



## Scientists and Farmers Unite for Khet Bachao Abhiyan and Sustainable Agriculture in South Andaman

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**Sri Vijaya Puram, June 4:** Scientists from the ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (CIARI), in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, organized a Khet Bachao Abhiyan at Calicut village under Prothrapur Block, South Andaman, on 4 June 2026. The programme aimed to create awareness among farmers on sustainable agriculture, climate resilience, soil health management, and scientific livestock practices.

The programme was attended by Dr. Rafeeq, Senior Scientist (Animal Genetics), Dr. Puneeth, Scientist (Vegetable Science), both from CIARI, and Smt. Bebi, Assistant Technical Manager from the ATMA, Department of Agriculture. The experts interacted with farmers and addressed their concerns on crop and livestock management.

Speaking on livestock development in the context of sustainable agriculture, Dr. Rafeeq highlighted the importance of animal health management, particularly during the monsoon season when disease outbreaks are more common. He advised farmers on preventive healthcare measures, sanitation, vaccination, deworming, and proper feeding practices. He also emphasized the value of composting agricultural and animal waste to produce nutrient-rich organic manure and improve soil health.

Dr. Rafeeq further created awareness about the Goat Artificial Insemination (AI) programme and other livestock improvement initiatives being implemented by CIARI. He explained how scientific breeding practices can enhance productivity, genetic potential, and overall livestock performance. Farmers were also informed about various livestock-related services and facilities available at CIARI.

Dr. Puneeth stressed the importance of soil testing for scientific nutrient management and encouraged the balanced use of fertilizers to improve crop productivity while reducing input costs. He highlighted the benefits of organic farming, biofertilizers, and integrated nutrient management in maintaining soil fertility and environmental sustainability. He also discussed measures to prevent soil, water, and atmospheric pollution arising from agricultural activities and encouraged the adoption of eco-friendly farming practices.

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Addressing the challenges posed by climate change, Dr. Puneeth explained climate-resilient agricultural practices suitable for island ecosystems, including efficient water management, crop diversification, organic matter enrichment, and sustainable production systems. He also sensitized farmers about health and safety measures during agricultural operations, especially while handling agrochemicals and farm machinery.

In addition, Dr. Puneeth informed farmers about the availability of quality planting materials and improved crop varieties at CIARI and encouraged them to make use of the institute's technical expertise and services to enhance agricultural productivity.

Smt. Bebi shared information on the activities of ATMA and emphasized the significance of the Khet Bachao Abhiyan in strengthening farmer awareness and adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

The programme provided a valuable platform for farmers to interact directly with scientists and obtain practical solutions to field-level issues related to crop cultivation, soil fertility, livestock management, and climate adaptation. Farmers actively participated in the discussions and appreciated the efforts of CIARI and the Department of Agriculture in bringing scientific knowledge directly to the farming community.

The Khet Bachao Abhiyan reaffirmed the commitment of CIARI and the Department of Agriculture to promoting sustainable, environmentally responsible, and climate-resilient farming systems in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Such collaborative initiatives strengthen the link between research institutions and farmers, contributing to improved agricultural productivity, better livelihoods, and long-term food security in the islands. Around 25 farmers attended the programme.