



Newsletter

GOOD FARMING – GOOD FOOD

Issue : 05

May 2021

Ground Activities

- ...Broad Bed and Furrow Training
- ...Summer Deep Ploughing Training
- ...Enriched Compost Training
- ...Integrated Approach for Balanced Nutrition in Soybean Training
- ... Pre-Sowing Seed Selection, Germination and Treatment Training
- ...Soil Test Training
- ...Vermicompost Training

From Nutrition Bulletin

- ...Awareness and Training on Anaemia
- ...Awareness Session on Food Security
- ...Awareness Session on Meal Planning
- ...Awareness Session on Micro and Macro Nutrients

FPO Newsdesk

- ...Updates for the month of May

Partners' Broadcast

- ...Field Activities

Meet the Achievers

- ...Kaal Singh

Good Farming - Good Food

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



Solidaridad





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD



Ground Activities Broad Bed and Furrow Training

Agriculture serves as the backbone of any developing country. With the growth, demand for sustainability also increases. It becomes the responsibilities of the government and organisations to educate the agrarian society on new, improved, and sustainable methods of agriculture. Good Farming – Good Food conducted many training and awareness exercises for the farmers of Madhya Pradesh to help them understand the necessity of using modern techniques of field preparation.

Mechanisation is important in agriculture to achieve sustainable development. Increasing production by timely completion of the farm operations, reducing losses and cost of operations can be conveniently reached by bringing mechanisation to the farming.

Broad Bed and Furrow is one such technique where a rain-fed field is divided into narrow strips of broad beds, separated by furrows. It is common to see crops getting affected due to waterlogging or dry spells during the

FROM THE PEN OF PROGRAMME COORDINATOR



Dear Esteemed Readers,

India is primarily an agriculture-based country, and 58 per cent of rural Indians depend on it for their livelihood. Good Farming – Good Food programme is envisioned to rejuvenate sustainable farming in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The programme started with the solid and irreplaceable partnership of public and private organisations who have invariably dedicated themselves to uplift the smallholder farmers community.

With the lockdown in place, we have faced and overcome multiple challenges. Although the personal touch in training and awareness exercises has been limited to video communication channels, we have constantly maintained a distinctive approach of bringing fresh themes through our planned training sessions. Several sessions on subjects like Integrated Approach for Balanced Nutrition, Selection of Seeds and Treatment and Enriched Composting were organised to address the pre-sowing operations necessary for a sustainable farming approach. On a similar note, our nutrition team helmed the cause of Balanced Nutrition, Meal Planning and many other subject matters through available audio-visual tools. The programme also educates farmers on the necessary precautions to avoid Covid 19 spread in rural areas.

It is a matter of pride to communicate that all partners have digitally trained and instructed the farmers through multiple social media platforms in tandem with the programme objectives. They strive to maintain agriculture as one of the contributing sectors which would perform at its fullest even after Junta Curfews. FPOs have a more decisive role to play in such situation. Several training exercises for the Board of Directors of FPOs in Madhya Pradesh also was organised to strengthen their efforts. Through educational and technological extension, judicious information on the newest development in agriculture can stimulate better results and prosperity for the farmers even when the physical movement is restricted enormously. With the same rigour, we, at Good Farming – Good Food, pull out all the stops to reach the farming community and bring sustainable farming to the doorsteps of every smallholder farmer.

We also value your participation in the programme. Thus, we would like to present this opportunity to showcase programme partners' stories, progress, achievements, and thoughts on the programme and its reach. Don't forget to send in your feedback and accomplishments to our publishing team.

Netherlands Enterprise Agency has been like a rock, guiding and inspiring the programme to new heights. The farmers of Madhya Pradesh and the programme conveys boundless gratitude for its generous support.

I wish you all a happy reading.

Dr Suresh Motwani
Programme Coordinator
Good Farming - Good Food



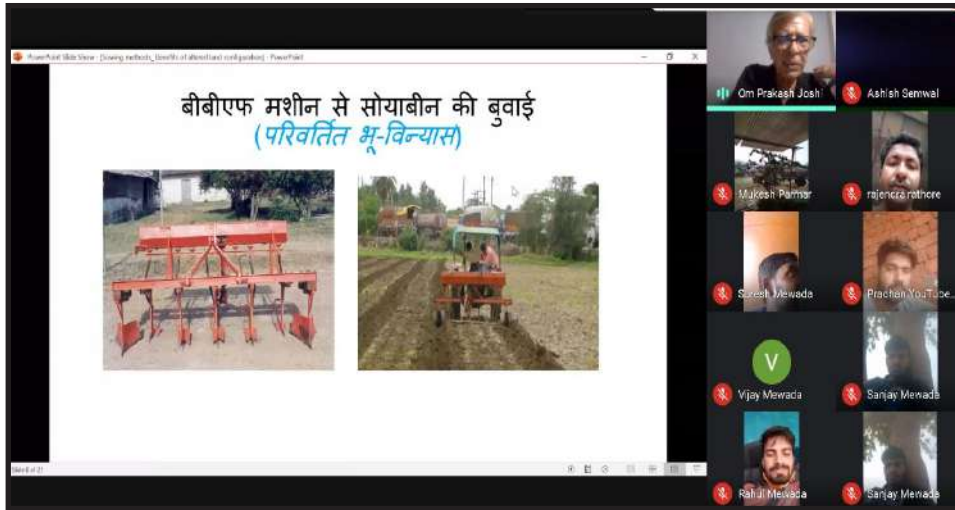
GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Broad Bed and Furrow Training

rainy season. The method effectively addresses the issue. The seeds are sown in the broad bed area. During the rain, the water is collected in the furrows and later, the lateral flow of the water from the furrows to the broad bed fulfils the crop's water requirement. In case of heavy rainfall, water stagnation is avoided as the excess water flows out through the furrows. During irrigation, the runoff water is diverted to the furrows. Each furrow is filled one by one as the water moves to the next after filling the first one. Water-based nutrient management can also be effectively implemented through the irrigation system. Jeevamrit and other bio growth enhancers can be added to the irrigation water before releasing it into the furrows.

The associated benefits of Broad Bed and Furrow (BBF) system outweigh the mechanical cost of its implementation. Farmers are also shown a practical demonstration of the technique, which helps them understand its importance with greater depth and knowledge. The beds are often made of cm width with crop row spacing of 30 cm. The furrows are made 45 cm in width. Broad bed furrow has numerous advantages. The technique can accommodate a number of crop row pattern, that is, wide row spacing and close row spacing. It suits both single and intercropping pattern. During excessive rains, the furrow can help guide the flooded water from the rows to an exit. The furrows are also helpful in storing water for later or dry stages of the month. Seed drills can be used for sowing. The system also encourages the storage of moisture for a longer duration and discourages soil erosion. BBF method is not vulnerable

to adverse climatic conditions, although soil with lower moisture holding capacity would require small irrigation in the dry season. The method is most effective for heavy, black and clayey soil.



Two to five rows of a crop can be grown on the broad bed, based on crop recommendation and requirement. Even a double-cropping system can be followed in such implementation.

The broad bed and furrows do not necessarily require heavy agricultural implements. Bullocks can also draw it in case a tractor isn't available. There are also types of equipment available that can form the BBF and sow at the same time. The BBF implements are also made available through the established FPOs in the area.

Sustainability provides a point of reference that is outside the confines of human experience. It leads to a succession of change in the habit of addressing farming. It is essential because it takes in challenges and brings out



a solution that is effective and efficient. Partners like Vippy Industries have persistently tried to bring a lasting impression to the community through numerous means. The team conducted several activities under the

land preparation practices during the month of May. Vippy has also shared many training videos with the farmers, which interactively shows the correct method of BBF implementation.

A range of similar exercise forms the very backbone of Good Agricultural Practices that receive preference in the farmer's training sessions. Farmers would continue receiving similar practices in the coming months of the Kharif season.



GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Ground Activities

Summer Deep Ploughing Training

An organic cropping system requires long term strategies and avoids cultivation practices that concede subtle interventions. Therefore, organic crop production largely depends on soil characteristics which are modified through various cultivation techniques.

Shaping soil structure plays an essential role in preparing the field for cultivation. The traces of mineral and organic material found in the upper crust defines the conditioning of the soil. Several mechanical methods on soil prove beneficial for soil conditioning. One such method is summer deep ploughing. In the earlier times, agricultural implements were restricted to simple tools. With the advancement in technology, heavier ploughs made a substantial difference. Now, tillage can be done with greater depths and effectiveness.

Good Farming – Good Food strives to train the farming community of Madhya Pradesh in sustainable and enduring farming techniques, which can help them increase their production and eventually livelihood. Under the training conducted before farmers are greeted with the cropping season, many sessions highlight the importance of deep ploughing. Deep ploughing is known to improve the infiltration and permeability of the soil. This, in turn, vastly improves upon the moisture-holding capacity of the earth. With a greater strength of holding moisture for a long time, the soil conditioning becomes favourable during dry spells. The continuous supply of water to the roots encourages the growth of soy even during challenging times.

Since the activity is conducted after harvesting, the remaining stubs of wheat and other plants are buried deep into the soil due to deep ploughing. The process exposes the inner-tougher crust of the soil to the surface and overturns the stems and roots of plant waste into the soil. As the time passes, these organic material breaks into simpler forms (through decomposition process) and increases soil fertility. Raw plant residue can also be taken out manually and used in compost. But deep plough-

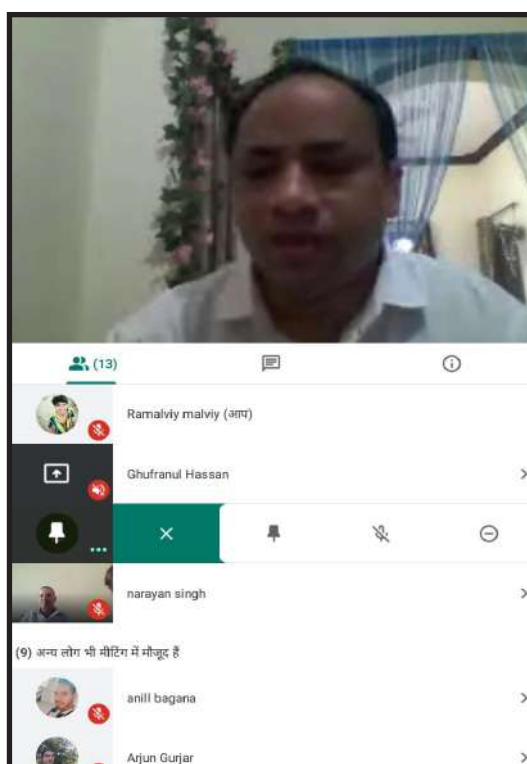
ing is a sustainable and effective way of replenishing soil health by simply reintroducing it back to the soil.

The aeration in the soil is also increased after deep ploughing. When the upper crust is broken into small pieces, a vast amount of air runs through the soil, which was previously unexposed. This helps in the proliferation of microbial content in the soil, resulting in the soil's rigid organic structure. It also opens various entry points for water to seep in. Water from the early and untimely summer showers, especially before sowing and bed preparation, enters the soil crust and further conserves moisture and increases water table level. During the rains, atmospheric nitrogen also mixes with the water enters into the soil. Increased nitrogen level directly increases the fertility of the soil. Many showers can result in soil erosion, but surface runoffs can be prevented due to deep ploughing.

Farmers also learn how deep ploughing can help in pest management. Many larvae, worms, pupas, and their eggs hibernate deep inside the soil and are exposed to the scorching heat of the summer sun after deep ploughing. Sunrays exterminate such pest and disinfect the soil, together with heat and light. Thus, monetary input on pesticides is also significantly decreased. Similarly,

the weed is also overturned into the soil, which later decomposes and improves its biotic structure.

Farmers from the five districts of Madhya Pradesh can avail the agriculture equipment from Farmer Producer Organisations for deep ploughing. Details of such FPOs and how farmers can benefit from such organisations are also shared through the training programmes. Vippy Industries and Samarth Producer Company have actively contributed to the awareness programmes and training exercise by sharing educative content over social media platforms with the farmers. Good Farming – Good Food and its enthusiastic partners would continue bringing sustainable agricultural practices to the smallholder farming community.





Ground Activites

Enriched Compost Training

Maintaining nutritional and affordable food for the expanding population poses one of the greatest future challenges for the government. The demands for quality food come from both urban and rural sectors. This steadfast demand has resulted in problems for soil nutrient in the agricultural sector, which has been over utilising its capacity. At the receiving end is often the smallholder farmers who suffer from net loss due to failed crop yield.

As a way out, the farmers should learn to integrate a multidisciplinary approach that suggests different technical options along with their economic feasibility. There is an imperative need to train the farmers in making the best use of farming waste products that are often thrown or left unused. Solidarity and other partners under the canopy of Good Farming – Good Food has organised numerous training and demonstration sessions to show farmers the best way to utilise farming and other organic waste for making enriched compost.

Composting is a natural process. Rich soil that covers the forest floor is a relevant example of this natural process. Fallen leaves on the ground blankets the dead vegetation, and over time the mixture breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces. The microorganisms play a considerable role that devours the organic material into an organically rich soil-like compound. The process does not differ much when repeated in a controlled environment. Farmers, when preparing compost in the fields, are taught the fundamentals of their constituents. Manure is always the first item on the list. Its impressive bacteria content brings biological and chemical balance and aids the rapid growth of all other materials. Other organic and biologically degradable materials like Newspapers, field straw, weed, fallen leaves, vegetable shavings and left-over food can also be added to the compost collection.

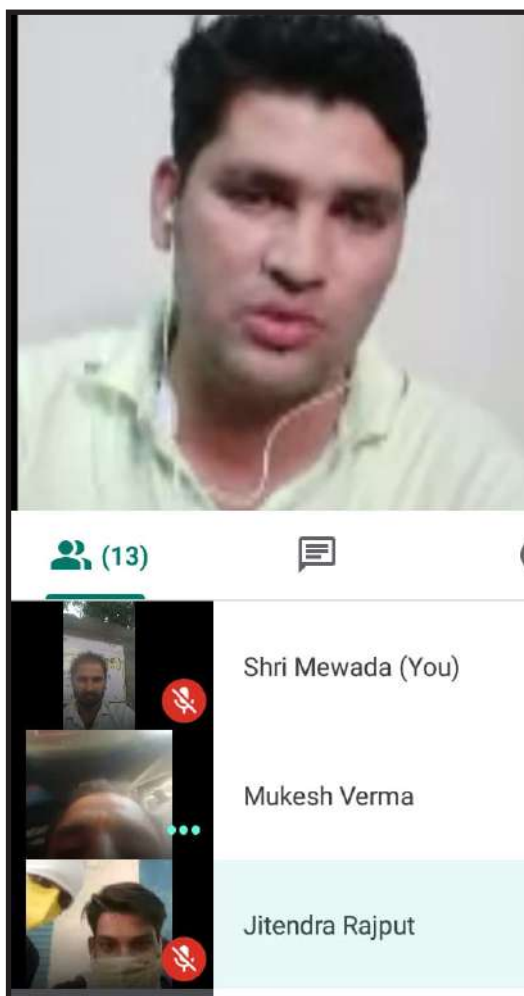
All in all, the potency in compost preparation can be increased by adding Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium content and control its pH level (acidic level) through external supplements. Adding Jaggery and chickpea flour also helps to increase its microbial content. Many value additives in the market provide a pre-packed microbial culture consisting of multiple microorganisms to enhance the bio composting process. These include Cellulomonas, Pleurotus, Actinomyces, Torulospira globosa, Chactominum globosum, Pseudomonas, Azotobacter and other microbes, which effectively decompose the solid waste material in a short period. Different combinations add naturally available amino acids, hormones and extracts to make compost more potent. They also help in faster decomposing and removes odour from the compost pile.

Understanding the stability and maturity of the compost is equally essential for the farmers. The time required by the microorganisms can vary depending upon the composition of the mixture and culture additives added to the compost. Solutions like waste decomposers can speed up the process and ready the organic manure in

less than 45 days. Periodic control of moisture becomes vital for the efficacy of the compost.

Compost, besides conditioning the soil, can also help suppress diseases by indirectly modulating soil organisms and influencing the nutritional status of the plants. Composting is based on the principle of return. Giving back to the soil is as important as taking from it. Successful organic farmers live by this rule.

The essentiality of making farming sustainable forms the basis of good agricultural practices encouraged under the programme Good Farming – Good Food. Its partners are devoted to the cause and bring such training and demonstrative exercises to the farmer of Madhya Pradesh unceasingly.





Ground Activities

Integrated Approach for Balanced Nutrition in Soybean Training

Phenomenal growth has been witnessed in the cultivation of Soybean in the last two decades, and it remains one of the dominant cropping systems in central India. Modern-day cropping system involves intensive use of expensive chemical fertilisers, which are also in acute shortage. A new trend has set in which encourages the replacement of chemical fertilisers with organic ones. Bio fertilisers, biopesticides offer a sustainable option to the farming community.

The combined use of chemical and organic fertilisers in the Soybean cropping system can prove beneficial for the system's long-term productivity and sustainability. An integrated approach towards yield and nutrient uptake can be promising. It contributes to yield, sustainable growth, encourages soil health and reduces environmental risks. To raise awareness and to bring a lasting impact to the cultivation techniques of the farmers of Madhya Pradesh, Good Farming – Good Food, along with its partners, organises several training programmes where farmers can freely learn and apply the integrated approach for balanced nutrition in soy farming. Qualified experts from the field like O P Joshi lead comprehensive training programmes via established online communication channels for the farmers from five districts of Madhya Pradesh.

These training exercises aim to ensure reasonable and efficient use of all available sources for plant nutrient in an integrated manner to obtain maximum economic yield without diminishing soil fertility and provide sustainability to farming via profitability and productivity.

The principal components of INM are Fertilisers, Organic Manure, crop residues and Bio fertilisers. To favourably affect the physical, chemical and biological environment, farmyard manure is also used as a key component of INM. To achieve yield sustainability at an optimum level under farming conditions, especially when the nutrient absorption in the cropping system is high, organic manure and fertiliser cannot alone augment the necessary environment. The use of organic sources in conjunction with chemical fertilisers has shown positive results

in long term use by maintaining the productivity of the soil. Bio fertilisers not only provide nutrients but also improves their efficiency in absorption through the soil.

Organic manure directly affects the uptake of humic substances, favouring the plant's metabolism and subsequent growth. The beneficial soil microorganisms and their activities are indirectly improved through organic manure and consequently promote micro and macronutrients' availability to the crop.

During the session, the discussions and training start with addressing the current status of INM in soybean. Farmers are introduced to the prevailing lack of balanced nutrition in soybean farming and the unequal use of DAP.

Farmers often incorporate fertilisers in the dry field. The misuse of potash and sulphur application are also common. They are also shown how limiting the availability of nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus directly affects the plant's growth. In the non-availability of necessary nutrients, the plant cannot complete its life cycle and therefore affects yield. Even the deficiency of micronutrients like Boron, Chlorine, Copper, Magnesium, Zinc and Iron can increase the chances of bad harvest.

The process of integrated nutrition does not stop with the application of soil conditioners. An important role is played by incorporating approach like deep summer ploughing, choice of seeds and variety, intercropping methods, weed control, seed testing and inoculation, etc. Therefore, the integrated nutrient approach unites multiple sustainability supporting activities and creates a comprehensive crop development system for the farmers.

The incorporation of the INM approach has shown significant growth in soil prosperity and hydrating capacity. The increased porosity due to the organic application has shown positive and promising results in the final yield of soybean. Good Farming – Good Food has therefore partnered with the leading agriculture institutes and organisation to educate the farmers of Madhya Pradesh in the ample scope of increasing cultivation through an integrated nutrition approach.





Ground Activities

Pre-Sowing Seed Selection, Germination, and Treatment Training

Bringing more food to the table amidst growing population and global demand is poised to challenge the farmers. The growth of the farming sector in comparison to other leading industry is diminutive. Thus, sustainability in farming will play an essential role in the overall progress and development of the farmers. There is an acute necessity to establish all-inclusive learning of crop life cycle to the farmers who wish to farm sustainably. Final crop results are affected by almost all farming activities, but it is crucial to monitor and implement them from the beginning. Good Farming – Good Food has been organising various training sessions with the support of its partners to educate the farmers from five districts of Madhya Pradesh in pre-sowing practices.

The coming months would mark the onset of the Kharif season, which is a principal period for soybean cultivation in the central part of India. Understanding and implementing pre-sowing practices, which signals the start of a crop life cycle, becomes necessary for the farmer during such times. Although other parts of the crop production are equally important, it is essential to provide additional efforts to pre-sowing practices for a commanding start. Many seed-related sub-activities like variety selection, seed treatment, seed germination, and seed inoculation altogether subsume pre-sowing activities.

The farmers are first requested to choose from the variety of the seeds. The seed selection may vary according to its yield consistency, maturity time, disease and pest tolerance, drought tolerance, etc. The variety should be selected according to the farming environment of the particular area. Experts from Solidaridad helps the farmers in choosing the variety that suits the climate, temperature, rainfall and the occurrence of pest in the area. Two different seeds can be selected so that if one fails, others won't, and the losses can be minimised. The farmers are also appealed to buy the seeds from trusted and reputable sources. Once the seeds are acquired, the farmer can move to test their germination capacity.

Germination is defined as the transition of a seed embryo from a state of dormancy to seedling development.

It is a complex process that requires a favourable environment of moisture, temperature and air. A farmer is requested to test the seed for its germination to determine how it'll perform in the actual field. Typically, farmers are suggested to conduct the test 15 days before the sowing starts. Firstly, the farmers are requested to collect a portion of seeds from the collected lot. The seeds are then counted (suggested to be 100) and placed on blotting paper or rag spread evenly over the floor. Once the seeds are arranged evenly distancing over a rag or paper towel, it is carefully rolled. Rolling of the towel or rag should be done carefully. A tightly rolled towel would encourage abnormal seedling development, promote fungus, and break the seedling when unrolled.

In contrast, a loosely rolled towel would encourage unneeded seed movement, quick evaporation, inadequate contact of the wet towel with seeds and eventually false germination count. When done correctly, the farmer can decide the seed rate according to the result. Usually, a successful germination result of 60 to 70% is acceptable, and the farmers are requested to use 10 kg of seeds per acre in such cases. Any less, the farmers are advised to change the seeds.

Seeds are also treated before sowing to provide an adequate base for the seeds to reduce the influence of pathogens and disease. These diseases can be seed-borne or soil-borne. Seed treatment also helps to increase the availability of nutrients to the seeds for proper growth. Fungicides, Pesticides and bio fertilisers are commonly used for the treatment of seeds. Organic fertiliser treatment gives the crop a high yield by improving the gaining capacity of nitrogen and phosphorus from the environment and soil.

When handling chemicals, it is important to follow the safety precautions like using hand gloves and respirators to avoid fumes. As a part of the combined series, Good Farming – Good Food has made strides in educating the farmers. A similar effort will be maintained for the rest of the crop cycle to improve soybean productivity and farmers' prosperity.





Ground Activities

Soil Test Training

Sustainability in agriculture and environmental safety is of utmost importance to fulfil the growing food requirement of the country. A safe transit to the fulfilment of food security can only be achieved with successful and practical farming. Increasing food production would require increased plant nutrients.

Plants may exhibit symptoms of nutrient deficiencies. Such deficiencies are often common to all the plants in the field due to soil infertility. Slow and stunted growth of plants, yellow or light green leaves indicates Nitrogen deficiency. Purple patches on the leaves and stems, burn patches on leaves and stems indicate Phosphorus and Potassium deficiency, respectively. All such symptoms are needed to be recognised first. Good Farming – Good

Food organises training exercises for the farmers of Madhya Pradesh to address the growing problem of soil infertility. The farmers are trained in recognition of symptoms that arises from a nutrient deficiency in the soil. Solidarity and partners

organised a series of exercises in May to educate the participants in benefits, methods, and necessity of Soil Testing before sowing.

Soil infertility can be addressed by increasing the nutrients in soil composition. Organic fertilisers and manures are essential additives to tackle the infertility challenge. Farmers are often using more fertilisers in hopes of boosting productivity. They are also misguided by the sellers who recommend them unnecessary additives, which become an expensive affair as well. Balanced use of fertilisers is essential for avoiding wastage of natural resources and minimising environmental damage. It would not only economise crop production but would also sustainably improve crop production. No single source is enough for supplying the required amount of nutrients; therefore, integrated use of all available sources is a must to provide balanced nutrition to plants.

A number of factors influence balanced fertilisation. It does not necessarily mean adding Nitrogen, Phospho-

rus and Potassium to the soil in the form of fertiliser. It is essential to take into account certain factors like- the availability of the nutrients already in the farm soil, farmer's ability to invest, agricultural techniques used, soil moisture regime, weed control measures, seed rate, sowing time, salinity and alkalinity of the soil, microbiological condition of the soil, available nutrient, cropping sequence, etc.

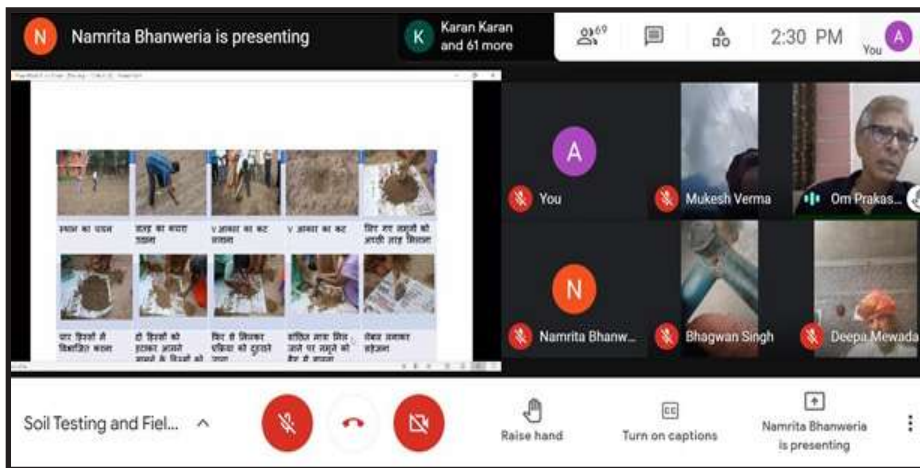
The best way forward to address the correct fertilisation is by Soil Testing. Soil testing remains to be one of the most effective tools to practice balanced fertilisation. Since balanced fertilisation varies from crop to crop, soil testing can help the farmers the type, kind, and amount of fertiliser to be used for each specific crop. Specifical-

ly for Soybean in the Kharif season, the sowing should be started with a soil test. Fields with low to medium phosphate level require additional fertilisers to bring a favourable response.

To test the soil, samples from uniform depth are collected

from multiple sites of the target area. The soil samples are then mixed with the chemical agents, showing their correct value by comparing it with a colour comparator. The comparator results help determine values of Ph, Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potassium, and organic carbon in the soil samples. The samples represent the census values of the target field, and thus, the recommended fertilisers for the samples can be used for the entire field. Experts from Solidarity helps in the inspection and analysis of the result, and based on the same, recommends the correct amount and type of fertilisers to be used.

Under Good Farming – Good Food, similar exercises become a part of the training schedule for the pre sowing season. Stress is given towards better field preparation by application of organic and compost manure. Thus, along with soil testing, preparation of vermicompost, cow dung manure, and Jeevamrit becomes a part of the training calendar.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Ground Activities

Vermicompost Training

The challenges associated with soil degradation have moved the farmers towards adopting a functioning cycle of organic matter in their fields. This serves two crucial purposes: continuous nutrient supply and two long-lasting soil sustainability. Under the programme, Good Farming – Good Food, several training exercises are conducted to educate the farming community of Madhya Pradesh on soil nurturing through ecologically sustainable methods like vermicomposting.

It is common to see a shifting trend in agricultural practices in India. New and modern techniques have replaced many traditional systems. The habit of recycling almost seems to be forgotten, and farmers are unaware of its economic benefits. Recycling farm waste is also a simple answer to the growing waste problem often burned or thrown away.

Vermicompost is a uniform, nutrient-rich substance that looks like dirt and is more potent than traditional compost. Converting organic waste to vermicompost requires a considerable level of understanding by the farmers. A basic understanding of its process is necessary for the farmers to produce efficient compost from available resources. During the training exercises, the farmers are educated about the role of worms like earthworm and red worm in making compost. Earthworms live in the soil, where they work with microorganisms to eat and digest organic waste. The process helps break it into simpler forms and make it more acceptable as nutrients to the crop. All crops use the provided nutrients that the worms leave behind to grow, thrive, and produce noticeably better results.

To accelerate the process of breaking down the organic matter, worms are often introduced to the containers where the waste organic matter is collected. A worm bed is thus built where the organisms can naturally breed, multiply and break the organic matter. Worms require a specific temperature and moisture content in the mixture to thrive. Thus, it is essential that the bedding can hold

moisture while having enough porosity to facilitate some air exchange. If the bed is too wet, the worms tend to move towards the surface; if the bed is too dry, the worms will burrow deep, looking for moisture. Therefore the beddings which are too deep, too thin, dense, or wet will not allow worms to move freely and survive.

A basic understanding of the vermicompost's principle helps the farmers adopt the practice with much ease. Many farmers have actively adopted vermicomposting and have been preparing their fields with enriched growth capacity.



It's important to remember that the worms don't consume the waste directly and all by themselves; they work in partnership with millions of microscopic organisms and bacteria to break it down. The worms devour the microorganisms and food waste simultaneously. Proper bedding acts as a culturing surface for the organisms

and bacteria that feed upon it, so the bedding is just as important to them as it is to the worms. The ideal bedding will have a good mix of aeration, moisture retention, slight abrasiveness, and readily available carbohydrates in the form of waste organic matter.

Leaves from trees and crop stubble make fine bedding once they are partially decomposed. The farmers can also add their household waste like food, non-consumable part of vegetables, fruit shavings etc., to the compost. The container or the bag should also have a water exit that collects all the extra liquid called vermiwash. This extract is an effective disease and pest control solution rich in beneficial nutrients, vitamins and microorganisms.

To make agriculture sustainable, the farmers of India need to adopt cost-effective and productive practices like the inclusion of Vermicompost in their field preparation. Good Farming – Good Food and its partners have successfully made strides towards bringing a diversity of such sustainable practices to the farmers of Madhya Pradesh.



GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD



Nutrition Bulletin Awareness and Training on Anaemia

Anaemia is a condition characterised by a steep decline in the number of red blood cells and presents severe implications for the nation's health statistics. It predominantly affects the cognitive development of young children and reduces work productivity in adults worldwide. Women and children in the low-income community primarily bear the anaemic burden. The condition is common in developing countries where health food security and health services have often failed to support the population.

Despite being economically stable and with a bustling health infrastructure, India's rural population suffers from various avoidable generic conditions. Many farming communities in India suffers from the challenges arising out of Anaemia.

It serves as a disability and decreases the working capacity of farmers. The stunted growth of children is also attributed to the ill effects of Anaemia.

A number of reasons surround the surge in anaemic cases in the rural sector. Poor knowledge of nutrition, insufficient livelihood, dependence on improper diet and hereditary or genetic transfer of condition are a few of the reasons for its widespread prevalence. Socio-economic factors like poverty, cultural diet trend, access to health services, and nonavailability of nutrition-rich food further perplexes the situation.

Under the collective guidance of Good Farming – Good Food, Solidaridad and partners consistently organise training programmes for the women farmers of Madhya Pradesh. The sessions focus on the nutritional aspect, which holds an important place in the programme's achievable goals.

Women farmers from all five districts were invited to the awareness sessions organised by Solidaridad to disseminate information on Anaemia. One of the sessions was spearheaded by Nutrition Expert Mrs Anjali. Covering the aspects of nutrition and Anaemia, the experts elaborated on the right meals and diet plans necessary to eradicate

the challenges faced by women and children. They were shown how improper diet could further aggravate the anaemic condition. Many related diseases often emerge when one's immunity is suppressed. They were requested to keep their diet solid and healthy, especially during the time of the Covid-19 crisis.

Participants were told about the common symptoms that can be noticed when a person is suffering from Anaemia. Dizziness, pale or yellowish appearance of tongue and

skin, irregular heartbeats, shortness of breath and constant fatigue are few observable symptoms. The diagnosis can also be undertaken in a pathology lab. Significant stress is given to diagnosis as it lays a plan of action post the identification of ailment.

To overcome Anaemia, participants are provided with comprehensive knowledge on dietary intake, which varies from person to person. Anaemic pregnant women and children require special attention. If not treated, Anaemia can lead to serious health complications ranging from prolonged phases of weakness, poor cardiac health and poor immunity. Consumption of iron and protein-rich food like green leafy vegetables and soybeans can help anaemic patients to recover from weakness. A general improvement in health and lifestyle can be observed when a robust dietary regime is followed.

The burden of Anaemia is universal but can be easily eradicated with the collective efforts of both government and other organisation, especially when working towards achieving a common goal. With awareness campaigns and providently designed dietary amendments, people suffering from such ailments can live a healthy and vivacious life and successfully contribute to the farming economy. Good Farming – Good Food strives to bring forward the collective enterprise of private and public partners to bring a tangible change to India's food and nutritional security. Similar sessions would be hosted for the farming community of Madhya Pradesh in future.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Nutrition Bulletin

Awareness Session on Food Security

Challenges related to increasing food availability, overgrowing population, improving nutritional status, and reducing poverty continue to grapple decision-makers of many developing and developed countries worldwide. Food Security, Poverty and Nutrition are closely entangled subjects that need to be addressed by a united front comprising community, government and social organisations.

Achieving promising food security depends on appropriate steps to ensure adequate food either through local production channel or through an increase in supply chain and trade volume. There has been impressive progress in securing food for the populace in recent times. Many governments have encouraged the storage of produced food for self-consumption.

However, the new studies show that the progress in the urban sector is contrasting to the improvement in the rural sector. While cities and metropolitan areas portray a declining trend in the absolute numbers of poor, hungry and malnourished people, the numbers in village society have been either steady or increasing. The heavy-weight of malnourishment falls heavily on women and children. Incidences of malnourishment in economically stable countries like India indicates that ensuring livelihood and food security is not enough to overcome the crisis prevalent amongst vulnerable groups like village communities.

Good Farming – Good Food is a programme that aims to increase the availability of nutritious food like soybean and vegetables to the farming community of Madhya Pradesh. Operating tirelessly in the state's five districts, the programme and its partners have made strides towards bringing awareness on nutrition to every doorstep.

The nutrition team also invites experienced nutritionist who conducts elaborate exercises on protein replenishment through dietary diversity. In May, several such sessions were organised where the participants ranged from women farmers to NutriSakhis. The participants were informed about food security and how good and nutri-

tious food for the family would help eliminate prevailing diseases and disabilities. There are a lot of food items produced locally which can be stored for consumption. Soybean, wheat, pulses can be stored and consumed throughout the year. The fluctuating prices of the commodity also won't affect the farmers as the frequency of purchase and dependency on the market is reduced to a great extent.

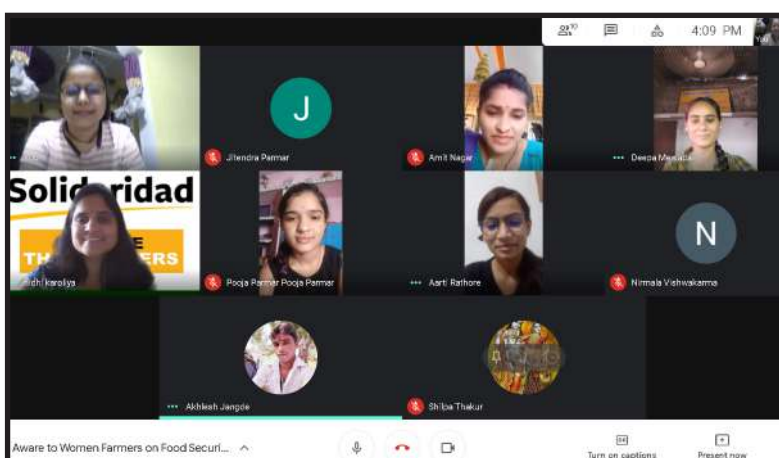
During the training session, participants are also requested to ensure that the consumable items are stored safely,

away from pest and rodents. During the pandemic, boosted immunity plays an important role. Food security and nutritional gain during such times become imperative. With COVID-19 disease spreading in villages, awareness about healthy lifestyle, sanitation, and dietary diversity can play an essential part in defin-

ing the overall health status of the community. Protein plays a vital role in bringing immunity level up. A good source of protein is soybean. The products derived from soybeans like soy chunks, tofu (soy paneer) and soy milk are high in protein value. Various recipes can be adopted to bring vividness to every meal. Women farmers are thus provided with multiple recipes that combines soy and vegetables for maximum nutrition value intake.

A wide variety of food grains are cultivated throughout the years. The farmers should store some part of it for self-consumption before selling it at the farmer's market. An all year supply of vegetables for the family can also be maintained through nutrition gardens behind one's house. A balanced diet can do wonders for the rural community involved in more labour intensive activities than others.

Good Farming – Good Food has been working with the farming community to help them understand the importance of food security and increase agricultural productivity through good farming practices. Similar exercises would take place in the future to ensure that such awareness reaches every doorstep of Madhya Pradesh's farming community.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Nutrition Bulletin

Awareness Session on Meal Planning

Food has always been an essential part of our health dynamics. Through centuries, we have gained a mine of information on its proper use. Balanced use of food items has ensured generations of progeny and recoveries from illness. Lately, food consumption has become a part of scientific enquiry into human health. When studied, one understands about the nutritional contribution of food.

Certain food is vital for maintaining good health while others are harmful. The learning from such studies should be applied in personal life to gain maximum benefit from one's consumption. Therefore, the management of nutrition takes a central place in building a robust physique. A simple approach to one's meal management can help people overcome the challenges of undernutrition. Several health care professionals agree that nutritional management is one of the many challenges in eradicating malnutrition. In fact, nutrition management can be considered both as a challenge and a solution.

Although challenging, improvement of dietary intakes of the rural population is a public health priority that might involve multiple influences from social organisations, government, and community, all at once. A collective effort is more likely to impact issues that beset health and nutrition security in an already compromised rural sector. A large part of our food heritage is scientifically beneficial. The beneficial aspects should be retained, but some aspects require modification in the view of changes in the dynamics of our modern lifestyle.

A family's familiarity with the dynamics of meal planning is a foundation that determines the best alternative for addressing nutritional requirement on a micro-level. To promote understanding of and compliance with goals of nutrition management, Good Farming – Good Food work with a

qualified team of nutritionists to determine the best way forward for the farming community of Madhya Pradesh. Meal planning involves conclusive steps and decisions on what is to be eaten in each meal. It requires thought, effort and prior knowledge through experience and training. As for the family's well being, it is crucial to know how well are the family members fed. It is challenging

for the family to bring variation to meals as the nutritional requirement varies from age to age and gender to gender. Undernourishment in the family often arises when it fails to instil a complete dietary balance.



A defined, systematic, and comprehensive approach is most effective in combatting severe repercussions of undernourishment. Simple steps like identifying nutritional requirements for each member, planning meals beforehand, scheduling meal time, and preparing meals on time require small but needful interventions. Once on the right path, the newly adopted routine continues perpetually. This behavioural change in meal management and its timing can prove extremely useful for communities in the long term. Generations of prevailing genetic and congenital disorders can be resolved by effortless approaches like awareness sessions and training.

Comprehensive nutrition assessment exercises like Meal Planning and management form the backbone of the nutrition plan under Good Farming – Good Food. Its ever-changing and ever-evolving nature in a variety of settings makes the nutrition-related dynamics more inclusive and restorative. The importance of nutrition is thus clearly identified, but its methods would continue to evolve. Irrespective of the method, the parameters of detecting and confronting malnutrition will be practical, scientific and relevant to programmes' goals.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Nutrition Bulletin

Awareness Session on Micro and Macro Nutrients

The Discovery of the role played by nutrition in diseases development and recovery has brought nutrition science into existence. Even in the past, through astute observation, humans have found that simple diet modifications can help prevent or cure many disorders. Through the year, the emerging dietary practices have made many disorders uncommon in today's world.

Although uncommon, these disorders have not entirely disappeared and reappear as soon as a food-related crisis emerges. Such a situation exists permanently in developing countries and is directly related to times when the population faces food crisis due to wars, crop failure and failing monsoon. Similarly, it also appears in people who ignore the importance of consuming a wide variety of food and depends on selected options that do not provide the essential micronutrients. These people can be of average weight and height, yet they are inadequately nourished with respect to the vital minerals and vitamins.

Solidaridad, along with other partners, organises numerous training and awareness sessions on the importance of micro and macronutrients for the farming community of Madhya Pradesh. The awareness reaches out to five districts through trained professionals and experts like Mrs Dipali Mishra. People affected with one or many nutrition-related disorders require a large intake of vitamins and minerals to compensate for the void.

During the awareness sessions, the participants are introduced to the organic and inorganic compounds essential in one's diet. There are compounds which have antioxidant properties, and others help in building membrane and tissues. Food made from soybean and vegetables contains an impressive amount of protein and iron that helps recover from anaemia and other ailments. Along with protein-rich foods, the body also requires other components that helps in breaking down the soluble and

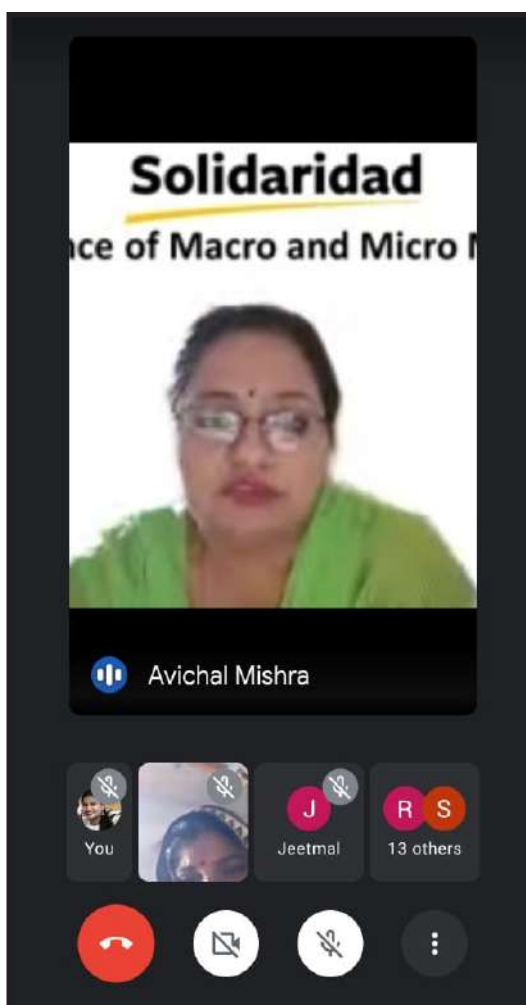
insoluble nutrients and minerals. Thus, the participants are enlightened with basic information on Vitamin B, A, D, E, Calcium, Iron, Iodine. The participants must also be introduced to the sources of acquiring them to the fullest. All the vegetables that can provide the aforementioned vitamins and minerals are shared with the participants. The practice also involves follow-up from the participants.

The nutritionists also provide the participating women farmers with all-inclusive recipes for a balanced diet as a mandatory exercise. They are also reminded how micro and macronutrient can affect all age groups and that a balanced diet, abundant with necessary nutrients, can help avoid infirmities. Even a moderate level of deficiencies can produce detrimental effects. A repetitive call to retrospection through training exercises has built an inclination towards adopting good diet practices.

The global burden of diseases can be reduced mainly by educating a vulnerable section of society about micronutrients and their replenishments sources. If left unattended, it can profoundly impact the country's economic development and productivity. With every increasing case, the public health cost would also be affected. The programme Good

Farming – Good Food has made many provisions for the farming community to address nutritional issues. Training and awareness exercises for the smallholder farmers form the strengthening pillar of its goals and objectives. A healthy and efficient farming community can only exist when it is aware of their produce's nutritional value. They are always encouraged by the dieticians and nutritionist working under the programme to secure a handful of their produced soybean and vegetable for self-consumption.

The programme would keep bringing such exercises to the farming community as a part of its awareness goals.



Solidaridad



GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Nutrition Bulletin

Prescribed Soy Recipe for the Month

Soybean Laddu

“When added to the wheat flour, soybean flour increases the total nutrition value of the food”



Ingredients

- 2 cup soybean flour (250 grams)
- 2 cup wheat flour (250 grams)
- 1 cup clarified butter (Ghee) (200 grams)
- 4 cups of crushed sugar (Bura) (500 grams).
- Cardamom (as per one's liking)

Method

- Sieve soybean flour and wheat flour and keep them together in a container.
- In a deep pan, heat the clarified butter and then add flour. In medium flame, roast the flour until it turns brown and then let it cool.
- Add cardamom and crushed sugar to the roasted flour when it is slightly hot.
- Mix and knead the mixture with your hands to a consistency where a ball of laddu can be made from it.
- Prepare laddus by making small balls of the mixture.
- Make sure that the laddus are stored in an airtight container. The preparation has shelf life of one month.

Ingredients	Grams	Protein	Iron (mg)
Soybean	250	108	26
Wheat Flour	250	51	12
Clarified Butter (Ghee)	200	30	12
Crushed Sugar (Bura)	500
Total	1200	189	50



GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD



FPO Newsdesk Updates for the Month of May

Farmer Producer Organisations are the future of the Indian agriculture economy. These organisations can bring themselves forward as a collective voice and body of farmers that would embody their different aspects of farming- from sowing to marketing.

Such organisations also protect the farmers from exploitation by corporations and monopoly in Mandis. This is possible because FPOs give the farmers a firm grip over their operation as designated shareholders.

A better price realisation, sharing of storage units, availability of cheap equipment on rent and employment opportunity are only a few to name from the list of benefits derived from such collective organisations.

One of the most active FPO, Samarth Producer Organisation, shows promising results and creates a benchmark for others to follow. Farmers often need guidance and counselling on farming-related activities. To get an in-depth knowledge of acceptable and sustainable agricultural practices, they need systemised and planned training sessions. Samarth has upheld the arduous task of providing constant assistance to its associated farmers by mobilising them for special training sessions that eminent agriculture experts from Solidaridad organise. These trainings feature special topics that highlight the necessity of pre-sowing practices. A number of exercises in May were organised to discuss the importance of deep summer ploughing, seed testing, soil testing, germination test, and variety selection.

Pre-sowing activities are bound to give a better start to the farmers. Even entrepreneurs from all shades of rural

society have approached the organisation. Twenty-five entrepreneurs are receiving training in the soil testing process. The organisation is thus actively bringing its



contribution towards creating livelihood opportunities.

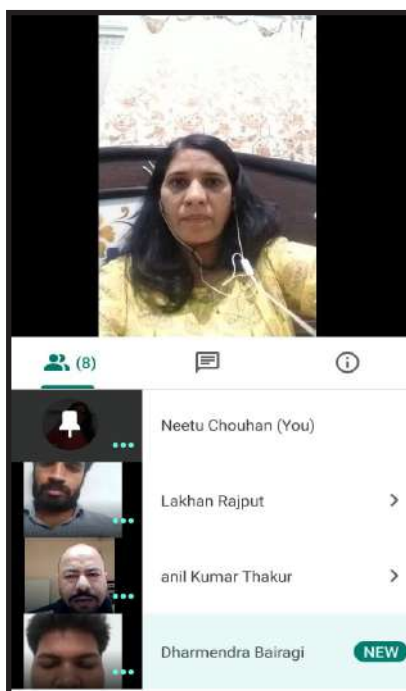
Orange Producer Company in Agar has applied for an Agri start-up award to Sammunati finance Pvt Limited, with the help of Solidaridad. Solidaridad has also envisioned a training plan for the FPO and its shareholders in association with the Institute of Rural Management Anand. The training would help develop

business models for the FPO based on feasibility analysis and the value chain of oranges.

FPOs can play an essential role in controlling the demand and supply cycle. It can plan the subsequent cultivation according to the demand and supply curve. Most FPOs have taken an active part in disseminating farming-related information and have been received well by the farmers.

The training exercises for the Board of Directors also play an essential part in FPOs operations. Increasing the strength of participants, strong bonds between the shareholders, inclusion of women members etc., plays a vital role in the success and smooth running of the organisations. Awareness sessions on the responsibility of shareholders, management of finances and following the mission and vision of FPOs, were organised for all the shareholders.

Good Farming – Good Food programme aims to bring more farmers together by encouraging and supporting the growth and development of more FPOs in Madhya Pradesh.



GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Partners' Broadcast Field Activities



Vippy Industries Ltd

Vippy Industries wholeheartedly conducted multiple training exercises in the district of Dewas. The team has been actively involved in planning the activities and their approach during the junta curfew. Although the task has been challenging for all, Vippy Industries, along with the team of Solidaridad, has been an active partner in the dissemination of crucial information to the farmers via different means of communication.

A monthly meeting with the Board of Directors of Farmer Producer Organisation was conducted with the support of the Vippy team. Under the arrangement, discussions on the importance of having more members in the FPO and collection of share capital took centre stage. BoDs were also requested to mobilise more farmers under the FPO and join the training conducted jointly by Vippy and Solidaridad under Good Farming – Good Food.

The farmers were engaged in deep summer ploughing and soil testing sessions on the lines of pre-sowing practices and related training. The farmers were instructed on the importance of providing a suitable environment for seed germination and crop root development while suppressing weeds and controlling soil erosion through deep ploughing every three years. Similarly, they were told how sustainability could only be achieved through well-calculated conditioning on soil health management. To know soil health status, farmers can conduct soil tests where the results would help determine values of Ph, Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potassium, and organic carbon. Video explaining deep summer ploughing and the process of collecting soil samples were also shared with the participating farmers.

Another crucial training exercise under pre-sowing operation was the germination test and its process. Multimedia presentation on seed selection, variety selection, germination, and treatment also showcased during the sessions. The participating farmers were also shown the various options of field preparation like RBF and BBF methods. The Vippy team made special efforts in explaining the seed rate and inter-row space when sowing.

The team was also successful in helping interested farmers acquire vermicompost bed from the horticulture department. The farmers were also trained to prepare enhanced vermicompost and its application in the field for improved soil conditioning. Vippy team has given their best efforts during the testing conditions times of a pandemic. Their



East-West Seed



In the month of May, East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer team has shown exceptional commitment to the trainings of farmers. Under the canopy of Good Farming – Good Food, EWS conducted numerous online training sessions for the farmers of Madhya Pradesh. A special focus was given to the vegetable nurseries, its foundations, and maintenance. Vegetables are important source of minerals, antioxidants and vitamins which are essential for robust growth and health.

The team helmed the cause of sustainable farming of vegetables. Farmers were shown during the presentations the many ways to incorporate bio growth enhancers for favourable yield.



GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Partners' Broadcast

The total count of kitchen gardens established under East-West Seed with support from Solidaridad and Good Farming – Good Food has reached thirty-eight in the five active districts of Madhya Pradesh. These kitchen gardens have highlighted its importance during the junta curfew. The farmers are able to get ready and fresh supply of green vegetables from their backyard. The nutrition gardens have, as planned, decreased their dependency on market for procuring vegetables meant for self-consumption.

Many of the farmers have conveyed their regards for sharing guidelines that helps grow vegetables like tomatoes, okra and bottle gourd. A number of farmers were shown how to manage and suppress the problem of pest and diseases, right time and techniques for harvesting, storage etc. Sustainability in farming requires special commitments and trainings. EWS also held training exercises to make organic fertilisers from kitchen waste. The activities were again supported by itemised presentation of process over different channel of media.

EWS KT has actively supported farmers in bringing their experience of farming forward. A number of success stories attest to the admirable work by the team.



MPSRLM

National Rural Livelihood Mission has collaborated with Solidaridad and many other partners under the programme Good Farming – Good Food to address multiple issues related to increasing the village community's livelihood and bringing nutrition to every doorstep.

To uplift the nutrition level, field agents and Nutri Sakhis from Agar, with the help of NRLM, organised multiple online awareness sessions for the women farmers of the district. Mr Bhjarat from NRLM helmed the exercise by clarifying the nutrition requirement in one's diet and its importance

for the holistic growth of the family. The session also provided the participants with information on how soybean flour can be combined with other grains to make the diet protein-rich. Preparation of curry dishes with soybean and mixing the lentils with spinach, tomatoes, and other vegetables can help fight anaemia-related ailments.

Similarly, Nutri Sakhis and Self-Help Groups from Dewas districts also came together for a joint session organised with the support of NRLM. The session was conducted on one of the essential topics- Meal Planning. Nutrition expert from Solidaridad- Mrs Nidhi Karoliya, steered the session where the discussion focused on the inputs from the participants as well. They received chances to clear their doubts and address the issues faced by them during Q&A session.

Mr Pankaj Thakur from NRLM also addressed the session, and many Anganwadi workers from the area participated in the session to enhance their knowledge of nutrition.

Another joint session organised by Solidaridad and MPSRLM through online communication channels gave the participants a chance to learn about Poshan Vatikas (Nutrition Gardens). The session was organised for all the five districts of Madhya Pradesh. Ms Rekha Chauhan from MPSRLM instituted the importance of building Poshan Vatikas. She also showed how the families could utilise wastewater from the kitchen to irrigate the small growing platform behind their houses. These nutrition gardens are sufficient to provide a yearlong supply of fresh vegetables to the farming families of the villages.

The appreciative contribution by MPSRLM would continue for the coming months for the farming community of Madhya Pradesh.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

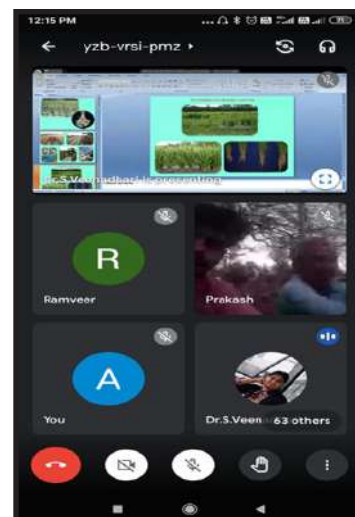
Partners' Broadcast



CIAE

Central Institute of Agriculture Engineering and Krishi Vigyan Kendra has been invaluable knowledge partners in Good Farming – Good Food. In an online training session organised for the farmers, Dr K V Rao addressed the participating farmers from Madhya Pradesh on Conservative farming for water conservation. The benefits of saving water can be numerous. Apart from building a sustainable environment for agriculture, proper utilisation of water can help save monetary inputs. The farmers can further utilise the saved water for farming other crops as well.

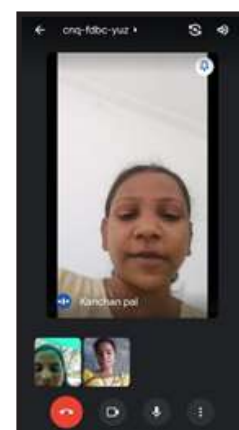
CIAE and KVK have made plausible contributions to the farming society by continuously providing technical and expert advice to the farmer and would continue their invaluable assistance in the time to come.



Mid Day Meal Scheme

Mid Day Meal

Mid-Day Meal aims to provide a better nutritional standing to the school going children for their physical development and mental growth. Anganwadi workers are the frontline of the scheme. Many training exercises for the Anganwadi workers are organised under Good Farming – Good Food to ornate their knowledge and understanding of nutrition. Several Anganwadi workers from the Ujjain district participated in the training sessions scheduled to broadcast the importance of Soybean in the daily diet. Soybean is an affordable mean to ornate their knowledge and understanding of nutrition. Several Anganwadi workers from the Ujjain district participated in the training sessions scheduled to broadcast the importance of Soybean in the daily diet. Soybean is an affordable mean to ornate their knowledge and understanding of nutrition. Several Anganwadi workers from the Ujjain district participated in the training sessions scheduled to broadcast the importance of Soybean in the daily diet. Soybean is an affordable mean to ornate their knowledge and understanding of nutrition.



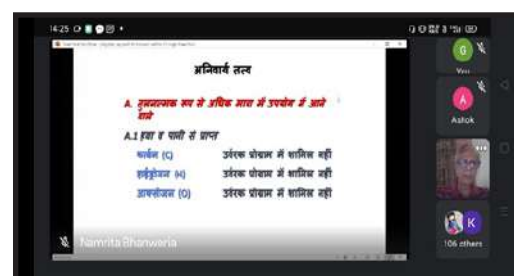
Samarth Kisan Producer Company

Samarth Producer Company has been providing constant assistance to the associated farmers in understanding and adopting good agriculture practices. It has successfully mobilized a number of farmers from the district of Agar in joining training exercises regarding Land Preparation and sowing which are prerequisite for the coming Kharif season. In the premises of Samarth Kisan Producer Company, training exercises on integrated nutrient management in soybean, seed practices like germination test and treatment, different sowing practice in soy, and method of soil testing were conducted.

Samarth's involvement in training the farmers becomes crucial as many associated farmers look up to the body which brings them together. Pre sowing activities are known to improve the infiltration and permeability of the soil and vastly improves upon the moisture-holding capacity of the earth.

Entrepreneurs have received opportunity to take part in soil testing process. A number of willing entrepreneurs were trained in using the soil testing kits to conduct test in fields. Twenty-five entrepreneurs are attached and active from the district of Agar. The organisation is also actively involved in supplying recommended variety of seeds to the farmers of the area. In a holistic approach, Samarth has secured a promising and trustworthy position in Agri input sale and distribution of Soy seeds. The same has been achieved by rural entrepreneurs and service providers.

Samarth contribution in bringing farmers together and lifting their livelihood by encouraging rural entrepreneurship stands as ideals partners and active Farmer Producer Organisations.





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD



Meet the Achievers Kaalu Singh

For many farmers of India, farming remains to be a gamble due to erratic monsoon. The challenges multiplied due to the pandemic triggered lockdowns. In such situations, farmers like Kaalu Singh has to reckon with the forces of nature.

Kaalu Singh, a diligent farmer from Kanka Khajuria, district Dewas, sows soybean regularly to increase his revenue from a geographical location known for soybean cultivation. Farming is his only means of livelihood. His experience in farming has been full of ups and downs, and he often recalls how farming changes in a short span of time.

Many important events in soybean farming have taken place since the last decade. New advancements in farming techniques and the choices in variety has changed the face of agriculture as we know it.

With improved fertilisers, pesticides, and sowing techniques, farmers have witnessed remarkable growth in soybean cultivation. Despite all the novel advancements in farming, farmers are still vulnerable to the unbridled calamities arising from climate-induced challenges. Incessant and intermittent rains, sudden and unforeseen hail storms have even riddled the experts from the field of climatology. Against this background, the best way to understand climate is by addressing it as “unpredictable”.

This unpredictability of monsoon has left several farmers in considerable losses due to the decrease in productivity. Almost every





GOOD FARMING - GOOD FOOD

Kaalu Singh

crop would show evidence of a reduction in final yield triggered by excessive moisture, increased pestilence, drought and dry spells. Soybean is no different. Kaalu, like other farmers from the district, was on the receiving end for the longest of time. His losses peaked at almost 60 per cent of the decline in total productivity due to prolonged dry spells and diseases triggered by the erratic monsoon. Kaalu shares his doleful journey –

“My friends and I have been observing the severity of climate change for a long time. These unforeseen changes left us in distress every time we thought of starting afresh.”

Kaalu admits that the price of agricultural inputs has also been a massive hurdle. In his small piece of land, the cost of production has grown exponentially with an increase in the prices of agricultural inputs, labour, and fuel. The rising price of transportation and the precarious state of Mandi (APMC – Agriculture Produce Market Committee) due to Covid-19 lockdowns has further bred farmers’ insecurities.

“The pandemic has been like a nightmare. It is incredibly challenging to procure chemicals, fertilisers, and pesticides during and around the lockdowns.”

Kaalu and his farmer friends have realised that the erratic monsoon and pandemic challenges are meant to last for a long time, and the best way forward is to brave the challenge. Under the guidance of knowledge partners like Krishi Vigyan Kendra and CIAE, Solidaridad has conducted numerous training exercises for the farmers of the Dewas district. The activities aim to minimise pro-

duction costs, increase productivity, and improve soil health by using organically produced bio fertilisers and growth enhancers. With the use of waste decomposer, farmers have developed a habit of enhancing soil fertility using organic compost. Along with soil conditioning, farmers like Kaalu also learned to prepare their field with climate-resilient techniques like Broad Bed and Furrow. They preferred seed varieties resilient to pest and torrential rains and received an overwhelming response in the final production.

Many farmers, along with Kaalu, are advancing towards the coming Kharif season with a renewed confidence in farming. This confidence is a direct result of training, demonstration, and awareness sessions. Calculated moves which are planned well in advance can pave the road to sustainable farming for the smallholder community of Madhya Pradesh. Several farmers are still oblivious to the climate-resilient practices and place their bets on uncertainties of monsoon.

Adopting new and improved farming techniques by smallholder farmers is bound to encourage sustainability in the long run. A contest with the forces of nature is unavoidable, but with proper guidance and support, farmers like Kaalu gets a fighting chance that was earlier out of their reach. Good Farming – Good Food committed to improving the face of agriculture in the rural farming community of Madhya Pradesh. With support from leading partners, the programme aims to touch thousands of farmers and improve their livelihood.

