b>Dr Dina Nijjar</b> , Senior Gender Scientist, ICARDA, Rabat, Morocco	Member
• <b>Dr Nitya Rao</b> , Professor, UEA and Director, NISD, Norwich, UK	Member
• <b>Dr Ch Srinivas Rao</b> , Director, IARI, New Delhi and Trustee, TAAS, New Delhi	Member
• <b>Dr Meenesh Shah</b> , Chairman, NDDB, Anand, India,	Member
• <b>Dr Usha Barwale Zehr</b> , Executive Director, Grow Indigo, Jalna, India	Member



- Member Co-Convener  
Member Convenor

Chairperson  
Co-Chairperson

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| • <b>Dr Renu Swarup</b> , Former Secretary, DBT, New Delhi                             | Chairperson     |
| • <b>Dr RR Burman</b> , ADG (Ag. Extension), ICAR, New Delhi                           | Co-Chairperson  |
| • <b>Dr Anuradha Agrawal</b> , Project Director, ICAR-DKMA, New Delhi                  | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Malavika Dadlani</b> , Former Joint Director (Education), ICAR-IARI, New Delhi | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Mridula Devi</b> , Director, ICAR-CIWA, Bhubaneswar                            | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Renuka Diwan</b> , CEO, Bioprime Agrisolutions, Pvt Ltd, Pune                  | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Seema Jaggi</b> , ADG (Ag. Education), ICAR, New Delhi                         | Member          |
| • <b>Dr JL Karihaloo</b> , Trustee, TAAS, New Delhi                                    | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Bhag Mal</b> , Secretary, TAAS, New Delhi                                      | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Bimlesh Mann</b> , Ex ADG (Ag. Education), ICAR, New Delhi                     | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Devika Pillai</b> , ADG (Fisheries), ICAR, New Delhi                           | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Gurinderjit Randhawa</b> , Former Head, ICAR-NBPGR, New Delhi                  | Member          |
| • <b>Dr G Taru Sharma</b> , Former Director, NIAB and PS, IVRI, Izatnagar              | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Anupama Singh</b> , Joint Director (Education) & Dean, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi    | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Pratibha Singh</b> , Regional Manager, South Asia, ACIAR, New Delhi            | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Sweta Singh</b> , Community Partnership Lead, Corteva, New Delhi               | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Smita Sirohi</b> , National Professor, NIAP, New Delhi                         | Member          |
| • <b>Dr Rishi Tyagi</b> , Senior Consultant, TAAS, New Delhi                           | Member Convenor |





### Event Format

Plenary Talks | Keynote Addresses | Technical Women Farmers' Forum Presentations | Panel Discussions  
Interface with Global Woman Trailblazers | Youth Forum | Posters | Exhibition

### Themes

- **Interface with Global Women Trailblazers**
- **Driving Progress, Attaining New Heights**
- **Mainstreaming Gender Equality and Social Inclusion**
- **Emerging and Disruptive Technologies for Gender-Transformative Change**
- **Building Future Leadership in the Agri-Food Sector**
- **Empowering Women through Economic Inclusion**
- **Gender Dynamics in Policy and Market Access**
- **Youth Forum – Nurturing Next Generation of Agri-Food Leaders**
- **Women Farmers' Forum: From Field Challenges to Global Influence**

### Participants

- Around 500 participants from India and abroad, including researchers, policymakers, leaders, representative of CGIAR centres, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Farmers Organizations (FOs), successful women farmers, industry, start-ups, entrepreneurs and students are expected to participate.

**Date** : 12-14 March 2026

**Venue** : Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam Auditorium, ICAR Convention Centre, National Agricultural Science Centre (NASC) Complex, Dev Prakash Shastri Marg, Pusa Campus, New Delhi 110012, India.

#### Chief Patron

**Dr R.S. Paroda**

Former Secretary, DARE & DG, ICAR, Govt. of India & Founder Chairman, TAAS, New Delhi, India

#### Patrons

**Dr ML Jat**

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Director General, ICAR,  
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Executive Managing Director,  
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**Dr T Mohapatra**

Chairman, PPV&FRA,  
Ministry of Agriculture and  
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#### Conference Chair

**Dr Renu Swarup**

Former Secretary to Govt. of India, Department of Biotechnology  
Ministry of Science & Technology, New Delhi, India

#### Conference Co-Chair

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Deputy Director General  
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#### Conference Convenors

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**Dr Rajarshi Roy Burman**

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Project Director,  
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**Dr Mridula Devi**

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**Dr Anupama Singh**

Joint Director (Education)  
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#### Secretariat

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**2. Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Pusa Campus, New Delhi 110 012, INDIA**

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**March 12-14, 2026**

