

Emphasis on lentil cultivation is expected to change pulse production scenario in Tripura as well NEH region – “Lentil Germplasm Field Day” and “State Level Meet of Pulse Farmers and Pulse Day 2014” organized at ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Tripura Centre, Lembucherra

The enthusiasm and overwhelming response shown by the lentil farmers and the technocrats in the Lentil Germplasm Field Day and State Level Meet of Pulse Farmers and Pulse Day 2014, organized on 5 and 6 March, 2014, respectively, by ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Tripura Centre, Lembucherra, Tripura, would make it to believe that pulse cultivation in Tripura is going to have a major boost up in coming days. Among the pulses lentil is the most consumed and preferred one in Tripura, as well as in NEH region. However, similar to all other pulses only a small fraction of the requirement is produced locally. Major problem for *kharif* pulses is that they have to compete with other crops, mainly rice, to make space for themselves in the cropping system. ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Tripura Centre, which is a sub centre for AICRP MULLaRP, has been making concerted effort to boost up the area and production of pulses in Tripura as well as in the NEH region since last 8-10 years. The centre was able to develop few pulse varieties and release them through CVRC as well as SVRC, which are becoming popular day by day. Major advantage for rabi pulses such as lentil mainly and fieldpea to some extent is that they do not have to compete with any established crops for area availability. Main bottleneck in their cultivation is late availability of land after *kharif* paddy. For lentil the cut off date for sowing should be 15 November, but most of the paddy lands are not vacated by the cut off date due to cultivation of long duration varieties like Swarna. Late transplanting of *kharif* paddy is another issue which is becoming prominent day by day due to shift in rainfall pattern. This problem is being tried to be tackled with development and release of shorter duration paddy varieties by the centre like Gomati, TRC 2005-3 and Naveen in the state, which are replacing long duration varieties like Swarna gradually. However, another approach adopted was to develop, evaluate and select lentil and fieldpea varieties that can perform very well under late sown conditions, even if sown in the first fortnight of December. Two fieldpea varieties developed by the centre TRCP -8 and TRCP -9 are well suited to late sown conditions. With this aim this season 640 lentil germplasm, segregating population, stable advanced breeding lines, elite lines from different sources like ICARDA, National Crossing programme of AICRP MULLaRP, MULLaRP nominations and lines developed at the centre are under evaluation at ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Tripura Centre, Lembucherra under December first fortnight sowing. To select suitable breeding lines that can perform well under late sown conditions a “Lentil Germplasm Field Day” was organized on 5 March, 2014 at the centre. The germplasm field day was attended by scientists of the institute, Assistant professors from College of Agriculture, Tripura, Programme Coordinators of KVKs, Subject Matter Specialists from KVKs and Officials from the Dept. of Agriculture. The Day was also graced by Dr. K. R. Dhiman, Hon’ble Former Vice Chancellor, Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan and Chairman, Research Advisory Committee

of the Institute, who was present as the lead resource person. He pointed out that pulses constitutes major component in the diet of hill people and lentil is the main commodity in the pulse basket of the hill people and emphasized that the exercise would go long way in selecting 2-3 top most lentil lines from the material under evaluation, large scale seed production of the selected lines by involving KVKs and their wide spread dissemination among farmers in the region to boost up the lentil production in Tripura as well as in NEH. He expressed satisfaction over the fact that there are quite a few lines that performed very well under late sown conditions and elevated temperature regime. Director of Agriculture, Tripura, Dr. Abdul Haq, expressed that the material under evaluation gave him confidence that few good lines could be released for Tripura and with their adoption by farmers a lot of money could be saved that was spent after importing lentil for the consumption in the state.

The Lentil Germplasm Field Day was followed by a “ State Level Meet of Pulse Farmers and Pulse Day 2014” on 6 March, 2014. The meet was organized to celebrate the success of large number of demonstrations on rabi pulses under MULLaRP TSP, AICRP MULLaRP FLDs and ICARDA OCP project. The meet was planned with participation of 400 farmers, but the touching point was that total number of farmers participated in the meet was 602. Shri. Jitendra Choudhury, Hon’ble Minister for Rural Development, Industries and Forests, Tripura was the Chief Guest in the meet. Other distinguished guests included Shri Pabitra Kar, Hon’ble Deputy Speaker, Tripura Legislative Assembly, Shri Haricharan Sarkar, MLA, Dr. V. K. Bahuguna, Principal Secretary (Agriculture), Govt. of Tripura, Dr. K. R. Dhiman, Hon’ble Chairman, RAC of the Institute. Dr. M. Datta, Joint Director and the Convenor of the events welcomed all the dignitaries and thanked the farmers for their overwhelming participation. Dr. V. K. Bahuguna, Principal Secretary (Agriculture) informed that state agriculture department has taken up a special drive on increasing the area and production of pulses and in this season only 1700 ha demonstrations were conducted on lentil with support like seed, inputs and incentives. He assured that state government and the department would extend all the support for the cause on boosting pulse production in the state. Shri Paitra Kar, Hon’ble Deputy Speaker, emphasized the importance of pulse in creasing the cropping intensity from 186% to over 200% by incorporating lentil and other pulses in the cropping sequence. He emphasized that with the present cost of pulses, these crops should earn attention as cash crops. Shri Jitendra Chaoudhury, Hon’ble Minister, who in fact hails from the lentil bowl of the state, pointed out that incorporation of pulses, particularly lentil in the cropping sequence not only give farmers an additional crop and income but it also helps the farmer to harvest a bumper crop of paddy in next season. He pointed out that as of today in coming days also agriculture would remain as main source of livelihood of people of Tripura, so farmers should put more and more scientific approach and inputs in their farming practice to remain economically competitive under the changing scenario. He expressed satisfaction that in spite of its very little men power and infrastructure ICAR, Tripura Centre has been very instrumental in bringing new and newer developments in the field of agriculture to the doorsteps of farmers in Tripura. During the Pulse Day 8 Technical Bulletins were released on Lentil, Fieldpea,

Rajmash, Mungbean, Urdbean, Pigeonpea cultivation in North East, Major Insect Pests of Pulses and their Management in North East and Major Diseases of Pulses and their Management in North East authored by S. P. Das, B. L. Meena, K. Chattopadhyay, D. Datta, Hemavati, R, S. N. Bhowmik, N. P. Singh, M. Datta and S. V. Ngachan. Apart from these another bulletin on “Homestead Farming System – Small Farm Big Return” was also released by ICAR- KVK, South Tripura, authored by A. K. Singh, N. P. Singh, M. Datta and S. V. Ngachan. During the Meet seed of Mungbean and Paddy and saplings of Amrapali mango and Shahi Litchi were distributed to all 602 number of farmers attended the meet. The Pulse Day ended with Vote of Thanks by Dr. S. P. Das, Organizing Secretary.



Dr. K. R. Dhiman, Former Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Dr.Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan and Chairman, Research Advisory Committee, delivering his key note address on the occasion of Lentil Germplasm Field Day,



Participants inspecting and selecting the lines during Lentil Germplasm Field day



Hon'ble Minister Shri Jitendra Choudhury (4th from the right) in the State Level Meet of Pulse farmers



Dignitaries releasing different Technical Bulletins during the Meet



Enthusiastic farmers participating in the State Level Meet of Pulse farmers