



Rice Chain Workshop In Thailand

A workshop on 'Organising the Organic Fairtrade Rice Chain, Building Grassroots Competency' was held in Thailand between 8 - 25th June 2005. This was an eighteen day long comprehensive training and exposure on the different components of organic and fairtrade rice chain. The programme was hosted by the Earthnet foundation, a NGO based in Bangkok with support from HIVOS, Netherlands. The training was for the NGOs in South and South-East Asian nations working largely on rice.

About 20 participants, from 13 organisations in 5 Asian countries participated in this training programme. S. Subhashini and R. Sridevi from CIKS participated in the workshop. The overall goal was to improve the livelihood of the rural producers through organic and fairtrade rice chain activities.

The curriculum included theory sessions, practical training and study visits of actual rice chain activities operated by grassroot groups in Thailand as well as other institutions



Participants in a group discussion

working on different aspects of rice chain. eg. Researches, Policy advocacy, business.

During the course of the first two weeks, the participants were given assignments, held group discussions and made country level presentations. During the last week the participants undertook planning, group work and development of a plan for rice chain activities for their respective locations.

Participants were guided to make an analysis of their own rice chain project's weaknesses, and to develop intervention measures to improve its operation.

Laurels for Indian Rice Varieties

A few rice varieties conserved by the different groups were displayed at the workshop. The farmers working with Earthnet Foundation were invited for dinner wherein the above mentioned rice varieties were cooked and displayed. The farmers and participants were asked to taste the different rice varieties and give their votes for the best one. Seeraga Samba - the traditional variety conserved by CIKS and the Basmati variety conserved by Green Foundation got the majority votes. This was followed by the Kappakar rice variety of CIKS.



Participants involved in FFS exercise.

ORGANIC RICE FOR SALE

For details see page 4



PROJECT WATCH

A round-up of our activities

Livelihood Security Through Organic Farming

Under the Ford supported project for "Enhancing Livelihood and Food Security through Capacity Building for Organic Farming and Natural Resource Management", three trainers training programmes were conducted in the month of April for all the three districts - Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur and Tiruvannamalai. Leadership training was also conducted for the sangam office bearers of Kancheepuram and Tiruvannamalai districts in the same month. Sangam meetings are being conducted regularly in all the three districts. Seed storage structures have been constructed for all the 24 villages. The lands for construction of these storage structures were provided by the farmers in most places. Mangavaram village of Tiruvallur district and Sathapoondi village of Tiruvannamalai district have been chosen for setting up biopesticide units. The construction work is on in both the villages.

Organic Cotton Cultivation

CIKS is implementing a DST supported project on organic cotton cultivation through the Tamilnadu State Council. Eleven farmers of the Dindigul district who were involved in this project have harvested the crop. Dr. E. Ramasamy, Member secretary and Dr. T. Dhanapal, Scientific Officer of the Tamilnadu State Council on Science and Technology visited our field area at Dindigul on 11th April 2005.

Vrkshayurveda for Vegetables

Under the DST supported project on "Use of Vrkshayurveda for Vegetable Cultivation", experiments for control of diseases and pests in chilli and ladies finger and also for growth promotion in ladies finger are being conducted. In

connection with this project our Sirkazhi staff Krithika, Maheshwari and Ashok Kumar visited the horticulture research department in Annamalai University, Chidambaram.

Restoration work in Tsunami affected areas in Nagapattinam

Survey and identification of plants in tsunami affected areas of Koozhaiyar and Tirumullaivasal villages have been carried out. A farmers meeting was conducted to assess the farmers needs in Koozhaiyar village. Water samples have also been collected from this village for analysis. Soil testing and soil mapping of the affected area was done with help from Scientists in Annamalai Agricultural University. Experiments are on to assess the performance of the two indigenous rice varieties - Ottadai and Kundhali, vegetable varieties and groundnut varieties in the affected land.

Work at Sukkankollai

Nine traditional paddy varieties have been harvested and 14 new traditional varieties have been planted for this season in the in-situ conservation centre at Sukkankollai. Sunflower is being cultivated on 75 cents.

Compas Coordination

Mr. Wim Hiemstra, the COMPAS Coordinator from the Netherlands visited India in April. Along with him A.V. Balasubramanian had meetings with the COMPAS partners from India namely, FRLHT and KPP at Bangalore. Mr. Kahandawa, the COMPAS Sri Lanka Coordinator, joined them in this meeting. Consultations were also held with Dr. Vijay Padaki, the International Consultant for the COMPAS Institutional Development process. On 25th April, A.V. Balasubramanian and Mr. Wim Hiemstra traveled to Gandhigram

Rural University at Gandhigram for consultations with Professor Ranganathan, Dean - Faculty of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry and other faculty of the department regarding possible involvement of the University in the COMPAS UC programme. On 26th April, they had a meeting with Mr. V. Varadarajan, Executive Officer of TENET (Telecom and Networks) Group of IIT, Chennai to know about the work in setting up rural internet kiosks.

NEW PROJECT

Enhancing Livelihood Security through Organic Farming

CIKS has launched a new project for "Enhancing Livelihood Security through Organic Farming" in 10 villages of Kancheepuram district with support from CAPART, New Delhi. A total of 405 beneficiaries have been identified for this project. Under this project organic farmers sangams have been established in all the 10 villages. Sangam meeting and a orientation meeting about the project was conducted for all the sangams. Trainings on organic farming was conducted in the month of June for the sangam members of Valathodu, Narapakkam and Kolathancheri villages belonging to Uthiramerur, Thirukazhukundram and Kattankalathur taluks. In these trainings, the farmers were exposed to organic cultivation of rice and vegetables. They were also introduced to several techniques to improve soil fertility.

NEWSROOM

Happenings and more.

FAO Team at CIKS

A three member team consisting of Dr. P. Bhattacharyya, Director, National Centre for Organic Farming, Dr. Peter Griffé of the Organic Farming Programme of FAO Rome and Dr. Ajay Rastogi of the Organic Farming Programme, FAO, New Delhi visited CIKS on 15th April. A presentation on our work relating to organic farming was made and the team discussed possible ways of our involvement in the programme of FAO and NCOF.

Rewriting Principles of Organic Agriculture

K. Vijayalakshmi attended the meeting of the TASK force on rewriting principles of organic agriculture at the IFOAM head office in Bonn, Germany between 1st - 3rd May. The final draft of the principles prepared during this meeting would now have to get approved by the World Board and then would be brought up to the general assembly at the International Congress of Organic Farming to be held in Adelaide in September. During this visit, K. Vijayalakshmi also met funders like EED, German Agro Action and Misereor and discussed possibilities of funding for several CIKS Projects.

Visits to Sirkazhi

On 19th & 20th April, M. Reema Kumari visited Sirkazhi for help in survey and identification of plants in Tsunami affected areas. On 21st and 22nd April, R. Sridevi visited Sirkazhi for coordination of research activities and standardization of procedures in biopesticides unit and the insect rearing laboratory.

On 16th and 17th May, A.V. Balasubramanian and R. Sridevi made a visit to Sirkazhi. At the Annamalai University, Chidambaram, A.V. Balasubramanian, R. Sridevi and Subhashini Sridhar had discussions with Dr. Kurucheva, Professor and Head, Department of Pathology and Dr. Bala Bhaskar regarding possible areas of collaboration. They also met Dr. Manivanan, Professor, Department of Horticulture to discuss possible ways in which collaboration can be carried

out in the area of research on traditional vegetable varieties. They visited the CIKS Biopesticide unit at Agani and the experimental fields in the village of Allivilagam. Subsequently meetings were held with representatives of the Organic Farmers' Sangams that have been formed in Sirkazhi.

Visit to Veterinary College, Bangalore

On 28th April, A.V. Balasubramanian visited the Veterinary College, Bangalore and had discussion with Dr. T. Veena, Department of Veterinary Physiology regarding the possibilities of collaboration for work in the area of the use of animal products in agriculture for pest control and as fertilizers.

First Aid Course

Mr. S. Chandran Lecturer in First Aid, St. John's Ambulance Association conducted a half day training programme on the basics of First Aid for the CIKS staff at Sirkazhi and Chennai on 14th and 24th May respectively. The sessions were lively with a lot of participation.

Sirkazhi Staff Visit Pondicherry

On 19th May our staff at Sirkazhi field station and representatives from the organic farmers sangam in Sirkazhi visited the Pondicherry Science Forum. They had detailed discussions regarding the SRI method of paddy cultivation with Mr. Shanthamoorthy. They also visited the field of Mr. Muralidharan and shared his experiences. In the afternoon, a visit was made to the organic farm of Mr. Manindrapal of the Aurobindo Ashram.

CIKS at Agri Expo

The Agri Expo 2005 was held at Suguna Auditorium, Coimbatore between 18th and 21st June 2005. Our staff P. Kalidoss and M. Chelladhurai participated in this four day fair and exhibited our publications, traditional rice varieties and biopesticides. Farmers, NGOs, Agriculture departments, publishers and business people participated in this trade fair.

The expo attracted nearly 7,000 visitors. Our books, posters and CDs on organic and traditional agriculture was very well received and appreciated by the public. The center's activities were appraised to the visitors and our brochures were distributed for future contact. Our organic rice and biopesticide samples were also distributed to the dealers.

Meeting On Open Source Software

The AU-KBC Research Centre at the MIT campus of Anna University Chennai has been recognized as a national resource center for free open source software by the Government of India. In connection with this a discussion on - "Developing an Indian understanding of the open source software movement and its relevance to education, research industry and applications" was held on 25th June. A.V. Balasubramanian participated in the discussions.

Upgradation of Systems and Training

The use of computers has been increasing in our centre in the last few years. The systems in our Chennai office have been upgraded and networked. Systems in our field offices have also been upgraded. Mr. Anand Ramachandran has been providing technical consultancy and conducting trainings for our staff.



Talk to us.

**Send your feedback,
comments and
suggestions to
info@ciks.org**

AROGYAM IN FULL SWING

CIKS is involved in marketing organically cultivated Indigenous rice varieties procured from our farmers. We have given below the list of rice varieties currently available and the price. If you are interested in purchasing them, you can contact our sales executive Mr. S. Sivakumar at the address given below.

S. No.	Name of the traditional paddy variety	Whole Sale Price (Above 25 kg)		Retail Price (Below 25 kg)	
		Rice (kg)		Rice (kg)	
		Raw (Rs)	Par boiled (Rs)	Raw (Rs)	Par boiled (Rs)
1	Seeraga samba	30	-	40	-
2	Thooyamalli / GEB-24 / Kitchili samba	22	20	30	25
3	White Ponni (include variety)	20	18	-	-
4	Salem samba	-	16	-	20
5	Pisini / Neelan samba / Sempalai / Sigappu kuruvikar / Kappakar / Kadai-kazhuthan / Kuthiraival samba / Sadakar / Vaikunda / Jil Jil vaikunda / Samba Mosanam / Kullakar	-	15	-	20

CENTRE FOR INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS
B45, Alagesan Nagar, (Opp. Government hospital), Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram (Dt). Tamilnadu - 603 001. Phone : 04114 - 230625, 9443264529 E-mail : ciks_fo@vsnl.net.

VISITOR'S BOOK

Who's been dropping in at CIKS

On 7th April, Dr. Ponniah from the Department of Environmental Sciences, TNAU, Coimbatore visited our Chennai office seeking collaboration in his study of tsunami affected lands.

On 9th April, a group of forty six students accompanied by some faculty members of CSI Ewerts Women's Christian College visited our farm.

On 11th April, Mr. Vivek Mahajan of Kshitij and Ms. Sujatha Ramachandran of Prakriti visited Chennai office

On 15th April, a team of farmers from Tribal Health Initiatives, Dharmapuri district along with the head of the organization, Dr. Lalitha visited our field area and office at Sirkazhi.

On 3rd May, Mr. S.M.B. Pandian, PRO of an organization called REEDA visited us to obtain help regarding project preparation.

On 18th May, Shanthi Manickasundaram visited us to provide help on economic analysis of the organic farming data.

On 14th June, Ms. Elisa of COSPE an NGO based in Italy and Mr. Paolo Mori, a consultant from Italy visited CIKS for discussions regarding possible collaboration.

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Real-world solutions from traditional science.

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