

Minutes of Technical Consultative Meeting on Agriculture Research

Venue : Hotel Thamizhagam, Nagapatnam
Date : 13.12.2005
Time : 10.50 a.m.
Organized by : NCRC

The meeting commenced with a self introductory session by the participants. Ms. Annie George, CEO of NCRC welcomed the gathering and briefed the purpose of the meeting. She invited the audience to look for different approaches and put all the available resources together for the restoration of tsunami affected farmers in the district.

Mr. Chandra Mohan of NCRC came out with a detailed presentation on the pre and post tsunami scenario of agriculture in the district. He gave an account of damages done to the district in figures and pictures with the help of an LCD projector.

Mr. Chandra Mohan said that twenty people from among twenty three NGOs working in the district have got agricultural background. These personals will be vital players in the process of restoration in coming days. He hinted at three measures which could be applied to restore agriculture in the district. They are the immediate, short term and long term measures. He also proposed the following packages that would help materialize the above mentioned measures: On farm productions of compost, bio mass compost and fodder grasses.

Highlighting the role of NCRC, he said that it would facilitate coordination of all the processes involved like the gathering of information on what have been done already, organising Taluk level meetings with NGOs and the community, making a closer review of works done by different NGOs in this line and coordinating with governmental departments and the local community.

He also announced the availability of funds that was promised during a couple of meetings NCRC held with the donors in Chennai in late June and July. In order to build capacity in the field, Mr. Chandra Mohan asked the NGOs and members of TFSHG to go on study tour and field exposures to equip themselves.

As part of information dissemination, he stated that the NCRC had circulated brochures to all the affected farmers in the district and a programme for the welfare of the affected farmers had been broadcasted in All India Radio.

Drawing closer to his presentation, Mr. Chandra Mohan explained the plans ahead. He suggested the followings:

- simple farming system
- Introducing horticulture, forestry and animal husbandry in the second year
- Facilitating 'Tree System' that would eventually supply manure to crops as well as fodder to animals
- Research on soil and rainfall activity

Mr. Chandra Mohan also expressed concerns about saline water, poor drainage system and decreasing soil productivity in the district. Highlighting the need for research to find out long term solutions for the persisting issues in agriculture, he concluded his presentation.

Ms. Annie George then invited the gathering for a discussion over the issue. She asked the participants if a research on the issue was necessary. Replying affirmatively, the participants engaged themselves in a detailed discussion for the rest of the meeting.

Dr. Mariappan opined that there is a real thrust for long term research in the field. He expressed concerns over the government's discontinuation of Saline Resistance Programme that was in place in 1960s. He came up with two suggestions of building saline resistance capacity and improving the quality of soil along the district. He also emphasized the importance of review of the coastal farm fields, adopting rain water harvesting and undertaking meteorological research.

Dr.S.Geetha of Anbil Dharmalingam Agriculture College & Research Institute, Trichy, spoke about the On Farm Trial being conducted in different parts of Nagapatinam. Dr.K.Rajukkannu of Kudumbam pointed out to doing exclusive researches for evolving saline tolerant varieties of crops for saline prone areas. He added that reclamation of saline is easy, provided there is plenty of water sources or enough rainfall. He also highlighted the need for a well planed drainage system that can take away salt from the field during rainfall.

At this point of the discussion, the participants arrived at the following consensus for the research. They are:

1. Reclamation of land
2. Restoration of productivity

Mr. P.Thamizoli of M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation, asked NCRC to provide NGOs and other players with inputs like replicable models, information on flood tolerant plants and resource personals, among others.

Then the meeting was directed to look in to the process of reclamation that has been put in place since the tsunami. Dr.A.Baskar of Panjancoa & R.I, Karaikal, accounted the reclamation process that started since January and added that the work was in progress. As every soil reacts differently to sea water, he suggested classifying it in to areas with more salinity and less.

Dr. Uma Shankar of CWS spoke about participatory models that produced success stories, feasible technologies and alternative practices. Mr. Rangarajan of The Covenant Centre for Development suggested for water holding capacities and support system for farming. Dr.K.C.Gouthaman of KVK opined to do the research along the lines of better production technology.

At the end of an active discussion, Ms. Annie George drew the final line of consensus with the agreement of the participants. The following are the excerpts:

Need for research	Site specific Technological Assistance	Social Acceptance	Replicability
Reclamation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soil sample analysis (Involve agri. Dept.) - Ground water analysis - Compare yield from previous year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers' participation - Feedback - Collecting demo units through NGOs 	
Restoration			

Objectives of the research

1. To study various approaches followed for reclamation
2. To study effectivity and replicability
3. To link up with research institutions and field researchers to identify varieties
4. To design replicable and sustainable models for relief and rehabilitation
5. To recommend land restoration practices

In order to carryout the research the following Task Force was created:

1. KVK
2. Pajancoa & RI
3. MSSRF
4. CWS
5. DoA
6. Dr. Mariappan
7. Sri Giridharan
8. TRRI
9. NGOs (to be decided)
10. PRI
11. Panchayat

Following stakeholders were identified:

1. Farmers
2. NGOs
3. Research institutes

4. Donors
5. State's Agriculture Department

After drawing the final consensus, the Task Force got going with how and when to do the research. The following points were finalized:

1. NGOs to assess the works done already
2. Soil Survey Test to be conducted before and after rainfall with the help of Directorate of Agriculture (DoA) from either Tanjur or Trichy unit
3. Demo units to be analysed
4. Study various approaches undertaken by NGOs with a view of taking them as models
5. Study social acceptability

It was decided that the Task Force would discuss about 'On Farm Trails' in the next meeting on Thursday, the 22nd December 2005. Mr. Giridharan, a Leader from Tamil Nadu Farmers Association gave the vote of thanks. The meeting came to an end at 1.55 p.m.

Annexure: List of participants

S.No	Organisation	Name of the Person	Contact No	E-mail
1.	Anbil Dharamalingam Agriculture College & Research Institute, Trichy	Dr.S.Geetha	0431-2690692 0431-2430364	Geethagovind1@rediffmail.com
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10.	Farmers Association	G.Giritharan	9443119702	-
11.	Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sikkal	Dr.K.C.Gouthaman	9442183127	-
12.	Department of Horticulture	A.H.Mohamed Rasheed	9443294206	-
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15.	Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute (TNAU), Aduthurai	Dr.P.Stalin	9442125237	pstalin@yahoo.co.in
16.	Farmer	S.Sokkalingam	221702	-
17.	Farmer	A.Dhandayuthapany	251305	-
18.	Farmer	K.Philipraj	9443784859	-
19.	The Covenant Centre for Development	R.Rangarajan	04364- 275973 9442165480	mathidasan@yahoo.com
20.	Chief Adviser and Farmers Welfare Association	Dr.Mariappan	04364- 289818	-
21.	EFICOR	S.Pandian	9842548181	naga@eficor.org
22.	NCRC	Ms. Annie George		
23.	NCRC	Mr. Chandra Mohan		
24.	NCRC	Mr. Buruslin Mento		
25.	NCRC	Mr. Perumal		