

ICAR-NIRCA Organised Strategic Brainstorming Session on European Green Deal and Tobacco Export Competitiveness in collaboration with ITMU.

Date: December 17, 2025 | Venue: ICAR-NIRCA, Rajahmundry

The Institute Technology Management Unit (ITMU) of the **ICAR-National Institute for Research on Commercial Agriculture (NIRCA)** organized a high-level brainstorming session today to address the evolving landscape of international trade. The session, titled “**Navigating the European Green Deal and Sustainability Standards: Implications for Indian Tobacco Production, Export Competitiveness, and Future Directions,**” brought together scientists, policymakers, and industry leaders to chart a sustainable path forward for the Indian tobacco sector.

Product Relaunch & Innovation Display

A major highlight of the event was the **official relaunch of ICAR-NIRCA-NEST** products by the Executive Director of the Tobacco Board, **Smt. B. Vishwasree, IAS**.

- **Collaborative Innovation:** These value-added products (including chilli, turmeric and ashwagandha-based health supplements) were developed jointly by **ICAR-NIRCA** and **millC, Hyderabad**.

Addressing Global Regulatory Shifts

The program commenced with a welcome address by **Dr. B. Hema**, followed by an insightful inaugural address by **Dr. M. Sheshu Madav**, Director of ICAR-NIRCA. Dr. Madav emphasized the urgency of aligning Indian agricultural practices with the **European Green Deal (EGD)** to ensure that Indian exports remain competitive and compliant with stringent global sustainability norms. He stated that "The European Green Deal is not just a challenge; it is an opportunity for India to redefine its commercial agriculture through the lens of sustainability and innovation."

Policy and Future Outlook

Smt. B. Vishwasree, IAS, Executive Director of the **Tobacco Board**, shared the Board's vision on EGD norms, stressing the importance of farmer sensitization and the adoption of "Green" protocols at the grassroots level

A key highlight of the morning was the technical session by **Dr. Arpita Mukherjee** from ICRIER, New Delhi, who decoded the impact of the **Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D)** on Indian tobacco exports. She highlighted that transparency and traceability are no longer optional but essential for maintaining a foothold in the European market.

Bridging the Gap: Research and Industry

The session featured intensive discussions on aligning current farming practices with EGD norms. **Dr. T. Kiran Kumar** (ICAR-NIRCA) led a technical audit of identified gaps, followed by a collaborative dialogue involving major industry players, including:

- **ITC Limited**
- **Godfrey Phillips India (GPI)**
- **Philip Morris International (PMI)**
- **Alliance One (AOL)**

Representatives from **Crop Life India** and **TraceX** provided additional perspectives on digital traceability and sustainable alternatives to conventional crop protection.

The session concluded with a "Way Forward" summary by **Mr. K. Viswanatha Reddy**, outlining a roadmap for ICAR-NIRCA to lead research in sustainable commercial agriculture that meets international environmental standards.

Field Demonstration of Cutting-Edge Technologies

Following the brainstorming session, a field visit was organized for the Executive Director of the Tobacco Board, **Smt. B. Vishwasree, IAS**, to demonstrate ICAR-NIRCA's latest technological innovations:

- **Climate-Resilient Varieties:** Showcase of new tobacco lines developed via **Genome Editing** for pest resistance and heat tolerance.
- **Smart Farming Tools:** Demonstration of **Agri-spray Drones** and **Precision Phenology** models using satellite-based NDVI/NDWI data for real-time crop monitoring.
- **Post-Harvest Innovation:** Presentation of advanced **Heat Pump-based drying technology** and automated **Bale Pressing machines** designed to reduce post-harvest losses and ensure chemical-free processing.

Recognition of Excellence (Farmer Awards)

In a dedicated ceremony, the Institute and the Tobacco Board honored five progressive farmers for their leadership in adopting sustainable practices: **Best Farmer Awards:** Five farmers from the primary tobacco-growing regions of Andhra Pradesh were felicitated for their success in achieving **EGD-compliant prod**

