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AMEF Info is a quarterly newsletter of AME Foundation for sharing news and views - Compiled by T.M. Radha, AMEF

To:

From:

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Working with Partners

More than 20 ENP staff from Mahabubnagar and Madanapalli participated in FFS methodology through Short term Training of Facilitators (SToF) for 15 days.

Bijapur Unit trained lead farmers in two series - the first one from 3 – 7 April, 2007, at Ichchagari, and the second during 15 - 19 May, 2007, at Muttagi. Totally, 20 farmers including seven women were trained under this programme.

Stakeholders from TNAU, KVK, ENP staff and Dharmapuri AU team deliberated on the present situation and recent developments in dryland technologies with reference to rabi and groundnut farming systems during the Preseason conference. This event, apart from strengthening linkages with the line departments, helped in consolidating the developments in dryland technologies.

Raichur Unit organised three preseason conferences, at Manvi, Deodurga and Raichur taluks. Officials from all the line departments participated and appreciated AMEF’s efforts in promoting SA. They promised to work with AMEF by collaborating with the on going projects of various departments.

Pre-seasonal workshops were organized by Bellary Unit at Collur to work with AMEF by collaborating with the on going projects of various departments.

New Projects in Kolar, Karnataka

- **Promoting ecological agriculture for improving livelihoods in Kolar district** - A five-year project to promote eco-farming practices for livelihood improvements in Kolar district is launched in June 2007.
- **Promoting Simple Biotechnology Options to Improve Livelihood of SC/ST Families in Kolar District** - A two-year project supported by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India has been initiated in Bangarpet Taluk of Kolar district.
- **Training and agricultural extension support to Karnataka Government’s Namma Bhoom - Namma Thota (NBNT) Scheme** - A one-year pilot project in association with UAS, Bangalore and Rural Development Institute (RDI), is started in June 2007 and is meant for landless labourers.

Building linkages

Fodder banks have been set up in four villages of Parambakar district by Tiruchiri Unit, with the support of NABARD. The objective of the fodder bank is to stock varieties of fodder in each village and motivate farmers to grow fodder in their backyards to cater to the feed requirements of livestock. As of now, these banks have 4 fodder varieties such as Lucerne, Co-3, Co-37 sorghum, Velimassal and further addition of varieties is in progress.

Bellary Unit has collaborated with DWDO, Chitradrug in Sujata watershed, a World Bank assisted Project, in guiding the FFS process. Farmer facilitators, trained by AMEF are conducting FFS, under the guidance of AMEF, covering 375 farm families in 15 villages.

Exhibitions promoting awareness on SA

Tiruchi Unit participated in the Agri-tech exhibition at Vepanbatthai, organized by World Vision India on 25 April 2007. The exhibits were reflecting the approaches of AMEF and field level SA activities and their impact, attracting a lot of visitors.

In Dharmapuri, 18 exhibitions covering preseason activities were organized in Cluster and ENP working areas, during the second fortnight of June. More than 2500 farmers from Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts visited and were exposed to sustainable agriculture practices. Farmers showed keen interest to learn the SA practices.

Madanapalli Unit displayed exhibits on SA technologies and FFS in an exhibition at Rythusadassu on 10 June 2007. Shri. Raghuvendra Reddy, the Agriculture Minister was the Chief Guest. Farmer from AMEF cluster village shared his experiences on adoption of SA practices through FFS approach. Ministers, District officials and nearly 1300 farmers visited the stall and appreciated the exhibits.

In collaboration with the Department of Forestry, Department of Agriculture and Agriculture College, Bijapur Unit set up a SA Stall at Sindagi Town on 10 June 2007. Models on SA were exhibited.

Core group for promoting SRI paddy in Karnataka formed

System of Rice Intensification (SRI), an approach in cultivating paddy, is being adopted by a number of farmers in Karnataka. Being predominantly a seed-saving and a water saving approach, SRI is being promoted by various institutions as well. To improve exchange of information and experiences across SRI promoters and to gear up the SRI momentum across the State, AMEF facilitated the formation of a core group of institutions (AMEF, Green Foundation, Jalasampadana, BIF, University of Agricultural Sciences and the Department of Agriculture-Kolar) and individuals (Shri Narayanan Reddy and Shri Krishna Rao). The core group has met twice, and discussed various issues related to SRI. The core group meetings are slowly becoming a platform for members to share their SRI experiences.

The first Tapioca Working Group meeting was organized in Vepanbatthai, a cluster village in Dharmapuri, on 25 April 2007. Parminated by the Tapioca Research Station, Trivandrum, Tapioca and Castor Research Station and Krishy Vigyan Kendra (TNAU), NABARD, State Department of Agriculture and Horticulture and tapioca farmers from five AMEF operational villages. CTICRI Scientists have invited AMEF along with our farmers to their Institute, to offer training on value addition in tapioca products.

Fostering LEISA initiatives

Mahabubnagar Unit trained 34 activists of ENP villages on FFS methodology during the SToF from 5 – 22 April 2007. As a result, 24 FFS on cotton and 6 FFS on castor are started during this season in 30 villages with 750 farmers.

About 450 farmers including 48 women belonging to 11 villages of Ramadurga taluk of Bellgaum district, were trained by Bijapur Unit. As a result, ten farmers have taken up Azolla, 28 farmers incorporated crop residues into the land, instead of burning. 8 farmers are adopting IPM practices in cotton crop and 12 farmers generated home made manure.

ENPs of Bellary Unit organized 48 training events to their SHG members. GUARD ENP is scaling up SA activities in 45 more villages in Malakolamal taluk, covering all the 16 gram panchayats. They are effectively using the services of rural youth trained by AMEF.

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SPANDANA, the ENP of Madanapalli Unit, is training 6 volunteers selected by Department of Agriculture on FFS in groundnut. The identified volunteers are being trained in M.Kothapalli village once in 15 days. These 6 volunteers in turn will conduct FFS with 12 groups in 12 villages. One AO and AEO from the Agriculture Department are also attending the event.

SLA report - Some highlights

“One acre of land, community-based organisations as vehicles for improving livelihoods in drought-prone areas of South India” is a report brought out based on the study on the impact of MT&O and practice FFS on participants’ livelihoods. The study was taken up by Dr. Francesca Mancini, FAO, using the Sustainable Livelihood Analysis (SLA) tool in Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu. Some highlights of the report are:

- FFS training had a positive effect on the natural capital.
- There was an overall higher satisfaction levels for their livelihoods by MYRADA respondents.
- FFS training has strengthened the women’s knowledge and skills on soil and water conservation, soil fertility management and improved approaches to crop production and protection.
- Participants benefited in terms of higher food grain availability for home consumption.
- FFS graduates earned a remarkably higher income from agriculture than the other two control groups, as a result of better land management and reduction in cost of cultivation.
- FFS training has also enabled women to be better decision makers, particularly in the area of livestock management.

Participation in Workshops

Dr. Arun Balamatti and Mr. K.V.S. Prasad participated in the International Conference on Organic Agriculture and Food Security, Rome, Italy, May 3 - 5, 2007. A paper on LEISA – A Step towards Organic Farming in Semi-arid Regions by Arun Balamatti, T.M. Radha and K.V.S. Prasad was submitted to the conference.

Mr. K.V.S. Prasad and Dr. Arun Balamatti were invited to the International Editors and Managers Meeting in the Netherlands during 25 - 30 April 2007.

Mr. RavindraReddy participated in the Tungabhadra River basin Stakeholders Workshop, organized by Soppecom, Pune, on 29 May 2007. Other stakeholders included officials of line departments, farmers and NGOs.

Mr. Anil More and Mr. Rudragowda participated in the National Kharif Workshop on Groundnut, organized by National Research Centre on Groundnut at UAS Dharwar, 17 – 19 April 2007, ICRI SAT, IACR and UAS scientists.

The AMEF Central Unit organized training on creating an Access-based farmers database on 23 - 24 April 2007. About 11 staff of AMEF from all the Area Units participated in the training.

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