

## **ICAR-NOFRI EMPOWERED TRIBAL FARMERS OF EAST AND SOUTH SIKKIM**

The ICAR-National Organic Farming Research Institute (ICAR-NOFRI), Tadong organized consecutively two ‘Training-cum-Awareness Program on Organic Crop Production’ for progressive tribal farmers of Thanka-Martam and Khamdong, East Sikkim on March 06, 2017 at ICAR-NOFRI, Tadong and at upper Pabong Village, South Sikkim during March 7-8, 2017 under Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) in order to increase awareness and strengthen the progressive tribal farmers on organic crop production by dissemination of scientific knowledge along with input support system. During the program a total of 38 tribal farmers from Thanka-Martam and Khamdong, East Sikkim and 61 farmers from upper Pabong Village, South Sikkim representing different Self Help Groups (SHGs) attended the program and benefited with the technical know-how and various inputs distributed viz., organically permitted bio-pesticides, bio-fungicides, bio-fertilizers, untreated seeds, and plastic sheets for low cost plastic tunnels and shelters. Power point presentations were delivered to the farmers on scientific crop production technologies developed by ICAR-NOFRI for quick and easy learning of the techniques and farmers showed keen interest and appreciated the ICAR efforts.

Chief Guest of the program Dr. R. K. Avasthe, Joint Director, ICAR appreciated the farmers for taking increased interest on organic crop production and scientists of the institute for their efforts in organizing training programs for the welfare of tribal farmers of Sikkim. He highlighted the activities of the institute related to organic crop production and stressed upon the need of this training program for further sustaining organic crop production and productivity in Sikkim under changing climatic conditions. Joint Director also discussed the importance of soil and its management for sustainable production under organic conditions through conservation agriculture.

Dr. Ashish Yadav, Senior Scientist (Horticulture) coordinated the program and detailed the organic production techniques of major vegetable crops of Sikkim. He discussed about the intensive vegetable production techniques under low cost plastic tunnel and plastic rain shelters and organic kiwifruit production techniques.

Dr. Raghavendra Singh, Senior Scientist (Agronomy) Sikkim presented the organic conservation agriculture and package of practices for maize and rice based cropping system. He emphasized

on the importance of inclusion of leguminous crops in cropping system for improving the soil fertility.

Dr. Rafiqul Islam, Senior Scientist (Animal Reproduction), ICAR-NOFRI discussed in detail about the backyard poultry and goat management techniques. He emphasized on the importance of Vanaraja birds which has gained popularity in Sikkim as backyard poultry. He also briefed about the disease management in backyard poultry and preparation of balance animal feed.

Dr. Matber Singh, Scientist Senior Scale (Agroforestry), ICAR-NOFRI, Tadong detailed the different agroforestry systems and benefits of incorporation of large cardamom plantations with tree plantations in hill ecosystem.

Dr. Brijesh Kumar, Scientist (Animal Reproduction) interacted with the farmers and suggested methods for maintaining the hygienic housing for dairy cattle along with the proper management of diseases prevalent in the region.

Dr. N. J. Singh, SMS (Plant Protection) discussed the organic pest and disease management in major field and horticultural crops of Sikkim. He stressed upon the importance of good agricultural practices to minimize pest incidence and that regular monitoring of farm is important for better management of insects and pathogens. He also practically demonstrated the mushroom

Mr. Boniface Lepcha, SMS (Horticulture), KVK Ranipool, moderated the event and shared the information on vegetable nursery raising techniques of cole crops, tomato and capsicum. Farmers were also trained with skill development through quality vegetable nursery raising technology, which shall improve the livelihood of the farmers.

During the program, Dr. Ashish Yadav and Shri Boniface Lepcha practically demonstrated the construction of low cost plastic tunnels to the farmers at field. Shri Ong Tshering Dong, Executive Officer, Pabong Organic Producers Cooperative Society Limited appreciated and thanked whole heartedly for the efforts of ICAR-NOFRI for empowering the rural farmers through improved production technologies of different crops with critical input support system.

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Dr. R.K. Avasthe, Joint Director ICAR-NOFRI addressing the tribal farmers at Pabong, South Sikkim



Joint Director ICAR-NOFRI distributing input to the tribal farmers at Pabong, South Sikkim



Joint Director, Scientists, SMS along with progressive tribal farmers at Pabong, South Sikkim





Practical demonstration of low cost plastic tunnels and mushroom production to progressive tribal farmers at Pabong, South Sikkim