

ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna organized a three days capacity building programme for social upliftment of 'tharu' tribal farmers through agricultural interventions

To empower the tribal farmers living in the far-flung locations, ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna organized a three day capacity building programme on 'Scientific interventions in agricultural practices to enhance the income of tribal farmers' under STC plan of Network Project on Animal Genetic Resources, funded by ICAR-NBAGR, Karnal, from March 22-24, 2023 in Naurangia village under Ramnagar block of West Champaran district. The programme was organized in collaboration with KVK, Narkatiaganj, under Dr Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University, Pusa. A team of five scientists from the institute along with the technical personnel from KVK under the leadership of Dr Anup Das, Director, ICAR-RCER, Patna, visited the village and organized the programme. Brajina foundation, a local non-Governmental Organization, also played an important role in supporting the institute in organizing the programme. A total of 195 tribal farmers, mostly women, participated in the training programme.

'Tharu' is a predominant tribal community who lives in the remote locations which expands from 45 to 50 kilometre range from Ramnagar, a block headquarters in West Champaran district. The district possesses almost 19% of forest cover that shields the district in its northern boundary adjoining to the hilly terrain of Nepal. The terrain is a difficult one which encompasses many villages interconnected mostly by *kachcha* routes. 'Tharu' who are forest dwelling tribes live in this challenging conditions with lots of limitations in every infrastructure facilities. Major agricultural crop was found to be sugarcane in the belt where goat and buffalo rearing was also very common.

During the three days programme, several aspects of scientific interventions in agricultural practices were discussed among the farmers. Scientists spoke on improved production technologies on finger millet, sugarcane and different vegetable and fruit crops. Topics were also discussed on scientific rearing of cattle, buffaloes and goats, and the timely interventions and first aid measures during infectious and non-infectious disease occurrences. Fish rearing methods and techniques for maximizing the profitability was discussed in detail. The participants were provided with agricultural inputs such as improved vegetable seeds, hybrid Napier root slips and institute owned 'SwarnaMin'- an area specific mineral mixture, apart from other inputs like conference bag, umbrella, torch etc. as a token of thanksgiving for taking part in the training programme. At the end, the Director, ICAR-RCER, conversed with the participants and the forum arrived with some defined conclusions.

The tribal farmers requested to provide them more interventions on mushroom cultivation, mushroom seed production, vermicomposting, vegetable cultivation and honeybee rearing. Most of the farmers raised the issue of non-availability of irrigation facilities for farming during dry season. The Director assured the participants to provide support in all possible forms in the future.

The training ended by vote of thanks.

