

National Workshop on “Strategies and Approaches for Greening Rice Fallow Area” held at Research Complex, Patna

A two-day national workshop on “*Strategies and Approaches for Greening Rice Fallow Areas*” was organized at ICAR-Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna, Bihar during 3-4 January, 2025. The purpose of this workshop was to design the strategies and approaches for managing rice fallow areas while building a module for sustainable crop intensification. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. S.K. Chaudhari, Deputy Director General, NRM, ICAR, New Delhi on 3rd January 2025. During his inaugural speech, Dr. Chaudhari stressed the urgent need to adopt an integrated & multidisciplinary approach to address the challenges faced by farmers in rice fallow areas. He highlighted the importance of land digitization, linkage of village-level institutions, and minimizing the gap between groundwater potential and its utilization. Further, he stressed on adoption of innovative resource conservation technologies like minimal soil disturbances, residue management, and weed control in rice fallows. Dr. Chaudhari also appreciated the effort of the Bihar Govt. in implementing programs like CRA.

The workshop brought together a distinguished panel of speakers and experts, including many directors such as Dr. J.S. Mishra (DWR, Jabalpur), Dr. N.G. Patil (NBBS LUP), Dr. Bikas Das (NRC on Litchi), Dr. A. Sarangi (IWM), Dr. Sunil Kumar (IIFSR, Modipuram), Dr. Anil Kr. Singh (RPCAU, Samastipur), Dr. D. P. Tripathi (Director, BAMETI), Dr. Masood Ali (Former Director, IIPR), Dr. C.L. Acharya (Former Director, IISS), Dr. B. P. Bhatt (Former Director, RCER & PS, NRM Division), as well as Dr. R.K. Jat (BISA) and Dr. S.P. Poonia (CIMMYT) from international organizations. Progressive farmers from rice fallow areas also shared their views on rice fallow management and expressed their appreciation for the work done by ICAR RCER in their villages.

Dr. Anup Das, Director, ICAR-RCER, Patna shared the institute's activities in greening over 1000 hectares of rice fallow areas in Bihar, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh through participatory efforts involving Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). He emphasized the potential of these interventions to bridge the demand-supply gap for pulses and oilseeds, contributing to self-sufficiency and improving farmers' incomes in the Eastern Region.

The dignitaries emphasized the identification and prioritization of rice fallow regimes based on soil moisture across the ecologies, the adoption of sustainable practices, including short-duration climate resilient cultivars of pulses/oilseeds that thrive well on the residual soil moisture, as critical to unlocking the productivity of these fallow lands. They also emphasized integrated water management practices; including rainwater harvesting, integrated soil nutrient management as well as the importance of climate-smart agriculture in managing rice fallow areas. An integrated approach involving Crops-Livestock-Fodder-secondary activities as per socio-economic conditions was emphasized by most of the experts. Further, central-state agencies especially ICAR Institutes, Universities, KVKs (ATARIs), and CGIAR centers may take up multi-location field trials for the development of validated technologies that must be taken up for greening Rice-fallows.

On this occasion, an e-Rickshaw (SwarnaRath), and an exhibition showcasing innovative technologies for rice fallow regions were inaugurated. The chief guest of the event Dr. S.K. Chaudhari, along with other dignitaries also visited the Sabajapur farm and inaugurated a Multiple Uses of Water model for smart water management. A Field Day focused on rice fallow areas, specifically for pulse and oilseed crops, was also organized on 4th January 2025 at Guleriachak Village in Tekari Block, Gaya District where over 100 farmers participated in the event. The event featured an interactive session between farmers and scientists, where modern agricultural practices were shared, and strategies for increasing production were discussed. Dr. Manoj Kumar Ray, Senior Scientist and Head of KVK Manpur; Dr. Sudhanshu Shekhar, Senior Scientist and Head of KVK Ramgarh; and Dr. Ved Prakash, Scientist ICAR-RCER Patna, along with other experts, provided detailed information to farmers on modern rice fallow management practices, including soil moisture management and soil conservation. A technical bulletin on “*Greening rice fallow areas in Eastern India: Package of practices for Bihar, Jharkhand & Chhattisgarh*” was released on the occasion. IARI Patna Hub students performed a variety of cultural programs in the event.

The workshop concluded with a consensus on the critical role of participatory approaches, stress-tolerant crop varieties, and rainwater harvesting infrastructure in enhancing productivity and addressing food and nutritional security for resource-poor farmers. Participants (progressive farmers) shared their experiences in rice fallow management. The workshop was attended by more than 100 participants. The program was coordinated by Dr. Rakesh Kumar and Dr. Sourabh Kumar (Organizing Secretaries) along with the organizing committee of the event.



Dignitaries attending the National Workshop on Rice Fallow



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Inauguration of Multiple Uses of Water model for smart water management



A Field Day organised at Guleriachak Village in Tekari Block, Gaya District