**Press Release (photographs attached)**

·         National Seminar on Medicinal Plants concludes today in Jaipur

·         Over 40 farmers from across the country honoured for their contribution to Herbiculture

·         Attended by more than 500 farmers from 23 States

**A CALL FOR FILLING THE GAP IN THE SUPPLY OF MEDICINAL PLANTS AT THE NATIONAL SEMINAR**

Jaipur, 21 August: Attended by more than 500 farmers from 23 states, the two-day national seminar on medicinal plants concluded today in Jaipur. The event witnessed a host of interactive sessions on various aspects of Herbiculture such as post-harvest management, quality assurance and marketing and export of medicinal plants.

In the session, ‘Marketing and Export of Medicinal Plants’, Deputy Director General (Research), Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Dr. G.S. Goraya highlighted the demand projection and gaps in supply chain. He said that the total commercial demand of herbal raw drugs in the country for the year 2014-15 has been estimated at 5,12,000 metric tonnes. This demand has grown by about 5 percent per year over the last decade. Keeping this increasing demand in mind, it is important to fill the gaps in the supply of medicinal plants in India. He further pointed out that the major groups of supply gap are *Ashtavarga, Dashamoola, Jivanti, Asoka Chhal, Guggul* and Himalayan Herbs.

Associate Vice President, Synergy Technofin, Mr. K. Karthikeyen discussed the approach of Farmer Producers Company (FPC) for medicinal plants. Throwing light on the current scenario of farming in India he underlined the various deficits in technology, input supplies, investment and market. He emphasized the importance of FPCs in supporting small producers by integrating with Small Medium Enterprises and retail chains as well as providing climate change coping mechanisms and risk mitigation.

This was followed by demonstration of the interactive web portal and mobile app ‘e-Charak’ which was launched yesterday by Rajasthan Agriculture Minister, Mr. Prabhu Lal Saini. During the demonstration, Senior Scientist, C-DAC, Dr. B. Vijyalaxmi explained how e-Charak will help the farmers as well as the traders in the e-trade of medicinal plants marketing. She said that it is a platform for buyers and sellers to interact, display their goods and services and will also aid in knowledge access and sharing.

The session was chaired by Chief Executive Officer, National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of Ayush, Ms. Shomita Biswas and Managing Director, TRIFED, Mr. Bala Prasad.

Earlier, a session on quality assurance of medicinal plants also took place. The issues and challenges in quality assurance, impact of quality on finished products, packaging of medicinal plants among others were discussed. During this session, Mr. Hansraj Choudhary, a farmer from Bhilwara shared his experience from a farmer’s perspective about the quality of medicinal plants.

During the day, over 40 farmers from across the country were felicitated for their contribution to Herbiculture. This was followed by a Buyers and Sellers Meet. The vote of thanks was delivered by Deputy CEO, NMPB, Ms. Padma Priya.

It is to be recalled the event was jointly organized by the National Medicinal Plants Board, Ministry of AYUSH in association with State Medicinal Plants Board, Government of Rajasthan and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).