



AGRICULTURE PRODUCER COMPANY – A NEW VENTURE FROM SEED TO TABLE

Farmers under the DFID project in Thiruvannamalai district have come together to form a producer company. 1,100 farmers are currently shareholders of this company which has been named as “Marutham Sustainable Agriculture Producer Company Limited”. The producer company has been established with a goal to help the farming community throughout the process “from seed to table” in the form of timely availability of quality inputs and seeds, creating proper marketing facility and value addition of the agriculture produce. It will also provide credit facilities and create linkages, insurance, marketing facilities – procurement and sales, value addition etc. It will also involve in the production of quality seeds for farmers. CIKS has provided the technical assistance to form this company.



Unity towards Sustainable Growth and Profitable Farming Activities

NEW PROJECTS

WOMEN’S TECHNOLOGY PARK FOR PROMOTING ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU

The Women and Society Division of the Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi has sanctioned this project to CIKS. This project is for a period of three years from August 2013 onwards in Kancheepuram district. Under this project we are planning to empower the women beneficiaries to take up organic farming related activities like organic input production, mushroom and fodder cultivation, *Azolla* production etc.

INCREASING THE INCOME LEVEL THROUGH EMPOWERMENT OF FARMERS FOR THE ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE BASED MICRO ENTERPRISES

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned this project to CIKS under its Micro Enterprises Development Programme (MEDP). This programme will be implemented in five village panchayats of Vandavasi taluk of Thiruvannamalai district from September 2013 onwards. In each panchayat, a 12 day training programme on microenterprises such as vermicompost and biopesticides production and value addition of agricultural produce will be conducted to help the farmers to increase their income level.



PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

Development and Field Testing of Bio Pesticidal Oils Formulated as Soaps - A Pilot Project in Tamil Nadu

This project supported by DST is in progress in Nagapattinam district. Bioassays have been conducted on *Spodoptera litura* and *Aphids* using neem oil soap, Pongam oil soap, neem oil, Pongam oil and *Annona Kashayam* under laboratory conditions. A total of 10 experiments have been conducted on *Spodoptera* and *Aphids* using *Melia azedarach* extract (samples received from STD in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh) under lab conditions to test the efficacy. Field trials using neem oil soap for pest control in vegetable crops have been conducted in Maruthur Therku village. Experiments on "Management of *Spodoptera litura* using Pongam oil soap" and "Management of pest in paddy using neem oil soap solution" were conducted. A neem oil soap production unit has been established in Ilaiyamadhukoodam village and being maintained by the women group members. A training programme on uses of neem oil soap was conducted for the final year agriculture students of PAJANCOA & RI in Karaikal. A training programme on 'Biopesticides - Production and Uses' was conducted for the beneficiaries and the resource person of the training programme was Dr. S. Arivudai Nambi from Annamalai University, Chidambaram.

Programme for Supporting Sustainable Organic Farming in Nagapattinam District of Tamil Nadu - Phase II

The second phase of this project supported by NABARD is in progress in the Sirkazhi taluk of Nagapattinam district. Under this project, 10 tonnes of rice, paddy varieties, sesame and value added products have been sold. Nearly 13 tonnes of ADT-43 paddy seeds and *Kullakar* paddy grains have been procured. Production of organic seeds of *white ponni* paddy is in progress in 13.16 acres. A total of 12 bio gas units have been installed in Allivilagam and Aadhamangalam villages. The partial

subsidy for this effort has been provided by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Nagapattinam. On 21st August, Mr. Dhananjaya, Technical Expert, UPNRM - PMU, Bangalore reviewed the project activities. Following this, the activities of the project were again reviewed by Mr. Dhananjaya and Ms. Lydia Hauth from GIZ Delhi. They had detailed discussion with the office bearers of the Sirkazhi Organic Farmers' Association (SOFA) and beneficiaries. On 2nd September, Mrs. Subhashini Sridhar participated in the workshop on 'Information & Knowledge Management (IKM) Web Portal - Features and Functions' organized by GIZ, New Delhi under UPNRM at GIZ Office campus, New Delhi.

Comprehensive Pilot Programme for Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture

This pilot programme on strengthening rainfed agriculture is in progress in the Jawadhu hills block of Thiruvannamalai district in Tamil Nadu from June 2012 onwards with the financial support of the Revitalizing Rainfed Agriculture (RRA) Network of India. Project activities are being implemented in Kovilur, Nammiyampattu, Kuttakarai and Kanamalai panchayat unions. Organic kitchen gardens have been established and being maintained by 600 households. The seed bank constructed in Seramarathur village is being utilized efficiently. Seeds of millet varieties of 2.5 tonnes have been distributed to the beneficiaries of all the four gram panchayats through the seed bank. Under the activities of soil node, production of biomass based manure is in progress in 10 hamlets and fields of three farmers are being monitored for soil health. A total of 24 beneficiaries from five different villages of Kovilur gram panchayat have constructed farm ponds with the help of the Department of Agriculture, Kalasapakkam under the NREGA scheme. Student interns from RRA and Sriram IGNOU Community College have completed their internship

at Jawadhu hills. On 15th September, Dr. Kiran from WASSAN - RRA, Millet Node from Andhra Pradesh visited the Jawadhu field station.

Poverty Reduction in Tamil Nadu through Sustainable Agriculture

This project supported by DFID, UK and co-funded by HIVOS is in progress in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts. A total of 9118 beneficiaries have been selected from 79 village panchayats in seven taluks of these districts. In each panchayat a Village Agri Business Development Service Provider (VABDSP) is in place to provide necessary services to the beneficiaries. A total of 552 Sustainable Agriculture Self Help Groups (SASHGs), 71 Panchayat Agriculture Development Committees (PADCs) and five Cluster Agriculture Development Committees (CADCs) have been formed. Monthly meetings of VABDSPs, SASHGs, PADCs and CADCs have been conducted. A total of 378 households have raised organic kitchen gardens in all the three districts. Under the component on conversion to complete organic farming, a total of 172 farmers have been selected and distributed with necessary inputs. A total of 585 farmers are involved in the seed production of paddy varieties and black gram. To enhance the soil fertility, a total of 676 farmers have been selected and distributed with organic inputs. Beneficiaries are involved in microenterprises like poultry farming and cattle rearing. A total of 55 backyard poultry units have been established under the project. Production is in full swing in the community biopesticide units (7), community vermicompost units (11) and community value addition units (5) set up in all the three districts. The 12 Agriculture Machinery Facilitation Centres (AMFCs) established in Nagapattinam and Thiruvannamalai districts are being utilized by the beneficiaries efficiently to reduce the cost of cultivation. An Agriculture Producer Company (APC)

has been established in Thiruvannamalai district. A total of 52 training programmes on various topics were organized for the beneficiaries. Under NABARD CAT programme, between 20th - 22nd August, an exposure visit cum training programme was organised for the beneficiaries of Nagapattinam district to the Society for Energy, Environment and Development (SEED) in Hyderabad. A total of five staff capacity building training programmes were conducted for the project staff. Government schemes have been availed for the purchase of rain water sprinkler, seeds, saplings and for conducting training programmes.

Improving the Livelihood and Food Security of Small-Holder Tribal Communities through WADI Model and Integrated Sustainable Agricultural Practices

This project is being implemented in Jawadhu hills of Thiruvannamalai district in Tamil Nadu from May 2013 onwards with the financial support of NABARD. The project activities are in progress in nine villages covering 304 beneficiary households and 150 acres. Under the component of WADI (small orchard), saplings of mango, jack, lemon, silver oak, teak, mahogany and Glyricedia have been procured and distributed to the beneficiaries. Organic inputs like vermicompost, biofertilizers and neem cake have also been distributed to the beneficiaries. Little millet varieties - *Sittan samai* and CO4 have been cultivated as intercrops in orchards by the beneficiaries under WADI component. Seed production of foxtail millet, pearl millet, kodo millet and barnyard millet is in progress in the fields of selected beneficiaries. Beneficiaries have raised kitchen gardens using 14 types of vegetable seeds provided through the project. On 21 August, a training programme on planting and maintenance of tree saplings was conducted for the WADI beneficiaries. Two participants groups (PGs) have been formed in Aalanjanur and Sinthaalur villages. This project was formally launched by the District Collector of Thiruvannamalai Shri. A. Gnanasekaran, IAS on 27th August. The ongoing activities of the project were assessed by Mr. Sudharshen, AGM, NABARD, Thiruvannamalai and Mr. Venugopal Arikeri, GM, NABARD, Chennai on 11th September.

NEWSROOM

Happenings and more

ABC Working Conference

The Agricultural Biodiversity Community (ABC) Working Conference was held between 9th - 13th July at the DHAN Academy, Madurai. This conference was organized by Hivos and Oxfam Novib, Netherlands. There were about 35 participants representing various developing countries from Asia. The agenda of this conference was to take the initiative forward from the last conference with focus on documenting good practices, communicating the activities of this group and to identify articles on experiences.

Visitors from Hivos

On 15th July 2013, we had three visitors from Hivos - Ms. Willy Douma and Ms. Sara from the Netherlands office and Ms. Diana Siddiqui from the Indian office of Hivos. They visited the field locations of the CIKS sustainable agriculture programme in Thiruvannamalai district of Tamil Nadu. Later, they also visited the Technology Resource Centre of CIKS at Sukkankollai village.

Workshop on Monitoring System

As part of setting up of online real time monitoring systems for the Farmers Clubs, NABARD has initiated a SMS based system with Reuters Market Light (RML) service providers. A workshop to demonstrate this system was organized by NABARD at their regional office in Chennai on 19th July 2013 and the representatives from RML demonstrated how the system operates in real time and the participants also tried out this messaging service using their mobile phone. About 16 participants from different NGOs attended the workshop. CIKS is now in the process of availing these services for its Farmers Clubs.

Workshop on Seed Technology and Seed Systems

A three day workshop on "Seed Technology and Seed Systems for Revitalizing Rainfed Agriculture" was organized by CIKS between 29th - 31st July at the CIKS Technology Resource Centre in Sukkankollai. The programme was organized as part of the RRA Seed Node activity, the thematic node of CIKS. There were 15 participants from six Comprehensive Pilots of the RRA Network and other thematic nodes of RRA. The programme was organized to provide the participants a technical and

conceptual overview of the seed systems. Apart from the theoretical sessions of the workshop on quality seeds, seed selection, multiplication, certification, storage etc., an exposure trip was organized to the seed storage and processing unit, seed testing lab and seed farm of the Agriculture Department.

Talk at Azim Premji University

At the invitation of Azim Premji University at Bengaluru A. V. Balasubramanian visited them on 1st August and had meeting with the faculty members in the Departments of Development and Education on possible collaboration between CIKS and the University. In the evening he delivered a colloquium talk on the topic "Is there an Indian way of doing Science?". The talk was attended by the students of the post graduate courses in education and development, members of the faculty and some general public.

RRA Network Meeting at Hyderabad

The Working Group meeting of the RRA Network was organized by the RRA Secretariat at the MANAGE - which is the ICAR Institute for Training and Extension at Hyderabad on 12th - 13th August. During this meet it was decided to sensitize the district level and state level officials on the efforts of RRA in order to converge with the government line departments. Following this, a five day meeting was hosted between 2nd and 6th September 2013 in collaboration with MANAGE. The meeting was attended by various officials of the Departments of Agriculture, Rural Development etc., from the specific blocks and districts in the three southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu where comprehensive pilot programmes are being implemented. Project staff participated and made presentations relating to the seed node activities and activities of the pilot programme at Jawadhu hills.

Visit of Representatives of Tata Trust

Prof. S. Ramanathan representing Sir Navojbai Tata Trust (SNTT) made a visit to the CIKS field areas - the Technology Resource Centre at Kancheepuram district, some field activities in and around Vandavasi in Thiruvannamalai district and the Jawadhu hills block of the Thiruvannamalai district on 17th and 18th September. During the visit details of the possible engagement were discussed.

CONSERVING PADDY FOR POSTERITY



CIKS Organic Research Farm in Sukkankollai village of Kancheepuram district conserves indigenous varieties of paddy. Since, biodiversity conservation is one of the major objectives of CIKS, the search for the indigenous varieties is always on. At present, nearly 100 indigenous varieties of paddy are being conserved by the Centre. Every season these varieties of paddy are multiplied through proper seed production technologies and restored in the seed bank after a series of tests like varietal purity, physical purity, germination and vigour. From this seed bank, these indigenous varieties are distributed to a wide range of farmers for cultivation. Characteristics of some of the varieties are,

Kalarpalai - Suitable for saline soils in lands with good drainage facility. Resistant to drought, pests and diseases. Highly suitable for flattened rice preparation.

Seeragasamba - Very fine and aromatic rice variety, grows well in sandy clay and clayey soil and suited for making biriyani (flavoured rice).

VISITOR'S BOOK

Who's been dropping in at CIKS

- On 3rd July, Mr. Praveen Prakash and Mr. Amarnath from the Centre for Environmental Education, Ahmadabad visited us.
- On 11th July, Mr. Jangal Jayaraman, Programme Director, PAC, Bangalore along with his team visited CIKS, Sirkazhi office.
- On 13th July, Mr. Sunderasan, Senior Programme Manager from SAP, Bangalore visited CIKS Sirkazhi field office to get to know about our activities.
- On 19th July, Dr. Razesh Sainuddin from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Canterbury, Christ Church, New Zealand visited us.
- On 31st July, Dr. D. Murugan, Assistant Professor from the Department of Economics, Annamalai University, Chidambaram visited CIKS Sirkazhi office.
- On 7th August, Ms. Saroja and Ms. Saradha Narayanan of the Consumer Action Group (CAG), Chennai visited us.
- On 13th August, Mr. Sudharshan, AGM, NABARD and Mr. Sekar, LDM, Indian Bank visited our project activities in Thiruvannamalai district.
- On 16th August, Mr. Ryoji Fukaya, President and CEO and Mr. Sathya from NTT Data Asia Pacific Pvt. Ltd., Singapore visited us.
- On 21st August, Mr. Dhananjeyan, Technical Expert from UPNRM - PMU, Bangalore visited CIKS Sirkazhi field office.
- On 11th September, Mr. Venugopal Arikeri, GM, NABARD, Chennai and Mr. Sudharshan, AGM, NABARD, Thiruvannamalai visited CIKS Jawadhu hills office.
- Between 11th and 12th September, Mr. Rajasekar from Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Hyderabad visited us and discussed about CIKS activities relating to conservation, research and production of indigenous varieties of seeds.

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Design & Layout : R.Anand & S. Ramesh

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