

‘Shaping the Future of Functional Foods’:

Scientists converge at KU to find health-centric academia-industry solutions

Need to integrate traditional foods into mainstream health strategies for nutritional stability: Experts



Srinagar, Nov 14: To build a consensus for strengthening collaboration and push forward with innovative research in functional foods, ensuring a healthier, sustainable future, the University of Kashmir (KU), organised a two-day international conference that concluded here Thursday.

Titled, ‘Shaping the Future of Functional Foods’, the event organised by the varsity’s Department of Food Science and Technology (DFST) in collaboration with the Association of Food Scientists and Technologists - India, AFST(I) Mysuru, brought together experts in food technology from across the globe to share insights and knowledge with over 250 delegates from various institutions.

In a statement, KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilufer Khan, reiterated the varsity’s commitment in advancing research in functional foods, a field with immense potential to impact public health and wellness in meaningful ways.

“Such platforms catalyse future research, promote collaboration and encourage innovation that can reshape the food industry towards health-centric, sustainable practices,” she added.

In her keynote, Director, Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysore, Prof Sridevi Annapurna, emphasised the critical role traditional foods play in enhancing health and overall well-being.

“As we navigate modern health challenges, traditional foods remain a cornerstone of nutritional stability,” she reiterated, urging further research to integrate these foods into mainstream health strategies.

Dean, Research, KU, Prof M Sultan Bhat, underscored the significance of food technology in offering employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

“With close collaboration between the University of Kashmir and institutions like CFTRI, we can unlock vast potential in food technology, benefiting our economy and empowering future innovators,” he said.

Founding head, DFST, KU, Prof Farooq A Masoodi, emphasised the importance of efficiency studies on nutraceutical elements during processing and storage.

“It is imperative that we continue to refine our approach to ensure product stability and effectiveness,” he said.

Delivering a lecture on ‘Prebiotics, Probiotics and Synbiotics as Versatile Potential Dietary Supplements in Functional Foods’, former Dean, Research, SLIET (Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering and Technology), Longowal, Prof Paramjit S Panesar, explored the growing relevance of dietary supplements in health and wellness.

“These supplements represent a dynamic area of food science, offering consumers healthier choices and new research pathways,” he maintained.

Prof Brijesh Tiwari from TEAGASC, Dublin, Ireland, stressed the need for sustainable practices in food production, stating: “Sustainability in our food systems is not just a choice, it is an imperative for the future.”

Head, DFST, KU, Dr Idrees Ahmad Wani, presented an overview of the department's academic and research pursuits, saying: “The department is committed to advance research on functional food and equip students with the skills needed to lead in this field.”

Outlining the broader concepts of future research prospects in the field of functional foods, Organising Secretary, Dr Adil Gani, said: “The conference has mapped a robust future for functional food research, bringing together academia and industry to build health-centric solutions.”

Several speakers from KU, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Awantipora and Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agriculture Sciences - Kashmir (SKUAST-K) shared their expertise on various facets of functional foods.