

Special Technical Session on forage crops and Grasslands held at SKUAST-Jammu

A Special Technical Session on “Fodder Crops, Grassland Management and Pastoralism under Climate Change” was successfully conducted during the National Conference *IESCCC-2026: Sustainable and Climate Resilient Agroecosystems—Innovations and Policy Framework*, held at SKUAST-Jammu, Chatha from April 28–30, 2026.

The session was chaired by Dr. Sanjeev K. Chauhan (Former Director Research, YSP University, Nauni) with Dr. A.K. Shukla (PS and Head, GSM Division, ICAR-IGFRI, Jhansi) and Dr. Sanjay Gularia (Dean, Faculty of Basic Sciences, SKUAST-Jammu) serving as Co-Chairs. The session commenced with a keynote address by Dr. A. K. Shukla, who emphasized the role of climate-resilient horti-silvipastoral systems in restoring degraded landscapes and enhancing livelihood security. The session featured a series of expert presentations addressing diverse aspects of grassland and forage-based systems. Dr. Suheel Ahmad (Sr. Scientist & Incharge, ICAR-IGFRI, Regional Research Station) discussed the status and management of rangelands in the North-Western Himalayas, highlighting their significance for sustainable livelihoods of pastoralists. Dr. Sheeraz Saleem Bhat (Incharge, CIHG, Palampur) elaborated on grassland development strategies in mid-hill temperate regions, while Dr. Shahid Sulaiman (Founder, Himalayan Pastoral Trust) stressed on the implications of climate variability on pastoral mobility in the Himalaya region. Other scientists, including Dr. Asif Mohd Iqbal (Sr. Scientist, ICAR-IGFRI) presented insights into red clover diversity and trait associations, and Dr. Nazim Hamid Mir (scientist, ICAR-IGFRI) discussed integrated crop intensification approaches with a focus on zinc enrichment. The session also included valuable grassroots perspectives, with Shri Faisal Raza Bokda sharing experiences of Bakarwal nomadic livelihoods. Ms. Noor-ul-Ain (Research Scholar, SKUAST-K) presented on water use efficiency and photosynthetic performance in fodder maize. Important deliberations were enriched by the contributions of Dr. Javid Rahi, who highlighted socio-cultural dimensions and policy needs of pastoral communities, and Dr. Rajan Kotru (Senior Consultant, ICIMOD), who emphasized regional cooperation and resilience strategies for mountain ecosystems. A major highlight of the conference was the signing of an MoU between ICAR-IGFRI and SKUAST-Jammu to strengthen collaborative research and extension in fodder, grassland management, and sustainable livestock systems, aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity and farmer livelihoods. Drs Suheel Ahmad, Incharge, ICAR-IGFRI Srinagar station and Syed Sheraz Mehdi, ADR and also organizing secretary of the conference acted as convenors of the technical session. The session witnessed active participation and enriching discussions, clearly aligning with the vision of the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP-2026). Emphasis was laid on sustainable rangeland management, conservation of pastoral livelihoods, climate adaptation strategies, and integration of traditional knowledge with scientific innovations. The deliberations provided meaningful inputs for strengthening research, extension strategies, and policy frameworks aimed at enhancing productivity, ecological resilience, and livelihood security in grassland-based ecosystems.

