

CONSULTATION ON SMALL HOLDER AGRICULTURE: ISSUES & POLICIES

Date: 11-11-2011

Place: Youth Hostel, Tirupati, Chittoor Dist, Andhra Pradesh

Organized By: MASS & Navajeevan - AP

Facilitated by: SRUTI - New Delhi

Total participants:

- Small Farmers (SC/ST/BC) :35
- Union conveners :2
- Union volunteers :3
- Resource persons :5
- Total : 45

Resource persons:

1. Reddy Kumar - Senior scientist, N.G.Ranga Agricultural University, Tirupati, Chittoor dist., AP
2. Krishna Reddy - Senior scientist, N.G.Ranga Agricultural University
3. Dr.Muralikrishna – Senior scientist, N.G.Ranga Agricultural University
4. B.Sunanda - MASS Secretary - Palamaner
5. K.Sahadevaiah – Navajeevan - Venkatagiri, Nellore dist., AP



Krishna Reddy addressing the consultation

Introduction: A state-level consultation on agricultural issues and concerns was organized on 11th November 2011 at Tirupati, by MASS & Navajeevan from Andhra Pradesh, to build resilience and enhance productivity of small holder farmers for adequate and nutritious access to food. A total of 35 small holder farmers (SC/ST/OC) belonging to different socio-economic backgrounds attended the consultation. Scientists from N.G.Ranga Agricultural University were called as resource persons to participate and address the concerns of small and marginal farmers in an effort to make agriculture more sustainable.



Raddy Kumar presenting different aspects of agricultural productivity and quality

To address the productivity and quality related concerns of small and marginal farmers, Mr. Reddy Kumar, a senior scientist discussed different types of land, the cropping pattern and shared the methods of disease management to improve the quality of soil. For instance, he explained that ingredients such as green manure, neem oil, and cow urine should be preferred over fertilizers and urea that is available in the market to improve the quality of land and to achieve greater productivity. Soil temperatures need to be assessed and monitored and sowing should be done accordingly.

Other aspects that were discussed in the consultation collectively were: the current agricultural situation, types of soil, fertilizers, crops and cropping patron, crop yielding, seed and

cleaning, organic agriculture farming, changing climate, diseases, vermin-compost, govt. schemes / programmes / policies, subsidies, market rates of produce and the future action plan.

Dr.Murali Krishna and Mr. Krishna Reddy spoke on climate change adaptation techniques and different types of pests that have emerged due to the changing soil temperature. The consultation was interactive and everyone shared local and scientific knowledge.



Problems Identified -

The consultation established the significance of sustainable agriculture which is dependent on farming techniques and methods practiced by the small and marginal farmers in the context of the large number of small land holdings.

- The crops produced by small and marginal farmers are not priced at a remunerative rate; hence they are unable to fight competition at the market.
- Despite having the traditional knowledge of agricultural production, small and marginal farmers are not in the habit of practicing it regularly since it is more laborious and time consuming. Fertilizers and pesticides that are readily available at the market are bought by the farmers as a result of marketing which leads to deterioration of the average crop produce and extremely low quality of production. The need was felt to further orient, build capacities of the farmers and also encourage traditional organic and scientific methods of production.
- Lack of appropriate grain-storage facilities raises yet another concern for small and marginal farmers in terms of pricing, preserving the quality, etc. Low-cost units and infrastructure need to be provided for storing produce either for value addition or better remunerative prices through sale of produce during the lean season.
- Lack of marketing skills keeps small and marginal farmers in a vulnerable position, giving rise to deplorable socio-economic conditions. Proper and regular training will enable them to fetch better remunerative prices.
- Absence of occupational diversity deprives them of access to better income generating activities during the non-agriculture season. If they are provided with needful skills in non-farm sector, the lean season can be effectively utilized for accessing better income and support for their households in an effective manner.
- Access to irrigation facilities is difficult, as a result the production and quality of produce has suffered vastly. The issue needs to be addressed and cooperatives need to be built to ensure better access to irrigation facility for enhanced production.
- On the whole it was felt that due to lack of information, knowledge and regular practice, small and marginal farmers do not achieve better yield leading to unsustainable livelihood opportunities.

Participant's assessment

The participants said that the sharing of information, experiences and knowledge were beneficial. Many achieved clarity and confidence on production techniques and methods to retain the quality. Mr. J.Baktha

expressed 'I have got clarity about sustainable agriculture interventions and its components. The resource persons explained well the need of organic farming.' Mr.Chinnabba said that 'I have got confidence to implement organic farming for sustainable livelihood. The content in training was well designed and explained by the resource persons.' Mr. Balasubramanyam Reddy said 'this training gave me an opportunity to understand an overview of bio-fertilizers and their impact. I clearly understood causes for disease and remedies.'

The training programme was concluded with awareness songs and a vote of thanks given by B.Sunanda, (MASS) and Sahadevaiah, (Navajeevan) to the participants, resource persons, and SRUTI for coming together and making the workshop a success.