

Scientists, Farmers Discuss Sustainable Agriculture During Khet Bachao Abhiyan at Calicut



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Scientists from the ICAR–Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (CIARI), in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, A&N Administration, conducted a Khet Bachao Abhiyan at Calicut village under Prothrapur Block in South Andaman on Wednesday to promote sustainable farming practices, climate resilience, soil health management, and scientific livestock development.

The programme brought together around 25 farmers, who interacted directly with agricultural scientists and experts to discuss practical solutions to challenges related to crop cultivation, soil fertility, livestock management, and climate adaptation.

Among those present were Dr. Rafeeq, Senior Scientist (Animal Genetics), Dr. Puneeth, Scientist (Vegetable Science), both from CIARI, and Ms. Bebi, Assistant Technical Manager, ATMA, Department of Agriculture.

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

Ms. Bebi briefed the farmers on various activities being implemented under the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and underscored the significance of the Khet Bachao Abhiyan in enhancing awareness and encouraging the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.

Farmers actively participated in the interactive session and appreciated the efforts of CIARI and the Department of Agriculture in bringing scientific knowledge and technical guidance directly to the farming community.

The programme reaffirmed the commitment of CIARI and the Department of Agriculture to promoting environmentally responsible and climate-resilient farming systems in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, while strengthening the link between research institutions and farmers for improved agricultural productivity, livelihoods, and long-term food security.

Dr. Rafeeq further created awareness about the Goat Artificial Insemination (AI) programme and other livestock improvement initiatives being undertaken by CIARI. He explained that scientific breeding practices could help enhance livestock productivity, improve genetic potential, and strengthen overall animal performance. Farmers were also informed about various livestock-related services available at the institute.

Speaking on crop production and environmental sustainability, Dr. Puneeth stressed the importance of soil testing and balanced fertilizer application for scientific nutrient management. He encouraged farmers to adopt organic farming, biofertilizers, and integrated nutrient management practices to maintain soil fertility while reducing input costs.

He also highlighted measures to prevent soil, water, and atmospheric pollution arising from agricultural activities and urged farmers to adopt eco-friendly farming practices. Addressing the growing challenges of climate change, Dr. Puneeth discussed climate-resilient farming techniques suitable for island ecosystems, including efficient water management, crop diversification, enrichment of soil organic matter, and sustainable production systems.

The scientist also sensitized farmers about safety precautions during agricultural operations, particularly while handling agrochemicals and farm machinery. He informed participants about the availability of quality planting materials and improved crop varieties at CIARI and encouraged them to utilize the institute's technical expertise and services.