

ANDAMAN SHEEKHA

The True Mirror of A & N Islands



Sri Vijaya Puram, May 03: The ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-CIARI), Sri Vijaya Puram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, organized a farmer sensitization programme on “Balanced Use of Fertilizers – A Must” at Calicut, Sri Vijaya Puram, South Andaman, on 1 May 2026. The programme focused on promoting balanced nutrient management as an essential component of soil and water conservation and sustainable farming under island conditions.

A team of scientists from ICAR-CIARI, led by Dr. M. Muruganandam, Principal Scientist and Head, Fisheries Science Division, emphasized the importance of integrating organic, biological, and inorganic nutrient sources to enhance crop productivity while reducing input costs and minimizing environmental risks.

Drawing upon his extensive experience in farming on sloping lands and under high-rainfall conditions during his tenure at the ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Dr. Muruganandam highlighted that the balanced application of organic manures and biofertilizers complements soil and water conservation measures. He elaborated on the significance of practices such as bunding, trenching, contour farming, mulching, green manuring, cover cropping, and improved cropping systems including mixed cropping, intercropping, and crop rotation. These measures help reduce runoff and soil erosion, conserve moisture, minimize nutrient losses, and sustain crop yields, particularly under the high-rainfall conditions and resource limitations prevalent in the islands.

Referring to the current scarcity of chemical fertilizers and the adverse effects of their indiscriminate use, Dr. Muruganandam stressed the urgent need for achieving greater self-reliance in the production and use of organic manures and biofertilizers. He strongly advocated the adoption of vermicomposting, farmyard manure production, and on-farm biofertilizer use. He noted that this transition toward resilient and sustainable farming systems would require coordinated efforts among agricultural development agencies, research institutions, and farming communities.

Dr. Rafeeqe Rahman Alyethodie, Senior Scientist (Animal Genetics and Breeding), discussed key livestock health challenges during the forthcoming monsoon season and outlined appropriate preventive and treatment measures to improve animal productivity.

Dr. Puneet P. V., Scientist (Vegetable Science), highlighted the importance of balanced nutrient application for sustaining the productivity of vegetable and fruit crops while maintaining soil health. He emphasized the need for crop-specific application of fertilizers based on their nutrient requirements at different stages of the crops.

A display banner illustrating the nutrient requirements of major crops and fertilizer management strategies for the region was used during the programme to facilitate better understanding among the participants. Farmers were also guided on suitable alternatives to chemical fertilizers and informed about training opportunities related to organic and biofertilizer production available at ICAR-CIARI and its Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). Around 25 farmers, including 9 women farmers and 10 next-generation farmer youths, actively participated in the programme. The participants sought information on the availability, preparation, methods, and appropriate timing of applying organic and biofertilizer-based inputs during an interactive session.