

☉ **FAO representatives visit AMEF**

Dr. Parviz Koohafkan, Chief, Land and Water Development Division, FAO-Rome and Dr. P.Somashekar Rao, National Professional Officer, FAO-New Delhi, visited AMEF during 10-11 March, to have an overview of AMEF's activities. The team also visited one of the project areas at Madanapalli and had discussions with the partner NGOs and farmers of Pathakeelapatla and Kothapalli villages.

☉ **On field activities**

PTD trials have been initiated in three villages in **Bijapur** on crops like tomato (Inchageri), chilli (Devaranimbaragi) and pomegranate (Sathalgoan). Activities completed include problem identification, prioritization and sourcing information on ITK for combating these core problems.

Bellary unit is trying out five new groundnut varieties in the summer under irrigated condition. The varieties being tried are R-8808, R-9251, KRG-1, K-134 and R-2001-1 with about 10 farmers in two watersheds, to find out suitable alternatives to the local variety (TMV 2)

Tiruchi unit organised field days in six villages. Farmers shared experiences on various aspects such as drought management, intercropping, new varieties of cotton, biomass production etc.

Groundnut farmers and NGOs from **Madanapalli** shared experiences on improved groundnut varieties, importance of biofertilisers and intercropping with redgram during the farmers meet.

Field days on jowar were held at Devaranimbaragi, Jirankalagi, Inchageri and Jigajeevani villages in **Bijapur**. PTD and non-PTD farmers, representatives from various CBOs, local panchayat, KAWAD, DWDO, RSK, Agricultural college and KVK participated. Farmers shared PTD results on use of quality seeds; growing of intercrops like chickpea and safflower; seed treatment with cow dung and cow urine; and seed treatment with bio agents. Farmers urged other farmers to adopt the successful technologies in the coming season.

Field day on cotton based farming system was held in Diddige village, **Raichur**. Besides farmers, the participants included representatives from KVK, UAS Raichur and Dharwad and AME partner NGOs. Farmers have decided to take up RAHS -14 variety during the next cropping season, for which UAS Dharwad offered to provide seeds and technical support.

Efforts are on by the **Central unit** to work with vegetable farmers, near Bangalore, to reduce the usage of chemicals. Discussions with farmers of Kammasandra, Allappanahalli and Upparahalli villages in Hoskote area and Korlaparti and Morabhalli villages in Chintamani taluk were held to finalise the programme of action. Similar activities are already initiated with 30 vegetable farmers growing tomato and Brinjal in Chitradurga and Bellary districts by Bellary unit.

☉ **Message through celebrations**

Kunte Puja, a traditional & cultural ritual of farmers in **Raichur** was used as a platform to spread the message of fall ploughing and importance of recycling crop residue in soil nutrient management. Large number of farmers participated with enthusiasm and shared their experiences.

☉ **Building internal capacities**

Workshops on concepts like In-situ soil moisture conservation, PRA, PTD and FFS methodologies were organized for the staff of AMEF at Bangalore. External resource persons included Dr. B.R. Hegde and Dr. Shivashankar. The discussions enabled better concept clarity and common understanding amongst the staff.

☉ **Building capacities of our partners**

42 farmers, from Chinnahagari and Upparahalla watershed areas in **Bellary** got trained on various aspects of sustainable agriculture and social skills. They have now evolved as Resource farmers.

Farmers and PNGOs staff (VISHALA and SEEDA) were trained on composting techniques by AMEF **Bijapur**. Participants learnt the advantages and methodology of composting and also motivated other farmers to go for composting.

Madanapalli unit conducted three module training for 12 days on Integrated Crop Management for agricultural consultants of ANTWA, covering Rayalaseema districts in Andhra Pradesh.

Training of Trainers on "Productivity Enhancement in Dry land Agriculture" was organized by **Bijapur and Bellary** units, for staff of KAWAD PIA and PNGOs at CEDOC training center, Dharwad.

AMEF-ILEIA organized the second workshop under the documentation and communication programme for the LEISA India consortium partners, from 23- 26 February, 2004. Participants were exposed to sourcing and repackaging information into various types of documents. The third workshop in the series is planned for the month of September 2004.

☉ **NGO Networks-efforts towards SA**

Tiruchi unit trained NGOs on concepts and practices in IPM, farming system development and income generation activities. The training was organised by SCINDeA network. Participants were also taken on a study visit to the Gloria farms and MSSRF at Pondicherry to learn more about IFS and IG activities.

☉ **Harnessing synergies in NRM**

A day's consultation on harnessing synergy of NGOs, CBOs and PRIs, in natural resource management, was organized by SEVA and AMEF **Raichur**. NGO

* AME Info is a quarterly newsletter (Jan, April, July and Oct) brought out by AME Foundation for sharing some highlights of the organisational activities.

representatives from North-east Karnataka and Hyderabad participated.

☉ Institutional collaborations

AMEF **Bijapur** has collaborated with *Raitha Samparka Kendra*, Chadachan in conducting soil testing. Training and demonstration on soil sampling was conducted in 3 villages under this initiative.

Tiruchi unit's efforts towards collaborating with Department of Science and Technology, New Delhi has resulted in a three-year project on "*Bio-farms for livelihood development of resource poor farmers*" which will takeoff from April 2004 onwards.

☉ Learning from others

The **Central unit** staff visited BAIF at Tiptur to learn more about rainwater conservation and biomass production through tree based cropping systems.

Bijapur unit took farmers of Devaranimbaragi and Inchageri watershed on a study tour to Devaranimbaragi watershed area to learn from each other's experiences. Farmers had interaction on intercropping sorghum with chickpea and also with safflower.

Madanapalli unit facilitated inter-group study tour with GVS-Tirupati at Sri Ram Raithu Sangham, Mungilpattu and with Myrada-Kadiri at Kammavaripalli. Farmers and NGO staff shared learnings on effective group functioning.

☉ AMEF - a learning platform for students

28 Students of Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, Kumulur, Tiruchi (TNAU) conducted *Student field stay* programme in 4 clusters of AMEF **Tiruchi** to study farming practices with particular reference to use of farm implements. *Implements day* was conducted to mark the conclusion of the programme.

Simple data base has been designed and developed by the Department of Computer Science, Jamal Mohammed College, Tiruchi, as a part of its students project. Baseline information of farmers and farmer groups of AMEF Tiruchi's area has been consolidated. This software could also be used for generating reports from the baseline information of participating farmers.

Final year BSc-Agri students from Agriculture College, Raichur, were oriented towards Participatory Technology Development (PTD) and understanding NGOs development approach by AMEF **Raichur**.

☉ Sharing our learnings

AMEF participated in the EU 2004 held in New Delhi during 25-27 March 2004. Efforts made by Intersard Asia partners towards implementation of the project were shared with the donors.

AMEF participated in the International Workshop, "From Web to Field", to devise strategies in taking the information available on the net to the field. This workshop was organised by PAN-Germany at Nairobi, Kenya during March 2004.

Following are the handouts brought out during this period:

- Perspectives on PRA
- "Why soil testing? Method of soil sampling for soil testing" (Kannada) by AMEF Bijapur.
- "Master farmer as an Extension agent" (Kannada) by AMEF Bellary.
- "Men SHG of PTD farmers in Ranganathanahalli", (Kannada) by AMEF Bellary
- "Pre sowing seed hardening a low cost technology for dry land Agriculture" (English) by AMEF Bellary
- "Autobiography of Veerabhadrappa- A master farmer" (Kannada) by AMEF Bellary

"Training master farmers" was published in the Kannada daily Vijay Karnataka – Bellary edition.

☉ LEISA India

Three issues of LEISA India - *Access to resources, Rural communication and Recreating living soil* were produced during this period.

☉ Staff news

Dr.S.S.Madiwalar has taken over as Acting Area Unit Co-ordinator, Bijapur unit. Mr.S.S.Kulkarni has joined Bellary team as Area Project Officer (IFS/NRM).

APRLP project concluded as of 31st March 2004. The contribution of the project staff is greatly acknowledged.

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