



ICAR approves cultivation of six genetic pulses

SURINDER SUD
New Delhi, 20 September

A high-yielding variety of gram developed through genetic mutation is among the six new varieties of various pulses approved for commercial cultivation by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). The varieties are of desi and Kabuli chana, field pea, lentil and mung.

The gram variety BGM 547, bred through genetic mutation by the Delhi-based Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI), is the first variety to be developed with this method in 20 years.

Mutation helps to change the genetic characteristics of a plant (not inherited from the parents) which can be passed on to its descendants. The last crop variety bred through mutation was released in 1985.

The other new varieties identified for release at the recent meeting of ICAR's rabi pulse group include Phule G 9425-9 of desi gram, BGD 128 of Kabuli gram, IPFD 1-10 of field pea, VL Masoor 507 of lentil and

HUM-16 of mung. These are recommended for growing in different specified areas of the country, according to ICAR sources.

ICAR has also chalked out a programme for enhancing the production of breeder seed of new varieties to facilitate quick multiplication and spread of new seeds. It would ask state agriculture directorates to indent for the seeds of only latest varieties (less than five years old) so that the farmers could grow improved strains. The work on denotification of old and outmoded varieties would also be speeded up.

The apex farm research body would hold front-line demonstrations of the new varieties to show their effectiveness and yield superiority. This would be done in collaboration with state agriculture departments and directors of oilseeds and pulses.

The mutation-bred gram variety, BGM 547 is claimed to have an average grain yield of 1,800 kg a hectare, about 15.8 per cent higher than the common gram varieties. Its crop



ICAR has also chalked out a programme for enhancing the production of breeder seed of new varieties to facilitate quick multiplication and spread of new seeds

matures in 135 days and can withstand the attack of diseases like wilt, root rot and stunting. It is recommended for cultivation in the plains of north-western states.

The other new desi gram variety, Phule 9425-9, developed by the Rahuri-based Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, is also meant for growing in the north-western plains and has almost the same yield potential. Besides, its dal recovery during processing is reported to be high, about 76 per cent.

The new Kabuli chana variety is BGD 128. It is recom-

mended for cultivation in the central zone and gives a yield of around 1900 kg a hectare. Its crop matures only in 116 days and is, therefore, considered suitable for inclusion in the double cropping sequences. Its grain quality is claimed to be excellent.

The fieldpea strain IPFD 1-10, bred by the Kanpur-based Indian Institute of Pulses Research, is meant for cultivation in the northern hills as well as the central zone. Ripening in 109 days, this variety produces about 2100 kg peas per hectare.