

MINUTES OF AGRICULTURE REVIEW & PLANNING MEETING

Date : 16th March' 2006 (Thursday)
Time : 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
Venue : NCRC Office, Collectorate, Nagapattinam
Organized by : NCRC, Nagapattinam

The meeting was a follow up of the previous meeting held on 24.02.06 (Friday) wherein review of the main activities carried out by each NGO, identification of their plans and strategies for the second season was done.

Agenda:

1. Brief review of work
2. Participation in first year
3. Broad plans of NGOs for second season/ year:
 - Implementation
 - Capacity Building
4. Taluk level planning meetings
5. Others

Review of work up to March' 2006:

- ✓ **Venture** told that they are running a Farmers' Field School (FFS) on groundnuts in Pushpavanam and Periyakuthagai. They are working in 200 acres of land in Periyakuthagai and trying to develop methods and techniques that will help the crops grow even on saline soil. Planning for PRA is under process.
- ✓ **REAL** stated that they are planning for an exposure visit before March end for strengthening the farmers' groups. The exposure programme will include farms in Cuddalore and Pondicherry (Auroville). Nearly 60 farmers will be part of this.
- ✓ **CREATE** spoke about the farmers' club formed by them and told that they are involved in 24 pit formations for vermi compost. Like REAL, they also have a similar plan of an exposure trip for the farmers.
- ✓ **RIM** Stated that they held a farmers' meet in Sangenthi. They also had discussions directly with the farmers regarding plans for the second season, in Maruthampallam.

- ✓ **Bharathi** is involved in conducting PRA for problems identification in five villages of Vedaranyam Taluk, viz. Maniyantheevu, Mottandithoppu, Pushpavanam, Naluvedapathy and Vellapalam. The exercise is for planning intervention in the second season. The NGO quoted the example of one farmer in Maniyantheevu, who had adopted exceptionally good farming practices and has harvested above average.
- ✓ **TOFM** shared that a yield of 2400 kg per acre has been realized in a village under irrigated condition. Desalination works were carried out in South and North Palpannaicherry. In Vetangudi, due to various reasons, farmers could not start sowing and farming at the right time – hence the crops are not ready for harvest.
- ✓ The NGO also told that in the areas where they had carried out reclamation activities and floods had come, up to 80% loss was avoided. They had also distributed Fish amino acid as a growth promoter in flooded areas.
- ✓ TOFM has found that there was absence of *karupu nellu* (black grains) in general in the produce.
- ✓ They are already conducting PRA in 9 villages of Nagapattinam and Sirkali block. The first phase is over, where data collection and problem analysis was done. Second phase is yet to be planned and commenced.

Participation of Farmers:

- ✓ **TOFM** stated that during the relief phase and the first phase of reclamation activities, the NGOs were allowed to intervene into the fields but there was nil participation from the farmers.
- ✓ Only as the second season started and there was urgency for planting, the farmers came forward. Their dependence on agriculture to earn a living was increasing and therefore they involved themselves in the season.
- ✓ **Bharathi** also had a similar experience where the farmers did not come forward even when ready-to-sow seeds were provided.

NCRC opined that the reason for such a lethargic attitude of the farmers could be their limited involvement in the planning processes of the NGOs in the first year. Therefore, it was suggested to ensure careful planning, capacity building and confirmed participation of farmers in the second season.

- ✓ On the positive side, TOFM stated that they have inspired formation of organic farming groups, especially in villages where fishing is also the primary source of income. This signifies that NGOs' work is accepted and appreciated.
- ✓ VENTURE has found out that few farmers are ready to contribute 'legiyam' for the upcoming sowing season.

NCRC expressed that a forum or common group of such exceptional farmers can be formed, which will be a standing example and inspiration for the other farmers in the district.

Planning for the second Season: 2006-07

The NGOs were requested to give clarity about the status of donor support to each of them for the second season or till the NGO's work period:

Kudumbum: will continue in Porayar & Akkurmukkuttu; Nagapattinam yet to confirm.

TOFM: will surely continue for a longer term

Bharathi: is at the finalizing stage

REAL: will utilize first year's balance funds & avail additional funds whenever required.

CREATE: has a similar plan as REAL

RIM: will raise its own funds and continue work in few selected villages.

Sevalaya: not yet clear

Venture: is in the process of getting things finalised.

NCRC confirmed that -

DHAN: will surely continue for a longer term.

CCD: will continue work for another two years.

NCRC also suggested that it would be good if all the NGOs get a green signal from their funding agencies at the earliest. It will help in making clear plans before summer showers and keep the pressure away.

Further on, each of the NGO was requested to list out the tentative plans or broad outline of the activities by them for the forthcoming season under the following two headings:

No.	NGO	Implementations	Capacity Building
1.	VENTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desilting of the remaining farm ponds - plant trees in waste land (<i>porambokku</i>) - seed multiplication of traditional variety & set up village level seed banks - develop demo farms to provide guidance on cropping patterns & seeds, drainages, etc. - Income generation activities for development of Dalits (doing inland fishing) - Trainings on livestock management & organic farming like bio fertilizers, panchakaviya & vermi compost. - Marketing services with regard to seeds & organic manure - tuition centre for the farm children - develop opportunities & encourage self employment (Handicrafts, making Agarbattis, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FFS for paddy and groundnut cultivation in April'06 - Farmers' resource centre which will provide information, equipments, trainings and resource persons for the farmers.
2.	Bharathi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - livestock to landless labourers –goat& milch - activities related to control & reduction of salinity –now& future - planning for agro forestry - Agro centre in 5 villages - provide sprayers and other equipments according to farmers needs - Vermi composting - Natural pest control 	Yet to be explored
3.	RIM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tree plantation - vermi compost pits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exposure programmes - training on developing azolla, panchakaviya, Vermi compost
4.	CREATE	- Income generation programmes – the what, when & where is yet to be planned	Yet to be explored
5.	Kudumbum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - form community organic input shops - Marketing of organic products & provide organic certification - group level seed banks - promotion of fodder crops - Introducing more inter crops - Production/ multiplication of vermi compost, compost & azolla - planting trees on common lands/ bunds - Model organic farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposure visit – inter village, inside the district to see the differences in the development in agriculture. - FFS for paddy, groundnut, vegetables - Refresher course for Training of Trainers (ToT) participants – NGO staff, DRDA officials, etc
6.	TOFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harvesting systems - assessments - demo plots – a complete design for 'round the year' farming - Community seed banks - study on traditional varieties - livelihood groups for the farmers - continue working in villages allotted and also in neighbouring villages (indirectly affected) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organic schools in delta areas – model cum resource/ research centre –April'06 - Provide useful booklets about agriculture; training by experts, supported by resource materials and other inputs – minimal fee has to be paid - micro enterprises for 1000 farmers and 1000 landless labourers – priority to women

Real Plan and Sevalaya is yet to come out with their plans. NCRC appreciated the NGOs for showing concerns for the landless labourers and developing opportunities for better livelihoods and income. It was added that the core area of work for all NGOs shall be developing methods to manage the salinity problem - now and in future. Value additions are welcome but it shall remain secondary.

Taluk level planning meetings:

- A meeting between NGOs, farmers and the line department officials in each Taluk shall be conducted before the summer showers.
- The need for encouraging the farmers' participation right from the planning stage and in turn for effective implementation was felt.
- NCRC told that clubbing this with district level workshops can also be possible – officials and experts from KVK, agriculture, horticulture & forestry departments shall be invited.
- March being financial year end, most of the NGOs will be busy with their books of accounts and hence it was agreed to conduct the meetings in April.
- Discussion on mobilization of representative farmers was made. NGOs were asked whether they can mobilize farmers this time, from all categories – rain fed, dry & wet land farmers, horticulture farmers, women, etc., from each village.

Others:

- The NGOs, who have plans to raise nursery, were asked to do so by this month end itself so that the seedlings are ready for plantation before the monsoons in September.
- NGOs were also suggested to conduct small functions at villages of programme implementation to consolidate the learning and outcomes. This will help in bettering mutual relationship with farmers for upcoming season.

The next meeting was scheduled for 5th April 2006 (Wednesday). The agenda of the meeting will include:

- Planning for common functions for the farmers;
- Presentation by Ms. Revathy of TOFM – meeting with farmers in Indonesia
- finalizing the activities of the NGOs' for the next season;
- Planning & organizing for the Taluk level meetings.