



FAO consultant advises ICAR to promote budded plants instead of seedlings to rejuvenate orange orchards in Sikkim

a NOW REPORT

GANGTOK, 10 Dec: Dr. S P Ghosh, FAO Consultant and former DDG (Horticulture), ICAR, visited the ICAR centre here yesterday and interacted with scientists to get acquainted with their research activities.

Dr. H. Rahman, Joint Director briefed him on ICAR research and extension activities and informed Dr. Ghosh that ICAR was working on a number of externally-funded projects on emerging biotechnological spheres of agricultural and animal sciences, besides institutional projects.

Dr. Ghosh expressed concern over the recession in production of Mandarin oranges and poor orchard management. He commented that citrus was the leading fruit of the world and the third most important fruit in India after banana and mango; the onus to revive the citrus industry in Sikkim was thus on ICAR, he said.

He commented that while

the average productivity of citrus in India was about 9 tonnes per hectare, in Sikkim, productivity was less than 1/3rd of the national average.

The poor productivity of mandarin is a matter of great concern, but concerted efforts by research institutes and State departments could rejuvenate it, he stressed.

He advocated the promotion of budded plants instead of seedlings, since budded plants not only bore fruits early, but also have the advantage of important character of rootstock. He recommended four rootstocks—rough lemon (*Citrus jambhiri*), Rangpur lime (*Citrus limonia*), Citrange (Trifoliate X sweet orange) and Volcamor lemon (*Citrus volcamaiana*) for mandarin rejuvenation in Sikkim.

He advised ICAR to go for budding in February-March on these rootstocks and to collaborate with National Research Centre for Citrus, Nagpur for rootstock.