



Visitors

- ♦ Dr. David Kahlar and his team from World Education visited the Central Unit on 22nd October 2005.
- ♦ Mr. Rene Van Veenhuizen, ETC Netherlands, Dr. Bob Simmons, and Ms. Gayathri Devi, IWMI visited Bangalore Office on 17-18th October, to discuss about the project on Peri-urban agriculture.

Mr. KVS Prasad was invited for the workshop on *National Consultation on Food Security Corridor* organised by DDS and DRCS. The workshop was held during 17-18th October, at Hyderabad.

Mr. KVS Prasad and Ms. TM Radha were invited to participate in a two-day workshop on *Perspectives and Strategies for Livestock Development in Rainfed Agriculture* organised by Anthra at MANAGE, Hyderabad.

Ms. Sudhamani, Ms. Sudha Bhat, Ms. Shobha Rani and Ms B. Sreemathi attended a one-day gender workshop organised by FAO at Hyderabad on 10th December.

A three-day Planning workshop was organised during 8-10th December in SEARCH Training Centre. Discussions during the workshop helped in fine tuning AMEF plans for 2006.

Dr. Siddu Madiwalur participated in 'Sharanu Sangama Samarambha' at Bijapur and delivered a lecture on

AMEF - AREA UNITS

MADANAPALLI: II-253-D-7, Colony Ring Road, Madanapalli - 517325, Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh. Ph: 08571-222943 & 227137 Fax (pp): 08571 227070
amef_mpl@yahoo.co.in / amefmpl@amefound.org

TIRUCHI: No.37, E.V.R.Road, K.K. Nagar, Tiruchirapalli - 620 021, Tamil Nadu. Ph: 0431 2458726 & 2455408 Fax (pp): 0431 2450725
try_ametry@sancharnet.in / ameftry@amefound.org

RAICHUR: 1-3-309, RR Colony, Asapur Road, Raichur - 584101, Karnataka. Ph: 08532-2266917 & 228895 Fax (pp):08532 233968
amefrai@yahoo.co.in / amefrai@amefound.org

BELLARY: Old Market Road, Cantonment, Opp. Indian Institute of Nursing, Aziz Compound, Bellary - 583104 Karnataka. Ph: 08392 241558, 241227 Fax (pp): 08392 244116
amef_bellary@yahoo.co.in / amefbellary@amefound.org

BIJAPUR: 159/2A, # 7C, Ward # 74, Near BDO Quarters, Behind Darbar High School, Asar Moholla Lane, Bijapur - 586101, Karnataka. Ph: 08352 258055 amefbjp@sancharnet.in

MAHABUBNAGAR: Plot # 68&69, Next to H. No 4-88, Near Water Tank, Bhagirath colony, Christianpally Gram Panchayat, Adjacent to Bhutpur Road, Mahabubnagar - 509 001, Andhra Pradesh.
amefmhb@rediffmail.com

DHARMAPURI: # 3/11, Erikarai Road, Pidamaneri, Dharmapuri - 636701. Ph: 04342 280135 amefdpi@sancharnet.in

Environmental Protection and Ecological Farming on 10th December. About 1,800 people gathered during the event.

Mr. G.H. Yogesh and Ms. N. Sudhamani attended a week-long workshop on *MPAP Capacity Building Workshop* organised by IWMI at ICRISAT, Hyderabad during 12-16, December, 2005.

All the Programme staff participated in the Workshop on *Effective Communication Skills, Group dynamics, Team building, Negotiation Skills and Leadership*, held at The School of Ancient Wisdom, Bangalore during the second week of December.

Dr. Rajendra Hegde and Mr. Kalyan Babu attended a training programme on *Management Development Programme on Team Building* conducted by IRMA at Anand, Gujarat, on 19-22 December 2005.

Documentation

Two Selected Readings - *NGOs as a Driving Force and Insights into Agricultural Development* were brought out.

LEISA India

The Issue on *More than money* was published during this period.

AMEF in the Media

- ♦ The field day celebrations and the training on vermicompost, organised at Raichur, were published in *Raichur Vaani*.

- ♦ The training programmes of Tiruchi Unit and its ENPs were covered in two of the local newspapers.

To,

From:



P.O. Box 7836, No. 204, 100 ft. Ring road, 3rd Phase, Banashankari 2nd Block, 3rd Stage, Bangalore - 560 085 Ph: 080-26699512, 26699522 Fax: 91-80-26699410
amebang@viasbg01.vsnl.net.in;
amefbang@amefound.org Website: amefound.org

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



This season experienced heavy rains in most of our working areas. Crops were affected in Madanapalli and Dharmapuri along with human lives in Tiruchi. On the other hand, the situation enabled farmers to recognise the importance of intercrops as insurance crops, and of soil conservation measures.

The period was marked with rigorous planning exercises, in preparing plans for the year 2006, both at the Area Unit as well as at the Central Unit. Attention was also given to a number of staff capacity building activities within the organisation.

Field Activities

Working area of **Tiruchi** Unit witnessed unprecedented rainfall, a repeat of the situation that happened 60 years back. Heavy rains lead to flash floods, which affected people as well as crops. The yield loss in groundnut is expected to be about 40 - 50%. In maize only 50 - 75% of the cob length is filled. In cases where groundnut has failed due to heavy floods, intercrops such as pigeon pea and field beans seem to be a ray of hope to the farmers. This even motivated farmers to plan for sequential cropping after groundnut and mobilise seeds of crops such as horsegram, chickpea and fodder sorghum. Farmers who had bunds stabilised with grasses and stylo could visibly see the protection of soil from erosion. The compost pits of the size 24 cu.m dug in the field, served to collect soil that would have otherwise been eroded away.

Dharmapuri district received high rainfall of 720 mm, a deviation of 125% from the normal. Dryland tomato and groundnut crops sown were affected by water logging problems and the crops were lost. With increased water availability, many farmers shifted to rice cultivation as their fields had standing water column of 1 to 1.5 feet. With abundance of water, many farmers took initiative in planting trees on the bunds resulting in enhanced availability of plant biomass for preparing manure.

In **Madanapalli**, continuous rainfall and cloudy weather during the harvesting period has led to severe loss in kharif groundnut including the intercrops. Fungal attack of the harvested crop and sprouting of pods where harvesting was delayed, were the impacts of heavy rainfall.

Horticulture plants are being planted for additional income in Madanapalli area. Around 13355 horticulture seedlings/grafts of different varieties of mango (Benesha, Mallika, Kadar, Bangalora, Malgoba, Neelam and Pither varieties), coconut, jack fruit, sapota, jamun, citrus and amla have been planted by 63 farmers of cluster villages and 170 farmers of ENP areas. Nursery raising for the promotion of biomass on bunds has been initiated at Thuguvaripalli with 8500 seedlings of Cassia seamia and glyricidia.

In **Mahabubnagar**, during Rabi, eight farmers from cluster villages have taken up SRI paddy cultivation. Two field days in SRI paddy were organised at Gaddegudam and Chinnarajanur villages and farmers shared their experiences. Many farmers from neighbouring villages expressed interest to cultivate SRI paddy in the ensuing season.

In **Raichur**, among the different groundnut varieties tried out by farmers, VRI 2 seems to be promising followed by R 8808 in SRDS ENP area. Observations revealed that VRI2 had more number of pods with better pod size yielding highest biomass compared to other varieties.

ICTP 8203 drought tolerant variety of bajra yielded 14 quintals per acre in Gadhar and Kamalapura villages in Raichur. Farmers convinced with the yield performance have stored the seed for the next season.

Two field days on sunflower and one on groundnut were organised at Palkamdoddi (Raichur), Yarmarsaal (Deodurga) and Hussenpur (Manvi). Farmers including those from the neighboring villages participated and shared the information generated in the trials, importance of quality seed, seed treatment and also the suitable cropping systems for the area.



Raichur farmers counting the pods of different groundnut varieties



Short duration Training of Facilitators (ToF) on Farmer Field School - IPM in vegetables

AME Foundation organised a month-long training to build capacities of internal and ENP staff in facilitating FFS methodology. The ToF was conducted during 7 November to 4 December 2005, at the College of Sericulture, Chintamani, Kolar. In all, 21 participants including 14 staff from different ENPs, 3 staff from SEEMA, an NGO in Mulabagilu and 4 AMEF staff, one each from Bellary, Raichur, Mahabubnagar and Tiruchy, got trained in FFS.

The faculty included the Master Trainers of AME Foundation, who themselves were trained rigorously in a season-long training on FFS-IPM, at Muthyalapadu in Andhra Pradesh. Services of experienced resource persons from other institutions were also utilised. Renowned IPM experts like Dr. Balasubramaniam, Dr. Palanisamy Pachagoundar and Dr. V. Raghunathan provided backstopping support to the trainers. The training programme was preceded by a curriculum development workshop.

Tomato crop was the focus around which the FFS training revolved. Tomato farmers from the region participated in the programme, enabling the participants to have hands-on training. A farmer's field near Chintamani was leased in for laying out the 'learning plot'. In addition to the ToF field, for AESA studies, the trainees made observations in farmers' fields with different crop growth stages. At the end, a field day was organised at Kothur village wherein the FFS farmers exhibited great interest in explaining whatever they learned in the previous four sessions.

Participants were quite motivated to take the FFS forward. They developed an action plan to organise FFS in their respective States in the coming crop season.

In **Bellary**, groundnut harvest yield indicated that performance of trial plots was better than the control plots in terms of plant population, mortality rates, pod yield and pod weight. Higher seed rate with application of Trichoderma and Gypsum were followed in trial plots. An increase of 13% in pod yield and 23% in haulm yield were observed.

Two groundnut field days were organised in DB Halli and Yerrenahalli in Bellary. Farmers shared their PTD experiences, results of varietal trials and seed multiplication and the importance of use of bio-agents in controlling pests and diseases. Around 356 farmers, including 149 women participated in the event.

Bijapur farmers have taken up plantation of tree seedlings like pongamia, glyricidia, cassia, jatropa, sesbania, *Stylosanthus hamata*, teak and custard apple on bunds, to meet the requirements of fodder, biomass, fruit and timber. Some farmers have also taken up protective irrigation to reduce seedling mortality.

During the groundnut field day, Bijapur farmers shared their PTD experience. Observations in PTD plot included good pod filling, 16 per cent improvement in yield compared to control plot and no reduction in the crop yield even with 25 per cent defoliation at 45 DAS. In addition, they also shared their knowledge gained on use of bioagents, identification of insects (harmful or beneficial) and feeding potential through insect zoo studies.

Working with farmers

Three Orientation programmes were organised by Dharmapuri Unit, on the AMEF's vision and activities. 173 group members participated in these events.

Dharmapuri Unit trained 23 farmers from Athanur village, on Azolla production, and 19 women farmers in the preparation of bio inputs.

Farmers from Thuguvaripalli and Mittamalapalli in Madanapalli were oriented on cattle and sheep management. An animal health camp was also organised. The Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry department and veterinary doctors of the respective mandals were the resource persons.

Mahabubnagar Unit trained 12 farmers from Parvathapur on SRI paddy cultivation.

Study tours

About 47 farmers including 11 women from Jeerankalagi, Devarnimbaragi, Jigajeevani, Sathalgaon, Kanakanal villages in Bijapur were taken on a 5-day study tour. They visited BIRD-K Tiptur, GKVK Krishi mela, Indraprastha-A.P Chandrashekar Farm. Farmers learnt about on-farm activities like live bunding, dryland horticulture, fodder promotion and *Jeevajala* preparation. Their thinking on crop rotation, inter cropping, mixed cropping, importance of varieties etc., were widened due to exposure to various aspects in Krishimela.

Tapioca farmers from Vadugapatti and Veppanatham villages in Dharmapuri, visited TCRS Yethapur, to learn more about Tapioca cultivation.

Madanapalli Unit organised two study tours for farmers of Thuguvaripalli and Mittamalapalli cluster villages and ENP villages. Nearly 40% of the participants were women. They visited Mr Ramesh's farm of Devanahalli, Mr Narayanareddy's farm of Doddaballapur and BAIF – Tiptur and were motivated to adopt alternative farming practices.

Raichur Unit organised a study tour to 37 farmers of ENP villages to Jalahalli, to understand the recycling of wastes for composting.

A study tour was organised for sericulture groups of Hosur and Juttalinganahatti of Bellary. About 39 farmers visited CSR&TI, Mysore and got updated with latest technologies and models of low-cost, dry land sericulture.

Working with NGOs

Bellary Unit organised a TOT on SA practices in Groundnut for ENP staff of all the Area Units. In total, 26 members participated and understood the various concepts related to Sustainable Agriculture and the way AMEF works on the field.



Celebrating WORLD FOOD DAY 2005 on Agriculture and Intercultural Dialogue

The Bangalore Unit along with Institution of Agricultural Technologists (IAT) organised the World Food Day Celebrations on 16th October 2005. Dr. Suryanatha Kamath, a renowned researcher and creative writer in Kannada was the Chief guest and emphasised on the contributions made by various locales and cultures to agriculture and livestock.

The event was also celebrated in all the Area Units with all its enthusiasm and uniqueness. Farmers participated in large numbers in all the Units. The event was special in the sense that it was honoured by the presence of dignitaries like the Perambalur District Collector in Tiruchi; Dr. C.J. Itnal, retd. Director of Instruction, UAS, Dharwad, in Bijapur; Dr. Ratnakar, Professor, EEI in Mahabubnagar; Professor Venugopal Rao in Madanapalli and Assistant Conservator of Forests in Dharmapuri. The Chief guests shared their views on food security and crop diversity that existed since ancestral period.

The event was marked by various activities like sharing knowledge on agriculture through street plays and songs, exchange of seed material among farmers and exhibition on agriculture related materials, food products, medicinal plants, etc.

The event was covered extensively by regional newspapers (Eenaadu, State Times, Indian Express, Andhra Jyothi, Deccan Herald, Prajavani, Vijaya Karnataka, Raichur Vaani, Eenadu, Vaartha, Andhra Prabha, Thinamalar etc), AIR (Tiruchi and Raichur) and regional TV channels (AMN TV, MC TV, Karan TV and Win TV).



WFD Celebrations at Madanapalli



INDIA ORGANIC – 2005

AMEF participated in INDIA ORGANIC - 2005, Trade Show (The Market Place For Organic People), organised by the International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture (ICCOA) at Lalbagh, Bangalore, from 4 - 7 November 2005. AMEF had set up a stall, mainly showcasing activities of AMEF and its publications. There was a good demand for AMEF publications.

To prepare the action plan for the AMEF - MYRADA collaborative programme, a planning workshop was organised at Bettamugilalam, near Dharmapuri. The discussions gave clarity on practical ideas for programme implementation with SHG women.

Under Greening the Dry Lands programme, 8 women from both SDDPA and PPDS ENPs in Mahabubnagar were trained on nursery management by BIRD-K, Tiptur. All the women were trained on management of nursery seedlings and propagation techniques of horticulture and forestry plants.

Ten ENP staff from Raichur were trained on Groundnut management.

Tiruchi Area Unit facilitated training on *Operationalising Sustainable Agriculture* to 15 NGO staff and government officials. The event was organised by KVK, Thanjavur.

In Tiruchi, scaling up by NGOs enabled wider reach of Sustainable Agriculture activities to farmers beyond the working area. The farmer federations have gained strength and have involved themselves in various activities such as organising horticulture seedlings for group members, input mobilisation and managing input costs of groups. Each federation has also evolved a plan of action for 2006.

Internal capacity building

Three-day 'Induction Training' was organised for the new staff who joined AMEF. This was done during 24-26 October 2005, at Horsely Hills, Madanapalli.

Dr. Arun Balamatti presented a paper at the Winter School on *Appropriate Extension Strategies for Promotion of Organic Farming*, at UAS, Dharwad on 12th November 2005.

Mr. Kalyan Babu and Dr. Arun Balamatti participated in the APRLP Consortium meeting at Hyderabad during 16-17 November 2005.

Dr. Arun Balamatti participated in the *Dialogue on Improving Watershed Policies, Practices and Knowledge to Impact People and Ecosystems* on 24-25 November 2005 at ICRISAT, Hyderabad.