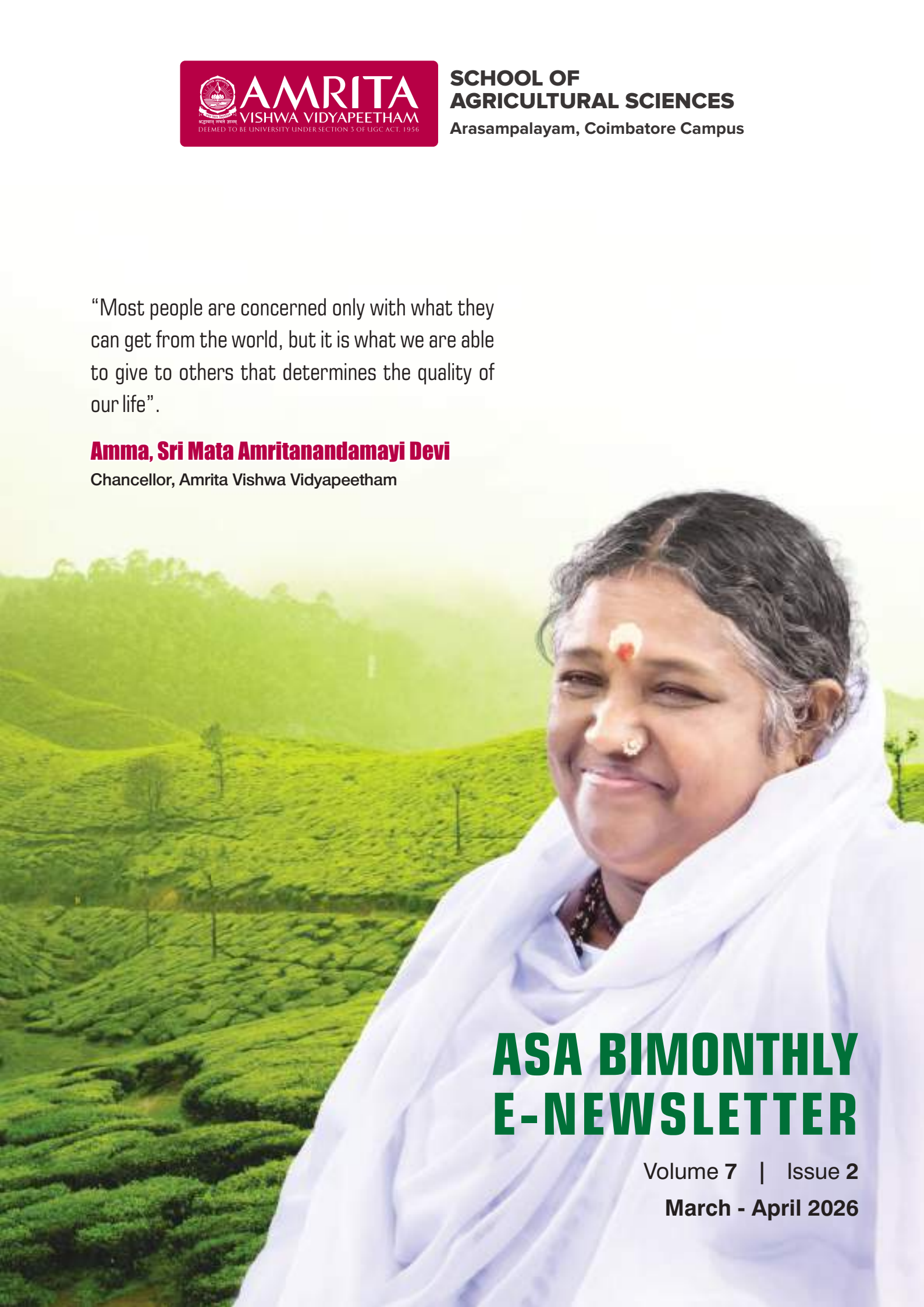


“Most people are concerned only with what they can get from the world, but it is what we are able to give to others that determines the quality of our life”.

Amma, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi

Chancellor, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham



ASA BIMONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

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March - April 2026

1. Experimental Learning Program - Food Processing

As part of the Experimental Learning Program (ELP), under the course 19FSN411 – Food Processing (0+10), the department's food processing laboratory, certified by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), facilitated the preparation and commercialization of a wide range of value-added food products by the 2022 batch of students. During the ELP course, students gained hands-on experience by utilizing various instruments and processing machinery for the production of milk-based products, fruit and vegetable products, cereal-based products, and bakery items under the guidance of course teacher Dr. Thirukkumar S, Assistant Professor (FSN). The products prepared by the students were appropriately packaged in suitable containers and marketed through the institution's cafeteria as well as through direct sales to the public.



2. Exposure Visit to Ooty - 2023 Batch Students

An exposure visit was organized from 29.04.2026 to 30.04.2026 for the 2023 batch of students of B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture program. The tour was coordinated by Dr. Manonmani K, AP (Genetics and Plant Breeding), Dr. Murugavel S, AP (Plant Pathology), Dr. Janarthanan P, AP (Agronomy), Dr. S. Kumaresan, AP (Horticulture) and Dr. R Priya, AP (Horticulture). The educational trip was planned to visit Central Potato Research Institute, Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Government Botanical Garden, Ooty and Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Regional station, Wellington as part of the courses 19GPB314 - Crop Improvement – II (Rabi Crops), 19PAT313 - Diseases of Field and Horticultural Crops and their management - II, 19AGR315 - Rainfed Agriculture and Watershed Management, and 19HOR315 - Landscaping of VI semester.

On 29.04.2026, the students visited ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute (Regional Station), Muthurai, Ooty, to gain insights into potato breeding methods and disease identification. Dr. Dhivya K Lekshmanan, Scientist, explained the history, objectives, and major breeding techniques employed at CPRI, along with their role in the Nilgiris region. The session primarily focused on important diseases such as late blight caused by *Phytophthora infestans*, early blight caused by *Alternaria solani*, and the quarantine pest potato cyst nematode, *Globodera rostochiensis*. The speaker explained the epidemiology, symptoms, and economic significance of these diseases, particularly emphasizing the destructive nature of late blight in cool, humid conditions. Students were shown the characteristic symptoms of late blight and early blight on foliage, as well as the symptoms associated with cyst nematode infestation. The session also included insights into the history of cyst nematode discovery in Ooty and its spread, highlighting its importance as a quarantine pest. Furthermore, Dr. Dhivya discussed various resistant hybrids and varieties developed to manage late blight and cyst nematodes, emphasizing the role of host resistance in sustainable disease management. Students learned about various recently released and long-standing potato varieties. Additionally,

students gained hands-on experience in hand emasculation and controlled pollination, along with proper bagging, tagging, and labeling techniques. The students also learned about the challenges in potato hybridization, including flower drop and low seed set, and the influence of environmental factors such as temperature and humidity on crossing success. They further understood the significance of parent selection and hybridization in developing improved potato varieties, along with post-pollination care for better seed setting.



**Hand emasculation
in Potato, CPRI, Ooty**



Late blight of potato



Early blight of potato



CPRI, Ooty

A field visit was organized to the ICAR - Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Ooty as part of the course Rainfed Agriculture and Watershed Management. The objective was to provide practical exposure to students on soil and water conservation (SWC) techniques, watershed management practices, and ongoing research activities. Students participated in an interactive session where experts explained the importance of soil and water conservation, the major challenges in rainfed agriculture, and the role of watershed-based approaches in improving productivity. They were then shown various working models demonstrating key SWC practices such as contour bunding, terracing, check dams, and vegetative barriers, which helped them understand principles of runoff control, soil erosion prevention, and water harvesting. This was followed by a field visit to experimental research plots where different SWC methods are being evaluated. Students observed comparative plots with and without conservation measures, the effect of slope management on runoff and soil loss, the use of vegetative measures for erosion control, and techniques for water harvesting and moisture conservation. Scientists also explained the design, layout, and performance of each treatment in detail.



ICAR–Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Ooty

On 30.04.2026, students visited ICAR-IARI Wheat Research Station, Wellington, to learn about the different ploidies of wheat and other winter cereals. Dr. V. K. Vikas, Senior Scientist (Plant Breeding), elaborated on the origin, importance of wheat, the varieties developed by the institute, and major diseases affecting the crop. Students observed the floral biology and reproductive structures of wheat, oats, lentil, rye, and mustard, and understood the differences between self- and cross-pollinated crops. They practiced hand emasculation techniques, particularly noting the difficulty in small-flowered crops like oats, rye, and lentil. They also learned to differentiate between wheat, barley, oats, rye, and triticale based on their distinct morphological characteristics, including spike/inflorescence type, presence or absence of awns, grain arrangement, and overall plant habit, thereby enhancing their practical identification skills in temperate cereals.

The Senior Scientist delivered a detailed lecture on major wheat diseases. The discussion focused on rust diseases of wheat, particularly stem rust caused by *Puccinia graminis* and leaf rust caused by *Puccinia triticina*. The speaker explained the symptoms, disease cycle, and importance of resistant varieties in managing these diseases. In addition to wheat diseases, students were able to observe symptoms of wheat blast caused by *Magnaporthe oryzae*, Alternaria leaf spot of mustard caused by *Alternaria brassicae*, as well as downy mildew and powdery mildew. These field observations provided a clearer understanding of disease identification and symptomatology.



Hand emasculation in Oats - IARI-RS, Wellington



IARI-RS, Wellington



Wheat stem rust



Leaf rust

Overall, the two-day educational tour was highly informative and beneficial in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. It enabled the students to identify important plant diseases under field conditions, understand their management strategies, and appreciate the role of research institutions in developing resistant crop varieties. The interaction with scientists and hands-on observation significantly enhanced students' learning experience and provided deeper insights into all the courses.

1. Inter-University National Youth Competition 2026

A folk-dance team from Amrita School of Agricultural Sciences participated in the 39th AIU's Inter-University National Youth Competition held at Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, from 10th March 2026 to 14th March 2026. The competition brought together participants from various colleges and universities across the country, providing a vibrant platform to showcase traditional folk-art forms. Through their energetic performance, graceful movements, synchronized choreography, colorful costumes, and authentic representation of cultural traditions, our students captivated both the audience and the judges.

Winning the **second prize** under the folk-dance category at such a prestigious national-level event is a testament to the countless hours of practice, commitment, and enthusiasm demonstrated by the team. Their performance not only highlighted their artistic talents but also showcased the cultural richness and spirit of our institution on a national stage. This accomplishment serves as an inspiration to fellow students, encouraging them to actively participate in cultural activities and appreciate the importance of preserving traditional art forms. The recognition received at Sathyabama University is a matter of great pride for our college and reflects our continued commitment to nurturing excellence in both academic and extracurricular activities. The college wholeheartedly congratulates **Vismaya P, Nandana S, Malavika V Nair, Ananya R Krishnan, Vijay J, Harigovind M Panicker, Smera P S, Devananda S P, Nandana S, Aathmasree K A, Adithya S, Easwaran Nampoothiri K V & S Devanarayanan** of the 2024 batch, **Namitha Prasad** (2022 batch) and **Aiswarya Thampi S** (2023 batch) on this outstanding accomplishment. The students were accompanied by **Dr. Dhivya Priya D**, Assistant Professor (Genetics and Plant Breeding) & Deputy Students Welfare Officer. The institution also expresses its sincere appreciation to the faculty mentors and department members, whose guidance and encouragement played a vital role in this success. The institution is confident that this achievement will motivate the students to reach even greater heights in future academic, research, and professional endeavours.



2. Amrit Summit 2026 on Agricultural Mechanization Held at Amritapuri

The Amrit Summit 2026, themed "Engineering the Future of Kerala Agriculture", was successfully held at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri, Vallikkavu, on 13-14 March 2026, bringing together experts, policymakers, researchers, students, and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to deliberate on advanced agricultural mechanization, emerging technologies, and sustainable farming strategies.

The summit was jointly organized by Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, and Kisan Samridhi in collaboration with the Amrita School of Agricultural Sciences. The event began with a welcome address by Dr. Sudheesh Manalil, Dean, School of Agricultural Sciences, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Coimbatore. The summit was formally inaugurated by Sampoojya Swami Vedamritananda Puri, who highlighted the importance of integrating modern technologies with sustainable agricultural practices to ensure long-term productivity and resilience in the agricultural sector. The inaugural session was presided over by Dr. Muralidharan, former Director of the ICAR–Central Plantation Crops Research Institute.

Distinguished speakers, including Sampoojya Swami Tapasayamritananda Puri, Dr. Sudheesh Manalil, Prof. Rajesh Kannan, AVVP, Smt. Komalam, P. Muralidharan, and Adv. Ratheesh Gopal shared their insights on farmer empowerment, capacity building, and the need for stronger institutional collaborations to achieve sustainable agricultural growth. A major highlight of the summit was the exhibition featuring stalls from 25 industries and organizations showcasing innovative agricultural technologies and services. Another important event was the FPO Round Table Conference, which provided a vibrant platform for dialogue among Farmer Producer Organizations and other stakeholders.

The round table discussions focused on policy support, operational challenges, market linkages, and strategic growth opportunities for FPOs. The valedictory session was led by Br. Viswanathamrita Chaintanya, Head of Corporate and Industry Relations. The event was successfully organized by the students of the 2022 batch of the ASA and faculty members Dr. Marthandan V, Dr. Sivasabari K, Dr. Sivaraj P, Dr. Pran M, Dr. Karuppasamy Vikraman, Dr. Sankararaman H, and Dr. Murugavel K, with support from staff members Mr. Kannan, SRF, and Mr. Maneesh SV.



1. **Dr. S. Thirukkumar**, Assistant Professor (Food Science), has published a research article entitled "Effect of optimized germination on nutritional functional and phytochemical characteristics of green gram" in Scientific Reports, 2026,16:1382. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-026-42908-y>



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