



CIKS NEWS

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Marketing of Organic Produce - Problems and Prospects

A meeting on "The Marketing of Organic Produce - Problems and Prospects" was conducted at 'The Conference Centre', Chennai on 6th February 2006 with support from the Ford Foundation. There were about 38 participants for the meeting from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Mr. K. Rajaraman, IAS, Commissioner In-Charge, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection, Government of Tamil Nadu was the chief guest. Dr. Vasanth Saberwal, Programme Officer, Ford Foundation was also present for the meeting. The participants for the meeting included diverse groups of people viz., groups who are involved in providing support and assistance to farmers for the cultivation of organic produce, individuals and groups who are involved in marketing of organic produce, representatives of consumer groups and consumers who are interested in organic produce and agencies involved in certification.

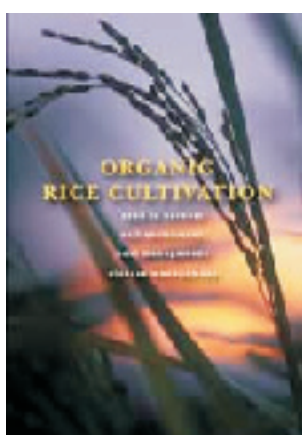


Mr. K. Rajaraman , IAS., addressing the gathering

During this meeting, participants shared their experiences from both consumer's and trader's point of view. Some participants felt that consumers should be closely in touch with the farm which produces their food and they should be willing to pay more for the organic produce. Traders felt that mechanisms should be evolved to reduce wastage in the supply chain. It was also felt that organic markets should concentrate on milk production and perishables as well. The participants were also given an introduction and briefing on procedures involved in "Organic Certification for Smallholder groups".

Organic Rice Cultivation

(A set of four films)



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Training on Internal Control Systems (ICS) for Organic Certification

A training programme on Internal Control System (ICS) and small holder group certification was conducted by Mr. Umesh Chandrashekar and Mr. Vasudeva of IMO Control, Bangalore, for the CIKS technical staff in the Chengalpet field office between 24th and 25th February 2006. During this programme, detailed training was given on various aspects of the Internal Control System and certification procedures. Group discussions and farm mapping exercises were also taken up during this training programme.

On 23rd, Mr. Umesh and Mr. Vasudeva visited our farm, farmer's fields, community seed banks and gave suggestions on maintaining records and evolving organic standards.



PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

Capacity building for organic farming

The project on "Enhancing livelihood security of small and marginal farmers through promotion of organic farming technologies" is being supported by Ford Foundation. Farmers have been provided with support and inputs for cultivation in this season. Paddy seeds have been procured from the farmers, for the Arogyam project. Trainer's training programme on Ethnoveterinary herbal medicine was conducted by Dr. Abdul Razak for the beneficiaries of all the three districts. As a part of this project, a video film entitled "Livelihood Security" has been produced in English. It is a 33 minute film giving the highlights of the project.

Livelihood security through organic farming

As a part of this CAPART supported project, sangam meetings were conducted in all the 10 villages in Kancheepuram district. Sixteen traditional varieties have been sown in the seed production field. Inputs like paddy seeds, biofertilisers and neem cake have been distributed to the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries of Valathodu village were taken for an exposure visit to the Kolathancheri demo farm, the herbal garden at Thandaripuducheri and Mamallapuram. Beneficiaries of Edaiyur and Thandaraipudhucherry villages visited the Kolathancheri organic field, Chithravadi organic field and Sukkankollai farm.

Paddy Organic Chain - Seed to Harvest

CIKS is implementing a pilot project on "Paddy organic chain - Seed to harvest" in Tamil Nadu with support from

HIVOS, Bangalore. As a part of this project, a two day training programme on organic farming technologies were conducted for the beneficiaries of Chithravadi, Kolanthancherry and Krishnapuram villages. During this training programme, they were given practical training on the preparation of various biopesticides.

Vrkshayurveda for Vegetables

Experiments on organic cultivation of vegetables are being carried out as a part of this DST supported project. Chilli is being cultivated in three cents in Agani for experimental purpose. Ten farmers from Pagasalai, Nemmeli, Adhamangalam, Allivilagam villages have undertaken organic vegetable cultivation in a total area of 80 cents. Experiments are also being conducted on Tomato and Brinjal. Fumigation experiments were conducted using the newly designed device in bhendi seeds. Discussion was held with Dr. Manivannan of Annamalai University to conduct varietal screening experiments with the help of M.Sc. students.

Storage Forms of Biopesticides

This DST supported project is being implemented in Sirkazhi. The armyworms and aphids are being reared for conducting bioassays. On 6th March, Dr. Arivudai Nambi from Annamalai University visited the Insect Rearing Laboratory and gave his suggestions on the rearing procedures. Standard operating procedure (SOP) for the raw materials used in the preparation of neem seed kernel extract has been developed.

Use of Animal Products for Pest Control

Under this COMPAS supported project, experiments in connection with the use of animal products in traditional agriculture have been planned. Panchakavyam prepared using cow and buffalo products was sprayed and observations were noted down. A shade house has been constructed in Agani village. Mr. Ramu and Mr. Sanjay from IDEA were trained on data collection and pests affecting vegetables and paddy.

Compas UC Programme

As part of the COMPAS Universities Consortium programme, a project has been initiated in collaboration with Gandhigram Rural University to develop and implement a set of training programmes on traditional agriculture for students of agriculture (B.Sc. and Diploma) as well as for farmers and NGOs. On 6th January, A.V. Balasubramanian attended the meeting of the Programme Committee for this project that was convened at Gandhigram.

Mr. Bertus Haverkort, Coordinator of Research under the UC Programme from COMPAS International Co-ordination visited Chennai between 13th and 17th March. During his stay, he visited a series of institutions involved in work on various aspects of traditional Indian knowledge systems. As part of this programme, it is proposed to hold a meeting on traditional knowledge systems in the Asian region during the month of July 2006. A planning meeting was held for this in Chennai on 17th March in which Mr. Bertus Haverkort and Dr. P. M. Unnikrishnan from FRLHT, Bangalore participated.

NEWSROOM

Happenings and more.

Task Force on Food Processing

At the invitation of the Government of TamilNadu, A. V. Balasubramanian has joined the Task Force set up by the Government for drawing up a strategy and action plan for food processing industries in TamilNadu. He attended the meetings that were held on 2nd and 19th January at Chennai.

Visit to Arya Vaidya Sala

On 3rd and 4th January 2006, A. V. Balasubramanian visited Arya Vaidya Sala, Kotakkal. He visited the Centre for Medicinal Plants Research (CMPR) that was set up by Arya Vaidya Sala. He also made a presentation on "Vrkshayurveda: Traditional Indian Plant Science" to a group of Ayurvedic physicians and scientists associated with the Arya Vaidya Sala group of institutions at Kotakkal.

Visit to Institutes

On 9th and 10th January, K.Vijayalakshmi visited the Deccan Development Society, an organization involved in conservation of millets in dry land area, the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture and Oxfam in Hyderabad. On 11th January, she met Mr. Rajeev Khedker, Academy of Development Sciences to discuss about the seed conservation work. On 12th January, she visited IMO, Bangalore and had discussion with Mr. Umesh Chandrasekar. She also visited International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture (ICCOA), Bangalore to get to know about their work and to see possibilities for collaboration.

Participation in Group Monitoring Workshop

The Department of Science and Technology, Delhi had organized a Group Monitoring Workshop at Dehradun between 17th and 19th of January. Dr. S. S. Sandhu, IAS presided over the meeting. Subhashini Sridhar participated in this meeting and presented about "Testing and Propagation of methods based on Vrkshayurveda for the cultivation of selected vegetables".

CIKS turns 11

CIKS celebrated its 11th anniversary on 23rd January. On this occasion, the entire team made a trip to Yercaud. There were group discussions where suggestions were obtained for better functioning of the organisation. The team also visited few tourist spots in Yercaud.

UGC Refreshers course

On 1st February, A. V. Balasubramanian gave a talk at the UGC Refreshers course at Annamalai University, regarding building on traditional knowledge and wisdom for natural resources management systems.

Training at INDOCERT

A training programme on Internal Control System (ICS) and smallholder group certification was organized by Indian Organic Certification Agency (INDOCERT), Alwaye between 1st - 3rd February 2006 in Alwaye, Kerala. There were about 34 participants from various parts of the country. R. Sridevi attended this meeting. The participants were given training on various aspects of the ICS and certification procedure. The participants also visited the Spices Board at Cochin and farms in Thodupuzha where an ICS has been implemented.

Visits to IIVR and IARI

On 10th February, Subhashini Sridhar visited the Indian Institute of Vegetable Research at Varanasi to know about their collections of traditional vegetables and experiments on organic cultivation of vegetables. On 14th February, she visited the Indian Agricultural Research Institute at Delhi.

Visit to VIBT, Kolkatta

K. Vijayalakshmi and S. Arumugasamy visited the biofertilizer unit of the Vivekananda Institute of Biotechnology at Kolkatta on 13th and 14th February. They had detailed discussion with them regarding replicating the model that they have developed in their institute.

Workshop on Rural Technologies

On 24th and 25th February, A. M. M. Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre organized the inaugural function of the workshop on Rural Technologies for NGOs in TamilNadu and Pondicherry. At the invitation of MCRC, A. V. Balasubramanian participated in this function and delivered the inaugural address. As a part of this programme, a group of thirty participants visited our experimental farm at Sukkankollai on 18th March.

DST Meeting at New Delhi

The Department of Science and Technology hosted a meeting at New Delhi between 1st and 3rd March. There was discussion on replicable technologies that had been evolved by various of the DST core groups through the years. There was also an exhibition, which was inaugurated by the Minister of Science and Technology, Shri Kapil Sibal. The progress of the work of the core groups was also reviewed by members of an expert committee. A.V.Balasubramanian participated in the meeting and made a presentation regarding the work of CIKS.

Workshop at Trichy

A follow up of the rice chain workshop held at Bangkok in 2005 was organized by Earthnet Foundation, Thailand between 1st and 4th of March 2006. The meeting was hosted by Kudumbam, an NGO in Trichy. Mr. Michael Commons and Mr. Vitoon Panyakul from Earthnet Foundation conducted the workshop. Totally there were 11 participants for this workshop. The workshop mainly concentrated on the Internal Control System such as Farm Monitoring, Farm Approval and Data Management. Subhashini Sridhar and P. Kalidoss participated in this workshop. Mr. Michael and Mr. Vitoon visited our farm at Sukkankollai and our Head Office at Chennai.

Training on Seed Production Technologies

A training programme on 'Seed production technologies' was arranged for our field staff, who are involved in conservation of traditional seed varieties, at Adhiparasakthi Agricultural College, Kalavai, Vellore district between 21st and 24th March.

BOOKSTORE

New publications and audiovisuals

Organic Rice Cultivation

(A set of four films)

This set of four films on organic rice cultivation gives details about seed treatment techniques, indigenous methods to improve soil fertility, diseases affecting paddy, their control measures, identification of the pests, their mode of attack and organic management. Several organic methods like the use of light traps, pheromone traps, fumigation techniques and the use of different plant extracts have also been discussed. These films are available in both DVD and VCD formats.

Iyarkai Velanmayil Thavarakaraisalgal (in Tamil)

This booklet describes about the various plant-based extracts used in organic agriculture to manage pests and diseases. Details about the preparation procedure and methods of use of these extracts have also been provided.



Manvala Mempadu (in Tamil)



This booklet describes the importance of using natural resources to improve soil fertility. It provides information on the composting techniques and the use of green manure, green leaf manure and certain plant growth promoters.

For Copies, Contact:

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VISITOR'S BOOK

Who's been dropping in at CIKS

- On 19th January, Dr. Vijaya Nagarajan from the University of San Francisco in California visited us.
- On 27th January, Mr. Vikram Doctor, Marketing Editor, Economic Times, Mumbai visited us.
- On 8th February, Ms. Sara Van Otterloo Butler, Consultant of COMPAS from the Netherlands visited us.
- On 20th February, Dr. Chelladurai and Dr. Subramaniam of the Siddha Medical College, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu visited us.
- On 25th February, Mr. L. B. Singh, Member Convenor, CAPART Hyderabad along with Ms. Sharmila, Young Professional posted with CAPART Hyderabad visited us.
- On 1st March, Mr. Qayum, Agriculture Consultant from Hyderabad visited us.
- On 7th March, Mr. G. Raju, Executive Director, Gram Mooligai Company Ltd. Bangalore visited us.
- On 13th March, Mr. Rajiv Malhotra from Infinity Foundation, USA and Ms. Shruti, Coordinator of their Programme in India visited us.

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