

Documentation

- Guidelines-7 on *Working with people (Bangalore)*
- Article on *Soil and water conservation practices in "Krishika Bandhu" (Bijapur)*
- Two articles - (a) *Tomato FFS - Farmers plots as 'laboratories': farmers as 'scientists'* and (b) *How a Postgraduate Farmer became Master Farmer*, published in "Nela-Jala-Samruddhi"- March 2005 (Bijapur)
- Handout on *Alternative farming practices in groundnut (Madanapalli)*
- Handout on *SRI Cultivation and dry land production practices (Telugu) (Mahabubnagar)*

Alternative farming practices for promotion of sustainable agriculture in Groundnut based farming system in Madanapalli area was telecasted by ETV-2, in the 'Jaikissan' program on 8th April 2005.

Visitors

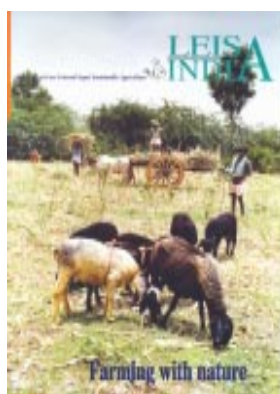
- Dr. Vasant Saberwal, Programme Coordinator, Ford Foundation, New Delhi visited AMEF Bangalore.
- Prof. Radha Mohan, a practicing organic farmer from Orissa, visited Bangalore Office and shared his experiences on organic farming and the immense benefit he derived from participating in AME's trainings in the past.
- Shri. Chalasani Dutt, an organic farmer from Andhra Pradesh, shared his views and experiences on eco farming with the staff of Bangalore Unit.



LEISA India

LEISA India - *Farming with Nature* Issue was published.

The review workshop of the two-year Documentation and Communication Programme was organised for LEISA India consortium partners. Programme of the first year was reviewed and plans for the current year were discussed. Participants displayed communication products developed during the first year of the programme.



The Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CIKS), Chennai, India, has included selected articles from LEISA India in their publication, "Seeds of plenty, Seeds of Hope: On farm conservation of indigenous genetic resources - the Asian experience".



AMEF's new building

The new premises of AMEF was formally inaugurated by Ir. Paul ter Weel, RNE, New Delhi. Dr. Daniel Gustafson and Dr. P S Rao from FAO, New Delhi were the special guests. Invitees included Board of Trustees and close associates of AMEF.

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 period was marked with pre-sowing activities like early ploughing, land preparation across the slope, small interception bunds, ridges and furrows to conserve soil moisture. Monsoon has set in, initiating sowings in some areas, while delayed in many other areas. Pattern of rainfall distribution has influenced sowing pattern across various Area Units.

This period was also marked with identifying NGOs as Eco Network Partners (ENPs), entering into formal agreements with them and initiating joint action. AME Foundation has entered into agreement with 24 Eco-network partners during the year 2005. Presently, AMEF works with 2694 farmers spread over 142 villages in 11 districts across six Area Units.

The DFID supported Karnataka Watershed Development Project (KAWAD) in Bellary, Bijapur and Chitradurga concluded on 30 June 2005. The Area Units set up by AMEF in Bellary and Bijapur, with the KAWAD support, are being continued with FAO support, to consolidate the work done so far and to seek opportunities for working with more number of farmers and NGOs.

Field activities

Along with practices for soil moisture conservation, a lot of efforts have been directed towards *enhancing soil fertility*. Mobilising seedlings for bund plantation and nursery raising were the two major activities pursued with farmers for building the biomass availability. Other activities included promoting green manuring based on the rainfall received and organic manure preparation and application.

For planting on the bunds, **Bijapur** unit mobilised 5000 *Jatropha* seedlings. Additionally, seedlings of *Pongamia pinnata*, *Cassia siamiae*, *Samaruba* and cuttings of *Glyricidia* are being procured. These would be transplanted on field bunds. Four varieties of Biomass seeds - *Jatropha*, *Glyricidia*, *Cassia siamiae* and *Pongamia* have been procured which would be dibbled on the field bunds. Also, fodder production with two varieties - *Stylosanthes hamata* and *Susbenia glandiflora*, is being promoted.

In **Raichur**, sowings are delayed in majority of the areas. Because of the lack of early rains in the month of June, *green manuring* was not possible in many of the areas. Around 115 farmers have taken up nursery raising activity. *Glyricidia*, *Subabul*, *Susbania sp.* and *Cassia siamiae*



Nursery raised by farmers group of Midgaldinni village in Raichur

seedlings are raised and are ready for planting on the bunds. Farmers were also motivated to go for bajra and groundnut to meet fodder requirement. Some farmers have applied *tank silt* approximately at the rate of five tractor loads per acre. This was possible owing to its availability due to desiltation works taken up by the JSYS project.

In **Madanapalli**, 22 farmer groups have taken up *nursery raising* during the months of February and March. Around 45000 seedlings are available with farmers in the group level nursery. Planting will be taken up in the months of July and August. Forest department has also been approached for mobilising additional seedlings.

In Madanapalli, as sowing was likely to be preponed owing to early rains, only seven farmers could take up *green manuring* with horsegram. In some areas like B.Kothakota and Nallacheruvu, green manuring could not be taken up as there were no rains in the month of May.

Community nurseries have been initiated in two villages in **Tiruchi**. Mother bed preparation and sowing of around 10,000 *Cassia siamea* seedlings have been completed. Only 22 farmers could take up sowing of green manure crops like *sunhemp* and *daincha* owing to inadequate rainfall. *Community compost pits* have been taken up by farmer groups in three villages of one cluster for recycling crop residues. The local panchayat has supported this initiative financially.

Mahabubnagar farmers are growing redgram as *intercrop* in castor and jowar. Farmers have sown improved varieties like Kranti, Haritha in castor and LRG-30 in redgram, instead of using hybrids /local varieties.

Working with farmers

In **Tiruchi**, building strong farmer institutions was one of the key activities of this period. Farm families selected with the help of local panchayats were mobilised into farmer groups and oriented to group functioning and record maintenance. Bank accounts were opened for all groups

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, Kirishthanapalli Gram Panchayat, Adjacent to Bhutpur Road, Mahabubnagar - 509 001, Andhra Pradesh. amefmh@rediffmail.com

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@giasbg01.vsnl.net.in; amefbang@amefound.org Website: amefound.org

and monthly savings initiated. PRA has been completed in all the villages and the felt need of farmers has been identified in each village. The unit also trained the farmers' groups on *in situ* soil and water conservation, soil fertility improvement, biomass improvement, group management systems and record maintenance.

Bellary unit organised seed treatment demonstration for 55 onion farmers in three villages. Onion farmers were also trained on crop improvement and soil fertility management.



Bellary farmers treating Onion seed with *Azotobacter*, PSB and *Trichoderma*

Raichur farmers were trained on preparation of vermicompost and its importance. As a part of the demonstration, one vermicompost unit was established in each village. After seeing the results, some more farmers have come forward to take up the activity.

Mahabubnagar unit organised training to farmer groups and partner NGOs on *in-situ* soil moisture conservation, soil improvement practices and crop productivity improvement practices in the field. Also imparted training to farmers on the importance of using good quality seeds and maintaining the optimum plant population.

Study tours

Tiruchi unit organised two study tours for farmers and NGO staff to National Dairy Development Board - Erode, Agriculture Research Station - Bhavanisagar and Myrada Thalavadi project, to enable them to learn dryland technologies for soil and water conservation, fertility management and crop management options. Participants were also exposed to functioning institutions like farmer federations.

Bijapur farmers visited model farms developed by BAIF in Surshettikoppa and Harugeri and progressive farmers field in Mudhol. They also visited OUTREACH, an NGO, to understand their activities.

Raichur farmers visited the vermicompost demonstration unit at Wanaparty, managed by SDDPA. Motivated by the visit, farmers of Sugarala village in Devadurga taluk have

established a vermicompost unit, which would be managed by the group.

Bellary Unit organised a 3-day study tour for onion growing farmers to Ralegaon Siddi in Maharashtra, to understand community watershed activities and Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeet, Rahuri, to know cultivation aspects of onion. Farmers also visited Onion Research Station and the onion market at Nasik. Farmers also had an opportunity to visit an onion firm which exports onion to Colombo, Malaysia, China and Dubai etc. and learnt about its storage methods and grading procedures. In total, 57 farmers from Pujarahalli, SK Hatti and KM Halli villages participated in the study tour.

Mahabubnagar farmers and Partner NGOs were taken on a study tour to Nandimallagadda and Tadipatri villages to observe biomass generation, vermi composting, neem seed extraction unit and also to a dairy farm at Appireddypally. Farmers learnt about the importance of agro forestry, vermi composting, value of farm wastes and IPM practices.

Working with NGOs

An Orientation Workshop was organised during 6-7 May 2005 at Bangalore, to begin AMEF – NGOs partnership activities under FAO project. The workshop helped in evolving common understanding and signing of MoUs for common action.

Bellary and *Bijapur* units have started their first year of working with partner NGOs under the FAO project. Earlier these units, were working mainly as a resource agency reaching farmers directly in KAWAD project. Both the units have identified two NGOs each as their Eco-network partners.

In *Raichur* too, new NGO's were identified keeping in view of the major cropping systems of the region.

The pre-seasonal area conference was organised by *Madanapalli* unit to discuss plans for 2005-06 and explore possible linkages with various line departments. There were 120 participants including farmers, staff of all partner NGOs, staff from the department of agriculture and animal husbandry, credit institutions like NABARD, fertiliser dealers and the media. The Area Unit plans for 2005-06 were presented for identifying areas for collaboration. The conference was helpful in initiating linkages with various departments that would be followed up.

The first module of the training on Sustainable Agriculture was organised by *Tiruchi* unit for the staff from five network NGOs.

Bellary unit organised one day orientation training to farmers and staff of Eco network partners (GUARD and MYRADA) at Kanahosahalli, on management of revolving fund.

Season-long Training of Trainers (ToT) course on Farmer Field School – IPM in vegetables

To create a pool of master trainers, particularly in the NGO sector, for FFS methodology, FAO India set up a season-long ToT to some of the selected staff of its project partners like AME Foundation, BIRDS-APFaMGS and ANGRAU. The training commenced during May and will continue till the end of July. Around 30 participants are getting trained in this programme. The facilitators who are the master trainers in FFS, are drawn from the government departments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. BIRDS has hosted the course in Muthyalapadu in Andhra Pradesh.

Prior to the ToT, a workshop was organised for developing curriculum for the programme in which ten staff from AMEF participated.

FFS in vegetables was chosen for the training. AESA concept and various issues related to FFS are being taught through Non-Formal Education (NFE) methodology. The long term agenda of the programme is to build on the Farmer Life Schools (FLS) experiences of other countries so as to expand the scope of FFS beyond IPM to soil health and water issues.

Eight staff from AME Foundation are participating in this programme. After completion of training, these FAO trained master trainers of FFS from AMEF would integrate skills learnt in their respective areas of operation.

An interesting feature of this ToT is the weekly newsletter being brought out for sharing the experiences of the programme.

AMEF fellowship programme

Recognising the need for preparing professionals in Sustainable Agriculture, AMEF has launched a 9-month fellowship programme for selected graduate students from Agricultural Universities. Six candidates are selected for the 2005-06 programme. These fellowship students have completed an orientation on Sustainable Agriculture conducted at the Central Unit in Bangalore. For gaining field experience, they are now associated with the Area Units at Tiruchi and Raichur.

As a part of their field training, all the six fellowship students have completed baseline data collection, consolidation and analysis. They have drafted action plans (one village per fellowship student). They have built up good rapport with the farmer groups and have started involving themselves in group meetings and field level trainings.

Internal capacity building

Eight staff members across various Area Units are participating in the "Season long ToT course on Farmers Field School – IPM in vegetables" at Mutyalpadu. The staff attending this programme include Mr Thirumal (*Tiruchi*), Mr. Suresh (Raichur), Dr. Gurudatt Hegde and Mr. Ravindranath Reddy (*Bellary*), Mr. Yogesh and Mr. Rudragowda (*Bijapur*), Mr. Maheswar Reddy (*Madanapalli*) and Mr. Naganagouda (*Mahabubnagar*). See Box on ToT for details.

Ms. Sreemathy (*Tiruchi*) attended the training on Biofarms organised by the coordination organisation for the All India Coordinated Project on Biofarms, at Wardha, Maharashtra.

Dr. Siddu Madiwalar (*Bijapur*) participated in the training on *Project Management for Development Organisations*, at IRMA, Anand. The training dealt with the knowledge and skills required for identification, selection, preparation, implementation, monitoring, control and evaluation of projects.

The Central Unit staff visited date farms promoted by LandMark Agrotech in Dharmapuri, Tamil Nadu. Date plant being hardy and resistant to drought conditions, possibilities of promoting date cultivation among the dryland farmers was explored.



Reaching farmers through street plays

Street plays are being organised in 12 villages of Bellary, for spreading the message on ecofriendly farming practices. As a result of messages got through street plays, farmers have started using bioinputs viz., *Trichoderma*, *Rhizobium*, PSB etc.

Abhinava kalaa jatha thanda, formed by a group of ten PTDF farmers from Pujarahalli in Bellary, will stage these street plays.

Our Fellowship Students – 2005-06



K. Gandhimathi K. R. Chandra Sangamesh



G. Mathumalar Kalaivani Mallikarjun