

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O.letter dated 6.12.2018 of Thiru **Edappadi K.Palaniswami**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

I would like to bring to your kind notice that in the states of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, potato is grown in hills. Potatoes are mainly grown in hilly districts of Dindigul, the Nilgiris, Krishnagiri and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu State covering nearly 5,500 Ha. **It is understood from media reports that the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has taken a decision to shut down the 'Central Potato Research Station' (CPRS), a well known Premier Institute functioning at Muthorai, Ooty in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu.**

This Institute was founded in 1957 and has been serving the potato farmers for the past 70 years in coordination with the State Government as well as with the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU). The Institute is well equipped with a hi-tech laboratory, seed production and multiplication facilities located in an area of 45 acres. This CPRS is the only station in the whole of South India researching on Potato cyst nematode and Potato early blight which are major diseases affecting potato cultivation and help the farmers to keep these maladies in check and grow the potato crop profitably.

CPRS-Ooty released the India's first nematode resistant variety "Kufri Swarna" in the year 1985 and this variety is still predominantly grown in many areas across the Nilgiris. This is one of the two Institutes where Potato farmers are getting disease free seeds. **If this Research station is closed, farmers of Tamil Nadu and other southern states of India, have to depend on the Potato Research Station at Jalandhar, Punjab, which is located far away, to access disease free planting materials, which in turn will increase the cost of cultivation. Moreover, the varieties of North India are not suitable for Southern hills.**

In the above circumstances, the closure of the said Institute "CPRS" at Ooty will have detrimental impact on the interest of the Potato farmers of this State and entire South India. I therefore request you to direct the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research not to close the CPRS, Ooty in order to safeguard the interests of the Potato farmers of this State as well as farmers in other southern States of our country.

Issued by:- Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai-9.
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