

Spices to diversify plantation based farming: Three days training for Nicobarese farmers imparted at CIARI

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Port Blair, Feb 23: A three days training programme on "Appropriate Cultivation and Postharvest Practices for Producing Quality Spices in the Plantation Crops Based Cropping Systems" was organized during February 19 to 21 2024 at ICAR-CIARI Port Blair under CSS-MIDH (NHM) Project on Spices. The programme aimed at imparting theoretical and practical training on various cultivation and management aspects of spices to the Nicobarese farmers of Car Nicobar Island. During the inaugural programme, Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI, interacted with the farmers and urged them to participate in the programme in fervor. He discussed various production and marketing related issues faced by these farmers from the southern group of islands. Course Director and Dr. Ajit Arun Waman and Co-course directors- Dr. Santosh Kumar, Dr. Pooja Bohra and Dr. P.K. Singh also spoke on the occasion.

During the technical session, Dr. Sharath S. Yeligar documented the perception of Nicobari farmers towards Coconut Climbing Devices. A talk on improved production and postharvest technologies for spices in the Island ecosystem was delivered by Dr. Ajit Waman. The farmers were taught various methods of plant propagation including air layering, cutting, grafting, Dweep Goottee 365 etc. in the Horticultural Plants Propagation Unit of the Institute. Further, practical hands-on training on harvesting and processing of cinnamon, black pepper and turmeric was conducted by Dr. Pooja Bohra to help the farmers in understanding the aspects in depth. Various intercultural operations in plantation crops, spices and other crops were practically demonstrated to the trainee participants by Dr. Abhilash and Mr. Talaviya Harshankumar, Scientists, ICAR-CIARI. Farmers also witnessed various research activities related to farm animals at Garacharma Farm apart from the exposure visit to Horticulture Research Farm, Sippighat and Bloomsdale Farm, Chouldari. Dr. Senthil Kumar, Principal Scientist, ICAR-IIHR, Bengaluru interacted with the farmers about the vegetable cultivation prospectus and experiences of the tribal farmers. During the valedictory session, Dr. Jai Sunder, Director (In charge), appreciated the efforts of the organizing team as well as the participants in meaningfully implementing the programme. He opined that the trainees could improve their farm incomes if spices and other horticultural crops are included in the system in a sustainable way. The training was attended by twenty Nicobarese farmers from Car Nicobar Island along with the Chief Captain and Captains from various villages.