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Training on harvest and post-harvest management of spices

PORT BLAIR, MARCH 5 /--/ A training programme on 'Scientific harvesting and postharvest management of spices in Andaman Islands' was organized at ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Port Blair under the Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development, Calicut funded CSS-MIDH (NHM) Project on Spices and AICRP on Palms project. During the introductory session, Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, Scientist-SS (SPMA) and coordinator of the training programme, emphasized that spices are the cash crops having immense potential for cultivation in the Islands. However, to promote the island spices, adoption of scientific practices is required as the quality of the produce is largely dependent on it. He informed the gathering about market trends and quality issues of various spices in the domestic markets and urged the stakeholders to come forward to develop islands

as hub of quality spices.

During the technical session, Dr. J.H. Kadam, Associate Professor, Dr. BSKKV, Dapoli, Maharashtra, who is a renowned expert and advisor to Government of Maharashtra on turmeric delivered a video presentation on processing of turmeric for commercial as well as home/ cottage scale units. He elaborated on various traditional and advanced methods of turmeric processing and avenues for product diversification. Dr. Ajit gave a presentation on techniques for scientific production and processing of various spices. He showcased various spice samples and explained the methods to differentiate the good quality produce from the inferior one. Dr. G.N. Khadke, Scientist-SS, ICAR-Directorate of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Research, Anand, Gujarat delivered a video presentation on techniques of extraction of essential

oils from spices and aromatic plants. Various machineries involved in the process and mechanism were explained to the participants during the presentation.

During practical session, a demonstration on turmeric processing was organized during which various stages of turmeric processing were shown to the participants. Hands on experience on various aspects on cinnamon harvesting including correct stage of harvesting, method to judge the sap flow condition, peeling and drying was gained by the trainees. A visit to Spices nursery in the Horticultural Plants Propagation Unit was made to showcase the diversified options of spices suitable for various areas. Various value-added products including essential oils, dehydrated powders etc. were shown to the participants and advantages of value

addition were also described. Dr. Pooja Bohra, Scientist-SS, ICAR-CIARI explained about various value-added products developed by ICAR-CIARI and invited the stakeholders to establish such industries in the islands as no spices-based industries on value added products have so far been developed in the islands. Planting material of cinnamon, black pepper, woody pepper, lemon grass, long pepper, mango ginger and clove were distributed to the stakeholders.

The programme was attended by 75 participants including farmers, entrepreneurs, island youth and students from JNRM, ANCOL and TGCE, who showed keen interest during the event. The event was conducted under the guidance of Dr. P.K. Singh, Head, Division of Horticulture and Crop Improvement and supervision of Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI