



**CIKS WISHES ALL ITS FRIENDS & WELL WISHERS
A VERY HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS 2015**

AGRICULTURE MACHINERY FACILITATION CENTRES A NECESSITY FOR SMALL HOLDERS

Our Centre in collaboration with Vrutti, Bengaluru has established Agriculture Machinery Facilitation Centres (AMFCs) to address the problem of lack of availability of labour for agricultural operations. Fourteen AMFCs have been established in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts with the support of DFID, UK and HIVOS Netherlands. The AMFC in Pagasalai village of Nagapattinam is one of the best Centres operating successfully. This Centre is being maintained by Karikalan Farmers' Club in the village. This AMFC was started in 2013 with the financial support of DFID, government subsidies and the contribution of club members. Necessary records for the Centre are being maintained. Beneficiaries are utilising the machineries at an affordable rent and this amount collected by the Centre is being used for the maintenance and purchase of additional equipments as necessary. Apart from the members, non-members are also being offered an opportunity to use the machinery. Beneficiaries feel that this AMFC is the answer for reduced cost of cultivation, increased yields and for the issue of labour scarcity in agriculture. They have also expressed interest to get additional machineries. Between June 2013 - June 2014, nearly 80 acres were cultivated using these machineries and a net profit of Rs. 80,000/- have been gained from this AMFC in the Pagasalai panchayat. Members are totally aware of the importance and the concept of AMFC and utilizing the machineries efficiently.



A beneficiary using the paddy transplanter in his field

NEW PROJECT

ENHANCING LIVELIHOOD SECURITY OF FARMERS THROUGH THE FORMATION OF AGRICULTURE PRODUCER COMPANY

A new project on "Enhancing Livelihood Security of Farmers through the Formation of Agriculture Producer Company" has been sanctioned to our Centre by HIVOS and PROCIF - Small Grants Fund, The Netherlands. This project is for a period of 14 months from November 2014 to December 2015. This project is being implemented in the Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu in collaboration with Vrutti Livelihood Resource Centre, Bengaluru.



PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

Poverty Reduction in Tamil Nadu through Sustainable Agriculture

This project supported by DFID, UK and HIVOS, Netherlands is in progress in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts covering 10,922 farmers. A total of 588 small groups have been formed at Village, Panchayat and Cluster levels. Beneficiaries are implementing the packages like integrated kitchen gardening, conversion to complete organic farming, seed production, enhancing soil fertility, backyard poultry etc. Beneficiary households have established integrated organic kitchen gardens. A total of 501 farmers are involved in the seed production of groundnut and paddy varieties. A total of 21 community input production units, 12 community value addition units and 14 Agriculture Machinery Facilitation Centres are in place. The Marutham and Valanadu Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited in Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts are functioning with a total of 5854 shareholders. The Valanadu Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited participated in two exhibitions - "Biodiversity" at SRM University, Chennai and in Dinamalar Agri Exhibition held in Thanjavur. Twenty two training programmes on organic farming technologies were conducted for the

beneficiaries. Government schemes have been availed for 50 farmers from Sirkazhi and Vedharanyam clusters for the purchase of pedal pump, neem oil and cattle feed. Between 10th and 11th December, staff capacity building training on Business Planning was conducted for the project staff of CIKS and Vrutti team.

Improving the Livelihood and Food Security of Small-Holder Tribal Communities

This project supported by NABARD is in progress in the Jawadhu hills of Thiruvannamalai district covering 557 beneficiary households and 284.5 acres in Kovilur panchayat. Under the WADI (small orchard) component, nearly 34,400 saplings of fruit crops and border crops have been planted in 284.5 acres. Under the component on other livelihood activities, 119 first year beneficiaries are successfully progressing with the livelihood activities like rearing of cows, goats and pigs, tailoring unit, petti - shops, poultry incubation, fodder cultivation and bee keeping. In the second year 72 beneficiaries have been selected and provided with the support for above mentioned livelihood activities. A total of 50 households in 24 villages have raised organic kitchen gardens. Machineries in the Agriculture Service Facilitation Centre (ASFC) in Seramarathur village are being utilized efficiently by the

beneficiaries. On 24th December, NABARD, AGM Mr. Sudharshan visited the WADI fields and other livelihood activities in the project villages. Monthly meetings of 24 Participants Groups (PGs) and 18 Farmers' Clubs were conducted regularly.

Women's Technology Park for Promoting Organic Agriculture

This DST supported project is in progress in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai, Nagapattinam and Ramanathapuram districts. Thirteen community vermicompost units and a mushroom production unit are in place in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai, Nagapattinam and Karaikal districts. These community units are being maintained by 132 women beneficiaries. Construction of the mushroom production unit in Sukkankollai farm has been completed and production has been started. Demonstrations of azolla production, vegetable seed production and fodder cultivation are in progress in the Sukkankollai farm. A total of 160 beneficiaries are involved in the cultivation and utilization of fodder grass. A Training programme on mushroom production was conducted for the women beneficiaries of Rettamangalam village. As a follow up, practical training sessions were organized at Sukkankollai farm.

Introducing Organic Farming in Alangadu Village

Our Centre is involved in the promotion of organic farming in Alangadu village of Nagapattinam district from January 2009. Under this sixth phase of the project, 25 farmers have cultivated ADT - 43 and ADT - 45 paddy varieties. Production and sale is in progress in the community vermicompost unit. Twenty beneficiary households have raised organic kitchen gardens. The evening school programme - *Ariyu maiyam* is running successfully. Between 10th - 12th October, three teachers and two volunteers from Alangadu *Ariyu maiyam* attended a training programme on Montessori Teaching Tools at Kaikal Trust in Kuppam, Andhra Pradesh. During this month crop loan has been distributed to 17 farmers. A new farmers' group named Seethalakshmi Pasumaithai Self Help Group has been formed in Alangadu.

Training Programme for the Members of Farmers' Clubs

Under this NABARD supported programme, a total of five training programmes were conducted for the Farmers' Club members of Thirumaraikadu Organic Farmers' Association in Nagapattinam district in the month of October and November. A total of 120 farmers from 11 different farmers' clubs in Vedharanyam block participated in these training programmes. They were trained on topics such as organic groundnut and paddy cultivation technologies, production and use of vermicompost and biopesticides, organic certification standards etc.

NEWS ROOM

Happenings and more

Hivos - Oxfam Novib Meeting of the Agrobiodiversity Conservation Network

Between 2nd and 4th October 2014, there was a meeting of the Hivos - Oxfam Novib Network on Agrobiodiversity that was organised in the Netherlands. On behalf of our Centre, A. V. Balasubramanian participated in the network meeting. He was part of the sub-group on the theme of the network 'Influencing policy'. The meeting was attended by about 30 persons from various parts of the World including - India, Pakistan, Netherlands, Peru, Canada, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania.

Meeting with TATA Companies

As part of our interaction with the TATA group of companies, Dr. Anil Kumar, Chief Scientific Officer of the Innovation Centre of TATA Chemicals from Pune visited CIKS on 21st October. He made a presentation regarding the work of the Innovation Centre and discussions were held about possible areas for collaboration.

Consultation on Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)

On 3rd December, FWFB (Friends of World Women Banking) had organised a one day consultation on "Tools to Assess the Capacity of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)". The meeting was organised at New Delhi and the participants included representatives of six FPOs and the NGOs involved in promoting them. On behalf of CIKS, A.V. Balasubramanian participated in the meeting and on behalf of Valanadu Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited (VSAPCL) it was attended by Mr. Jayapal, Chairman of the

Board of Directors. The major item of discussion was a report presented by EDA Rural Systems Pvt. Ltd. on their assessment of the six FPOs. The discussion focused on the strategy to strengthen FPOs based on the findings.

Staff Capacity Building

A staff capacity building programme on "Business Planning" was conducted for the technical staff of CIKS and Vrutti team at CIKS Technology Resource Centre in Sukkankollai between 10th and 11th December. A total of 21 staff members participated in this programme including the staff of the two producer companies Valanadu and Marutham. The resource persons for the programme were the team members from Vrutti consisting of Mr. Balakrishnan, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Manuel.

Visitor from Tata Chemicals, New Delhi

Mr. Ajay Setia from the inputs division of TATA Chemicals visited the CIKS farm on 18th December. He had a discussion with various technical team members on possibilities of CIKS interaction with TATA Chemicals in terms of scaling up proven technologies for crop protection as well as inputs for improvement of soil fertility.

Visitor from FWFB, Ahmedabad

Dr. Vijaylakshmi Das of FWFB, Ahmedabad visited CIKS on 24th December and had meetings and discussions with A.V. Balasubramanian, K. Vijayalakshmi and other technical staff of CIKS. They discussed about possible support and linkages between FWFB and FPOs being promoted by CIKS.

**AGRICULTURE PRODUCER COMPANIES
- PROMISE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF
FARMING COMMUNITY**

Agriculture Producer Company is a corporate body registered under the Indian Companies Act. The ownership, membership and control of the APCs are held only by Primary producers / Producer Institutions. APCs are the farmer organisations that help the farming community to get timely availability of inputs, credit linkages, market linkages, value addition support etc. Ten or more individuals being a primary producer or two or more Producer institutions or combination of ten or more individuals and Producer institutions can form a Producer Company. Those willing to promote the Producer Company for the betterment of the selected people/ group like NGOs, individuals, multi-State cooperative societies or Federation of Co-operative can promote the Producer Company. CIKS is one such organisation working with the farming community and promoting Producer Companies. So far two Producer Companies - Marutham and Valanadu Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited have been promoted by CIKS in Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts. CIKS is providing technical assistance by providing necessary educational and capacity building programmes. As part of this effort and to help other producer organisations we have produced a Tamil translation of the Producer Company Act (which forms a section of the Companies Act, 2013).

Note : The full text of this publication can be downloaded from the CIKS website - [http://www.ciks.org/producer%20company%20book%20\(tamili\).pdf](http://www.ciks.org/producer%20company%20book%20(tamili).pdf)

**VISITOR'S BOOK
Who's been dropping in at CIKS**

- On 13th October, Mr. Kasi Viswanathan and Mr. Gowtham from ICCOA, Bengaluru visited CIKS.
- On 15th October, Ms. Jayashree, AGM, NABARD, Ms. Krishnaveni, ADA and Ms. Kovilammal, PACCS, Secretary visited CIKS TRC in Sukkankollai in connection with the Monitoring Committee Meeting of the FTTF Project.
- On 6th November, Dr. Arup Basu, President, New Business and Innovations Centre, TATA Chemicals, Mumbai visited us.
- On 6th November, Mr. Gopi Ramasamy, Programme Manager, CABI INDIA, New Delhi visited CIKS Sirkazhi field office.
- On 8th November, Ms. Vidya Shankar and Mr. Murali Krishnan of Relief Foundation, Chennai visited us.
- On 17th November, Mr. Sharad Varma of FWWB (Friends of Women's World Banking), Ahmadabad visited CIKS and made a presentation about their work to support Producer Companies.
- On 20th November, Mr. Fukaya San, CEO Asia Pacific Region, NTT DATA visited CIKS along with other team members Mr. Ajith, Mr. Sathya and Mr. Sridhar.
- On 28th November, Ms. Carolene and Mr. Velusamy from Inba Seva Sangam, Karur visited CIKS Sirkazhi field office and had discussion with Mrs. Subhashini Sridhar about the activities of CIKS.
- On 24th December, Mr. Sudharshan, AGM, NABARD visited the project villages in Jawadhu hills of Thiruvannamalai district.

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