

ICAR-CIARI Sensitizes Women Farmers on Balanced Fertilizer Use and Entrepreneurial Farming



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The ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute organized a farmer sensitization programme on “Balanced Use of Fertilizers and Entrepreneurial Farming” at Guptapara Panchayat on May 21, 2026, with an aim to promote sustainable nutrient management, improve soil health, and encourage entrepreneurial farming systems suitable for fragile island ecosystems.

The programme was conducted by a team of scientists comprising Dr. M. Muruganandam, Principal Scientist and Head of Fisheries Science Division, Dr. Ajit Singh Waman, Senior Scientist (Spices), and Dr. Rafeeqe Rahman Alyethodie, Senior Scientist (Animal Genetics and Breeding). The scientists addressed various aspects of integrated farming, climate resilience, and livelihood diversification, particularly for women-led groups and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Speaking during the programme, Dr. M. Muruganandam emphasized the importance of conserving soil and rainwater resources for sustainable agricultural productivity. He highlighted the need to reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers such as urea and DAP due to limited availability and environmental concerns. He advocated the increased use of organic manures, biofertilizers, vermicomposting, farmyard manure, and biological inputs, along with cultivation of legumes, pulses, beans, and Azolla for natural nitrogen enrichment. He also recommended rainwater harvesting and integrated fish farming models to improve resource-use efficiency and strengthen farm resilience.

Dr. Ajit Singh Waman highlighted the significance of indigenous and climate-resilient fruit crops that require minimal external inputs while contributing to food and nutritional security. He said promotion of native germplasm such as Cowphal, Goonphal, and Kattaphal could reduce input dependency and support sustainable farming systems. He also explained the entrepreneurial potential of spice crops, particularly cinnamon, and demonstrated scientific harvesting and bark extraction techniques for improving yield, quality, and income generation.

Addressing the participants, Dr. Rafeeqe Rahman Alyethodie spoke on livestock health management ahead of the monsoon season. He stressed the importance of vaccination, hygiene, balanced feeding, and timely veterinary care to prevent seasonal diseases and minimize economic losses in smallholder farming systems.

Village Pradhan Mr. Durlapdas highlighted the role of SHGs and farmer collectives in strengthening agricultural enterprises through collective action, value addition, and better market access within the Panchayat.

During the programme, scientists underlined that balanced nutrient management is essential for sustaining soil fertility, conserving water resources, and ensuring long-term agricultural productivity under island conditions. They stressed the integration of organic, biological, and need-based inorganic inputs to reduce production costs while maintaining environmental sustainability. The programme also featured practical demonstrations and an interactive session where farmers clarified doubts related to fertilizer use, organic inputs, biofertilizer preparation, and sustainable farming practices.

Around 45 women farmers and entrepreneurs, along with 10 progressive farmers from Guptapara, participated in the programme. Mr. Chandan Kumar, technician, and other staff members from ICAR-CIARI were also present. Farmers and Panchayat representatives expressed interest in visiting ICAR-CIARI facilities for further learning and collaboration.

The programme reaffirmed ICAR-CIARI's commitment to promoting balanced fertilizer use, sustainable nutrient management, and entrepreneurial farming systems aligned with national goals of soil health improvement, reduced chemical dependency, and resilient agricultural development in island ecosystems.