

## **Tribal Farmers Empowered through Input and Technology Support under TSP and HMNEH-I**

The ICAR Sikkim Centre organized a mega program on May 08, 2014 at Amba Village, Pakyong, East Sikkim by clubbing the activities of Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) and Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH-I) in order to strengthen tribal farmer's capacity by providing them full package of dissemination of scientific knowledge and inputs support. Seeds of various summer vegetables, leafy vegetables, plastic sheets for construction of low cost plastic tunnels were distributed under HMNEH-I for Front Line Demonstration and biopesticides, biofungicides and sprayers were distributed under TSP for organic disease and pest management. A total of 90 farmers from seven SHGs viz., *Durga Group, Sikhar Group, Srijana Group, Smriti Group, Krishi Uthan Organic Club, Farmers Group and Shikti Group* of Chithang-Pithang GPU, East Sikkim attended the program and benefitted with the various inputs distributed. Farmers showed keen interest in learning the scientific vegetable production technologies developed by ICAR Sikkim Centre.

Inaugurating the program, Dr. R.K. Avasthe, Joint Director, ICAR Sikkim Centre stressed upon the importance of scientific knowledge for commercial and intensive production of vegetables to bring about perceptible change in the vegetable production scenario of the region. He said that hi-tech low cost production technologies are available with ICAR, which can be a good source of income for the rural youth. Joint Director also distributed the vegetables seeds, biopesticides, biofungicides, sprayers, plastic sheets, etc. to the progressive farmers of seven SHGs from Chithang-Pithang GPU, East Sikkim.

Shri Phurba Lepcha, Panchayat President, Chithang-Pithang GPU, in his address thanked the Joint Director ICAR Sikkim Centre for organizing such programme and imparting knowledge regarding agricultural practices and also for providing quality inputs to them. He also convinced farmers to cultivate their land and generate some income to improve their living standard and become self-dependent.

Smt. Meena Chettri, Panchayat Vice President Chithang-Pithang GPU, in her address said that farmers are slowly becoming progressive and competitive; however, they need proper knowledge for scientific cultivation of crops. She said that off-season vegetable production will be effective for further improvement of agriculture in the area.

Earlier, Dr. H. Kalita, Principal Scientist (Entomology) presented the overview of the program and its significance for the region. He also discussed the pest and disease management in horticultural crops. He stressed upon the importance of regular visit and proper monitoring of farm in organic production systems for better control of insects and pathogens as 'prevention is always better than cure'.

Dr. Ashish Yadav, Senior Scientist (Horticulture) detailed the 'Quality Summer Vegetable Production Techniques' and 'Leafy Vegetable Production Techniques under Low Cost Plastic Tunnels during Rainy Season'. He highlighted that vegetables are quick cash crops and hi-tech production of vegetables with low cost technologies is very profitable during rainy season.

Dr. R. Gopi, Scientist (Plant Pathology) shared the information on disease management in vegetables under organic production system. He emphasized the need of proper crop rotation to avoid diseases in agricultural and horticultural crops.

Dr. Subhash Babu, Scientist (Agronomy) talked about the good agricultural practices for vegetable crops. He emphasized on the need of cleaning of crop field and nearby area and crop rotation with leguminous crops to avoid nutrition depletion in soil.

Shri Shaon K. Das, Scientist (Soil Science) briefed about the organic nutrient management in vegetable production system. He informed that soil pH plays significant role in proper uptake of nutrients.

Dr. Brijesh Kumar, Scientist (Animal Reproduction) highlighted the importance of integrated farming system including livestock component in organic production system to have sufficient farm yard manure for better production and in return quality feed for the livestock.

Mr. Boniface Lepcha, Program Assistant, KVK Ranipool coordinated the event and discussed about the construction of low cost plastic tunnels and detailed the package of practices of leafy vegetables and other relevant issues related to organic vegetable production.

Vote of thanks was proposed by Shri D.B. Mishra, a local resident of Amba village.

Mr. A.D.D. Misra, Ms. Yamuna Pandey and Ms. Dinisha Rai actively assisted in organizing the whole programme.



