

Title : Need for investing in in-depth agricultural research in Andhra Pradesh-Laid

**SHRI LAVU SRIKRISHNA DEVARAYALU (NARASARAOPET):** The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in its first advance estimates has predicted a record Kharif harvest of 1,647.05 lakh metric tonnes. However, as we secure food for our nation, we must also prioritise its nutritional value. A recent ICAR study highlights a concerning trend: high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat have significantly reduced micronutrient densities, with zinc levels dropping by up to 33% in rice and 30% in wheat, and iron levels similarly declining. To achieve nutrition security, it is time to shift our focus from yield per hectare and lakh metric tonnes to nutritional output per hectare. We must promote crop diversity and introduce new metrics like an agriculture income diversity score and incentivize farmers accordingly. Indicators like soil organic carbon must be included in the soil health card. Other metrics such as landscape diversity scores, soil biological activity, and water-use efficiency must be mainstreamed into agricultural practices. I propose investing in in-depth agricultural research, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, the rice bowl of India and home to Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University. On the 125th anniversary of the legendary Rythu Ranga, let us honour his vision by driving innovation that ensures doubling of farmer income and sustainable agriculture.