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## *Our new experimental farm*



Collector of Kancheepuram district Mr. K. Rajaraman inaugurating the training centre at Sukkankollai

**O**ur new experimental farm at Sukkankollai in Madurantakam taluk was inaugurated by the Kancheepuram District Collector Mr. K. Rajaraman on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2002. On this occasion we had also put up an exhibition on Organic Farming. This exhibition had a good display of indigenous paddy varieties (in the form of ear heads, seeds and photographs) and dishes made from some of these varieties. The Collector inaugurated this exhibition. Besides this, he released the first issue of the "Indigenous Agriculture Newsletter" in Tamil. This function was attended by nearly 300 farmers. They were also given an opportunity to share their views regarding their experience with CIKS and its

activities. The Collector distributed prizes for the quiz programme which was held for our trainers and also gave away support provided to the farmers for organic farming under the GTZ programme. In his address to the gathering the Collector advised the farmers to organise themselves and work rather than depend on Government programmes and subsidies for everything. At the end of the programme he also started the tree planting activity at our Centre. We have started work in full swing there. Detailed plans have been worked out for the next cropping season. Green manure crops have been cultivated and ploughed in for increasing the soil fertility. We have also started work on setting up a medicinal plant nursery and put up demonstrations of different compost pits. We have planted several trees and have started our biodiversity conservation work. We would be conserving more than 100 varieties of paddy and vegetables here.

### *News from our Farmers' Network*

Pumpkin beetle is a common pest attacking vegetable crops which are cucurbitaceous like pumpkin, gourds, watermelon etc. It affects the leaves and sucks the sap from the flowers. Farmers of Kayirambedu and Moolakkazhani villages of Kattankolathur block have been using an indigenous method to control this beetle. They mix dung of the common brown sheep with cowdung in equal quantities. To this, 5 times the volume of water is added. This is filtered well and sprayed on the leaves. Within 4 days of spraying, the beetles are effectively controlled. This indigenous pest control technique has been practised for the past 20 years.

## **PROJECT WATCH**

*A round-up of our activities this quarter*

### ***CAPART Training programme***

A short-term residential training programme for farmers of Tirukazhukundram block was conducted on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July at Singaperumal Koil training centre. 41 farmers participated in this workshop. Similarly, a short-term residential training programme for farmers of Madurantakam block was conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of August at our Sukkankollai centre. 54 farmers participated in this workshop. These workshops covered topics on the role of indigenous seeds and the importance of organic farming. Different methods of compost preparation, management of paddy and vegetable pests and diseases, preparation of plant extracts were some of the other topics covered in this programme. The importance of medicinal plants and their uses were also highlighted. These workshops were co-ordinated by our field team. A follow up workshop would be conducted three months later.

### ***CAPART follow up workshop***

A follow up workshop to the organic farming training held during April 2002 was conducted on 18<sup>th</sup> September at Sirkazhi. This was conducted at Vettai-

karaniruppu village near Vedaranyam. Subhashini Sridhar coordinated this meeting. All the 15 participants who attended the earlier training programme attended this workshop. It was encouraging for us to note that all the farmers who had participated in the training workshop had started activities in organic farming in one way or the other.

Another follow up workshop with farmers who participated in short-term organic farming workshops earlier this year was conducted at Sirkazhi on 25<sup>th</sup> August. 30 farmers participated in this meeting. Farmers shared their experiences on organic cultivation. The participants also visited the CIKS experimental farm at Agani and also the field's of other organic farmers.

### ***Organic Farming Workshops***

A series of three workshops on organic farming were conducted during July under the UNDP programme for conservation of indigenous genetic resources. These workshops were conducted in Puzhuthivakkam village in Madurantakam on 7<sup>th</sup>, Venpakkam village in Tirukazhukundram on 17<sup>th</sup>, Kattiyampandal village in Madurantakam on 26<sup>th</sup> respectively. A total of 85

farmers participated in these workshops. Similarly, a one day workshop was conducted on 18<sup>th</sup> August at Moolakazhani village in Chengalpattu taluk. A total of 19 farmers participated in this workshop. In these workshops farmers were taught to identify the pests of paddy and their predators. A detailed session on non-chemical pest management was conducted. The participants were also taught to make different plant extracts for pest control.

### ***Capacity Building for Sustainable Agriculture***

As a part of the capacity building programme under the GTZ project, several workshops were conducted. On 12<sup>th</sup> July a quiz programme was conducted for the participants. It was coordinated by K. Vijayalakshmi. This quiz programme was based on all the topics that were covered under the training programme till now. The trainees participated very enthusiastically. The winners were awarded prizes by the District Collector during a programme which was held that evening. On 19<sup>th</sup> July, a one day course on First Aid was held. It was conducted by Mr. S. Chandran of St. John's Ambulance Association. The trainees found this course very useful.

There was an experience sharing session on the 21<sup>st</sup>

of August. On this day all the trainees presented their experiences on organic farming in the form of posters. It was an excellent interactive session which was also attended by our pre-funding evaluator Mr. T.C.A. Srinivasa Ramanujam.

On 12<sup>th</sup> September, the theme was Vrکشayurveda and its importance in organic agriculture. A.V. Balasubramanian gave an overview of the scope and importance of Vrکشayurveda. S. Arumugasamy and S. Thambidurai summarised the practical experiments conducted on different crops and the successes to the farmers. This was followed by a discussion. On 24<sup>th</sup> September Dr. K. Abdul Razak, Retd. Veterinary Surgeon was invited to conduct a session on the importance of ethno-veterinary medicine. Dr. Razak gave a detailed introduction regarding the importance of indigenous cattle. In his theory session he covered various aspects such as how to look for a good cattle, what are the types of cattle to avoid, cattle feed, hygiene etc. He also dealt with curing of various diseases by use of ethnoveterinary practices. This was followed by a practical session where he demonstrated certain practices with the use of a cow, goat, buffalo and hen.

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# CIKS TALK

*Seminars, Discussions, Presentations, Workshops, Fairs...*

## **Visit to TEDA and Save Grain Campaign**

Our Research Associate H. Saraswathy visited the Tamilnadu Energy Development Agency to seek details regarding solar power operated equipments. She also visited the Save Grain Campaign office to get details regarding various seed storage structures. We plan to help farmers construct some good seed storage structures.

## **Visit to PROGRESS**

A.V. Balasubramanian visited Hyderabad on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> August at the request of CAPART to undertake a Pre Funding evaluation for a proposal for a Technology Resource Centre that has been submitted by the organisation - PROGRESS. It is based at Hyderabad.

## **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre**

On 13<sup>th</sup> August, A.M.M. Murugappa Chettiar Research Centre celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a function held in Madras that was addressed by Dr. Chidambaram (Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India) and Sri Rangan Dutta, Consultant, Planning Commission. A.V. Balasubramanian and H. Saraswathy attended the meeting.

## **UNDP meeting at Delhi**

On 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> August, A.V. Balasubramanian was at Delhi to attend a meeting of the Steering Committee for the UNDP – Ministry of Environment project on Medicinal Plants conservation that is being implemented by FRLHT.

## **Visit to Sirkazhi**

On 13<sup>th</sup> August K. Vijayalakshmi visited the CIKS centre at Sirkazhi and met the farmers networking with us in the villages of Agani and Thirunandriyur.

## **Review meeting on Vrکشayurveda**

On 14<sup>th</sup> August, a meeting was held at Singaperumal Kovil for a detailed review of Vrکشayurveda experiments conducted during the last crop season. The meeting was attended by A.V. Balasubramanian, K. Vijayalakshmi, H.Saraswathy, S.Arumugasamy and S. Thambidurai.

## **Prefunding evaluation of CAPART project**

Mr. T.C.A. Srinivasa Ramanujam visited our office as prefunding evaluator for a CAPART project on 20<sup>th</sup> August. On 21<sup>st</sup> August he visited our field station at Sukkankollai. After this he participated in the GTZ experience sharing work shop. In the evening he attended 3

meetings in the villages where the project has been proposed. He met the beneficiaries and had a detailed interaction with them.

## **Workshop on organic vegetable cultivation**

Subhashini Sridhar conducted a one day workshop on 15<sup>th</sup> August on organic vegetable cultivation for the staff of several NGO's at Gandeepam near Trichy. It was organised by FRLHT.

## **Presentation of proposal to DST**

K. Vijayalakshmi presented a proposal to the expert committee of DST at Delhi on 28<sup>th</sup> August. This proposal was on organic cotton cultivation in Nagapattinam district which was presented through the Tamilnadu State Council of Science and Technology. On 29<sup>th</sup> August she visited the Plant Protection Directorate at Faridabad and met the Director Dr. A.T. Pawar.

## **UNDP Meeting at Bangalore**

On 31<sup>st</sup> August, A.V. Balasubramanian attended a workshop that was convened by FRLHT, Bangalore to discuss a proposed programme to be undertaken as part of UNDP-CCF (Country Cooperation Framework) programme for the period 2003 – 2007.

## **Visit to Sharada Ashram, Ulundurpet**

At the request of CAPART, A.V. Balasubramanian did a

mid-term evaluation of a project on tank restoration by Ramakrishna Sharada Ashram Trust on 16<sup>th</sup> September at Ulundurpet.

## **Visit to AU-KBC Centre**

A.V. Balasubramanian, K. Vijayalakshmi and H. Saraswathy visited the Anna University KB Chandrasekar Centre for internet and telecom technologies on 17<sup>th</sup> September. A.V. Balasubramanian made a presentation to a team of researchers and faculty about the CIKS work on traditional Indian plant and veterinary science. A collaboration between CIKS and AU-KBC is being considered for developing a database on the subject.

## **Visit to LEISA Network**

On 19<sup>th</sup> September, K. Vijayalakshmi visited the Vermicomposting project of the NGO Kudumbam (a part of LEISA Network) based in Trichy as a mid-term project evaluator for CAPART.

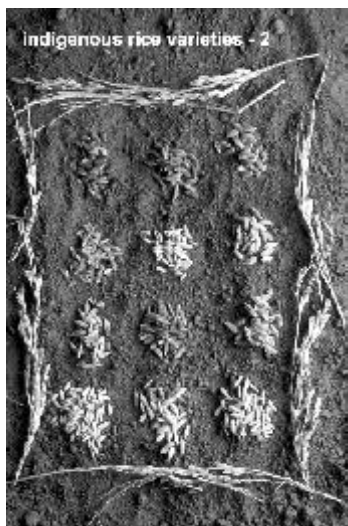
## **Visit of World Bank Team**

On 24<sup>th</sup> September CIKS received a group of 12 delegates from Africa involved in a medicinal plants project. The team had representatives from NGO's, government officials, and World Bank officials from Ethiopia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

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## **VISITORS BOOK**

*A look at who's been dropping in at CIKS*

□ *Dr. G.G. Ganga-dharan, Vaidya C. Suresh Kumar and Dr. C. Suresh Kumar visited us on 6<sup>th</sup> July. They invited A.V.Balasubramanian to deliver the key note address on the theme of "Ayurveda for plants and animals" in the World Ayurveda Congress to be held in Cochin in November 2002.*

□ *Ms. Sumana Narayanan of FRLHT visited us on 26<sup>th</sup> July in connection with a documentation work of local health traditions.*

□ *Tmt. Sheelarani Chungath, IAS, Chairperson of Tamilnadu Pollution Control Board visited our farm on 10<sup>th</sup> August. She also had a meeting with the organic farmers in the afternoon when they shared their experiences with her.*

□ *Mr. Venkatachalam of "Save the Eastern*

*Ghats" campaign at Chengam, Tiruvannamalai visited us on 22<sup>nd</sup> August.*

□ *On 28<sup>th</sup> August, a group of students from Kyoto University, Japan visited our Centre. They are members of SAGE (Solid Action on Globalisation and Environment) which is a movement to study and understand globalization. A.V.Balasubramanian and H.Saraswathy met this group and made a presentation regarding the efforts of CIKS in the area of agriculture. This was followed by a discussion with the students on how they saw globalization as well as the relationship between India and Japan.*

□ *On 11<sup>th</sup> September, Dr. Narendra Mehrotra, Scientist from CDRI, Lucknow who is currently with the National Institute of Rural Industrialisation at Wardha visited us.*

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