

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

Field activities are in full swing. Improving soil fertility has been the focus of field activities during this period. Efforts towards generation of biomass through green manuring, vegetation on bunds and tree cropping and conversion of biomass into organic matter have been enthusiastically taken up by farmers. Farmers groups are being strengthened through trainings, study tours and regular follow up visits.

FAO team, Dr. Daniel Guftafson, Dr. P.S. Rao and Mr. Ajay Rastogi visited AMEF. AMEF entered into a four year partnership agreement with FAO.

AMEF has extended its activities to Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh with a new Area Unit at Mahabubnagar.

### Field activities

94 farmers from Tiruchi region cultivated Sunhemp and Sesbania species as green manure to generate additional biomass. While some farmers incorporated green manure into the soil, leaving a fallow period of 20 days before sowing the main crop, others used it as an input for composting. About, 148 farmers have taken up tree planting, mainly *Cassia siamea*, *Gliricidia* and *Leucaena*, on field bunds for biomass generation.



Sun hemp (*Crotalaria juncea*) grown for green manuring by a group member in Karatampatty village in Tiruchi.

Raichur farmers display a fine example of group cohesion. With 18 new vermi compost units being started, farmers are helping each other by sharing worms. Worms are being distributed at half the price to the group members to encourage other farmers.

Direct seed dibbling of forest species like *Gliricidia*, *Sesbania*, *Cassia siamea* and *Subabul* was taken up by 250 farmers in Raichur. The germination was good. This method proved economical as compared to raising seedlings in the nursery. However, with early sowing, the survival rate was found to be low.

48 farmers from Upparahalla and Chinnahagiri watershed areas in Bellary have adopted strip cropping. Ragi and groundnut are sown as strip

crops.

Few farmers from Bijapur adopted compartment bunding for conserving moisture after participating in a demonstration organised by AMEF Bijapur at Inchigeri village. In addition, to generate more biomass, farmers took up planting of *Jatropha* and *Gliricidia* on the bunds and green manuring with sunhemp.

In Madanapalli region, about 120 farmers have taken up bund plantation. Around 17000 seedlings, mostly *Cassia siamea* were planted. Besides, 43 compost units and 31 vermi-compost units have been initiated by the farmers.

Farmers from Sunnappagutta and Nalagutlahalli villages in Chintamani tried groundnut seed treatment with Agave, Eucalyptus extracts and Chlorpyrifos and soil treatment with application of neem cake and pongamia cake. Seed treatment with agave and eucalyptus extracts showed better results than others in managing root grubs.

Farmers from Alappanahalli and Kammasandra in Hoskote area, have tried diluted cow urine spray (1:6) on carrot, cabbage, cucumber and chilli crops and found it effective in improving the crop growth and yields. Farmers plan to extend this practice to other crops too.

AMEF-Bijapur organised a field workshop on Pomegranate. Farmers, PNGO staff and experts from U.A.S-Dharwad and Agriculture College-Bijapur participated. FFS farmers shared the results on use of different botanicals. Dr Biradar from Agriculture college highlighted eco friendly crop protection measures.

Three field days on Tomato and Legume crops were organised by AMEF-Bijapur at Inchigeri, Kakanal and Devarnimbaragi to share PTD experiences. PTD and non-PTD farmers, CBO and panchayat representatives, DWDO, Director of Instruction and scientists from Agriculture College and KVK participated.



## Training events and study tours

AMEF-Bijapur trained Devarnimbaragi farmers on efficiently converting crop and animal residues into organic matter.

Mass campaign was organised by AMEF-Bijapur on root grub and termite management in crops like groundnut, chillies and pomegranate. Farmers from Devarnimbaragi and Jeerankalagi villages and PNGO staff participated.

AMEF-Bijapur, organised an orientation programme on "Minor millet sowing and seed treatment" for Jeerankalagi farmers and PNGO field staff. Seeds of minor millets like foxtail millet, little millet and finger millet and bio agents such as PSB, *Azospirillum* and *Trichoderma* were mobilized.

AMEF-Raichur and PRERANA organised a training on Dry land Horticulture for farmers of Narbandi and Googal villages. Farmers learnt about orchard layout, plantation & after care techniques. Following the training, horticulture plantation is taken up by 30 families. Plants like Tamarind- (PKM variety), mango (different species) and sapota are planted.

Raichur farmers are being trained on NADEP method of composting using weed and bio mass available in and around the field through FFS sessions.

AMEF-Tiruchi trained 26 farmers and 10 NGO staff on group management and input cost management systems. All groups have been following the systems since completion of the training.

15 women farmers from Karatampatty, Tiruchi district were trained on SRI principles of rice cultivation. 5 farmers will be cultivating paddy as per the SRI guidelines, in collaboration with the DoA, Tamil Nadu.

AMEF-Madanapalli organised several trainings for farmers on package of practices for groundnut and biomass generation.

AMEF-Bellary organised two study tours to the Lead farmers of Chinnahagari and Upparahalla watershed areas to Bavikere (IFS model), Dummalli, BAIF-Tiptur, and Kalalawadi (Mysore) to motivate them for adopting suitable technologies. 48 lead farmers including 9 women farmers and 5 staff from PNGOs participated. Five farmers in Upparahalla watershed have adopted the IFS model of Bavikere Research Station.

AMEF-Bijapur organised a study tour for 25 farmers from Inchigeri to Jayasingpur (Maharashtra), KVK-Tukanatti (Gokak), Yemakanamaradi and Belgaum to expose them to various technologies being adopted in tomato cultivation.

AMEF-Madanapalli organised a study tour for 40 farmers to Narayana Reddy farm in Doddabalapur and Puttegowda farm in K.R. Peta, to understand more about soil and water conservation practices,

organic farming and System of Rice Intensification in paddy. Farmers also visited BAIF-Tiptur to know more about bio-mass plantation, agro-forestry, recycling of organic wastes and the role of SHGs.

AMEF-Tiruchi organised ToT on Integrated Crop Management in groundnut, cotton and vegetables through FFS methodology for Lead farmers and NGO staff.

AMEF in collaboration with ILEIA organised a week long workshop on communication for the LEISA India consortium partners. Participants learnt how to plan and prepare for disseminating information through various communication media. This was third in the series of workshop organised under the LEISA India - Documentation and Communication programme.

Write shops were organised by AMEF-Tiruchi and SCINDeA network to prepare a field guide on ecological farming principles in Tamil, to be used by NGO staff.



## Building internal capacities

Dr.S.S.Madiwalar, AMEF-Bijapur participated in a week long training on "Project Management for Developing Organizations" organised by IRMA, Anand, Gujarat. Participants included staff from various development organizations both from government and non-government organisations across the country

Mr.B.Girish, AMEF-Bellary, participated in the "Training on Gender issues", organised by KAWAD, at Bangalore, during 5-8 July 2004. The objective was to enhance the gender analytical skills and to improve equity in development programmes.

### Our visitors

- Mr. Ajay Rastogi from FAO, New Delhi visited AMEF-Bangalore during July 2004 and had discussions with the staff at the Central Unit. Following the discussions, AMEF has been working with FAO on developing a Data Management System (DMS), website, CD-Rom and Booklet on "Expertise and Information Resources on Organic Agriculture in India"
- Mr. Ajay Rastogi visited Tiruchi unit and held discussions with the farmers and NGOs on integrating medicinal plants in the dryland farming systems. He also visited Madanapalli Area Unit and had discussions with the farmers of Valasaguttapalli village during his field visit.
- Dr. Daniel Guftafson and Dr. P.S. Rao from FAO, New Delhi visited AMEF-Bangalore during August 2004. They also visited Madanapalli Area Unit and discussed the various activities of the area unit.
- Ms. Liz Kiff, DFID farming system consultant and Ms Nandini, Documentation specialist, KAWAD-Bangalore, visited AMEF-Bijapur unit on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2004
- Shri H.Basker, IAS, Executive Director, KAWAD – Bangalore, visited AMEF-Bijapur unit on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2004.

Mr. Shyam S.Kulkarni, AMEF-Bellary, participated in the "Training on Communication and Personality development in watershed areas", organised by MYRADA, Molakalmuru.

Dr.Gurudatt Hegde, AMEF-Bellary, participated in a training on "Technical aspects in watershed development", organised by MYRADA. The topics included were watershed selection criteria, concepts, soil and moisture conservation structures & its implications etc. Other participants included staff from Agriculture and Agricultural Engineering college and various NGOs.

All staff members from AMEF-Bellary visited ARS-Bavikere to study the IFS model and promote it in the KAWAD watershed areas.

Two Study circle meetings were organised at the Central Unit. Discussions were held on NGO partnerships and Revolving Fund management. Guidelines were developed for common understanding.

### Working with institutions

AMEF-Bellary coordinated with Andhra Pradesh State Seed Development Corporation (APSSDC), Anantapur, to mobilize different groundnut varieties (K-134, TAG-24 and TMV-2 seeds) for varietal trials.

AMEF-Bijapur interacted with experts from Agricultural College, Bijapur in managing pests and diseases in Tomato.

AMEF-Raichur held discussions with Gujarat Institute of Development Research, Ahmedabad, to conduct study on opportunities and constraints in dry land organic farming.

AMEF-Tiruchi interacted with National Dairy Development Board, Erode, for addressing issues like marketing of maize, organizing trainings on Livestock management, setting up pilot unit for cattle feed preparation etc.

AMEF-Madanapalli worked with Regional Agricultural Research Station–Tirupati and DAATT Centre (District Agricultural Advisory Transfer of Technology Centre), Chittoor, in conducting trials on management of Red Hairy Caterpillar in groundnut and on two drought tolerant groundnut varieties

AMEF-Bellary had discussions with CIDOW MYRADA-IA on promoting cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants in Chinnahagari watershed area.

The Central Unit networked with PDBC in conducting field trials using endomopathogenic nematode treatment in controlling root grubs in vegetable crops. Also enabled the distribution of IPM kits to groundnut farmers of Nalagutlapalli from the Agriculture Department, Chintamani.

### Documentation

G. Chandrasekhar (AMEF Bangalore), "Integrated Nutrient Management in cotton based on the nutrient extraction studies".

Ravindranath Reddy (AMEF Bellary), "As you sow, so you reap-success of seed planter"- a case study on the usage of seed planters.

B.P. Gangadharaswamy (AMEF Bellary), "A successful farmer" – a case on a lead farmer practicing crop rotation and dryland sericulture (Kannada).

Dr. Gurudatt M. Hegde & Dr. Arun Balamatti (AMEF Bellary), "Critical stages in Groundnut cultivation" – a pictorial message.

Dr. Gurudatt M. Hegde (AMEF Bellary), "Importance of Bio agents in Groundnut crop" - a cartoon.

G. Ravi Kumar (AMEF Tiruchi) as Co–author, "Guidelines on FAG management systems and IC management systems" (Tamil and English).

Video documentation (AMEF-Bijapur), "Different options in the management of Bacterial leaf spot in pomegranate" (Kannada).

### Partners initiatives in spreading

2 lead farmers from Bijapur demonstrated the usage of biofertilisers and also procured them from Agril college, Bijapur, for the benefit of farmers in the village.

AMEF lead farmers from Bellary performed street play in nine villages of Upparahalla watershed to create awareness about sustainable agriculture, seed treatment in groundnut crop, pest identification etc. The technical assistance was provided by AMEF and financial assistance by PNGOs. A good example of INFOTAINMENT (Information and entertainment) to use street play as medium for creating awareness.

### **In the media**

A programme on the "Legume(Green gram, Black gram and Red gram) seed treatment with *Rhizobium* and *Tricoderma* ", was telecasted by E-TV Kannada under Annadata Agricultural programme on 11<sup>th</sup> August – AMEF-Bijapur

A Press report on "Legume field day" celebrated at Kanakanal appeared in Kannada dailies – Vijay Karnataka and Samyuktha Karnataka - AMEF-Bijapur

Press report on talk delivered by Dr. Gurudatt M.Hegde on "Fodder promotion and importance of strip crop in dry lands" during the BAIF field day at Molakalmuru, appeared in Samyukta Karnataka, Kannada daily – AMEF-Bellary

Members of Susthira Krishikara Balaga, Devarnimbaragi in Bijapur opened an outlet for bio-fertilizers to spread its usage particularly in sorghum and also make it more easily accessible to other farmers

The NGOs and farmer clubs in Tiruchi are playing a vital role in spreading the use of organic inputs for crop production and seeds by mobilising them collectively. These inputs are now attracting farmers from outside the group as well.

Training efforts have been scaled up by the NGOs in Tiruchi. 30 NGOs have been trained on farming systems development. REACH conducted 2 trainings on vermicomposting to 144 farmers, with the support of the State Council for Science and Technology, Tamilnadu.

CAD, a member of VASANTHAM Network in Tiruchi, has been training other NGOs in vermicomposting. It is also launching a project for scaling up vermi composting in the project villages. The NGO will train 20 farmers from 7 villages and will support the costs of vermi compost production through revolving funds.

 **LEISA India**

Issues on "Reversing Degradation" and "Valuing crop diversity" have been released.

A survey was done to elicit feedback and suggestions for improvements from the LEISA India subscribers. There was an overwhelming response to the survey, the highlights of which are presented in the Box.

**Appeal**  
We earnestly look forward to your support. Contributions received from you will be exempt under the IT Act.

- Highlights of LEISA India survey**
- Over 20% of the subscribers responded to the survey
  - More than two-thirds found LEISA India interesting especially, information on alternative agriculture and its mix of global and local experiences
  - 96% of the respondents have been using LEISA India content in various ways
  - More than three-fourths of the respondents were using it as a teaching and training resource
  - About half of the respondents have used it for field application
  - Content is being shared in workshops, trainings and meetings
  - More than 70% share the content with their friends and colleagues
  - Suggestions include new thematic areas and need for local language versions

 **Staff news**

The new Area Unit at Mahabubnagar is headed by Dr. Sarvajna Salimath as Area Unit Coordinator supported by 5 staff.

Dr.Arun Balamatti, took over as Central Programme Officer-IFS/NRM at the Central Unit. Mr. B.P. Gangadharaswamy, has taken over as Area Unit Coordinator, Bellary Unit.

New staff include Mr.B.C.Kolhar - AMEF Raichur unit and Ravi Valluru – AMEF-Madanapalli unit as APO / NRM . L Annoes Simon joined the Central Unit as Secretary-Accounts.

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To,

**AME INFO**  
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