

# AME INFO

July 2003



**AME Foundation** promotes ecological agriculture among small and marginal farmers in the semi arid areas of the Deccan Plateau through generating alternatives, enrichment of knowledge base, training, linkage development and sharing experiences.

## ☞ **AME gets settled, strengthened**

In the month of June, this year, AME office shifted to its new premises, specified overleaf.

Three new trustees got nominated to the Board, against the existing vacancies – Dr. N.C.B. Nath, former Director, Steel Authority of India (SAIL), Shri N Perumal, Former Joint Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture, GOI, Dr. K. Shivashankar, former Professor & Head, Agronomy/Forestry, UAS, Bangalore.

AME team has been strengthened too. The new staff members are: Adishesha Balaji, Shobha Maiya, Sudha Bhat and T. M. Radha at Bangalore; J. Krishnan at Tiruchi; Gurudutt Hegde at Bellary; Sharanappa Gulige and V. Rachappa at Raichur.

A three-day planning workshop was conducted in March to finalise the work plan for 2003-04. An important decision made in this workshop was for the area units to devote efforts to work in clusters of villages, with groups of farmers, so as to build up, over time, illustrative cases of sustainable agriculture. Thus with 'add-on' measures, it should be possible to develop some good examples for propagating alternative farming practices through NGO networks, and by training interested stakeholders.

The period was marked by intensive programme planning and orientation at all levels (AME, NGOs and farmers), joint field action, collaborative workshops and new collaborative projects including global initiatives on information sharing.

## ☞ **Interactions with the Universities**

The State Agricultural Universities of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are increasingly collaborating with AME not only at the field level but also in facilitating national workshops.

AME organised two workshops, one with UAS, Dharwad and the other with TNAU involving extensive interactions between farmers, specialists, researchers, input suppliers and NGOs for joint action.

The *Interactive Workshop on Organic Farming and Groundnut based cropping system*, February 22-23, 2003, jointly organised in association with **TNAU, Coimbatore**, addressed groundnut cropping systems, varietal trials, seed production and role of organic farming.

AME and **UAS (Dharwad)** jointly organised an *Interactive Workshop on Integrated Farming Systems in Deccan Plateau* March 5-6, 2003 where issues like resource management, fodder and livestock production, gender concerns, marketing and credit support to IFS were discussed.

These workshops, as envisaged, have brought together various stakeholders leading to joint action, for instance, TNAU and UAS (Dharwad) collaborating with AME on seed production, varietal testing and multiplication at the field level.

## **Breeder seed produced by farmer certified!**

TNAU and the State department of Agriculture with their technical guidance supported Mr. K Chellapan of Pannikondanpatti village (supported by MANUSHI and guided by AME for several years) in Tamil Nadu in producing groundnut breeder seed that has been certified. This generated a lot of enthusiasm among the fellow farmers.

## **Seed Initiatives in cotton too..**

Rabi seed production has been initiated in cotton crop, though on a small scale. Proven varieties like Sumangala, Anjali, Surabhi, RACH 11 and MCU12 have been taken up for seed multiplication.

## **Together we gain...**

Farmers in Tamil Nadu who have been marketing their cotton harvest individually, attempted collective marketing. This initiative gave an additional income of Rs.100 per quintal, thus reinforcing that collective action amongst farmers is beneficial.

AME co-hosted a dialogue between Canadian and Indian farmers, policy makers and researchers on organic farming experiences. The one-day workshop organised by DDS, Hyderabad, as a part of a series of such workshops in major cities, was lively with interesting debates on several issues with resolutions passed for strengthening organic farming movement in India.

AME organised a workshop jointly with Natural Resources Institute (NRI), UK and Cirrus Management Services (CMS) Ltd., Bangalore on "Best Practices for Sustainable NGO/CBO agricultural marketing initiatives" during March 27-28, 2003. Potentials for marketing of organic products, organic certification, skill development of farmers for value addition, collective marketing etc., were discussed.

## ∞ **Collaborations – New and Existing**

AME continues to support the sustainable agricultural component of KAWAD and ISPWD-K watershed areas in Karnataka. While collaboration with APCOT has been strengthened, efforts are on for a fruitful collaboration with ANTWA, AP.

To strengthen agriculture related rural livelihood options among farmers, AME has entered into collaboration with Andhra Pradesh Rural Livelihoods Project (APRLP).

AME is associated with TERI in carrying out a study on “Rural Energy and Social Change in Semi arid areas of Karnataka” on a pilot basis. Efforts are on to strengthen this association into a long-term collaboration.

Livestock Research station in Palamner, AP, has agreed to collaborate in integrating livestock component into IFS programme particularly in the areas of farmers/NGOs training and farm research for fodder production.

AME has entered into a long term collaboration with International Center for Development oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA), Wageningen, The Netherlands. AME along with active cooperation of KAWAD, hosted a field study ‘*Feasibility of and constraints in enhancing biomass production in watersheds for sustainable agriculture and improved livelihoods in Bellary and Chitradurga Districts*’ done by the multidisciplinary team of researchers from ICRA Anglophone programme 2003.

AME along with GEAG has been identified as a regional hub in South Asia to implement EU Intersard Asia IT&C Project on sharing best practices of farmers on web based information system. The project is being facilitated by ETC and implemented by an international consortium of partners. Regional workshops were held to examine the various options and processes for improved information sharing.

## ∞ **LEISA India – Here to stay**

As you know, LEISA India magazine was irregular owing to funding uncertainties. However with IDRC extending

limited support (for pending issues) and collaboration with ILEIA Foundation, Netherlands, supported by DGIS, IDA for the next few years, we shall reach you more regularly. Happy reading and enthusiastic contributing!

## ∞ **Sharing our learnings**

Profiles of master farmers for display in Raitha Samparka Kendras in KAWAD’s working areas are being prepared with KAWAD support, facilitated by AME.

A Strategy paper was prepared on Training of NGO staff and Master farmers and presented to the FAO Cotton Review Mission.

A Case study based on experiences and strategies for participatory breeder seed production at farmers’ level was prepared and presented in the National Workshop on Groundnut Seed Technology.

Case studies were prepared on Marketing initiatives of some of the NGOs/CBOs of South India.

## ∞ **AME on the Web**

A basic web site of AME has been launched [www.amefound.org](http://www.amefound.org). We are looking forward to your comments for improving the site.

## ∞ **Funding Support**

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