

Press Release from Agriculture Department

Khet Bachao Abhiyan Held Successfully at West Pendam, Duga Block

Pakyong, June 17: The Khet Bachao Abhiyan programme was organised at West Pendam under Duga Block by the Agriculture & Horticulture Department in coordination with ATMA, KVK and CAEPHT, CAU. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from farmers, scientists, officials of the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments, and representatives of local institutions with the objective of promoting sustainable agricultural practices, soil conservation, value addition and farmer welfare.

The programme was graced by the presence of Hon'ble Panchayat President, Shri Nirmal Bajgai. Also present on the occasion were FPO President Shri Tanka Nath Bajgai; Joint Director, Horticulture Department, Shri J.N. Sharma; Deputy Director, Agriculture Department, Smt. Sangita Basnett; Associate Professor, CAEPHT, Dr. S.K. Satpathy; Professor, CAEPHT, Prof. S. Jena; Professor, CAEPHT, Dr. J. Panda; ACTO, KVK, Dr. Anushree Gogoi; ACTO, KVK, Dr. Sanjay Kumar along with officials and staff from the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments including Agriculture Inspectors, BTM, ATM, Field Assistants, Krishi Sevaks, Krishi Sevikas, Marketing Assistants and Organic Field Assistants.

The programme commenced with a welcome address delivered by Smt. Sangita Basnett, Deputy Director, Agriculture Department, who gave a brief overview of Khet Bachao Abhiyan. In her address, she emphasized the importance of cluster-based farming and encouraged farmers to remain consistent in their approach for achieving better productivity and sustainability. Highlighting the significance of soil and soil health, she stressed that maintaining soil fertility is vital for ensuring long-term agricultural productivity. She also acknowledged the issue of animal menace affecting agricultural activities and stated that active participation in cluster-based and large-scale farming could help mitigate such challenges to some extent. She encouraged farmers to cultivate high-value crops such as buckwheat and millets and urged them to make effective use of various departmental schemes and agricultural inputs provided by the department. She further highlighted the importance of soil health and fertility management.

Addressing the gathering, FPO President Shri Tanka Nath Bajgai informed that a total of 200 members have been registered under the West Pendam FPO. He further informed that agricultural produce from local farmers is being transported to the IFFCO processing centre at Rangpo and highlighted the contract farming initiatives currently being undertaken through the FPO.

Dr. S.K. Satpathy, Associate Professor, CAEPHT, CAU, spoke on farm mechanization and acknowledged the manpower shortage faced by farmers. He encouraged farmers to adopt power tillers and modern farm machinery to overcome labour constraints and improve efficiency in farming operations. He also informed participants about various training programmes conducted at his institution on repair and maintenance of power tillers and highlighted the use of portable agricultural equipment such as drum seeders for direct paddy seed application. He further requested the Panchayat President to facilitate an exposure visit of farmers to their institution at Ranipool.

Prof. S. Jena highlighted different training opportunities available in food processing and value addition, including preparation of products such as chips, churpi, bakery items, noodles and pickles, which can enhance income generation opportunities for farmers.

Dr. Shravani, SMS, KVK, informed farmers about the Kisan Sarathi App, through which farmers can upload photographs of crop-related problems and receive expert guidance and immediate solutions. She also introduced the Kisan Suvidha App and advised farmers on the importance of seed and seedling treatment prior to transplantation. Additionally, she informed farmers about training programmes on value addition and proper marketing of agricultural produce.

Joint Director, Horticulture Department, Shri J.N. Sharma shared his field experiences and stated that Khet Bachao Abhiyan is not only aimed at saving agricultural land but also at preserving soil health. He informed farmers about an upcoming initiative wherein farmers' produce would be marketed through FPOs using eco-friendly boxes containing assorted organic products. He also encouraged farmers to revive traditional farming practices and maintain clean surroundings around their farms.

Further, he highlighted various inputs being distributed under the MIDH programme, including seedlings of banana, guava, papaya, avocado, kiwi and other crops. He requested farmers to convert joint land records into single-name parchas in order to avail benefits under various government schemes. He also informed the gathering that farmers facing severe wildlife-related issues may submit joint applications through the Panchayat to the Chief Wildlife Warden. He encouraged young farmers to inspire future generations to remain connected with agriculture and the soil.

The Chief Guest, Shri Nirmal Bajgai, Panchayat President, expressed gratitude to the department for organizing such informative and awareness-generating programmes and encouraged farmers to actively participate in similar initiatives for their overall development and advancement of the farming community.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Krishi Sevika Ms. Dorjee Doma Bhutia, who thanked all dignitaries, scientists, officials and farmers for their valuable presence and active participation towards making the programme a success.