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ICAR-CIARI conducts tuber crops diversity fair wealth of ANI

PORT BLAIR, MARCH 31/--/ ICAR- Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Port Blair has conducted 'Tuber crops Diversity Fair' at Sippighat, Port Blair on 30th March 2022 to enhance awareness on Tuber crops Wealth of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and to sensitize the farmers on the potentials of tropical tubers in enhancing the livelihood security under All India Coordinated Project on Tuber Crops with the collaboration of ICAR-Krishi Vigyan Kendra, South Andaman in which about 80 farmers and 25 school children have participated.

Dr. Eaknath B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI in his presidential address, highlighted the scope of marketing and value addition opportunities in tuber crops and appreciated the accumulation of array of tuber diversity of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. He called upon the farmers to make use of the improved technologies available with ICAR-CIARI and AICRP on tuber crops for incorporation of successful tuber cultivation in island cropping/ farming systems. He underlined the ability of various tuber crops in meeting the carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals and protein requirement of human. He urged the participants to undertake the tuber crops cultivation to increase the profitability and productivity of farms and stressed upon the value addition to enhance the consumer base of tuber crops. The



participants were imparted technical information on various tuber crops, cultivation techniques, storage, planting season, crop duration and value addition avenues. Quality planting material of sweet potato were also distributed to the enthusiastic woman farmers who come forward to take up home garden planting of tuber crops. ICAR-CIARI has already demonstrated the doubling of income and employment generation through tuber-based farming systems in tribal areas. Through this programme, the Institute has reached the Island farmers to double their income through integration of tuber crops in the cropping systems.

During the programme, an array of diverse, conserved accessions

and varieties of tuber crops grown in the Islands viz., Cassava, Sweet Potato, Colocasia, Elephant foot yam, Cylindrical yam, Yam bean, Greater Yam, lesser yam, Coleus, Costus, Curcuma, Tannia, Tacca, Typhonium, Giant taro were displayed. The participants have enthusiastically seen the diversity and shown keen interest in conserving them in their gardens. The potentials of improved varieties of Cassava viz., CIARI SP-1 Swarna, CIARI SP-2 Aparna, Greater Yam Yamini, Sree Vijaya, Sree Jaya, Vellayani Hirsua, sweet potato varieties viz., Bhu Krishna, Bhu Sona, Colocasia Megha Taro-2 were explained to the participants.

Dr. B. A. Jerard, Head, Division of Horticulture and Forestry and convener of the programme has

enumerated the types of tuber crop diversity in the islands including different species, unique collections made by the Institute, role of AICRP on Tuber crops in conservation and utilization of tuber genetic resources, their climate resilience status of tuber crops in ensuring food and livelihood security in remote places and nutritional status of biofortified varieties of tuber crops to the participants. The export scenario and potential of tuber crops and its products were also highlighted. Dr. K. Abirami, Senior Scientist has explained to the participants about the scope of cultivation of these tubers in coconut and arecanut based cropping systems in the Islands as demonstrated at Sippighat farm of the Institute. Dr. Y. Ramakrishna, Head, KVK, South Andaman has stressed upon the need for diversifying the island farming system with tuber crops which has potential to increase the income and employment generation besides national food. Dr. V. Damodaran, CTO has detailed the package of practices right from planting, nutrition management, harvesting and storage Dr. I. Jaisankar, Senior Scientist, while showcasing the diversity of tubers, drew the attention of the participants on the scope of utilising the tubers and tuber crops vegetation in supporting the animal component of Island based agro-forestry systems.