Guidelines-7 on Working with people (Bangalore)

Two articles - (a) Tomato FFS - Farmers plots as ‘laboratories’: farmers as ‘scientists’ and (b) How a Postgraduate Farmer became Master Farmer, published in “Nela-Jala-Samuudhi”- March 2005 (Bijapur)

Handout on Alternative farming practices in groundnut (Madanapalli)

Handout on SRI Cultivation and dry land production practices (Telugu) (Mahabubnagar)

Alternative farming practices for promotion of sustainable agriculture in Groundnut based farming system in Madanapalli area was telecasted by ETV-2, in the ‘Jaikissan’ program on 8th April 2005.

Visitors

Dr. Vasant Saberwal, Programme Coordinator, Ford Foundation, New Delhi visited AMEF-Banglore.

Prof. Radha Mohan, a practicing organic farmer from Orissa, visited Bangalore Office and shared his experiences on organic farming and the immense benefit he derived from participating in AME’s trainings in the past.

Shri. Chalasani Dutt, an organic farmer from Andhra Pradesh, Ph: 08392 241558, 241227 Fax (pp): 08392 244116 program on 8 th April 2005.

From: II-253-D-7, Colony Ring Road, Madanapalli - 517325, MADANAPALLI

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AMEF Foundation gratefully acknowledges donor partners for their support: FAO, Royal Netherlands Embassy, New Delhi for core funding; and DFID through KAWAD, SDAC-ID, DGIS and SIDA through ILEIA, and IDRC for supporting collaborative projects.

AMEF- AREA UNITS

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Bijapur: 159/24A, # 7C, Ward # 74, Near BDO Quarter, Behind Darbar High School, Asar Mohlola Lane, Bijapur - 586101, Karnataka. Ph: 08322 232601 amef@jw謭ernet.org

Mahabubnagar: Plot # 6B-84, Next to H. No 4-88, Near Water Tank, Bhagirath colony, Kirinadhapani Gram Panchayat, adjacent to Bhupur road, Mahabubnagar - 501 001, Andhra Pradesh.

AMEF’s new building

The new premises of AME Foundation was formally inaugurated by Ir. Paul Ter Weel, RNE, New Delhi. Dr. Daniel Gustafson and Dr. P S Rao from FAO, New Delhi were the special guests. Invitations included Board of Trustees and close associates of AMEF.

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

LEISA India

LEISA India - Farming with Nature Issue was published.

The review workshop of the two-year Documentation and Communication Programme was organised for LEISA India consortium partners. Programme of the first year was reviewed and plans for the current year were discussed. Participants displayed communication products developed during the first year of the programme.

The Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CIKS), Chennai, India, has included selected articles from LEISA India in their publication, “Seeds of Plenty, Seeds of Hope: On farmers’ search of indigenous genetic resources - The Asian experience”.

AME Foundation

promotes ecological agriculture among small and marginal farmers in the semi and areas of the Deccan Plateau by generating farming alternatives, enriching farmers knowledge, linking development agencies and sharing experience.

This period was marked with pre-sowing activities like early ploughing, land preparation across the slope, small interception bunds, ridges and furrows to conserve soil moisture. Monsoon has set in, initiating sowings in some areas, while delayed in many other areas. Pattern of rainfall distribution has influenced sowing pattern across various Area Units.

This period was also marked with identifying NGOs as Eco Network Partners (ENPs), entering into formal agreements with them and initiating joint action. AME Foundation has entered into agreement with 24 Eco Network partners during the year 2005. Presently, AMEF works with 2694 farmers spread over 142 villages in 11 districts across six Area Units.

The DFID supported Karnataka Watershed Development Project (KAWAD) in Bellary, Bijapur and Chitradurga concluded on 30 June 2005. The Area Units set up by AMEF in Bellary and Bijapur, with the KAWAD support, are being continued with FAO support, to consolidate the work done so far and to seek opportunities for working with more number of farmers and NGOs.

Field activities

Along with practices for soil moisture conservation, a lot of efforts have been directed towards enhancing soil fertility.

Mobilising seedlings for bund plantation and nursery raising were the two major activities pursued with farmers for building the biomass availability. Other activities included promoting green manuring based on the rainfall received and organic manure production and application.

For planting on the bunds, Bijapur unit mobilised 5000 Jatropha seedlings. Additionally, seedlings of Pongamia pinnetia, Cassia siamea, Sennuruba and cuttings of Glycicidae are being procured. These would be transplanted on field bunds.

Four varieties of Biomass seeds - Jatropha, Glycicida, Cassia siamea and Pongamia have been procured which would be dibbled on the field bunds. Also, fodder production with two varieties - Stylosanthes hamata and Susbenia glandiflora, is being promoted.

In Raichur, sowings are delayed in majority of the areas. Because of the lack of early rains in the month of June, green manuring was not possible in many of the areas. Around 115 farmers have taken up nursery raising activity.

Glycicida, Subabul, Susbania sp. and Cassia siamea seedlings are raised and are ready for planting on the bunds.

Farmers were reluctant to go for bunds and green manuring to meet fodder requirement. Some farmers have applied tank silt approximately at the rate of five tractor loads per acre. This was possible owing to its availability due to de-siltation works taken up by the JSYS project.

In Madanapalli, 22 farmer groups have taken up nursery raising during the months of February and March. Around 45000 seedlings are available with farmers in the group level nursery. Planting will be taken up in the months of July and August. Forest department has also been approached for mobilising additional seedlings. In Madanapalli, as sowing was likely to be postponed owing to early rains, only seven farmers could take up green manuring with horsegram. In some areas like B.Kothakola and Nallacheruvu, green manuring could not be taken up as there were no rains in the month of May.

Community nurseries have been initiated in two villages in Tiruchi. Mother bed preparation and sowing of around 10,000 Cassia siamia seedlings have been completed. Only 22 farmers could take up sowing of green manure crops like sunhemp and daichia owing to inadequate rainfall. Community compost pits have been taken up by farmer groups in three villages of one cluster for recycling crop residues. The local panchayat has supported this initiative financially.

Mahabubnagar farmers are growing redgram as intercrop in castor and jowar. Farmers have sown improved varieties like Kranthi, Haritha in castor and LRG-30 in redgram, instead of using hybrids local varieties.

Working with farmers

In Tiruchi, building strong farmer institutions was one of the key activities of this period. Farm families selected with the help of local panchayaths were mobilised into farmer groups and oriented to group functioning and record maintenance. Bank accounts were opened for all groups.
Surshettikoppa and Harugeri and progressive farmers' field federations were also exposed to functioning institutions like farmer management and crop management options. Participants were exposed to technologies for soil and water conservation, fertility improvement, biodiversity management, and credit institutions like NABARD, fertiliser dealers, and the media. The Area Unit plans for 2005-06 were completed baseline data collection, consolidation and analysis.

Bellary unit organised a 3-day study tour for onion growing farmers to Ralegaon Siddi in Maharashtra, to understand community water management and Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeet, Rahuri, to know cultivation aspects of onion. Farmers also had an opportunity to visit an onion farm which exports onion to Colombo, Malaysia, China, and Dubai etc. and learnt about its storage methods and grading procedures. In total, 57 farmers from Pajarahalli, SK Hatti and KM Halli villages participated in the study tour.

Mahabubnagar farmers and Partner NGOs were taken on a study tour to Vandlamallagadga and Tadipatri villages to observe biomass generation, vermi composting, use of composted organic manure and composting unit. Thereafter, the farmers visited an onion firm which exports onion to Colombo, Malaysia, China, and Dubai etc. and learnt about its storage methods and grading procedures. In total, 57 farmers from Pajarahalli, SK Hatti and KM Halli villages participated in the study tour.

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Season-long Training of Trainers (ToT) course on Farmer Field School – IPM in vegetables

To create a pool of master trainers, particularly in the NGO sector, for FFS methodology, FAO India set up a season-long ToT to some of the selected staff of its project partners like AME Foundation, BIRDOS-APFMOS and ANGRAU. The training commenced during May and will continue till the end of July. Around 30 participants are getting trained in this programme. The facilitators who are the master trainers in FFS, are drawn from the government departments, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. BIRDOS has hosted the course in Muthyalapadu in Andhra Pradesh.

Prior to the ToT, a workshop was organised for developing curriculum for the programme in which ten staff from AMEF participated.

FFS in vegetables was chosen for the training. ASEA concept and various issues related to FFS are being taught through Non-Formal Education (NFE) methodology. The long term agenda of the programme is to build on the Farmer Life Schools (FLS) experiences of other countries so as to expand the scope of FFS beyond IPM to soil health and water issues.

Eight staff from AME Foundation are participating in this programme. After completion of training, these FTOs trained master trainers of FFS from AMEF would integrate skills learnt in their respective areas of operation.

An interesting feature of this ToT is the weekly newsletter being brought out for sharing the experiences of the programme.

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