

Workshop on climate change mitigation strategies

The integration of dairy, forestry, fisheries, mushroom cultivation, horticulture with dominant cropping system and agro-tourism based on conservation principals is the need of the hour to convert climate variability /change into an opportunity. Shifting from crop, commodity and enterprise based agriculture to integrated multi-enterprise system and increasing farmers' income per unit of land and water is imperative to enhance climate resilience and livelihood options. These were some of the major recommendations during the one-day capacity building programme organized under Climate Change Adaptation in Rural Areas of India at the Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF), Nauni.

Panchayats representatives from Solan, district officials, scientists and research scholars took part in the workshop organized by the HP Knowledge Cell on Climate Change, Department of Environment, Science and Technology in collaboration with GIZ and Department of Environmental Science of the university. The aim of the workshop was to understand and develop mitigation strategies for climate change in the region.



In his address, Dr Suresh Attri, State Coordinator, HP Knowledge Cell on Climate Change said that the Himalayan ecosystem was vital to the ecological security and possessed unique floral and faunal wealth. He was of the view that the rate of change in the environment puts a big question mark on the survival of all living beings and called for linking development activities with environmental conservation and sustainability. Dr JN Sharma, Director Research of the University, shed light on the contribution of agricultural activities in environmental pollution. He advocated the implementation of climate-smart agriculture interventions that are adaptive to different agro-ecologies and farm types for reducing the pollution caused due to agriculture. Dr PK Mahajan, Dean College of Forestry urged the scientists and students to work in close coordination with the farmers and undertake environmentally friendly research as per the needs of the end user. Through interactions between the scientists and the farmers, it was concluded that climate change and variability events like heat and cold waves, droughts and floods have become common. These have increased the vulnerability of agriculture and absence of alternative livelihood options in mountains is leading to migration of labour and educated youth. There was a consensus on the urgent need to focus attention on sustainably increasing productivity, enhance resilience and reduce greenhouse gases and to have synergies between three pillars: productivity, adaptation and mitigation.

Two technical sessions by Dr SK Bhardwaj and Dr MK Brahmi were also held during the workshop followed by interaction on developing mitigation strategies for the region based on the participants' experiences. Another important recommendation of the workshop was the urgent need to train researchers, extension personnel, farmers on climate change issues and create awareness among masses. Infrastructural development to make the hill agriculture resilient to climate change and training on making value-added products can augment the farm income to make farmer more resilient to adverse situations.