

NBSC organised training programme on Integrated farming system through IIFSR, Modipuram

Integrated farming system (IFS) has gained priority in recent times in India. Research and studies done in recent past shows that the IFS has the unique ability to enhance the income level of farmers as also mitigate the production and marketing risks of farmers.

Realising the importance given by our TMT, NBSC organised a customised training programme on IFS during 27 to 29 January, 2021 for Grade A/ B/ C officers. A total of 23 trainees attended the programme. The programme was organised with the help of Indian Institute of Farming System (IIFSR), Modipuram, Meerut. This is an ICAR institute, working, inter alia, on developing suitable agro-climatic region based IFS models both in the research stations and farmers' fields. Shri Subrat Kumar Nanda, Faculty Member was the Programme Director.

Dr. A. S. Panwar, Director of the institute welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of the integrated farming system in Indian context. He indicated that IIFSR is working on developing suitable IFS models for different agro-climatic regions of the country through its 74 research sub-centres and have so far already developed 34 models. These models are also being field tested in the farmers' fields and suitably modified.

Shri S. K. Dora, Principal, NBSC highlighted some of the critical issues being confronted by the Indian farmers. He mentioned that average size of the operational landholding is declining fast and as per estimate, the average size of holding in India would be mere 0.32 ha in 2030. Declining size of landholdings without any alternative income augmenting opportunity is resulting in fall of farm income, and causing agrarian distress. The issue is more profound in rain-fed regions of our country. Keeping in view the declining income level of farmers, he opined that IFS is one of the powerful interventions to tackle such problems of the farmers.

The technical sessions were handled by scientists and researchers working in IFS models of different agro-climatic regions. The programme schedule is attached.

The major takeaways of the programme are given below;

1. IFS models are feasible for small farm holders in all agro-climatic regions of the country
2. Adoption of IFS models by the small & marginal farmers in their fields have resulted in the increase of gross income levels by a minimum of 30% over the control ones
3. There is reduction of cost of inputs by a minimum of 50% by 3rd year of introduction of IFS as output of one system is used as input for another system in IFS
4. The farmers observed risk reduction on account of natural calamities, pest attacks and also market price fluctuation due to the combination of different sub-systems within the overall IFS.

However, the major challenges being faced are; lack of farmers' awareness and also lack of awareness at bankers' level. The suggestions emerged from the programme are as under;

1. IIFSR shall send the list of 74 sub centres working under All India Co-ordinated Research Project on IFS with contact details to NBSC and NBSC, in turn, shall share the same with FSPD, HO for onward transmission to all ROs and DDMs.
2. FSPD, HO shall advise ROs to attempt preparation of unit costs of suitable IFS models and facilitate approval by SLUCC.
3. ROs may also facilitate DDMs for fixation of scale of finance of crops/ activities under such IFS models.
4. ROs and DDMs can contact the scientists based in the sub-centres seeking help in finalisation of unit cost models and scale of finance.