



SHRI BONBEHARI VISHNU NIMBKAR

Shri Bonbehari Nimbkar is known for his pioneering work in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry. His visionary ideas over many decades have contributed solidly to the development of rural Maharashtra and India by being instrumental in increasing crop and animal productivity and taking the benefits directly to farmers and animal rearers. **A Padma Shri was awarded to him by the President of India in 2006** in recognition of his achievements.

Born on 17 July 1931, he received all his higher education in the United States, in agronomy and agricultural biochemistry. After returning to India in 1956 he started farming in Phaltan in Western Maharashtra. In 1961 he became **associated with The Rockefeller Foundation** which helped him set up a seed processing plant in Phaltan. He learnt the techniques of growing hybrid seeds from their staff. They encouraged him in starting his own breeding program which resulted in his establishing the [Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute \(NARI\)](#) in 1968. He started his own seed company Nimbkar Seeds Pvt. Ltd. in 1971. Nimbkar Seeds developed and distributed high yielding sorghum, cotton and sunflower hybrids which increased the productivity of these crops and the incomes of farmers substantially.

He served as Chairman of MAFCO (a Government of Maharashtra undertaking), Agricultural Director of the Central Bank of India, Member of the Agro-Irrigation Commission of the Government of Maharashtra and a consultant to the World Bank on irrigation projects. In 1988 he was appointed the Chairman of the Maharashtra State Sheep and Goat Commission. The mandate of the commission was to study these animals and suggest methods to increase their productivity and the welfare of their keepers. In 1994 the Commission submitted its report to the state government which, however, did not implement any of its recommendations. This led to his starting the Animal Husbandry Division of NARI to work on these much neglected animals.

He has dedicated his life to agriculture in India. He feels that the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) of India is not capable of delivering the research that is expected of it, not due to lack of competence but due to frequent transfers. Agricultural research cannot be accomplished unless a person dedicates a large part of his/her life to a single discipline, he says.

The green revolution came about because of import of genetic material and technology from abroad. Similarly, Mr. Nimbkar believes that we can progress much faster if we continue importing genetic material and technology from abroad rather than waste time and money on developing indigenous genetic material and technology, as most other countries are far ahead of us in these aspects despite our having the largest body of scientific researchers in the world. NARI has been very successful in importing genetic material (plant and animal) from abroad and suitably modifying it for Indian conditions. He has been greatly helped in his pioneering work by the support of his wife, Jai Nimbkar. Now his daughters [Nandini](#) and Chanda are helping to realize his dreams in crop research and small ruminants respectively.