

KU holds five-day outreach programme in Gurez areas

Srinagar, July 11:The Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Kashmir, in collaboration with Mountain Agriculture Research and Extension Station (MAR&ES) Gurez of SKUAST-K conducted a five-day survey-cum-training programme at different locations of Gurez and Tulail.

The programme was part of a project entitled “Value addition of fruits and vegetables of Western Himalayas through eco-friendly and low-cost technologies”, sponsored by National Mission on Himalayan Studies, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Changes.

One of the objectives of the programme, undertaken by a joint team of scientists, was to impart training to local producers and womenfolk on preservation and value addition of vegetables cultivated in the region using low-cost and eco-friendly technologies.

The team documented the traditional methods of vegetable preservation to refine and upgrade the technology.

While interacting with the farmers, they identified some problems faced by the producers, including, among others, poor cooking quality of potatoes and delicate skin of tubers.

The joint team identified early harvesting of potatoes as the major reason for the delicate skin of tubers and was of the opinion that the tuber be given adequate time to mature in the field before their harvest to let their skin complete its development.

The farmers were further advised to plant the varieties that withstand cooking and retain their firmness. In order to enhance the market for potato produced in the region, linkages with industry can be of great help, the team said, adding that vegetables like cabbage, knol-khol and Kale which give high yields and perform well in the region need preservation and value-addition.

The team trained local farmers in preservation of cabbage and tomato through a method demonstration at MAR&ES, Izmarg, Gurez which was highly appreciated by them.

It was also observed by the visiting team that marketing support for products like strawberry and peas can motivate the farmers to cultivate these crops and transportation of these commodities through cold chain can make the cultivation of these crops highly remunerative.

Gurez has a seasonal advantage in cultivation of both strawberry and peas as these are produced there in off-season.

The joint team of scientists comprised Prof Farooq Masoodi and Dr Sajad Ahmad Mir from University of Kashmir and Dr Bilal A Bhat, Dr Wasim Ali Dar and Dr M Muddasir Magray from MAR&ES, Gurez, SKUAST Kashmir.