

## ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI) organizes “Science Walk”

A Science Walk was organized at the ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur for three days to expose the visitors to food production systems of arid regions. This included visiting research and demonstration blocks laid out at the 400-acre research farm of the institute. “Science Walk” was kicked off on 10 August, 2023 at the Integrated Farming Cafeteria (IFC), recently established as a one-stop demonstration of all production technologies related to field crops, horticultural crops, agro-forestry, soil conservation, water harvesting and recycling, and other agricultural innovations to all stakeholders.

A special attraction was on Millets Block as a part of celebration of the International Year of Millets – 2023 where three major millets i.e., pearl millet, sorghum and finger millet; and five minor millets i.e. foxtail millet, proso millet, kodo millet, barnyard millet and little millet were grown. Government of India has declared millet crops as ‘NutriCereals’ for production, consumption and commerce. The better nutritional profile, low water requirement and climatic resilience of millets were shared with the visitors to promote their consumption. The varietal differences of crops and their differential habit of growth and development attracted the attention of visitors.



Visitors were enthralled by the layout of blocks consisting of silvi-pasture, multi-cut fodder crops, green manuring, and recycling of farm waste. The newly developed farm pond (20 m x 12 m wide at top, 16 m x 8 m at bottom and depth of 3 m) with a capacity to store 5 lakh litre rain-harvested water highlighted the importance of water resources to recycle harvested water to irrigate horticulture (gonda, fig, pomegranate, ber and datepalm) to augment the income of farmers.

Spectroradiometer measurement in the crop field was demonstrated for quantifying carbon and water footprint of arid region crops. Introduction of new perennial species of *Melia dubia* and *Gmelina arborea* along with pearl millet and mungbean were new interventions to augment resilience to climatic stresses and total farm income.

The management of seed production plots to strengthen the seed supply of food legumes and arid grasses caught the eyes of all visitors. The preparations and research interventions in perennial crops to augment the supply of quality planting material was highly appreciated. Integration of annual crops, multi-purpose trees, grasses, medicinal plants, horticultural crops, drought-adapted grasses advocated the concept of integrated farming system to provide round-the-year income.

All heads of divisions of the institute Drs. P Santra, Dhiraj Singh, RK Kakani, S Vyas, HL Kushwaha and SPS Tanwars shared their views in the discussion during the walk. Director of the institute, Dr O.P. Yadav also interacted with visitors. Dr. P.C. Moharana, PME Incharge coordinated the event.