

Recommendation of IAUA 2nd Regional meeting in N E on "Agriculture and Livestock in Integrated Farming System" held on 5-6 October, 2006 at CAU, Imphal

Central Agricultural University, Imphal organized Indian Agricultural University Association

Regional Conference in North-East during 5 and 6 October 2006, on "Agriculture and Livestock in Integrated Farming System" where 21 Vice-Chancellors and Directors of National Institutes (Deemed-to-be Agricultural universities) deliberated and the following recommendations emerged.

Recommendations

- A Regional Consultative Group needs to be established under the Chairmanship of the most senior VC in the region to frame education and development agenda in a partnership mode, to facilitate addressing of farmers' issues and propagation of intensive integrated farming-system models developed for the region by ICAR Research Complex.
- A Regional Referral Laboratory needs to be established in NEH Region of ICAR to promote organic agriculture and animal husbandry.
- Cultivation of maize and soybean, the two important components of animal feed, along with rice bean, and other forage and feed crops should be popularized in a mission mode with forward and backward linkages.
- Rain-water conservation for its better utilization in non-rainy or drought period will help in increasing the cropping sequence and insensitive cropping during winter (rabi) season. Shallow tube-wells will prove highly beneficial in valley areas.
- The scientists of KVKs should be given the required training to create awareness and development of technical skills in various aspects of production and components of farming systems. Women should also be a focus for training in livestock and fish farming.
- To improve the productivity and profitability of various components of farming systems like crop, animal, fishery etc., the availability of quality seed, planting material, fish seeds, chicks etc. should be ensured and necessary infrastructure should be created.
- For improving the livelihood of the farmers and farm income on year-round basis, crop diversification and integration of crops with livestock and fishery as complementary activities is the most sustainable practice.
- There is great scope to diversify the area for medicinal plants, vegetables, pulses (lentil), groundnut, soybean etc. Seeding in the standing crops of paddy with field pea, berseem etc. may be attempted. Niger is another low water-input-requiring crop, which may be tried in the area for honeybee enterprise. The under-crops of turmeric and ginger with main fruit crops may be tested in this region.

- There is a need for formation of SHGs/farmers' clubs with women empowerment along with training for post-harvest processing, value addition and marketing.
- Extensive work is needed on collection, evaluation and conservation of various crops of NE region. Wild species of paddy, vegetables, fruits, horticultural crops, under-utilized fruits, spices, ornamentals and the medicinal and aromatic plants need more emphasis.
- Indigenous livestock of NEH Region including Manipuri pony, Banpala sheep, Dam and Mali pig and wild Asiatic buffalo needs to be surveyed and characterized, both at phenotypic and molecular levels and conserved. Non-descript cows should be upgraded through crossing with Sahiwal or Gir. Backyard poultry should be encouraged and model backyard poultry farms should be established by KVKs in their areas of jurisdiction. States should develop regional livestock databank so that species-wise breeding policy can be framed with the help of NBAGR.
- Facility of credit availability at low interest rate should be provided for land development, establishing regulated markets and processing facilities.
- Role of women needs to be promoted further, especially for skill-based cottage industries and home stead farming components.
- To improve the efficiency and rate of tea-leave plucking, there is need to propagate light-weight cloth-bags for collecting the leaves and use of finger-blades for cutting the leaves instead of hand plucking.
- Value addition of fruits, vegetables, bamboo shoots, fish and bio-fuel by planting Jatropha can be taken up. Use of waterlogged areas of Assam and Tripura for cultivation, production and processing of lotus stem, makhana and singhara needs attention.
- Women should be organized at village, block and district levels. Funds by line departments like Tribal Welfare Department, Rural Development Department etc. should be released directly to women organizations. Women's grants can be issued through Micro-credit plan of village and implemented with or without bank-credit support.
- General Recommendations covering SAUs, DUs and CAUs:
 - Adoption of Model Act.
 - Enhancement of RAWE and Internship for agricultural and veterinary graduates under consideration by the ICAR should be pursued for early orders.
 - Resource crunch in SAUs, ICAR and IAUA should be taken up with Planning Commission for adequate flow of funds.
 - Conditional advertisement of NET for recruitment for SAUs may be given.
 - To make KVKs as the knowledge centre, only State Government or Line Department should take up extensive activities.