
Workshop on Sustainable Plant Protection Strategies for ANI (SPPS- 2024) jointly organized by (ASA) and ICAR- CIARI gets inaugurated

Port Blair, Mar 21: Agriculture in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands faces unique challenges that arise from the region's geographical and climatic characteristics. Introduction of new crops without following appropriate quarantine measures

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could also pose the risk of inadvertent introduction of new pests in these islands. In order to address the above burning issues, Andaman Science Association (ASA) and ICAR- CIARI is jointly organizing a Workshop on "Sustainable Plant Protection Strategies for Andaman and Nicobar Islands (SPPS- 2024)" which got inaugurated today on 21st March 2024 at its Garacharma Research Complex.

Speaking during the inaugural occasion the Chief Guest Dr. N. K. Krishna Kumar., Ex-DDG Horticulture Science, ICAR-New Delhi started with Dil ki Baat, wherein he emphasized on the most important points pertaining to achieving sustainability in plant protection for ANI. Firstly, establishment of a state of art quarantine facility near the international airport with the involvement of the development department, research institute and civil aviation. Introduction of oil palm in the island where there is no vegetation as we have to save the rich floral biodiversity of the island ecosystem. The A & N administration we make use of getting scientific information from institutes like ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (NBAIR) for cross learning and establishment of a model of quarantine centres. Further to facilitate fast adoption of the technology the department can introduce some innovative techniques like payment of ecosystem (farmers who are conserving floral ecosystem producing PP& fertilizers) etc, coordinator as a linkage officer between the department and research institute, discourage export/import of seeds, planting material, livestock from mainland to island and vice versa without authorized certification.

He concluded his speech by mentioning the essential measures i.e to step up awareness among the stakeholders spread across the scattered islands, early detection of diseases and pests, integrated pest management practices and designing appropriate policy measures to safeguard the island agriculture and generation next.

Mr. Vikram Singh, DANICS, Director of Agriculture & Guest of Honour thanked the esteemed scientists of the institute for providing technological support in popularization of spices, plant protection inputs and drawing guidelines for fish policy. He asked for a joint focused programme with ICAR-CIARI on imparting training on ornamental plants, production of vegetables, fruits, spices and bee keeping. He also requested the officers of the department participating from 29 clusters to learn the technique taught for replicating the same at their respective areas.

The Guest of Honour Dr. Mani Chellapan, Dean, College of Agriculture, KAU expressed that the pest and disease problems are the same as Lakshadweep Islands. He stressed on maintenance of biodiversity and strengthening of quarantine facilities in ports. He also threw light on popularization of bee keeping and control of non-insect pests as an important step.

Dr. E. B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI & President, ASA in his Presidential address welcomed all the dignitaries, farmers, state department officials, experts from mainland and expressed his happiness on the conduct of the workshop. He put forth that with the declaration of organic farming, the farmers have become restless, as to how

to go forward with the organic inputs. A & N Islands are prone to challenges i.e both biotic and abiotic and to tackle the same one has to start their own production unit. Through this workshop he assured that the islanders and the policy makers will be benefitted by getting the insight of National level experts in the field of plant protection.

The technical session started with an invited talk on "Importance of Disease and Pest Resistant Varieties and Rootstocks in Sustainable Vegetable Production" by Dr. T.K. Behera followed by "Strategies for Sustainable Management of Important Pests and Diseases in Horticultural Crops of Andaman and Nicobar Islands" by Dr. N.K. Krishna Kumar. On 22nd March 2024 the technical session will start at Dr. T.R. Dutta conference hall at 9:00 am with an invited lecture on "Emerging Pests and Diseases in Climate Change Scenario" by Dr. Mani Chellappan followed by "Important Diseases and Pests of Plantation and Spice Crops and their Control Measures" by Dr. Vinayaka Hegde, "Quarantine Measures to check the Introduction of Invasive Pests/Pathogens in the Islands" by Dr. R. Selavarajan on "Biological Control Strategies for Major Insect Pests in Tropical Island Ecosystem" by Dr. A.N. Shylesha. Thereafter panel discussion (Experts, Director (Ag.) or nominee, Director, ICAR-CIARI, Representative from farmers or inputs suppliers' side) will be conducted. The two-day workshop is attended by around 180 participants representing farmers, students, and scientific staff. Earlier Dr. P.K. Singh, Head (Act), HCIP welcomed the august gathering and Dr. Pooja Bohra, Scientist & Member Secretary proposed vote of thanks.