

## **KAU to formulate roadmap to revive pepper economy**

Linking quality assurance with productivity enhancement, drive to produce and market certified organic pepper, encouraging pepper cultivation in home gardens, promoting bush pepper and selective production to ensure demand-based supply will be the principal aspects in the roadmap set to be prepared by the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) to revive the state's black pepper economy. The decision was taken at a meeting attended by scientists, government officers and farmers in Thrissur on Friday. "There exists a gap between R&D and the field situation. Bridging this gap is an essential part of the attempts to revive pepper," said KAU vice-chancellor R Chandra Babu while inaugurating the session. The farmers' demands include supply of quality planting materials, mechanism to predict incidence of pest and diseases, proper advice on plant protection and marketing and regular financial support.

*(with inputs from Gopika Varrier and Hareesh Kumar A S)*