

Livestock & mushroom based integrated farming system promoted for livelihood improvement of Purulia farmers

14th March 2024, Hatinada, Ajodhya Hills, Purulia (WB)

ICAR Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna in collaboration with Vivekananda Vikas Kendra, Kalimati, Purulia, organized a capacity building cum farmer-scientist interaction program as part of Institutes flagship extension programme PRAYAS under Tribal Sub- Plan (TSP) at Hatinad avillage of Ayodhya hills in Purulia, West Bengal during 13 to 15th March 2024. More than 250 farmers participated in the programme, majority being women farmers. The area is mostly inhabited by small and poor farmers belonging to Santhal and Munda tribes. Water scarcity during dry season, non-availability of quality seed and planting materials, and poor skill and capacity of farmers are the major challenges in the plateau region of Purulia. Farmers shared their views with the scientists and resource persons during the interaction programme. Representative from ATMA were also present as resource person in the programme.

Dr. Anup Das, Director, ICAR RCER, Patna described the TSP programme of Government of India in brief and its purpose to the farmers. He emphasized on low water requiring components like mushrooms, animal husbandry (especially poultry farming), fruits and multipurpose trees, and millets for improving livelihood, year round income and employment of farmers. The aim is to empower farmers specially women through improved integrated farming system. Hence, this village is adopted for three years to provide them specific training and inputs to improve upon their livelihood. He also explained in detail about the vermicompost as soil amendments and backyard poultry farming as source of income to poor farmers. He also encouraged farmers to grow fruits like papaya, jackfruit, lemon, sapota, bael, mango, goose berry etc in their backyards and barren lands for nutrition and income. He suggested farmers to include pulses in cropping system for getting cheap source of proteins and improved soil health.

Dr. Arun Kumar Singh, Head, FSRCHPR, Ranchi encouraged the farmers to grow tomatoes in rainy season to get better price in the market. He emphasized that vegetables like brinjal, sponge guard, ridge guard, bottle guard, pumpkin, ash guard are suitable for this region. There is a need to follow year round vegetable cultivation sequence for higher income and nutrition.

During the programme, sixty two women farmers were provided with high-quality chicks along with starter feeds. Customized poultry cages (16 numbers) and two mushroom production houses (made with local materials) were also provided to farmers under the program. Additionally, plastic fencing nets, poultry drinker, feeder, mixi grinder for badi making, sprayers, weighing balance, vegetable seeds (Tomato, sponge gourds, brinjal, beans, okra etc), mushroom packaging materials, mushroom spawn, medicines for poultry and cattle, etc. were also provided to participating farmers.

Dr. Ajit K. Jha, Sr. Scientist, FSRCHPR, Ranchi described in detail about the production technology of oyster mushroom production to the women farmers. Dr. Rakesh, Scientist, ICAR RCER, Patna sensitized farmers about the general precautions for rearing of poultry, disease management of poultry as well as cattle and distributed medicines among farmers. Dr P K Sundaram, Sr. Scientist, and Sh. Manoj K Sinha, STA, ICAR RCER, Patna discussed about farm mechanization with farmers. Dr. Bikas Sarkar, Pr. Scientist, ICAR RCER, Patna demonstrated

mulching technology and drip irrigation practices among farmers and coordinated the whole programme. Sh. A Bhattacharjee, Secretary, Vivekanand Vikas Kendra, Kalamati, Purulia proposed a vote of thanks.

