



## FARMERS' FIELD SCHOOL

**A** Farmers' Field School (FFS) programme was implemented by CIKS in Kancheepuram district under the programme of Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) for a period of three months from January - March 2012. Under this programme, a total of 53 farmers including 35 women farmers have been selected from Kayarambedu and Moolakazhani villages. A total of six training programmes have been conducted for each village. The participants were trained on various topics like, introduction to System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method of paddy cultivation, seed selection and nursery raising, preparation of main field and transplanting, nutrient management, weed management, pest and disease management etc. Various demonstrations were also done. This three month programme was concluded on 23rd March. A valedictory function was organized and the chief guests of the occasion were, Mr. P. Selvaraj, Assistant Agriculture Director and Mr. K. Vivekananthar, Assistant Agriculture Officer, Kattankulathur circle of Kancheepuram district. During this event farmers shared their experience about this programme and the knowledge gained by them. Publications and organic inputs were distributed to farmers.



*Participants of the onfarm training on organic cultivation technologies*

## CIKS TURNS SEVENTEEN

In 23rd January, all team members of CIKS from various offices gathered for a day long celebration for the Seventeenth Foundation Day of CIKS at Mahabalipuram. All members shared their impressions about working with CIKS and way forward. Members also gave their suggestions for improvement in various technical and administrative areas. This was followed by several lively cultural programmes. This gave an opportunity for all the staff to display their skills and also spend a relaxed day away from work and recharge their batteries.



*Our senior staff distributing prize to a winner*



## PROJECT WATCH *A round-up of our activities*

### **Sustainable Livelihoods through Organic Farming in Tamil Nadu**

This project supported by Jamsetji Tata Trust (JTT), Mumbai is in progress in Kancheepuram, Ramanathapuram, Dindigul and Nagapattinam districts. Organic seed production is in progress in 88.67 acres. Under the input support and crop loan schemes, 725.41 acres are being supported. Demonstration fields are in place in 17.2 acres in all the four districts. A total of 143 organic kitchen gardens are being maintained in all the four districts. Vermicompost production is in full swing in 38 demonstration units and in four community units. A total of 28 microenterprises established under this project are progressing well and records for the same are being maintained by the beneficiaries. A total of 15 short term and four Trainers' Training sessions and six exposure visits were organised for the beneficiaries. Under the component on capacity building of NGOs, five training programmes, three exposure visits and three veterinary camps were organized for SKETCH (NGO in Ramanathapuram district) and *Pasumai* (NGO in Nagapattinam district). External inspections were conducted in all the four districts by IMO, Bengaluru.

### **Strengthening Sustainable Agriculture for Improving Rural Livelihoods: A Project with focus on Dryland Agriculture**

This project supported by Ford Foundation and HIVOS is in progress in Thiruvannamalai and Dindigul districts. Entire land under this project is registered with Tamil Nadu Organic

Certification Department (TNOCD). Sangam meetings were conducted. Crops like groundnut, maize, sorghum, black gram, horse gram, cotton, niger (*Pei ellu*) and varieties of millets cultivated in 1017.4 acres in both the districts during the previous season were harvested. Organic kitchen gardens are being maintained in both the districts. Beneficiaries are also involved in the production of vermicompost. Five training programmes on various organic farming technologies were conducted for the beneficiaries. In Dindigul district, external inspection was conducted by TNOCD. Construction of a millet processing unit in Javadhi hills has been completed and regular processing is in progress.

### **Eco-Friendly Management Strategies to Reduce Rat Damage in Agricultural Crops**

This project supported by the Department of Science and Technology is being implemented in the Sirkazhi taluk of Nagapattinam district. Under this project, four experiments on eco-friendly rat management methods were conducted in the field. Mass campaigns on "Non-chemical rat management methods" were conducted in Kondal and Nemmeli Panchayats. As a part of this programme, rat control activity was taken up in 173.5 acres in five villages with the help of *irula* tribal group. A training programme on "Non-chemical methods of rat management" was conducted in Kondal village. An awareness programme on 'Eco-friendly rat management measures' was conducted in Poomphuhar College. An awareness programme on

"Conservation of predators - snakes for rat management" was conducted for a diverse group of people.

### **Creating Livelihoods through Organic Farming - A Model**

This project is in progress in Sirkazhi taluk of Nagapattinam district with the support of NABARD. Crops like paddy and groundnut cultivated during samba season have been harvested. A total of 36 farmers are involved in the cultivation of black gram, green gram and cotton. Six individual vermicompost units have been set up in Pagasalai and Ilayamadhukoodam villages. An awareness programme on 'Importance of tree planting in villages' was conducted in Pagasalai village. An orientation programme on organic kitchen gardening was held in Aadhamangalam village. A women Self Help Group (SHG) named Sri Krishna Women SHG has been formed in the Uluthukuppai village. Five members of this group were trained on value addition and now they are involved in the production of value added products.

### **Technology Transfer, Credit Counseling and Market Advocacy through Farmers Clubs**

This pilot project is being implemented in Nagapattinam district with the support of NABARD. Under this project, a total of 42 training programmes were conducted for the sub-trainees on integrated pest management methods, Agro Eco System Analysis (AESAs), organic cultivation, seed production, poultry farming etc. A refresher training programme was conducted for the

# NEWSROOM

*Happenings and more.*

master trainees on 27th January. A group of 40 farmers from nine farmers' clubs were taken to visit the veterinary science exhibition held in Trichy on 25th February and in Thanjavur on 3rd March.

## **Development and Field Testing of Bio Pesticidal Oils Formulated as Soaps**

This project supported by the Department of Science and Technology is in progress in Nagapattinam district. Under this project *Spodoptera* and *Aphids* are being reared in our insect rearing laboratory in Sirkazhi. Bioassays have been conducted on *Spodoptera litura* and *Aphids* using Neem oil soap solution at different concentrations. Project staff visited soap making units in Auroville to get to know about the procedures involved in soap preparation. A procedure for the preparation of neem oil soap has been evolved and preliminary trials have also been conducted.

## **A Project on Developing Integrated Sustainable Community Farm**

This project is being implemented in Thirukadaiyur in Nagapattinam district with the financial support from the Churches Council for Child and Youth Care (CCCYC), Bengaluru. A total of 10 cows have been purchased. Poultry farming has been started in the farm. Production and use of vermicompost and biopesticides are in progress. Saplings of *Pongamia* and neem have been planted. As a part of the extension work in the nearby villages, an orientation meeting was conducted for the SHG formed in the Valayasozhagan village followed by a workshop on organic farming. On 21st February, an external inspection was conducted by IMO, Bengaluru. Three capacity building training programmes were conducted for the project staff. On 22nd February and 18th March, Research Director Dr. K. Vijayalakshmi and Director A. V. Balasubramanian visited the farm and reviewed the work in progress

## **Strengthening of SHGs on Value Addition**

As a part of our effort on strengthening of women SHGs, a training programme on "Post harvest technology and value addition of grains and fruits" was organized for the members of women SHGs on 19th January. A total of 66 women beneficiaries from Allivilagam, Aadhamangalam, Manalagaram, Nemmeli, Pagasalai, Uluthukkuppai and Thathakudi villages participated in this training programme. The participants were trained on topics like, harvesting of paddy, milling, storage, preservation and value addition of fruits, paddy, millets etc. Mrs. S. Sulochana, Mr. S. Kumaranvel, Scientists and Mr. R. Paranthaman, Technical Assistant from Indian Institute of Crop Processing Technology (IICPT), Thanjavur and Mrs. N. Sangeetha, Assistant Professor from Pondicherry University served as resource persons.

## **Training on Organic Vegetable Gardening**

An orientation programme on "Organic vegetable gardening" was conducted for the teachers at the Sabanayagam Muthaliyar Higher Secondary School in Sirkazhi on 20th January. This training programme was coordinated by the technical staff of CIKS. Teachers from five schools participated in this training programme. They were trained on the importance of raising organic vegetable gardens in schools, importance of nutritional security and balanced diet and technologies involved in organic vegetable gardening. Demonstrations of bed preparation, raising nursery, companion planting and biopesticide preparation have also been done.

## **Presentation and Discussion on Food Security Bill**

On 8th February, Mrs. B. Poongkhulali, Advocate, Madras High Court and Ms. Akila Ramalingam, faculty of the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru made a presentation at the CIKS office at Chennai regarding the Food Security Bill that has been recently introduced in the Parliament. They

outlined the major features of the Bill and also discussed certain responses and critiques regarding the bill particularly with respect to the responses of the Tamil Nadu government which already has a Public Distribution System in place for a long time. The meeting was attended by the CIKS technical staff, Programme Directors and the Programme Coordinator.

## **Visit to Gandhigram**

A. V. Balasubramanian and K. Vijayalakshmi visited Gandhigram on 24th March, 2012. K. Vijayalakshmi attended a meeting of the Lakshmi Seva Sangh. A. V. Balasubramanian visited various technical and production units of the Khadi and Village Industries to acquaint himself on their activities. They both had discussions with Mr. M. R. Rajagopalan, President and Shri K. Shivakumar, Secretary of the Gandhigram Trust.

## **Participation in Agri Exhibition**

To promote the sales of the five women SHGs involved in the production of organic inputs, value added products, handicraft etc., in Nagapattinam district under the guidance of CIKS, a proposal was submitted to the Micro Credit Innovations Department (MCID) of NABARD during February 2012 to participate in the Dinamalar Agri Exhibition. Since the proposal was sanctioned, we have participated in the Dinamalar Agri Exhibition held in Trichy between 23rd and 26th March. Six women SHG members participated in this programme. They displayed their products and made a very good sale.

## **International Student Intern**

Ms. Sarah Lakshmi Sax, who is a student at the University of British Columbia at Canada, spent a period of three months between January and March 2012 as a student volunteer working with CIKS. During the period she was involved in the survey of literature, preparing reports relating to the issue of seeds and seed industry as well as a preliminary survey regarding community seed banks promoted by NGOs.

## ORGANIC FACTS !!!

### More Nutritious Organic Food

It has been proved very authentically that organic production has a very positive effect on the nutritional value of food products. Organic foods contain lower levels of nitrates, antibiotics, pesticide residues and veterinary drug residues. They have a more balanced protein profile and also contain more minerals and vitamins. It has also been proved that organic plant based foods contain higher amount of secondary plant compounds like phytochemicals. Organic fruits and vegetables contain 40% more antioxidants and higher levels of beneficial minerals like iron and zinc. In the case of organic milk antioxidants level was up to 90%.

Crops and plants that are generally cultivated organically are not "pushed" or "forced" to grow like the ones in conventional agriculture. Though their growth is a little slower they produce higher quality products since they are given more time to synthesize their vital components. Organic tomatoes exhibit higher concentrations of Flavonoid substances. The way organic food is handled and cultivated (crop variety, time of harvest, post harvest handling etc.) contribute to higher nutritional quality of the food.

Processed organic foods avoid artificial additives which have negative health impacts. For example, aspartame is a widely used artificial sweetener which is strongly linked to migraines, blurred vision and several other nervous disorders. These are completely forbidden in organic foods.

To sum up when we talk of organic food it is not a luxury but it is the way food is supposed to be.

## VISITOR'S BOOK

### Who's been dropping in at CIKS

- On 7th and 8th January, three representatives from the NABHA Foundation, Punjab visited our Sukkankollai farm to get trained on Organic farming certification and Internal Control Systems (ICS).
- On 28th January, a group of seven members from KNH, Germany, Thyssenkrupp, Germany and the Church Council for Child and Youth Care (CCCYC), Bengaluru visited our Sukkankollai farm.
- On 31st January, a group of 15 farmers from the Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh visited our organic experimental farm in Sukkankollai.
- On 18th February, Dr. N. Sukumar and Dr. Sunanda of Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh visited our Centre.
- On 25th February, Mr. A. Rajendran, Manager Indian Overseas Bank, Erode visited our experimental farm at Sukkankollai.
- On 28th February, Mr. C. Balaji of Nachiyar Organic Garden, Pollachi visited us at Chennai.
- On 28th February, a group of 17 farmers from Pilupu NGO, Andhra Pradesh visited our organic experimental farm in Sukkankollai to get to know about various organic farming technologies.
- On 13th March, a team of four technical persons consisting of Mr. Chandankeri and his colleagues from TIDE, Bengaluru visited our Chennai office.

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