

ANDAMAN SHEEKHA

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Farmer Awareness Programme on Dry Season Farming Held at Shaheed Dweep



Sri Vijaya Puram, Feb 01: An awareness programme for farmers was successfully conducted by the Agrometeorological Field Unit (AMFU), ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-CIARI) at Shaheed Dweep on 29 January 2026. The programme was organized under the Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa (GKMS) Project, a collaborative initiative of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The programme was held on the theme "शुष्क मौसम में सफल खेती: ग्रामीण कृषि मौसम सेवा के माध्यम से मौसम जागरूकता एवं जल प्रबंधन", focusing on dry season farming, weather awareness, and efficient water management. A total of 33 farmers from Ramnagar, Bharatpur, and Lakshmanpur villages of Shaheed Dweep participated in the programme, including five women farmers. In addition to farmers, the programme was attended by the Gram Pradhan, Panchayat members, and officials from the Department of Agriculture, reflecting strong community participation.

Addressing the farmers, Dr. Abhilash, Scientist (Agricultural Meteorology), and Principal Investigator of GKMS, highlighted that rainfall in the islands remains very low from January to April, resulting in limited water availability for irrigation. He emphasized that judicious and planned use of water is critical for sustaining crops during the dry season. Farmers were sensitized about the impact of dry weather on crops, such as soil moisture depletion, yellowing of leaves, poor crop growth, flower drop and reduced crop yields. He stressed that farming without weather information often leads to loss of water, to the Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa (GKMS) and informed about the biweekly weather based, crop and site specific agromet advisories under the service, including quantitative information of weather parameters like rainfall, temperature, wind speed, and humidity. Advisories on irrigation scheduling, fertilizer application, plant protection measures, and drought management were explained in simple terms based on Crop and its stage. Guidance was given on water management during dry weather, including irrigation during early morning or evening hours, avoiding over-irrigation, and planning irrigation based on weather forecasts. Farmers were also advised to adopt moisture conservation practices such as mulching using dry leaves, straw, coconut or arecanut husk, strengthening field bunds, and selecting crops requiring less water. The importance of short-duration and drought-tolerant crop varieties, proper plant spacing, and the use of organic manures to improve soil moisture retention was also highlighted.

Dr. Hemareddy Thimmareddy (Technical Officer, GKMS) explained the benefits of adopting agromet-advisories, stating that weather-based decision-making helps farmers increase crop yield, save irrigation water, reduce cultivation costs, minimize weather-related losses, and take timely farm operations. The programme also covered the interpretation of Agromet Advisory Bulletins (AABs) and their use in crop planning and water management. Farmers were introduced to digital tools such as the M-Kisan Portal, Meghdoot App, Damini Lightning Alert App, and WhatsApp advisory groups, which provide timely weather alerts and advisories. Discussions were held on moisture management strategies during dry and pre-monsoon periods, followed by farmer feedback, experience sharing, and suggestions for improving weather-based advisory services.

The entire programme was coordinated by Dr. I. Jaisankar (Principal Scientist and Head, Division of Natural Resource Management) under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Jai Sunder, Director, ICAR-CIARI, Sri Vijaya Puram and was well appreciated by the participating farmers, who expressed keen interest in adopting weather-based advisories for improving farm productivity during the dry season.