Natural farming is the future of farming and will play a key role in global food security by 2050, Advisor to State Government on Agriculture, Vijay Kumar Thallam has said. Andhra Pradesh and UNEP will partner on establishing it as a scientific practice and ICAR and Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University will also work on it to present a great solution to the world, he said at a panel discussion on “Enablers for effective AgTech transformation” on the concluding day of Andhra Pradesh AgTech Summit on Friday.

Quoting a UN estimate that put the population by 2050 at 9.7 billion and coming down of arable area by one-third, he underlined the importance of food security. “Zero-budget natural farming (ZBNF) knowledge is good for today and good for tomorrow and good for farmers, environment, soil and consumers,” Mr. Vijay Kumar said.

Mr. Vijay Kumar said Andhra Pradesh was promoting ZBNF to counter rise in cost of agriculture, static yields and scared consumers. The Chief Minister wanted to make A P a zero-budget farming State i.e, zero investment on agriculture, by 2024 since he was of the view that farmers livelihoods were at the core of society’s progress, he said.

Answering Partner Varad Pande of Dalberg who chaired the session he said he was aware of the issue of drudgery of farmers but manual labour would save expenditure. One should also think of the adverse effects of pesticide.

Director General of ICRISAT David Bergvinson congratulated the government for bringing together government, private agencies, not-for-profit organisations and most importantly, farmers in the summit. Integration of ICT with AgTech was taking place at an amazing pace, he said.

Executive Director of Garwood Centre for Corporate Innovation UC Berkeley Solomon Darwin said innovative smart village model was being pioneered in which adaptability, leadership, capabilities and open innovation play a key role. Asset access instead of ownership was important. Read more.