



Newsletter

GOOD FARMING – GOOD FOOD

Issue : 01

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Good Farming - Good Food

Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security and Transforming Smallholders' Livelihood

Solidaridad Asia



Solidaridad





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD



Ground Activities Trainings on Pest Management

Wheat remains to be one of the most produced food crops in India and Madhya Pradesh still ranks amongst the top three wheat-producing states. The growing requirement of grains in society is also fulfilled by crops like wheat, often an essential constituent in the country's staple food list. Protecting the crop from pest attacks is thus crucially essential for ensuring the country's food security and our farmers' prosperity. Good Farming – Good Food renders detailed training on skilful adoption of good farming practices for cultivating wheat as a seasonal crop. With



sustainability in mind, Solidaridad and its stakeholders organised training sessions on pest management in the wheat crop for Madhya Pradesh's farmers.

The participating farmers were advised to keep a stringent watch on the growth of pest in their fields. Detailed presentations on recognising the type of pest become an important part of the training exercises. The farmers were shown how to distinguish between the diseases as well. Method of control differs with each pest; for example, to control in-

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FROM THE PEN OF THE PROGRAMME MANAGER

Dear Esteemed Readers,

We feel proud to bring you the first Newsletter of our programme Good Farming – Good Food. We're dedicating this issue to all of you who have actively and carefully moved towards achieving programme's goal especially during the trying times of a pandemic. Your constant dedication to the cause of building a better farming world for the farmers is certainly commendable.

Our programme, Good Farming – Good Food strives to achieve a level of commitment and result, especially in the case of uplifting farmer's economic condition by improving their livelihood through improved agriculture practices. The task is arduous but the result is equally gratifying. With efforts to go extra mile for the community, we have promoted equal participation of women in the farming activity as well as improving their knowledge about right nutrition. Along with this, developing a strong nutritional base for the village community, with the support of Nutri Sakhis, finds a special place in our issue.

Learning is a continuous process and trainings for the farmers thus becomes a daily activity. In the districts of Madhya Pradesh, farmers after the harvest of Soybean in Kharif season, moves to Wheat. As a major Rabi crops, we have provided our farmers with a strong base of training for Wheat, Onion and Garlic throughout the season. From the vast collection of activities, we've brought to you the special highlights and updates from this year. In an attempt to bring you all up to the speed, we have also drawn this publication to reflect our latest achievements in one single compendium. Therefore, we have in store a few important events from last year as well.

We wish that this monthly letter becomes a messenger of progress and prosperity, and also provide the enjoyment and learning for its readers. Please do send in any stories and development that you wish to share with us related to the programme for the coming issues.

Best Regards,

Dr Suresh Motwani
General Manager
Solidaridad Asia





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Trainings on Pest Management

festation by armyworms, the farmers are often advised to start the sowing process on time and look out for the first sign of damage. In contrast, for insects like white grub, controlled use of pesticides is recommended. Yellow sticky cards are helpful in identifying insects as well.

The field agents also help inspect the farmland for visible signs of pest infestation. Subsequently, the farmers are informed about the treatment. Similar exercises are conducted in demonstration plots and Farmer Field School, organised across the five districts of Madhya Pradesh. Farmers under the banner of Good Farming – Good Food also receive training and advisories related to crops like Onion and Garlic, which are adopted under intercropping cultivation with wheat.

Encouraging a sustainable approach, many demon-

strations were carried out showing the preparation of bio-pesticides like Dashparni. The effectiveness of organically prepared pesticides as a remedy against pest infection has proven effective and economical. It also ensures the edibility of farm produce which falls many grades

when treated with chemical pesticides. Such measures also save the farmers' financial inputs, who often invest more than the required amount.

Several farmers took part in trainings and activities for pest management in wheat and intercropping commodities. Similar exercises form a base of the operative plan under the programme Good Farming – Good

Food. More and more farmers are joining the programme every day to adopt the new and improved sustainable practice.



Ground Activities

Trainings on Pest Management - Bio Pesticide Dashparni

Farmers from across the state took part in training exercises to prepare bio pesticide - Dashparni. Farming conducted with biological inputs has a handful of benefits that does not accompany the synthetic form of farming inputs. Dashparni is a biopesticide that is prepared by using only organic ingredients. Ten different leaves from the plants – Neem, Karanj, Seetaphal, Safed Dhatura, Mogli Erand, Nirgudi, Papita, Genda, Bel, Kaner, Besharam, Tulsi, Tobacco, Nilgiri, Dronpushpi, and Mango, are used to prepare this effective pesticide. Cow urine and water are also decomposed along with the leaves. The final solution obtained, after giving it sufficient time, is a potent pesticide, effective on various diseases and pest.

The participants took a keen interest in knowing about the process. In case of unavailability of the ingredients, they were also shown how to recognise the substitute plants.

The leaves are finely ground and kept aside. Cow dung and cow urine is mixed with the specified amount of water in a drum and later with leaves' ground paste. After stirring the solution properly with a stick, a fine cloth is used to cover the drum. The mixture is left to decompose for 40 days and stirred clockwise and anti-clockwise twice a day.

Participants were also warned about the precautions to be taken while preparing and storing the solution. The solution prepared after 40 days is in its concentrated form. It is then diluted in the ratio of 1:40 with water. For an acre of area, 5 litres can be mixed with 200 litres of water and sprayed 30, 45,

60 and 75 days after sowing. The same solution can be stored and used for six months.

Farmers from the surrounding villages have eagerly requested to conduct similar practices near their area. A practical demo to the women farmers of Agar was given





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Trainings on Pest Management

on preparing and spraying Dashparni on infesting sucking pest like Thrips, White Fly, Jassid, Aphid on their vegetable crops. Since the contents of Dashparni are all organic, it is entirely safe for crops and harmless to soil and human beings. Like in the past, the farmers have seen positive results after its application. The intensity of pest and diseases infestation was observably less and controlled.



Under the programme Good Farming – Good Food, many farmers have learned about the exclusive organic and biological ways of farming, which are useful for reducing the dependency on chemical inputs and an effective way of cutting down on the input cost. The farmers from 5 districts of Madhya Pradesh are eagerly coming forward to participate in such activities organised under the programme.

Ground Activities Trainings on Weed Management

Effective weed management can help farmers secure a better yield. Farmers from the five districts of Madhya Pradesh, namely- Bhopal, Sehore, Dewas, Ujjain, and Agar Malwa, sow Wheat during the Rabi season. Weeds pose a significant threat to an effective yield as it competes with Wheat for nutrients from the soil and deprives it of essential components for a productive growth like soil moisture and sunlight. Many training and demonstrative exercises were conducted to present the impending problems arising out of weed mismanagement for Madhya Pradesh's farmers. Coming from one of the top producing states of Wheat, the local farmers have to meet the expectations. Solidaridad, along with its stakeholders, thus organised



can face if he leaves the weeds unattended. The exercises consisted of activities like recognising the type of weeds, the correct method of controlling them, duration at which weeds should be attended to, etc.

There are different ways of controlling weed infestation in the field. Using manual labour to remove weeds is one of the most common and effective ways of attending to the problem. The farmers can also cover the soil with a polyethene sheet after spraying little water over the tilled soil.

The heat produced under the sun would destroy the weed seeds. Blade Harrow can also be used to destroy juvenile weeds before sowing the crop. The farmers were also advised to use certified and trustworthy sources for

a series of activities and training sessions, especially catering to Madhya Pradesh farmers who grow Wheat during Rabi season. United under the banner of Good Farming – Good Food programme, Solidaridad, Vippy Industries, East-West Seed, and knowledge partners like Krishi Vigyan Kendra informed the participating farmers about the magnitude of losses a farmer



purchasing seeds.

Chemicals are also effective in keeping a check on weed related challenges. The chemical method is often preferred over the mechanical way because it involves less labour and time. Solfosulfuron (leader), Clodinafop – propargyl (Topik) should

be sprayed after 27 to 35 days of sowing in the prescribed quantity per hectare. Broadleaf weeds can be dealt by us-



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Trainings on Weed Management

ing 4D sodium salt and WP, 30 to 40 days after sowing, in the requested measure per hectare. For the grassy leaves weed, Sulfosulfuron is known to be effective.

Apart from the do's, the farmers are also brief about the don'ts at the time of de-weeding. Outmost precaution is advised when handling and spraying chemicals. Thus, wearing protective equipment becomes a priority.

Many farmers open-heartedly appreciated such trainings

in their villages. Good Farming – Good Food strives to bring such exercises to the smallholder farmers for their progress and success. A decent livelihood for the farmers is one of its key objectives. Thus, the programme focuses on imparting the crucial knowledge of good agricultural practices that would make farming sustainable and eco-friendly.



Republic Day Celebrations 26th of January 2021

Every year, on 26th of Jan, India celebrates Republic Day to honour the day on which India's Constitution was enacted.

The constitution gave our farmers many rights and privileges which were withheld before its formation. Under its guidance, various government departments and educational institutes were created and directed to help the farming community grow prosperous. Similarly many policies and guidelines came into effect post its directive principles.

Farmers from 5 districts of Madhya Pradesh came together under the banner of Good Farming – Good Food to celebrate the occasion. In the district of Bhopal, farmers from the village Khauri gathered with the team of Solidaridad and organised a community gathering while following the COVID – 19 norms stated for such occasions.

Our Tri-Colour flag was unfurled around the tune of National Anthem, early in the morning. The Anganwadi workers and village headman, along with the participants from Solidaridad, hoisted the flag in unison. Like every auspicious function, the event started with the lighting of lamp which symbolises knowledge and light. The

guests of honour, in succession, addressed the crowd. Top officials from Panchayat delighted the audience



with their sincere words for the farming community and village unity. Nutrition specialists from Solidaridad discussed about the growing problem of Anaemia in rural areas. During the session, participants received detailed advice on Anaemia and its ill-effects, and various ways to counter the condition by micro-nutrient supplements. The importance of including Soy in the diet especially for such cases

accompanied their guidance. Soy is rich in iron and zinc, therefore effective in diminishing the adverse impact of



the anaemic condition.

A quiz competition based on the session was conducted. Participants wholeheartedly participated in the quiz and received attractive prizes for answering the question correctly. A small competition to entertain the kids was also placed in the event. Themed around nutrition awareness, an informative task of colouring the vegetables and then matching them with their nutrition details was enjoyed by every kid who participated. Best drawings were awarded with prizes as well.



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Republic Day Celebrations

Along with the session, Anganwadi workers from the area, who willingly participated in the event, also received a chance to convey their experience and knowledge about a good diet and its importance. A similar theme followed in other districts as well. In the Agar district, lead farmers gathered in Samarth Kisan Producer Company's premises and hoisted the national flag together. The participants were briefed about the technological improvement in the farming sector. They were shown how the farming advisories are brought to the farmers from the recently installed weather stations. A brief introduction to farmer producer organisations and



its benefits were also brought to their attention during the meeting. Good Farming – Good Food programme offer resolute support towards creating livelihood for the farmers through Farmer Producer Organisations. Partners and stakeholders frequently collaborate under the canopy of Good Farming – Good Food to unite the farming community and help them improve the farming standards. Occasions like Republic Day further provides opportunities to recognise and felicitate the hardworking group of Indian farmers and instill a feeling of nationalism in their noble profession.



Farmers' Day Celebrations 23rd of December 2020

Along with a growing farming community in Madhya Pradesh, Good Farming – Good Food programme celebrated the momentous day of honouring our nation's hardworking farmers- National Farmers' Day. The celebratory day is observed throughout India, and it pays homage to one of the oldest profession still practised across the globe. Indian government celebrates Farmers' Day every year on 23rd of December. The day is also dedicated to Choudhary Charan Singh's birthday, a famous farmer leader who heralded many revolutionary farming policies and also served as the honourable 5th Prime Minister of India. Nearly 50 per cent of India's population is employed in the sector of agriculture, directly or indirectly. Thus, agriculture serves as one of the principal sources of livelihood for most of the population, especially for the



people living in our country's rural areas. Many government and private organisations work together with farmers to elevate the standards of agriculture in the country. Sector's leading institutes invite farmers to celebrate the occasion collectively across the country. More than 200 farmers were invited and commemorated by Solidaridad across the five districts of Madhya Pradesh on the same day. The initiative was supported by stakeholders and knowledge partners like Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission, Department of Agriculture etc. The activity also recognised and felicitated the farmers who successfully applied good agricultural practices in their daily farming routines. Senior officials from the Department of Horticulture, Agriculture and Solidaridad, along with the CEO of Samarth Kisan





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Farmers' Day Celebrations

Producer Company graced the event with their presence in Agar. A similar pattern of celebration was followed in the district of Dewas, Sehore and Ujjain.

Under the banner of Good Farming – Good Food, Solidaridad and programme partners organised a get-together for farmers from the district of Bhopal. The event, held in Krishi Vigyan Kendra's premises, was joined by more than 55 farmers interested in the discussions and sessions held for them. The theme "Powering the farmers, bringing prosperity" was drawn around farmers and farming community's development. Farmers were made aware of the latest technology utilised for productive farming, and how the information gained from such technology can help farmers avoid unforeseen losses due to unpredictable weather and pest issues. Sustainable agricultural practices also featured in the themes of discussions. Its advantages and methods were highlighted for the audience.



Nutrition holds a special place amongst the many objectives of the programme Good Farming – Good Food. The necessity of a nutritious diet and its role in strengthening women and children's overall health shaped the session's progress. Many of the participating women farmers were Nutri Sakhi who are tasked with educating women farmers on nutritious diet benefits. A stage was set for them to share their experience and learning. Many of the distinguished farmers, known for following good farming practices, were also invited by the panel to share their knowledge. The crowd also learned about organic farming and its benefits, shared by the programme partners. An open session to address issues faced by participating farmers followed the experience sharing sessions. Along the lines of sustainable farming and prosperity, Good Farming – Good Food, progresses with its partners and encourages to organise occasions like Farmers' Day.



Nutrition Bulletin

Poshan Vatika Trainings

Lack of dietary diversity in the rural community is a major cause of micronutrient deficiency in developing countries. This has also given rise to sporadic instances of impaired physical and cognitive development in the farming community, mainly seen in the juvenile age group. Similarly, this matter has influenced the lives of adults in the community as well. Dietary deficiency is one of the chief causes behind fatigue and often directly affects work efficiency. Good Farming – Good Food, with the support of its esteemed partners, strives to overcome this impending challenge faced by the farming community of Madhya Pradesh. Overcoming this requires effective

and efficient strategies that use available resources and have long-term benefits. Therefore, kitchen gardens prove to be a strong contender for replenishing malnutrition and micronutrient deficiency.



The kitchen gardening model promotes the cultivation of green and leafy vegetables grown seasonally in a small area, in or around the farmer's house. Typically, a house backyard forms an ideal place. Kitchen gardens can provide a year-round supply of nutritious vegetables for the family. The excess vegetables can be sold in the market to get an added income source.



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Poshan Vatika Trainings

The strategy has its benefits that suit the requirements of a family holistically. The maintenance is not demanding, and its application is relatively easy. The fact that the kitchen garden is developed near or around its beneficiaries' houses makes its maintenance rather easy. The necessary agricultural inputs like soil nutrients, bio-fertilisers, and biopesticides can also be made at the site itself. Dashparni, Jeevamrut, and making compost through waste accompanies the training exercises held for promoting nutrition gardens.

Another benefit derived from this activity is the all-inclusive equation. Women can easily maintain such gardens on their own. A majority of training exercises are based



on women-friendly farming techniques. Almost everyone in the house above the age group of fourteen can help in maintaining the garden. The gardens also promote sustainability. The use of kitchen waste, cow dung, and crop residues in making compost reduces cost significantly and helps make the exercise sustainable for a longer duration. In an effort to encourage more participation, seeds

and maintenance guides were also distributed to the attendees.

More than ----- farmers were trained in setting up nutrition garden, also known as Poshan Vatika. Like now, similar activities would form the backbone of Good Farming – Good Food activities in future.

Nutrition Bulletin

Prescribed Soy Recipe for the month

Soybean Sprouts

“Soybean Sprouts are an excellent source of Protein, Iron, and Vitamin”

Ingredients

- 1 Cup (175 Grams) Soybean (soaked for atleast 8 hours or overnight)
- 1 Tomato (medium sized)
- 1 Onion (medium sized)
- Salt (as per the liking)
- Chat Masala (as per the liking)

Method

- Wash the Soybean in clean water and then let it sit in lukewarm water for 3 to 4 hours .
- Drain the water and rinse thoroughly.
- Transfer the Soybeans in a cotton cloth and loosely wrap it around the beans.
- Keep sprinkling water 3 to 4 times a day to maintain moisture in the cotton bag.
- Soybeans would start sprouting in 2 to 3 days. Upon achieving complete germination, boil the Soybeans for 10 minutes.

Ingredients	Grams	Protein	Iron (mg)
Soybeans	175	75.6	18.2
Tomato	75	1.4	1.35
Onion	60	1	.72
In total	310	78	20.27



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Meet the Achievers

Reena Nagar

A common issue that features in almost every farming community across the world is that very few women farm in their own right. Most of the glaring farming activities are dominated by men, whereas women involvement is limited to looking after the house and provide support for family's farming in every way possible. Even after her all-inclusive assistance, the work of women in agriculture-related professions goes unrecognised.

The article examines how Reena Nagar sets aside the usual trend of under-representation of women in farming by guiding the women from the farming community of her village Bakaniya. Along the lines, she also inspires rural entrepreneurship in agriculture by managing a lending business of farm equipment and encouraging others to step in a similar direction.

Coming from a small farming settlement situated in the district of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, Reena Nagar has shown an extraordinary level of commitment in completing her academics in pressing circumstances. Through dedication, she has earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and a Diploma in Elementary Education. Reaffirmed by the skills of institutional teaching acquired through her academics, her efforts as a field associate trainer for Good Farming – Good Food resonates amongst her farming community. Reena has been working as a field associate for the programme since 2018. Everyone in her village acknowledges her unwavering commitment to farm training and support.

As the eldest and the most educated in the family of eight, she helped her father manage a small family business of leasing agricultural implements and provided her support in the fields. Reena credits her unprejudiced father who never hesitated in bringing a relatively young girl to the business and farming front.

Her father passed away in the year 2014. The entire responsibility of a moderately large family fell on the shoulders of a nineteen-year-old Reena who was the only one who knew her way around the family business.

"The entire weight of providing for the family came down on me soon after my father passed away. I was still studying, and thus had a difficult time shuffling between my academics and family requirements."

Reena braved her way out of the testing times with considerable struggle. Growing problem related to declining yield and absence of guidance often plagued her throughout her education. While supporting her four young siblings' education, Reena brought back a stable income to the family by continuing to supply her father's agricultural implements like tractors and harvester to the farmers. Her experience in farming and penchant for leading the group training earned her the role of field agent for the programme Good Farming – Good Food.

By combining the sustainable farming methods with prior knowledge of farming from her father, Reena transformed the face of farming, for both- her family and for her villagers. She has successfully applied the best farming practices to her soybean, chickpeas and wheat crops. Also, the farmers from villages like Dhamaniya, Khajuri and Khoyri are improving their agricultural practices through her training sessions. Her expanse of influence through agricultural training also helps in creating a customer base for her lending business. As a service,

Reena unselfishly assists her client in using the agricultural implements effectively and advises them on combining the biological and technological aspects of farming practices.

Farming prosperity depends upon the degree of cooperation across gender. The glowing examples of Reena in farming as a promising entrepreneur and a motivated instructor proves that the women in India are the silent heroes behind successful farming. The vital role of women in the public space of agriculture is essential for the farming community's overall growth. The programme Good Farming – Good Food strives to uplift women's involvement in agriculture and actively supports budding entrepreneurs from the rural community.



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