



CIKS NEWS

The CIKS quarterly newsletter

April 2005 Vol. 6 No. 2

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ORGANIC FARMING FESTIVAL ATTRACTS 1000 FARMERS.

CIKS organized an "Organic Farming Festival" on 26th February 2005 at Chenglepet. Around 1000 farmers participated in this festival. Mr. R. Venkatesan, IAS, Kanchipuram District Collector was the guest of honour. Mr. T. Swaminathan, Asst. Gen. Manager, NABARD, Mr. H. Kadhar, J.D.A., Kanchipuram, Mr. P. Velusami, Programme officer, District Rural Development Authority were the other guests. The programme started with the welcome address by A.V. Balasubramanian and was followed by a brief presentation on the centre's activities by K. Vijayalakshmi.

Three beneficiaries from organic farmers' sangams shared their experiences in organic farming. The District Collector honoured Mr. Santhanam for donating his three cents of land for construction of a biopesticide unit in Vinayaganallur village. Mrs. Amirthanayagi received a cash award of Rs. 2000/- from the Collector on behalf of Vinayaganallur organic farmers sangam - for its best performance. The recent publications of CIKS - "Organic Paddy Cultivation" (English & Tamil) and "Herbs for Good Health" were released. Agricultural implements were distributed and an exhibition on organic farming was also arranged.



Clockwise, from top left : The Collector arrives; Equipment is distributed to farmers' sangams; Farmers visit the exhibition; An exhibition stall displaying seeds; The hall is packed to capacity; Women farmers arrive by truck.



Talk to us.

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PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

'Livelihood Security Through Organic Farming' project supported by FORD foundation

Paddy seeds have been harvested and the farmers have started returning the seeds to the community seed banks. The farmers are being helped to market their produce. Three trainers' training programmes on "soil fertility" were conducted for all the three districts. Construction of storage structures for seed banks is on in eight project villages. Agricultural implements like sprayers and tarpaulin sheets were distributed to the sangam members in an organic farming festival conducted at Chenglepet. On 22nd March, Dr. Vasant Saberwal, Programme Officer from Ford Foundation visited the project area.

Organic Cotton Cultivation

Under this DST supported project, a two day training programme was held at Sirkazhi for 25 farmers from 5 different villages. Similar training programmes were conducted for 24 farmers of Thandalam village at our Sukkankollai farm and for 16 farmers of Neithavasal, one of the tsunami affected villages.

Restoration work in Tsunami affected areas

Soil testing, soil profile study and detailed survey work have been undertaken in Nagapattinam district. Preliminary experiments were conducted to test the performance of indigenous paddy varieties in tsunami affected soil. Our staff also visited the ADACERT saline soil research centre at Trichy to discuss soil reclamation

technologies.

Vrkshayurveda for Vegetables

Under this DST supported project, four farmers have been selected as beneficiaries and have been provided with inputs for vegetable cultivation. Experiments on pest and disease control are being conducted on brinjal, ladies finger and chillies.

CAPART Public Cooperation Project

Rural libraries have been constructed by the beneficiaries in Alavai and Venpakkam. The books and infrastructure facilities for these libraries were provided by CIKS. They were inaugurated by K. Vijayalakshmi on 26th January.

Total Conversion to Organic Farming

Under the COMPAS programme, three farmers in Narapakkam village are being supported for complete conversion to organic farming. Vermicompost tanks were constructed for these farmers.

Green Manure Village

37 farmers from Anoor, Alavai and Venpakkam village in Kancheepuram district have been identified as beneficiaries and have been provided with green manure seeds and technical assistance.

DST Expert Committee at CIKS

On 29th March, an Expert Committee of the DST consisting of Dr. P. Pushpagan, Director, National

Botanical Research Institute as the Chairman, Dr. John Joseph, Consultant - MSSRF as Member and Major S. Chatterjee, Principal Scientific Officer, DST as Member Convenor visited CIKS to review the progress under the Core Support programme. After the presentation in the morning, they visited our farm and Biopesticides unit at Sukkankollai.

Insect Rearing Laboratory

Spodoptera is being reared in Sirkazhi using artificial diet. Subhashini Sridhar and R. Maheshwari visited the project directorate of biological control at Bangalore and had discussions with the scientists regarding *Spodoptera* rearing techniques.

Work at Sukkankollai

31 rice varieties were harvested and 29 varieties have been transplanted to the main field in in-situ conservation centre. Organic watermelons have been harvested and organic groundnut is ready for harvest. Green manure crops have been planted for seed production. Vrkshayurveda experiments in paddy and ladies finger have started.

Compas Institutional Development

Dr. Vijay Padaki, International Consultant, COMPAS Institutional Development Programme, visited CIKS for a discussion. A. V. Balasubramanian had a meeting with Mr. Darshan Shankar and Dr. G. G. Gangadharan of FRLHT and Dr. Nadagowda of Green Foundation for a discussion regarding the ID programme at Bangalore.

NEWSROOM

Happenings and more.

Educational Material on Indian Heritage

Mr. Michel Danino of International Foundation of Indian Heritage (IFIH), convened a meeting on 19th January at CIKS. Mr. Michel Danino and Ms. Nicole of IFIH, Dr. Nanditha Krishna of CEE, Chennai, Mr. O. B. Ramasubramanian of Samanvaya, Ms. B. Poongkhulali, student of the National Law School of India University, Bangalore as well as A.V. Balasubramanian and R. Sridevi from CIKS attended this meeting. A large number of other scholars of repute have also promised to support and contribute material to this effort.

UGC Refresher Course

At the invitation of Professor Kurucheve, Head - Department of Pathology, Agriculture College, Annamalai University, A. V. Balasubramanian visited Chidambaram on 1st February and delivered a talk on "Vrkshayurveda-Traditional Indian Plant Science" in the UGC Refresher Course on the use of Natural Products for plant, animal and human health. Scientists, botanists and pathologists from various agricultural Universities and ICAR Research Institutions attended. On 28th January, 36 participants visited our Sirkazhi field station and the experimental farm at Agani.

Participation in the DST Meeting

DST convened an expert committee meeting at Chennai on 17th February and invited some selected organisations to present proposals for integrated science and technology inputs for tsunami affected areas. In this meeting, A.V. Balasubramanian and Subhashini presented a proposal regarding restoration of agricultural lands affected by tsunami in the Sirkazhi taluk, Nagapattinam district.

Science and Technology for Women

On 24th February, A.V. Balasubramanian attended the DST Expert Committee meeting on Science and Technology for Women held at New Delhi.

Interaction With Agriculture Department

Our Sirkazhi field staff gave lectures and demonstrated the preparation of various plant extracts for pest control in a programme that was organized by the Agricultural extension officers.

Visit by AME Foundation

As part of a seven day exposure tour on "Organic Farming", a group of about 15 members from different NGOs like AME Foundation (Bellary unit), MYRADA and KAWAD, Karnataka visited CIKS farm at Sukkankollai.

Visit to Tsunami Affected Areas

On 24th January, K. Vijayalakshmi visited Pudukuppam and Keezamoovarkarai villages at Sirkazhi to have a look at the Tsunami relief work organized by CIKS. On 2nd February, A.V. Balasubramanian visited the affected villages and had discussions with the farmers.

Visit to CSSRI

In connection with the CIKS effort for restoration of agricultural lands affected by tsunami, A.V. Balasubramanian visited the Central Soil Salinity Research Institute at Karnal, Haryana on 23rd February. He met the Director, Dr. Minhas and Dr. Anand Swarup of the Department of Agronomy and discussed regarding the methods that had been developed by the Institute for Restoration of Alkaline and Saline soils.

Events at Sirkazhi

On 1st March, our Sirkazhi staff participated in the farmers' day festival held at Annamalai University, Chidambaram. On 6th March, Prof. N.O. Gopal of the energy division of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, gave a talk on biogas plants and its importance to 45 farmers from 7 villages of Sirkazhi district

IN BRIEF

CIKS becomes a Technology Resource Centre (TRC)

CIKS has been recognized as the 23rd TRC of CAPART. As a part of the TRC, we are planning to construct a training centre at Sukkankolai, which will enable us to conduct intensive and comprehensive training for farmers and NGOs.

Use of *Kalanchoe pinnata* (Air plant) in Treatment of Foot and Mouth Disease

CIKS has been training farmers on organic farming and healthcare through the organic farmers' sangams established in the villages of Tiruvallur district. A few months back, many of the cattle and goats in these villages died due to attack of foot and mouth disease. Mr. K. Panneerselvam, a farmer from the Attavaram village tested the leaf paste of *Kalanchoe* on one of his affected goats. After 4 days of applying the paste on the animal's foot, the symptoms of the disease started disappearing and the goat started walking. Another farmer Mr. Venkatesan reported that the paste worked on poultry as well. After these incidents, the farmers in these villages have decided to use *Kalanchoe* leaf paste for treating the foot and mouth disease in future.

BOOKSTORE

New publications and audiovisuals



ORGANIC VEGETABLE GARDENING

Organic Vegetable Gardening is an interactive CD made with colour photographs and a sound track. This CD ROM will help you plan, plant and maintain your garden in the best possible way - without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. It contains information on cultivation methods for various vegetables, soil management, pest and disease control and much more.

Price :

Rs. 250/- (English)

Rs. 250/- (Tamil)

VISITOR'S BOOK

Who's been dropping in at CIKS

- On 6th January, Mr. O. B. Ramasubramanian of Samarvaya and Mr. Annamalai, Director, Gandhi Study Centre visited us for a discussion regarding coordination of tsunami relief efforts.
- On 27th January, Dr. Ravi Chellam from UNDP Delhi visited us to get to know about our work.
- On 7th February, Ms. Sujatha Ramachandran of Prakriti Ayurveda Centre, Chennai visited us.
- On 10th February, Ms. Vrnda Dar of Movimondo, Italy and Mr. Dinesh Sanghvi of Gram Swaraj Sangh, Gujarat visited us in connection with tsunami relief work.
- On 17th February, Ms. Alice Hsiu and Mr. Ashok Kakkad of International Finance Corporation, Washington visited us in connection with their interest in supporting Socially Relevant Industrial Grassroots Initiatives.
- On 18th February, Dr. Ram Rammohan, Professor, Biotechnology Department, Bannari Amman Institute of Technology, Sathya Mangalam, Tamilnadu visited us.
- On 22nd February, a group of 33 students and faculty from Stella Maris College, Chennai visited our farm.
- On 2nd March, Ms. Peggy Carswell from Fertile Ground, East West Sustainability network, Canada visited us.
- On 21st March, Dr. Divya Mudappa and Dr. Shankar Raman from Nature Conservation Foundation, Valparai visited us.
- On 23rd March, Dr. Rama Jayasunder of Jayendra Saraswathy College of Ayurveda, Chennai and Ms. Sumitra Gautama from The School, Chennai visited us.

For copies of our publications, contact Padma at our centre or e-mail ciks@vsnl.com

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