On November 19, 2024, a webinar titled "Datepalm: Status and Prospects" was successfully organized at the ICAR-Central Institute for Arid Horticulture (ICAR-CIAH), Bikaner. The event served as a platform for interaction between the Horticulture Department of Rajasthan and ICAR-CIAH, Bikaner to assess the status and potential of date palm cultivation in the hot arid region. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Jagadish Rane, Director, ICAR-CIAH, who highlighted the strategic importance of promoting date palm cultivation. He emphasized the significant expenditure on date palm imports annually and underscored the immense potential of the hot arid regions of Rajasthan to meet domestic demand through expansion of area under Datepalm cultivation. The conveners of the webinar were Dr. Manpreet Kaur, Scientist (Agricultural Economics), Dr. S.R. Meena, Principal Scientist (Agricultural Extension), and Dr. V.P. Mishra, Joint Director (Horticulture), Government of Rajasthan. Deputy Directors of Horticulture from various districts of Rajasthan attended the event, who shared insights into the area, production levels, and challenges faced in date palm cultivation in their respective regions. Expert discussions during the webinar addressed key constraints and possible solutions to management challenges. Oueries regarding scientific practices for improved date palm cultivation were answered by Dr. R.K. Meena, Senior Scientist (Fruit Science), and Dr. Dhurendra Singh, Principal Scientist (Agricultural Biotechnology). Additionally, Dr. Chet Ram, Scientist (Agricultural Biotechnology) provided insights into the DNA fingerprinting of date palm crops, addressing concerns raised by the attendees. The webinar was concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Dhurendra Singh, acknowledging the active participation of horticulture officials and experts, and reaffirming the commitment to advancing date palm cultivation in Rajasthan.



