



Newsletter

GOOD FARMING – GOOD FOOD

Issue : 04

April 2021

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Good Farming - Good Food

Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security and Transforming Smallholders' Livelihood
Solidaridad Asia



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Ground Activities Summer Deep Ploughing Training

Tillage or ploughing might look like an insignificant and undemanding task, but its implementation has a deep-seated theory of agronomic significance. In layman's term, Tillage is the manipulation of the soil with the help of tools and implements, which would help create favourable soil conditions for better seed germination and subsequent growth of crops. Soil tillage is crucial for preparing a seedbed, mixing manure, litter and soil, and controlling weeds throughout the growing season.



These actions aim to provide a suitable environment for seed germination and crop root development while suppressing weeds, controlling soil erosion, and maintaining adequate soil moisture.

The depth of tillage was limited mainly to the upper crust back when the technology was undeveloped. As soon as the plough improved, the farmers began to increase the depth of tillage. Nowadays, plough plays a crucial

role in defining the soil structure before sowing starts. Many tillage methods have also been evolved, and it is

FROM THE PEN OF PROGRAMME COORDINATOR



Dear Esteemed Readers,

The month of April comes as a great shock and awe to the world. With the rise in COVID-19 cases, the time has come to stand in solidarity with the nation and extend all possible help to the needy. To check the spread of disease, it is of utmost importance that we keep a check on our activities

and movement. The government has laid stringent guidelines to restrict the movement of people. In hopes of flattening the curve, our programme and its partners are acting in accordance with the request.

This is, of course, a testing time for all of us. With the objective of keeping our field agents and farmers safe and sound, the training activities have now been conducted over online communication platforms. The decision has been taken to minimise personal interaction and break the chain of Covid 19 spread.

The training organised throughout the month highlighted activities like Deep Summer Ploughing, Impact of Stubble Burning, Yield Assessment etc. Our team was fortunate enough to celebrate World Health Day with the farming community before the *Junta Curfew* was enacted. Nutrition training continued through online communication channel as well. The revival of group video calling after almost a year under similar circumstances is not as challenging as it was the first time. Farmers are now much more aware of the technological bend required for training purposes.

We also aim to spread awareness about Covid-19 and remind the farmers about its guidelines and precautions every time we engage with the farmers. I hope the dark clouds of pandemic upon our country would soon clear out; till then, we're happy to be in touch with our farmers and stakeholders through the recommended communication channels.

Last but not the least, everyone associated with the programmes shares their gratitude to Netherlands Enterprise Agency for supporting the programme like a pillar.

Our Newsletters are released every month, and partners are invited to share their side of the story and experience under the programme Good Farming – Good Food.

Dr Suresh Motwani

Programme Coordinator

Good Farming - Good Food



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Summer Deep Ploughing Training

thus essential to find tillage methods that promote the highest possible productivity.

One of the well known and widely practised methods across the Indian subcontinent is Deep Summer Ploughing. Exercised once every three years, deep ploughing is preferably done from mid-March to mid-May. As one of the essential activities after the harvesting, Deep Ploughing is done across the field, during the hot summer days, with the help of mechanical tools. The activity exposes the soil crust to the disinfecting warmth of the sun by overturning the soil underneath the fields. The farmers from the five districts of Madhya Pradesh took active participation in learning about the process. In sessions spread across the month of April, farmers were briefed about the ideal depth that should be maintained to expose the weed, weed seeds, harmful soil-borne diseases, and pest present deep inside the soil. The exposed portion of the earth is also allowed to be ventilated through this process which helps in improving water absorption, water retention and soil conservation capability of the farmland.

The process also helps loosen the soil, which in turn makes it easier to remove the crop residue. The collected crop residue can be converted into manure by using it in the compost along with the application of a waste decomposer for better composting results. Some of the stubble is also turned inside the soil layers, serving as a soil nutrient after disintegrating through natural decay. In

short, deep ploughing improves the water-holding capacity of the soil, soil aeration and weed control. It also helps pulverise soil for a better tilth, harmful spore and sclerotium of Pathogen get exposed to intense heat and solar radiation, which ultimately neutralise it. Besides the larvae and pupa present in the soil, crevices are also exposed to the summer heat, and birds also feed upon it.

Once the cultivation area is deeply ploughed, farmers can use cultivator or bakhar to turn the large chunks of soil into the crumbled surface and ready the farm for sowing. It was recommended to use the cultivator twice for better results. Breaking the upper rigid layer and improving the permeability of the soil increases the chances of moisture conservation. The plant roots subsequently receive better hold and moisture during their growth. Several field demos were given to the lead farmers throughout the month.

Deep ploughing every three years gives favourable results in soybean cultivation. While preparing the fields, the farmers are also requested to leave drains every 25 meters so that the extra water may exit through the channel during heavy and unexpected rains.

Good Farming – Good Food and its esteemed partners have organised numerous training sessions for the farmers of Madhya Pradesh in hopes of bringing sustainability and profitability to the farming community. The farmers have reciprocated the commitment by actively becoming a part of sustainable development.



Ground Activities

Negative Impact of Stubble Burning

It is almost common to see the burning of straw and stubble every year after the harvest. Farmers in India burn the remaining stubble on their farmland to prepare their fields for the subsequent wheat crop. The burning of this crop residue causes massive air pollution affecting lakhs of people through degrading air quality. Many environmental agencies and government have highlighted

the need to address the shortcoming of this method. The method has been so widely accepted that it has become challenging to help the farmers adopt alternative means of preparing fields.

For the farmer's enrolled under the guidance of the programme Good Farming – Good Food, training and awareness drive on the negative impact of stubble burning was





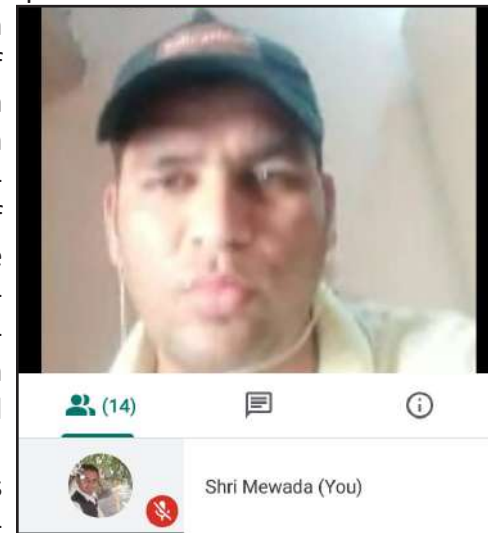
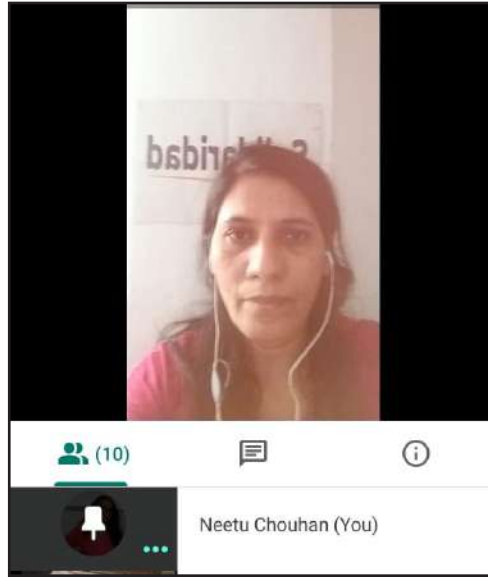
GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Negative Impact of Stubble Burning

organised in the month of April. The burning of crop residue, especially after the harvest of Wheat in the Rabi season, is relatively a common sight in the month of April- May. The farmers of Madhya Pradesh have increasingly rested on the practice of burning the crop residue to clear out the fields for the next crop. Burning wheat remains after harvesting degrades the soil quality and affects the physical and engineering properties of soil.

Soil is most vulnerable to the generated char, which in turn reduces the nutrient budget of soil besides creating an adverse effect on its absorbency and porousness qualities of the soil. This incineration of plant residue also increases the chances of soil erosion and decreases the pH level (acidity) of soil, and reduces the microorganism in soil necessary for its fertility. With respect to the air quality during harvesting periods, the open burning of agricultural residues releases a large number of pollutants into the atmosphere, including aerosols and hydrocarbons. The air pollution burden from field burning is imposed upon all the residents of the area.

The reasons for burning the fields are based on economic considerations. The removal of stubble from the ground is a labour-intensive process and requires investment in both time and money. But the damage done



by residue burning and its eventual impact on soil leads to unprecedented loss in productivity. There is a need to raise awareness amongst the farmers about the cause-and-effect relationship of stubble burning. In sessions organised across the five districts of Madhya Pradesh, farmers were briefed about the soil and air quality degradation as its result. For many of the farmers, the disseminated information regarding the degradation of soil characteristics was relatively novel. They were also told that the practice has now become a social issue, where the farmers have to spread the educating advisories around the farming community.

The farmers were also shown how to utilise the remaining residue and use it either as fodder for their husbandries or make good compost out of the same. The compost can also be made effectively by using a waste decomposer. The farmers can also recycle the residue in the soil by turning the soil through ploughing and letting the residue naturally decompose and replenish the soil. These practices will help improve soil health, increase productivity, reduce pollution, and enhance the sustainability and resilience of agriculture.

In hopes of changing the outlook, Good Farming – Good Food, along with its partners and farming community, strives to build an environment-friendly farming ecosystem that is sustainable, productive, and beneficial for the farmers.

Ground Activities

Importance of Trap Crops in Soybean Farming

There are many modern agricultural practices, such as the widespread use of pesticides and intensified use of land, which directly or indirectly causes large scale losses to biodiversity. Such practices also leave a heavy impact on our ecosystem, which is vital for successful and sustainable farming. Pest and weed control through chemically-laden methods can pass to the grains and food consumed by us. The farmers also depend highly on such quick measures, especially in pest management, which

gives fast results, but in exchange, the heavy price is paid when the pesticide residue is transferred to the food chain. Reversing such an impact on farm biodiversity loss remains a difficult challenge for most of the farmers.

The ease of their availability also motivates the farmers to opt for synthetically produced pesticides. The lack of technical knowledge behind the pesticides uses further complicates the condition. There is a need to change the mentality which prefers easy solution to the problems.





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Importance of Trap Crops in Soybean Farming

Moreover, the farmers also need to realise the detrimental impact of chemically induced ways of pest prevention.

Good Farming – Good Food, organised a training session for the farmers of Madhya Pradesh to enlighten their knowledge on trap crops. As a farm diversification scheme, trap cropping is beneficial in pest management. Trap crops are highly attractive to pests and can protect the host plants nearby. It generally pairs one pest attracting crop species with one less pest attracting crop, which is also economically valuable. With trap crops, the pest can be attracted to a specific place and then destroyed with a better target achievement and fewer pesticides. Identifying a more attractive trap crop than the main crop is fundamental for successful pest control with this strategy. Trap crop also helps nurture the growth of crop protecting insects by shielding them from pesticides.

Each crop has its specific trap crop like- Okra for Cotton bordered with Marigold around the fencing would prevent Bollworm infestation, Marigold rows with Tomatoes and Potatoes would prevent the crop from Helicoverpa infestation. Similarly, in Soybean crops, Anethum Graveolens, commonly known as Suva, effectively controls Lepi-

dopteran defoliators who are known to destroy soybean crops aggressively. The effect of semi-looper pest and

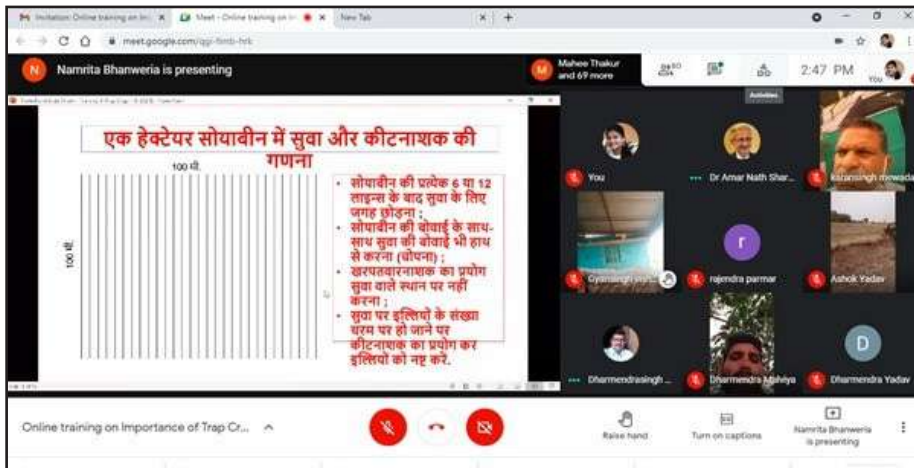
tobacco cutworm on soy cultivation is observed to decrease five times and three times when grown with Suva.

Dr A N Sharma, an eminent pest expert, during his presentation, elaborated on how to lay the rows when sowing the soy crop and the distance between the rows. He also requested the participants to follow the do' and don'ts with the trap crops, like the precautions when using weedicides, the density of Suva crop etc.

Online sessions like these provide the participants to clear their doubts and queries. A Q&A session was organised where the farmers showed interest in procuring Suva seeds for their crops. The participat-

ing farmers were also provided with support that can be acquired from FPOs near them for the procurement of seeds.

Good Farming – Good Food, along with its partners, strives to bring the farming community close to sound and sustainable agricultural practices through effective online communication channels.



Ground Activities

Yield Assessment Training

Agricultural statistics are a vital part of agricultural planning and management. It is not just the farmers but also the government and agriculture-based players who are interested in accessing the size of crop harvest. The harvest estimation helps the farmer and the government make a conservative food balance and ensure food secu-

rity for a particular period of time.

Farmers from developing and underdeveloped countries have often encountered difficulties in making the correct appraisal of their crops due to a lack of resources and guidance. Good Farming – Good Food and its partners organised a number of training sessions for the farmers of





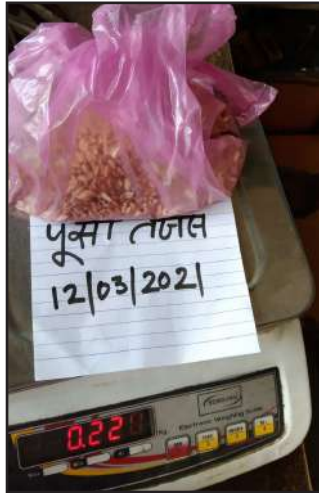
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Yield Assessment Training

Madhya Pradesh on yield assessment and its data management. The crop-season-long process, in which the lead and participating farmers are encouraged to participate, starts with selecting a demonstration plot from the total area of cultivation. The controlled plot (rest of the plot) is prepared and maintained by the practices followed by the farmer, whereas recommended and good agricultural practices by the field experts of Solidaridad are employed in the demo plot.

The demonstration plot also serves as a training ground for the farmers enrolled in the programme. The variety of seed grown in the demonstration plots differs from the one in the controlled plot. While the farmer is allowed to maintain his own choice of variety, the one chosen for the demo plot also goes through various practices like germination test and seed treatment.

The farmers and the field agents maintain a detailed record of the applied practices under land preparation. Records on- soil testing, type of composting, amount of urea used, sowing methods, row to row distance maintained, seed rate, type of pest and weed found during the cultivation, type and amount of pesticide used, planting and harvesting dates etc. are maintained throughout the season for both the plots. The maintained records help in chalking out the cost, quality, income analysis by the end of harvesting and storage practices. It conclusively brings forth detailed compar-



tives.

The yield assessment process starts with selecting four to five sample collection area from both plots. A square meter of the area is brought under the sample collection, and the number of plants, number of pods per plant, plants per square metre, number of grains per pods or ear in a plant per square metre, weight of grains per square metre etc. is brought under records for comparative analysis. The results are then made available to the farmers. The data was collected throughout March and April of the Rabi season.

The entire data and associated activities serve as a training and learning exercise and an educative measure towards record keeping and its associated comparative benefits for future yields. On a personal level, the farmers often

find it challenging to bring a comparison between their yield from the last year and the current year. If done correctly, the comparison would help the farmer highlight the increase or decrease in yield due to change in weather, agricultural inputs or any other causes. Accordingly, the farmers can plan their next crop, decide the appropriate agrarian inputs, and eventually benefit from the information.

The programme Good Farming – Good Food has brought many farmers under the learning process of yield assessment and strives to educate more in the coming years about its benefits.



Nutrition Bulletin

NutriSakhi Training

Nutri Sakhi shapes as the frontline force of Nutrition aspect of Programme Good Farming – Good Food. Their presence and joint action towards conveying the message of nutrition has benefited numerous families so far. With a motive to transform the health of the rural sector, especially the women and children in the farming commu-

nity, Nutri Sakhis have constantly participated in training and nutrition programmes. These training and orientation programmes are held to improve and upgrade their awareness of key nutrition aspects.

Although the movement of Nutri Sakhis is restricted due to Covid 19 restrictions, they virtually participated in



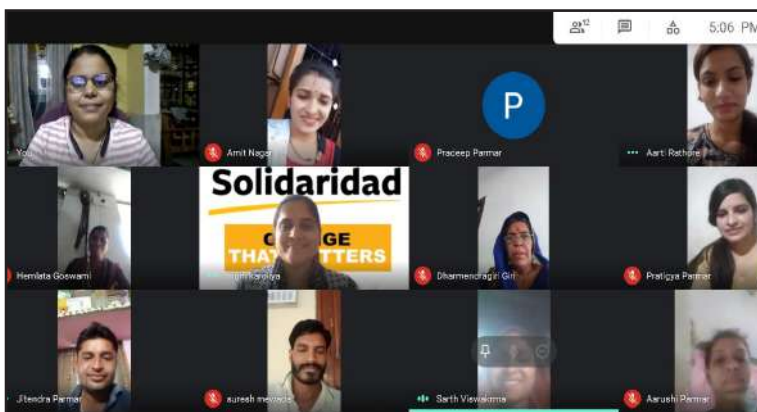
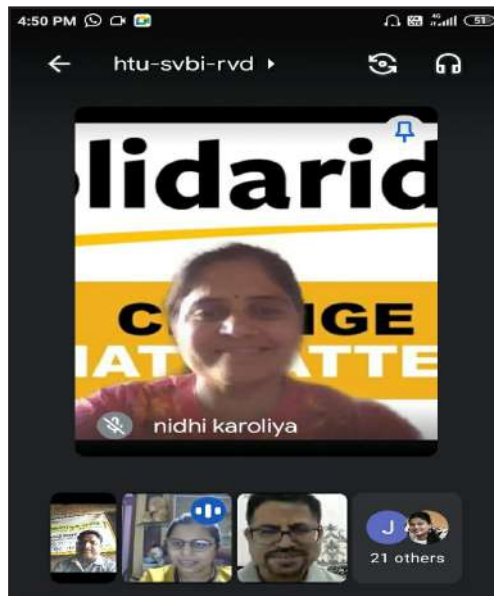
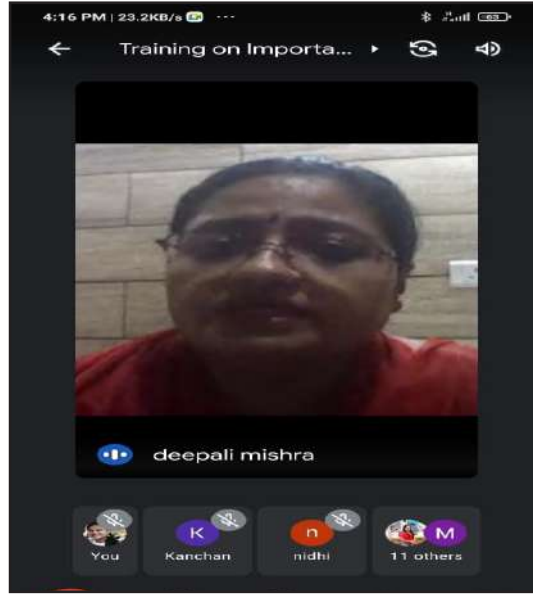


GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

NutriSakhi Training

many training and orientation programmes in the month of April. The underlying principle behind such seminars is to increase one's capability and engagement through improved knowledge retention. Education boosts a feeling of value in work and strengthens morale. It promotes commitment to the cause and ensures an overall satisfaction of working with confidence. This has helped a number of Nutri Sakhis to reach out to the women farmers with correct information on

The programme aims to reach out to more than 55000 farmers by utilising digital solutions during a pandemic and personal interventions throughout the year. This would help to strengthen the health, hygiene and nutrition status of malnourished children and women who need such assistance the most. A number of families in the rural communities are found following below the par standards of a daily diet. This has endangered the growth of children and the overall health of women, especially pregnant women. A number of farming communities faces the grim challenges of anaemia in their families. A protein-based diet with the richness of adequate vegetables has become an out-an-out necessity for such families. Much more perturbing is the current state of awareness within the community. Along with this basic nutritional training, the programme also initiated a ground-level study. Through household surveys, nutrition experts have discovered that many of the women fail to include the legume and vegetables grown on their farms in their daily diets. Such farm produce is explicitly kept for its commercial clearance. A part of their produce can be easily diverted towards the family to fulfil their daily nutritional needs, and Nutri Sakhis have unremit-



tingly requested the farming families to adopt the approach.

To bring diversity to one's meal, Nutri Sakhis are trained in disseminating various recipes that can be made from soy. Many of the farming communities have now started including Soy in their daily diet with a diverse range of options, especially through soy flour, nuggets and milk, all derived from soybeans. Therefore, an extensive training and orientation programme under the nutrition banner becomes necessary to accomplish the programme's nutritional objectives.

The online training sessions discuss in detail the daily nutritional requirement for the family and the proper intake that a family should take based on different season and temperature. A number of food items like soy chunks, soy milk, and tofu can be made easily at home. The sessions also covered nutrition-related ailments and all the related information to be propagated amongst the farming community. The diseases which are directly related to iron and protein deficiencies are highlighted in such sessions.

Nutri Gardens plays an essential role in fighting the eclipsing problem of malnutrition through ingraining the habit of producing vegetables at the back of the farmer's house. During the training sessions conducted for the Nutri Sakhis, they are instructed on the types of vegetables and plants that can be grown in a small area. The instructions are then carried to the farming communities through an organised training session by Nutri Sakhis.

This constant perseverance towards the nutrition goals is aimed at securing the nutritional status of the farming community. Good Farming - Good Food, along with its partners, strives to bring good food to every doorstep.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Nutrition Bulletin

Training on Micro and Macro Nutrients

People in the older times ate a diet consisting mainly of fresh plant foods, which included seeds, nuts, roots, grains and beans, and fruits along with other essential supplements. They consumed carbohydrates like whole grains, which are rich in fibre, vitamin E, and minerals. It is no surprise that our diet today is significantly different from what our ancestors ate. Humans are not built to thrive on a highly refined, micronutrient-depleted diet like fast food. Such dietary consumption has lately dragged the nutrition and health index to a scarily low level.

In most developing countries, women and children are exposed to the risk of vitamin A, iron, protein, and zinc deficiencies and, consequently, susceptible to anaemia and other malnutrition-related ailments. It is also observed that the children are particularly exposed to such conditions as they shift their diet from breastfeeding to family foods with inadequate nutritional quality. The bioavailable nutrients are particularly essential for young and growing children and can be easily derived from a well-maintained daily diet rich in vegetables and protein.

Good Farming – Good Food regularly organises detailed educative sessions for the women farmers of Madhya Pradesh, discussing the role of micro and macronutrients in one's diet. The sessions are designed to furnish information that leaves a lasting impact on its attendees' diet behaviour. It has been observed that poor knowledge of the nutritional benefits and the increasing disregard of the new generation for nutrient-rich food contribute to the underutilisation of their micronutrients. Significant knowledge gaps still exist in the population about such foods, and constant efforts to spread awareness around health has taken a front seat.

Micronutrients include dietary and endogenous antioxidants, B-vitamins, and certain minerals, whereas mac-

ronutrients primarily include fats, carbohydrates, and proteins. Antioxidants have the natural ability to reduce oxidative stress and inflammation. They also play an essential role in healthy ageing and the prevention and improved management of acute diseases. Modern researchers and medical practitioners have discovered that with optimum utilisation of micro and macronutrients, daily illness can be treated, and in many cases, completely prevented. This may help in reducing the cost and resources that are often diverted towards modern medicines and therapies.

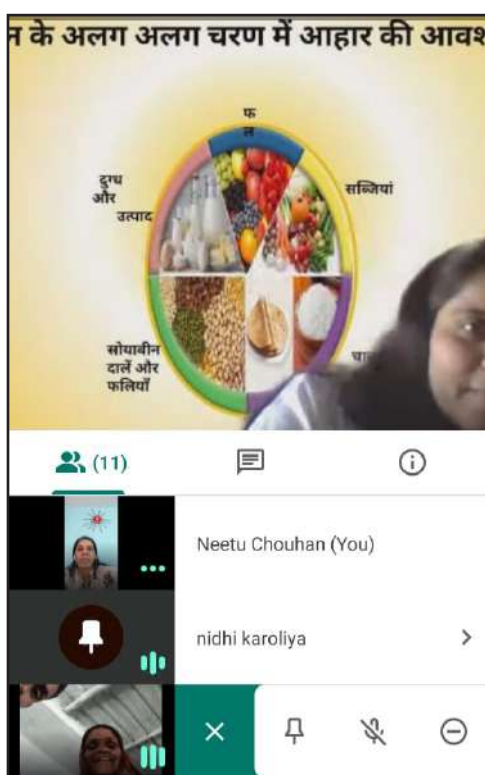
During the training sessions, the trainers and Nutri Sakhis explains the working of nutrition in one's body. Micronutrients can be considered as the fundamental components of every cell in the body. They assist as chemical messen-

gers, building blocks, and enzymes for the new and existing cells and tissues. For tissues (combined cells) to function efficiently, all nutrients should be present in the precise amount, at the correct time and in the proper form. Our body constantly metabolises micronutrients by breaking them down and replacing the utilised ones with new ones. Because these nutrients are not stored in our body, a regular and regulated daily intake becomes essential to maintain the recovery of exhausted cells and tissues.

The nutrition experts also highlight the most nutritionally useful dishes based on the food consumption survey of the locality. Soybean rich food and green leafy vegetables take the centre place in such discussions. They are often readily available and cheap, and contribute to

improving the micronutrient quality and diversity of local diets, and could lessen the burden of malnourishment.

The sessions' participants are introduced to the benefits of Vitamin A, B, C, E, Calcium and protein. As an elaboration to each vitamin, its sources like vegetables, pulses and legumes, are exchanged within the meetings.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Training on Micro and Macro Nutrients

Amending deficiencies and instabilities in health by providing the missing nutrients has proved to be a powerful new therapeutic approach for recovery.

Many women farmers have readily adopted the recipes and shares the knowledge amongst their community

through different communication tools. Good Farming – Good Food, along with its partners, have constantly tried to bring a behavioural change in the farming community’s diet and uplift the nutritional status of farmers in Madhya Pradesh.

Nutrition Bulletin

World Health Day Awareness

World Health Day, 7 April, is an annual event that marks the anniversary of the enactment of the Constitution of the World Health Organization. Every year, the day is celebrated by spreading awareness and support around crucial public health issues. People throughout the world are encouraged to consider their health needs and ways to improve people’s health in their communities. This encouragement in participation would help spread an understanding of the prevalent problems and the pathway to their eradication.

On World Health Day 2021, in the drive towards health for the farming community of Madhya Pradesh, women

farmers from village Semradangi (Sehore) took active participation in an educative session planned for them on behalf of Solidaridad. The World Health Day 2021 was themed around health and nutrition security and labelled as “Building a fairer, healthier world for everyone”. In an attempt to spread the word of nutrition during the challenging time of a global pandemic, the nutrition team from Solidaridad, under the collective banner of Good farming – Good Food, invited numerous women farmers to join the discussions.

The poverty that exists in the rural sectors is well known. Lack of guidance and livelihood, when combined, trickles down to the change in the diet of the community. Within the challenging circumstance, many families opt for cheap and unhealthy alternatives. Most of the households in the farming community are unaware of the nutrition status of their community. Many families are unfamiliar with the necessary nutritional requirements for the members, who range from young to elderly. Farmers are unaware of the nutritional benefits that they can derive from their harvested crop.

In Good Farming – Good Food, the farmers are also assisted in identifying the nourishment that can be derived out of their cash crops. Soy, a significant crop in Madhya Pradesh, is famous for its nutritional benefits. With its heavy protein supplementing profile, Soy has proved beneficial for women and children of all ages. During the celebration of World Health Day, the nutrition experts of Good Farming – Good Food engaged the participants in a dialogue focused on improving the quality of life for women of all ages; living in rural communities through better health and dietary habits.

The session started with an elaborate discussion and presentation on the ailments prevalent in women, followed by how some minor changes in one’s diet can help overcome such challenges. The presentation included various soy-based recipes that can be made at home with much ease. There are many food items that can be made



from soybeans. Soy milk, tofu and chunks carry high nutrition value and are easy to prepare as well. Products like Soy milk and tofu are a good replacement for milk-based products like paneer and is a good protein alternative for lactose intolerant.

The participants also took a keen interest in clearing their doubts during the Q and A session. Many participants committed to good food constituting green-leafy vegetables and protein-based recipes made out of Soy at the end of the session. The celebration of World Health Day ended with refreshments and dissemination of Covid 19 related guidelines and precautions.

Communication of information related to rural health and health services; quality of life; health promotion strategies; and policy forms the foundation of nutrition aspect under Good Farming – Good Food.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Nutrition Bulletin

Prescribed Soy Recipe for the Month

Soybean Sabzi

“ Soybean is a complete protein as it contain all eight amino acids essential for human health. ”

Ingredients



- 1 cup soybeans (175 grams) (soaked for 6 to 7 hours)
- 2 medium sized tomatoes (150 grams)
- 2 medium sized onions (120 grams)
- 5 garlic cloves (5 grams)
- 2 green chillies
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 tablespoon coriander
- 1 teaspoon coriander powder
- ½ spoon cumin
- ½ spoon turmeric
- ½ spoon red chilli powder
- ½ spoon asafoetida
- ½ spoon garam masala
- Lemon juice (as per one's liking)

Method

- Boil the soaked soybeans in salted after washing it thoroughly
- Cut the garlic, green chillies, onions, and tomatoes in small pieces
- Heat the oil in a pan and add cumin and asafoetida
- Wait till the cumin turns brown, then add garlic, green chillies, onions, and tomatoes and cook the vegetables for 10 minutes in slow flame
- When the tomatoes appear cooked, add the boiled soybeans and mix well
- Add salt to taste
- Add water according to one's taste and requirement
- Garnish the dish with finely cut coriander and add lemon juice to add a tangy flavour to the dish

Ingredients	Grams	Protein	Iron (mg)
Soybean	175	75.3	18.2
Tomatoes	150	2.85	2.7
Onion	120	2.16	1.44
In total	445	80.16	22.34



GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

FPO Newsdesk

Updates for the Month of April

Farmer Producer Organisation has the capability to offer innumerable benefits to the farmers of India. In the context of smallholder agriculture in India, the potential spreads across a wide array of agricultural solutions.

Farmer Producer organisation can be roughly defined as an involvement-based organisation or a collection of many such organisations with elected representatives accountable to their representatives. It can be viewed as a hybrid of private companies and cooperative societies working in the sphere of collective agricultural improvement.

The robust institutional framework of FPOs can uphold agricultural productivity scenario and promote sustainable agriculture. FPOs also helps in rebinding the fragmented and unorganised farming sector, especially in cases where farmers with marginal landholdings face various issues relating to credit, market access, and technology adoption. By organising themselves into FPOs, the smallholder farmers stand to reap the benefits of open market economy and collective bargaining and serve the larger purpose of poverty reduction and farmer's/rural sector's capacity building.

Good Farming – Good Food and its partners encourage FPOs and assist farmers in materialising their resources and emerge as FPOs in their areas. In April, many capacity building meets were organised for the Board of Directors (BOD) across the five districts of Madhya Pradesh. BODs of Nandel Krishak Producer Company (Dewas) and Sadbhavna Kisan Producer company (Makdon) took part in the meetings, which elaborated on characteristics of a good producer organisation. The sessions discussed key topics like the identity of an organisation and the necessity of inclusiveness as a team. The members should be aware of the organisational activities and its financial status. The session also elaborated on the necessity to include more members and expand the size of FPO by inviting more farmers to participate. The session also highlighted FPO's bye-laws enshrined under its Article of Association. The members collectively discussed the business opportunities for the FPOs like setting up of farm mechanisation centres, in-

puts and quality seeds production etc.

The members were also proposed to share capital mobilisation and start regular training cum resource centres. Many such training centres are planned under FPOs in seven different locations to provide all necessary resources for farmer training. Solidaridad would provide the training and technical support for the training centres. Similarly, themed sessions were organised for the members of FPO Utthaan (Phanda) and Sarthi (Sonkachh). The sessions highlighted the role, responsibilities of BOD along with the functioning of FPOs. Rakshika FPO, an all-women farmers' FPO, also assembled its BODs for a session on the importance of increasing members in FPOs. Such exclusive all-women FPOs would throw light on the crucial role played by women farmers in the farming community of Madhya Pradesh. Frequent BoD meetings would finally help build an organised system of higher price realisation for better livelihood.



In Agar, Samarth Kisan Producer Company has undertaken Wheat procurement on a massive scale and has profited a number of associated farmers. With support from the district authority, FPO has been provided with an additional procurement centre of 6500 MT capacity

in village Nipaniya Baijnath. The FPO also procures wheat from the farmers while providing them with 150 Rs per quintal more than the Market Selling Price. Through such transparent procurement policies, farmers are assured of MSP on their produce and can save themselves from the distortive price ruled by traders and intermediaries. By the end of April, more than 350 farmers had sold their produce in both the centres under Samarth Kisan Producer Company. Under the banner of Good Farming – Good Food, Solidaridad constantly provides support in the documentation and logistics like registration, messaging about procurement, MSP, weighing, storage in the target areas etc.

Under the correct and astute guidance, many other FPOs are likely to come up soon. Good Farming – Good Food aspires to guide all budding FPOs into sustainable organisations.



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Partner's Broadcast

Field Activities

East-West Seeds



In a joint online training session organised by East-West Seed and Solidaridad, the participating farmers from the five district of Madhya Pradesh were trained in Drip Irrigation, Mulching (by East-West Seed) and Vermicompost (by Solidaridad).

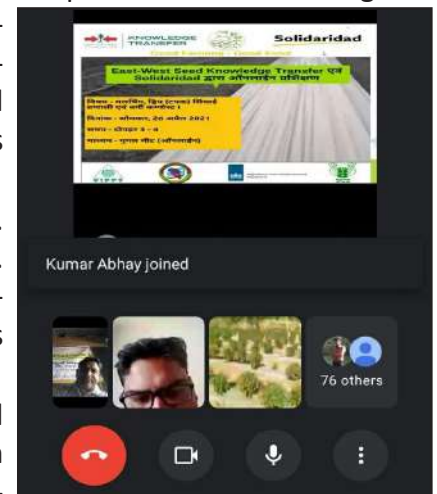
The drip irrigation method promotes the efficient use of water resources. In drip irrigation, the water is applied only where it is needed in contrast to sprinkler or flood irrigation, which increases the chance of water runoff. It is also helpful in steep terrain and soil that does not absorb water easily. The farmers were also told how it could encourage less weed growth because only a limited area is wetted through drip irrigation. Through the session, farmers received a chance to improve their farming and irrigation practices by understanding low-cost and efficient irrigation.

Similarly, the farmers also learned about Mulching from the experts. They were shown how the weed seeds are blocked from sunlight and prevented from germinating when mulching is used. The soil also retains water for a more extended period of time, especially during summers.

Experts from Solidaridad enlightened the participants about the benefits of vermicompost and its use during land preparation. Vermicompost is essentially a soil enhancer made by decomposing organic waste with the help of worms. Organic waste can be broken down and fragmented rapidly by earthworms which have potentially high economic value as a soil conditioner for plant growth. The farmers took great interest in learning the process of vermicomposting.

The farmers appreciated the effort, especially during times of restricted mobility. They also received an opportunity to clarify their doubts at the end of the session. Under the banner of Good Farming - Good Food, farmers would receive similar educative exercises through the best possible communication medium, and its partners strive to strengthen such efforts.

EWS has been actively encouraging farmers by bringing their success stories to social media platform and posting educational content to keep the farming community in loop of latest development. Team EWS has been largely successful in mobilising farmers to spread awareness amongst them. They have successfully pooled their resources to bring a lasting change in the farming habits of Madhya Pradesh's farmers and their involvement is praiseworthy.



Samarth Producer Company



Samarth Kisan Producer Company has been tirelessly exhibiting promising results from the district of Agar. The BoDs are actively performing and assisting in procurement during the harvest season.

This has benefitted a number of associated farmers from the area. Samarth Producer Company was also successful in acquiring an additional procurement centre of 6500 MT capacity in village Nipaniya Baijnath with support from the district authorities. The FPO also procures wheat from the farmers while providing them with 150 Rs per quintal more than the Market Selling Price. Through such trans-





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

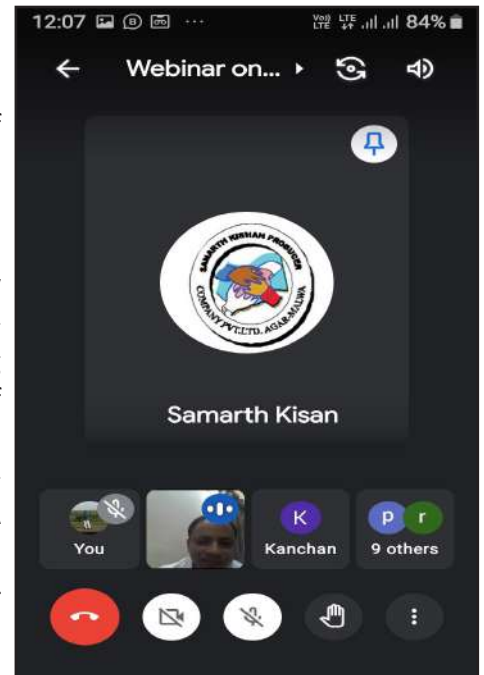
Field Activities

parent procurement policies, farmers are assured of MSP on their produce and can save themselves from the distortive price ruled by traders and intermediaries. By the end of April, more than 350 farmers had sold their produce in both the centres operational under Samarth Kisan Producer Company. Under the banner of Good Farming – Good Food, Solidaridad constantly supports documentation and logistic requirements like registration, messaging about procurement, MSP, weighing, storage in the target areas etc.



Samarth has also actively supported rural entrepreneurs. Many rural entrepreneurs facilitate Wheat aggregation by ensuring quality parameters as fixed by the organisation and helping farmers in logistics. The Solidaridad provides support in documentation and logistics arrangement to the entrepreneurs while enabling communication with the farmers and scheduling the procurement date at the centre.

Samarth’s Nipaniya Baijnath’s collection centre procured more than 20000 quintals of Wheat from 471 farmers at the Minimum Support Price of 1975 per quintal. Samarth’s Agar collection centre procured 18000 quintals from the farmers and provided an additional 150 Rs bonus over and above MSP to every farmer. More than 350 farmers have availed the bonus. The procurement was done based on a fair average quality ratio of 10:1:1 of moisture, inert matter, and foreign material. Additionally, 500 quintals of Chana (Chickpeas) at 5100 Rs per quintal were also procured from the farmers. Samarth also invited its associated farmers for training on World Health Day, where Block Technology Manager Mr Tomar from ATMA (Agriculture Technology Management Agency) also gave his inputs. East-West Seed also joined and provided information on vegetable farming and vegetable gardening. The training covered other essential topics like compost in field preparation, preparation of compost with waste decomposer, setting up of poshan vatika and the importance of including soybean and vegetables in one’s meal. More than 50 farmers participated from village Raja Khedi and took lively participation during the Q&A session.



The active participation by Samarth in mobilising the farming community of Agar for the training and education purpose is noteworthy.

Vippy Industries Limited



The field Team of Vippy Enterprises has been active in disseminating trainings on Good Agriculture Practices in the district of Dewas. In training organised for the farmers of Dewas with the help of Vippy, the participants were trained in the soil testing process and deep ploughing. They have actively mobilised farmers to train in practices organised jointly with Solidaridad. Their active participation in the field is worth compliments.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD



Meet the Achievers Ramesh Mewada

Farming has become a profession that demands constant improvement and education. Those who fail to keep up with the pace are often left behind with considerable losses to bear. In an attempt to revitalise farming efforts, Ramesh Mewada spares no effort.

Farming is the primary source of livelihood for Ramesh Mewada. At the age of 57, almost throughout his life, Ramesh has witnessed the farming evolve around his village- Raju Khedi. With growing age and the burden of a reasonably large family of five, Ramesh has managed to educate his three children, but with serious challenges.

According to him, farming has changed substantially since his childhood. The traditional approach of farming was considerably different from the modern approach. The intensive use of indigenous knowledge in cultivation had its advantages and drawbacks. While the farmers used little pesticides and fertilisers in the past, the soil remained of high quality. Still, at the same time, pestilence in the crop significantly affected the final productivity. It thus becomes necessary for the farmers to keep up with

the pace of the world.

A similar resolute was made by Ramesh Mewada when he started attending the training organised for the farmers under the programme Good Farming – Good Food. The programme focuses on training the farmers from five districts of Madhya Pradesh in good agricultural practices. The training ranges from land preparation to the very last and essential harvesting, storage, and distribution activities.

Ramesh had realised that his small piece of





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Ramesh Mewada

land, which measures around a hectare, cannot be enough to sustain a family of five, especially when all three of the children requires constant funds for education. As an investment towards his children's future, Ramesh took a loan from the bank to pay for their education's fee. He also had to leave farming and move to cities to find a better source of income, but later realised that agriculture was always his calling.

After joining the programme's training, Ramesh has learned and applied modern and scientifically proven methods of agriculture to his farms. Since then, he has been able to take higher crop production, especially in the farming of Soy and vegetables. In an attempt to constantly improve his practices, he keeps in touch with the field experts from Solidaridad who have wholeheartedly assisted him in chalking out a solution; Ramesh shares his gratitude for the swift assistance-

"We farmers often faces pestilence issues together. The pest infects the entire local farming sector all at once. We were largely dependent on the advice from the shopkeepers who also sold us unnecessary pesticides and that too at higher prices. Under the training, we get an opportunity to learn more about the pest and how to control it effectively. During the field demonstrations, the experts have shown us the way to recognise pest correctly. Post recognition, they tell us the required number of pesticides to eradicate the disease or pest. We have also been provided with training on preparation of naturally produced biopesticide – Dashparni."

The naturally produced bio pesticides and bio fertilisers like Dashparni and Jeevamrut can help save a substantial

amount of money spent on agricultural inputs. Ramesh, along with his friends, has started preparing his fields and crops in a sustainable and ecologically safe manner.

The farmers from the village are also advised to adopt climate-resilient practices, which proves beneficial during times of drought or excessive rains, a common feature in Madhya Pradesh's weather during the rainy season. Tilling his land with Broad Bed and Furrow technique and using draught tolerant variety, Ramesh prepares for unforeseen weather-related calamities. He explains-

"Raju Khedi is still an underdeveloped village. There are no employment opportunities available here, and most of my friends are traditional farmers who are often affected by drought and incessant rains. Upon the suggestion of Solidaridad experts, we have adopted drought-resistant varieties like JD 95-60 and JS 20-98 in soybean farming and have seen favourable results as well."

For the past three years, Ramesh has been growing vegetables and Soy on his small farm with great success. As a smallholder farmer, he has made great strides to bring his monthly income to a sustainable level. Although his children have now graduated and are earning for the family, Ramesh finds his peace in successful farming. He strives to improve the practices under the collective guidance of Good Farming – Good Food and its partners.

