ICAR–IIRR Scientists Take Rice Science and Technologies to the High Altitudes of Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh under CRP Biofortification NEH Programme

Scientists from the ICAR–Indian Institute of Rice Research (ICAR–IIRR), Hyderabad, successfully conducted a capacity-building training, farmers' interaction, and sensitisation programme on bio-fortified rice varieties at Zomkhang Hall, Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh, under the CRP- Biofortification NEH Programme. The initiative marked a significant milestone in extending advanced rice science and nutrition-oriented technologies to high-altitude and hilly regions, thereby enhancing the visibility and impact of ICAR–IIRR in frontier areas of the country. The event witnessed the presence of several dignitaries, officials, scientists, and progressive farmers from the region. The ICAR–IIRR scientific team was led by Dr. C. N. Neeraja, Principal Scientist and Co-ordinator, CRP Biofortification Rice, ICAR–IIRR, Hyderabad, along with Dr. Jyothi Badri (Senior Scientist, Plant Breeding and Genetics), Dr. Kalyani M Barbadikar (Senior Scientist, Biotechnology), and Dr. Veerendra Jaldhani. Ms. Keertika Kashyap, District Development Coordinator, NABARD, Tawang, graced the programme as the Chief Guest, while Ms. Nawang Chonzom, Chairperson, Tawang Green Farmers Producer Company, attended as the Guest of Honour. Key participants included Mr. Tashi Lungtan, Assistant Development Officer, and Mr. Jambey Tenzin, General Secretary, Kisan Morcha, Tawang, along with farmer representatives and extension officials. The programme commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Anjanand Tripathy, Senior Scientist-cum-Head, KVK Tawang. Dr. C. N. Neeraja set the tone of the programme by highlighting the importance of rice bio-fortification (nutrient-rich rice) as a sustainable strategy to address hidden hunger and micronutrient deficiencies, particularly in remote and nutritionally vulnerable regions. Dr C. N. Neeraja emphasized the role of women farmers in rice cultivation and underlined the contribution of women farmers in the context of the International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026. Dr. Jyothi Badri elaborated on bio-fortified rice varieties developed by ICAR–IIRR, their yield potential, adaptability, and nutritional benefits, with special emphasis on suitability for hilly and high-altitude agro-ecosystems. Dr. Kalyani M Barbadikar briefed the participants on nutrient-use-efficient rice varieties, soil health management, and the role of balanced fertilisation in sustaining productivity under challenging environments. As part of the practical demonstrations, ICAR–IIRR scientists demonstrated the use of a soil testing kit provided (Dr Brajendra) under the programme, explaining its importance and application for on-farm soil testing and site-specific nutrient management. Farmers actively participated in the demonstration and expressed keen interest in adopting soil-health-based crop management practices. An interactive session followed, during which farmers raised queries related to rice cultivation, soil fertility, and other crops, all of which were comprehensively addressed by the ICAR–IIRR experts. Addressing the gathering, Ms. Keertika Kashyap, Ms. Nawang Chonzom, and Mr. Jambey Tenzin also emphasised the importance of adopting improved agricultural technologies, strengthening farmer institutions, and promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture in the region. They extended heartfelt regards to the Director, Dr. R. M. Sundaram, ICAR-IIRR, and the entire team of ICAR-IIRR CRP Biofortication NEH for the program. It concluded with the distribution of programme inputs, including Bio-fortified rice seeds (high grain zinc content), Soil Testing Kits developed by ICAR–IIRR, Hyderabad, followed by a vote of thanks

proposed by Dr. J. K. Singh, Subject Matter Specialist (Animal Science), KVK Tawang. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from farmers, especially women farmers, who expressed happiness and appreciation for the efforts of ICAR–IIRR scientists in bringing advanced rice research and nutritional innovations to the high-altitude region of Tawang. The event marked a significant step towards promoting nutrient-rich rice, improving soil health awareness, and strengthening sustainable rice-based agriculture in the hilly ecosystems of Arunachal Pradesh.


TAWANG
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