



CERTIFIED ORGANIC SEEDS – FOR THE FIRST TIME

CIKS in collaboration with Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU), Coimbatore organized a brainstorming meeting on organic seed production on 3rd March 2010. The meeting deliberated on the need to notify the traditional seeds by the seed certification department, production of organic seeds by the University etc. During the meeting the organically produced certified paddy seeds of ADT 43 variety which were produced by CIKS was released by the Registrar of TNAU. The release of seeds was hailed as an historic occasion as it was a first time in Tamil Nadu that the seeds with double certification were available commercially. The organic seeds would be marketed by The Arogyam Organics Private Limited, which is a company established for the marketing of organic products. The meeting was attended by organic farmers, NGO representatives, University scientists, students and officials from the Department of organic certification.



The Registrar of TNAU releasing the Certified Organic Seeds of ADT 43

DIVERSITY ON THE PLATTER



Millet preparations displayed by women SHG members

CIKS had organized traditional food festivals to create awareness about the importance and nutritional value of traditional and organic foods in Nagapattinam and Dindigul districts on 11th and 28th March, respectively. More than 550 farmers participated. The participants were served with different traditional dishes. There were stalls with displays of medicinal herbs, traditional paddy varieties, value added products, organic products etc. The chief guests of the occasion were Bank Managers, Officials of Horticulture and Agriculture Departments, Scientists and Village Presidents. During the event agriculture implements like power weeder, brush cutter, jet pumps, rotovator etc., were distributed to farmers sangams. Prizes were distributed to the outstanding organic farmers and to the best women Self Help Group.



PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

COMPAS Project

This project, supported by ETC Foundation, Netherlands, is being implemented in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam districts from 2007. Under this project, two organic farming festivals were conducted in Nagapattinam district on 9th and 10th January. The chief guests of the functions were Bank Managers and Horticulture Officers. COMPAS Asian Partners meeting was held in Chennai between 28th January and 1st February. A total of nine partners representing four countries - India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Vietnam (CIKS, FRLHT, KPP, ADS, BRIT, FIOH, GSS, CRES and UBINIG) participated in the meeting. The main objective of the meeting was to make plans for the next phase of the COMPAS programme and proposal for funding.

Biodiversity Conservation, Reduction of POPs and Livelihoods for Farmers in Tamil Nadu - A Sustainable Triangle

This project supported by UNDP - GEF is in progress in Kancheepuram, Thiruvannamalai, Dindigul and Nagapattinam districts. Monthly meetings of farmers groups were conducted. Plans are on for the production of rice based value added products in collaboration with IICPT (Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology), Thanjavur. Ten traditional paddy varieties conserved in 10.97 acres in Nagapattinam district were harvested. A format for the consolidation of cost of cultivation of vegetables was prepared. An assessment of coconut fields in Dharumathupatty village of Dindigul district was carried out on 14th February. A total of four trainings on "Integrated pest management measures in vegetables and coconut" were conducted for the beneficiaries of Dindigul district. These

training programmes were coordinated by Dr. S. Arivudai Nambi of Annamalai University and Dr. Henry Louis, Director cum Scientist from Hi - Tech coconut nursery, Nagercoil.

Sustainable Livelihoods through Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu

This project supported by Jamsetji Tata Trust (JTT), Mumbai is being implemented in Kancheepuram, Ramanathapuram, Dindigul and Nagapattinam districts from May 2009. Under this project, 21 farmers' sangams have been formed and monthly meetings were conducted. A total of 178.38 acres has been selected and seed production of different paddy varieties, green gram, sesame, maize and black gram etc. are in progress. Inspections were conducted in seed production fields. Under the components of input support and crop loan schemes, about 408.57 acres have been selected and different crops are being cultivated. Inputs and crop loans were provided to the beneficiaries. Demonstration fields have been established in 20.40 acres and various organic farming technologies are being implemented. Agricultural implements and machineries have been distributed to farmers sangams. A total of sixteen short term trainings and nine Trainers' Training Programmes (TTP) were conducted for the beneficiaries. A total of seven exposure visits were organized. Under the component of capacity building of NGOs, CIRHEP in Nilakottai and Gandhi Peace Keeping Centre in Thiruthuraiipoondi have been identified and provided with four training programmes. On 17th and 18th March, 25 representatives of CIRHEP were taken for an exposure visit to CIKS Organic Research farm, neem disintegrator unit etc. Six acres have been selected from

three farmers working with CIRHEP for establishing demonstration fields and necessary inputs for the same has been provided. Efforts are on for the construction of a biopesticide unit in Ramanathapuram district.

Introduction of Organic Farming in Alangadu Village

Our centre is involved in the promotion of organic farming in Alangadu village of Nagapattinam district from January 2009. Monthly sangam meetings were conducted. Two exposure trips were organized for the beneficiaries to organic farms, biopesticide unit, medicinal plants conservation park and CIKS organic research farm. Inputs like ADT 3 black gram seeds and biofertilizers have been distributed to the farmers. To supplement the cattle feed *azolla* has been cultivated in all the four farm ponds in Alangadu village. On 22nd February, an awareness programme on organic farming was conducted in Alangadu. More than 75 farmers participated in this programme. On 12th March, a one day training programme on Installation of Bio gas unit and usage was conducted by Dr. N. O. Gopal, Department of Bio Energy, TNAU, Coimbatore.

Strengthening Sustainable Agriculture for Improving Rural Livelihoods: A Project with Focus on Dryland Agriculture

Under this Ford Foundation and HIVOS supported project a detailed survey has been conducted in Thiruvannamalai and Dindigul districts. A total of 1235 acres of land has been selected from 12 villages in both the districts. Twelve sangams have been established in the beneficiary villages and monthly meetings were conducted. Three farmers of Kalathupatty

NEWSROOM

Happenings and more.

village of Dindigul district are involved in the demonstration of vermicompost production and apiculture (rearing of honeybees). Under this project, a capacity building training programme on soil health and nutrition analysis was conducted for the technical staff of CIKS on 16th February at Sukkankollai farm. This training programme was coordinated by Consultant, Mr. Daniel Anandraj. The beneficiary villages, Attiyanur and Mullipattu of Javvathi hills and Kalathupatty and Karuthanayakanpatti of Sendhurai were visited by our consultant Mr. Daniel Anand Raj on 29th and 30th March 2010. He evaluated the various criteria of soil health by practical testing.

Increasing the Income Level of Farmers through Implementation of Organic Farming Technologies in Chilli Cultivation

This project supported by the Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology is being implemented in Ramanathapuram district from December 2009. Under this project, a detailed survey was conducted in Ramanathapuram district. Four villages - Keelathooval, Sambakulam, Sathanur and Keelakulam have been selected from Muthukulathur and Kamudhi taluks for the implementation of project activities. Detailed baseline survey was conducted in all the four villages. Baseline data has also been collected from various available secondary sources. Collection of details on organic cultivation techniques for chillies from various available sources is in progress. Baseline survey report was prepared.

Work in Progress at Sukkankollai

In our experimental farm at Sukkankollai, 84 traditional paddy varieties cultivated for seed multiplication were harvested. Traditional paddy *Kullakar* has been cultivated in 25 cents. Crops like coriander and spinach have been raised in the shade house. Various vegetable varieties have been cultivated in kitchen garden. Compost and vermicompost production is in progress. Experiments on management of sucking pests in Brinjal and shoot and fruit borer in tomato using biopesticides and cow dung solution are in progress.

Foundation Day Celebration

The fifteenth CIKS Foundation day was celebrated on 23rd January 2010 in Chennai with a gathering of staff, trustees, friends and well wishers. The day started with an overview of CIKS activities and achievements since its inception by the Research Director, Dr. K. Vijayalakshmi and Director A.V. Balasubramanian. This was followed by a presentation by Programme Director S. Arumugasamy on our new venture for marketing of organic products - The Arogyam Organics Private Limited. Later some of the participants shared their views and suggestions about CIKS.

Staff Capacity Building Training Programme

A one day staff capacity building training programme on 'Soil health and Nutritional analysis' was conducted for the technical staff of CIKS on 16th February at the CIKS Technology Resource Centre in Sukkankollai. This training programme was coordinated by Consultant, Mr. Daniel Anandraj. A total of 18 staff members participated in this training programme. The participants were trained on various methods of analyzing soil health through class room sessions and a practical session.

Honours for CIKS Research Director

As part of the International Women's day celebrations on March 9th 2010, two different institutions honoured Dr. K. Vijayalakshmi, CIKS Research Director.

- Dr. G. Thiruvvasagam, Vice Chancellor, Madras University honoured some of its distinguished alumni including Dr. Vijayalakshmi. She was given a citation acknowledging her services in advancing the cause of women in the field of science.

- The Lions Club International organized a facilitation programme to commemorate World Women's Day. MJF Lion Lakshmi Kannan, District Chairperson acknowledged Dr. Vijayalakshmi as an Expert in Indigenous Technology Promotion and gave away a shield.

Visit of Taskforce of Government of India

The Government of India has constituted a task force on the issues of farmers affected by loans with emphasis on those who are not covered under the loan waiver scheme. The Southern Regional Team of the task force has a mandate to visit and obtain inputs from farmers, government departments and various other stakeholders in the Southern states. On 12th March 2010, the members of the panel including Ms. Shashi Rajagopalan, Chairperson Mr. Shailendra, Member of the Panel visited the CIKS farm at Sukkankollai accompanied by a team of NABARD officials. CIKS had arranged a get together where groups of farmers and their representatives had been invited from the districts of Kancheepuram, Nagapattinam, Dindigul and Ramanathapuram and they made representations about the problems of farmers and also their experiences about how organic farming can help in reducing farmers debts. Following this on 13th March, the panel had a meeting in Chennai with NGOs, Academics, representatives of companies to make presentations to the panel. On behalf of CIKS, K. Vijayalakshmi made a presentation and submission to the panel.

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

- On 21st January, Mr. Balaji, Mr. Devaprakash and Mr. Dhakshinamoorthy visited our farm to get to know about various organic farming technologies.
- On 2nd February, Mr. Palash Baral of UBINIG, Bangladesh visited CIKS Chennai office for a discussion.
- On 3rd February, a group of 133 students and 8 teachers from The Hindu Secondary School, Triplicane, Chennai, visited our farm to get to know about various organic farming technologies.
- On 15th February, a group of 21 students and 2 staff from The Women's Christian College, Nungambakkam, Chennai visited our farm.
- On 20th February, Mr. E. Ramkumar and Mr. E. Prashanthkumar from Chromepet, Chennai, visited our Sukkankollai farm.
- On 17th March, a group of five students and two teachers from The School of Krishnamurthy Foundation in Chennai visited our Sirkazhi field station to get to know about our various activities.
- On 17th March, Ms. Beulah Azariah, CEO, Ecomwell, Mr. Rina Bohner and Ms. Urs Bohner of FES Switzerland visited us.
- On 24th March, Mr. Ilango, Panchayat President of Kuthambakkam village visited us.

Editorial Team : Dr. K. Vijayalakshmi & R. Abarna

Design & Layout : R.Anand & S. Ramesh

Book-Post

To



CIKS

30, Gandhi Mandapam Road, Kotturpuram

Chennai - 600 085. INDIA

Phone : 91-044-2447 1087 / 5862

E-mail : info@ciks.org / ciksorg@gmail.com

Website : www.ciks.org