

Agriculture Meeting

Date : September 22, 2005.

Venue : NCRC Conference hall, Nagapattinam

“In the eventuality of denkcha crop not being available for green manuring, application of organic manures would be carried out @ 3mt/acre in the case of FYM or compost and 300kg/acre in the case of vermi- compost.”

Agenda

1. Review and Plan
 2. Presentation by Yermunai
 3. Capacity Building
 4. Revisiting Package
 5. Accommodating new NGOs
- Mr. Chandra Mohan, NCRC, Sector team leader briefed about the meeting. He introduced a format to the participants for Taluk- wise consolidation of total area planned to be covered and accomplishment of sand/ silt cast clearance, deep ploughing, trenching, farm pond clearing, mobilization of seeds and manure, etc.
 - During the ensuing discussions on the activities and methodologies employed by the various NGOs, a debate arose on direct implementation by the NGOs, with or without the farmers’ participation as against provision of finances to the farmers directly without any NGO participation. It was felt that without diligent monitoring and field presence of the NGO, merely providing money and expecting the farmers to take responsibility for timely completion of all expected activities may be over ambitious. Furthermore, if this money is being provided as a loan, this would be a disincentive for the farmer to actively utilize these funds when alternate funding is available. Hence, it was suggested that, while stake holding by the farmer in any such developmental activities was the accepted fundamental philosophy, this particular instance when speed was of major import, the approaches used should ensure the timely completion of the non- negotiable activities.
 - A presentation by Yermunai (NGO) on alternate cropping pattern of thorn less bamboo and wild prosopis, instead of paddy, was planned. As the representative of Yermunai didn’t attend the meeting, it was decided to skip the session.

- It was decided to have a capacity building for the NGO field staff and farmers. NCRC informed that a workshop was being planned involving line departments, NGOs, Panchayat Presidents and SHG Leaders in the near future.
- While individual farmer based activities were progressing as planned, reclamation activities of common resources like common ponds and irrigation/ drainage channels were proving to be more difficult due to heavier investments requires in terms of both finances as well as labour. Wherever NGOs were facing difficulties in the completion of such activities, they were advised to report to the coordination forum at the earliest for facilitating viable alternate solutions.
- It was also decided that in the eventuality of denkcha crop not being available for green manuring, application of organic manures would be carried out @ 3mt/acre in the case of FYM or compost and 300kg/acre in the case of vermi- compost.
- While reclamation of affected agricultural land was being carried out in a coordinated manner by the NGOs actively involved in agriculture since early April, entry of new NGOs who were not a part of this coordination platform, would disturb the balance already achieved in terms of coverage and uniform progression of activities. It was unanimously agreed that any such new ventures, in terms of reclamation activities, alternate cropping methods or demonstrations, should be discussed by the concerned in the coordination forum for smoother and better sustainable integration.
- This was followed by a lengthy discussion on the availability and estimated requirement of saline resistant crop varieties. The NGOs were of the opinion that requirement would be much more than what the Government is supplying through their package due to the following reasons:
 - The estimated land damaged being more than the government estimate, and
 - The poor germination percentage of these varital seeds supplied by the government, forcing the farmers to use 50kg per acre as opposed to the 20 kg/acre as generally recommended
- It was decided that the NGOs would make arrangements for meeting the shortfall and this could be either through the government sources or through private.
- The poor germination quality of the seeds supplied were a matter of concern for not only the NGOs but also for the farmers which was expressed time and again during various meetings. For determining the germination potential of the varietal seeds prior to sowing, the NGOs decided to carry out germination tests. One of the NGOs described the methodology which was unanimously accepted by all present.

List of Participants

Sr. No	Name of Participant	NGO
1.	Shajahan	CYDA
2.	M. Thirumalai	Best
3.	N. Murgaperumal	Sevalaya
4.	R. Udayakumar	Dhan Foundation
5.	P.K. Alamelu	Avvai
6.	S. Sivagami	CCD
7.	Fr. Antony Raj	TMSSS
8.	V.Vimal	World Vision
9.	R. Pandian	Real