

RAIN FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE, JORHAT CONDUCTS TREE GROWERS' MELA

To increase the awareness among the farmers, foresters and other counterparts of the society about the needs of tree plantation for livelihood management and mitigation of climate change, a two-day **Tree Growers' Mela** was organized on 20th and 21st March, 2015 at Deovan Campus of Rain Forest Research Institute, Jorhat (Assam).

Dr. N. S. Bisht, Director, RFRI, Jorhat welcomed all the tree growers, farmers, JFMC Members, forest officials, students and other participants coming from various parts of N E region as well as outside the NE Region. In his welcome address, Dr. Bisht emphasised on the ongoing lab-to-land activities of the Institute to encourage the livelihood opportunities and capacity building of the farmers, tree growers and small industries holders of the region. He gave special emphasis on cultivation of bamboo and agar and their value added products.

Shri Rajib Kr. Kalita, Organizing Secretary of Tree Grower's Mela anchored the Inaugural Session wherein more than 350 progressive farmers of North Eastern States participated in the Mela apart from students from universities such as West Bengal State University, Kolkata and Assam Rajiv Gandhi University of Cooperative Management, Sivasagar, representatives from NGOs, SHGs, JFMCs, State Forest Departments, Soil Conservation Department, Horticulture Department, Sericulture Department, financial institution like NABARD took part in the Tree Growers' Mela, which was held for the first time in North East India.

Dr. D. Ramaiah, Director, North Eastern Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST), Jorhat emphasized on farmers' friendly technologies innovated in research institutions like NEIST, Jorhat. He requested the farmers to take benefits of these research findings by acquiring and applying them in their respective fields.

On this occasion, RFRI, Jorhat felicitated a renowned botanist, popular Science writer, retired Scientist of Tocklai Experimental Station, Jorhat Shri Ananda Chandra Dutta who is a recipient of honorary D. Sc. of Dibrugarh University for his outstanding towards the promotion of science. In his emotional address, Shri Dutta mentioned need of conservation of locally available medicinal and fuel-wood plant species to maintaining good health and to mitigate future fuel scarcity respectively. He urged the farmers to incorporate such trees in their plantations and homesteads to enhance livelihood options.

Dr. Rafiquz Zaman, Vice Chancellor, Assam Rajiv Gandhi University of Cooperative Management, Sivasagar and Chief Guest of the Inaugural Session described about the "*Rastrya Krishi Bikash Yojna*" and invited the farmers to take full advantage from this. He explained about the farmers friendly activities of Assam Rajiv Gandhi University of Cooperative Management, Sivasagar for helping the farmer and urged the farmers for a co-operative move and act united. He invited the beneficiary of RKBY to the University with the concept of Co-operative (*Samabai*) in Forestry, Agriculture, Pisciculture etc. He mentioned that in Assam there are a large number of tea growers which are cultivating individually but they are suffering as they do not have any processing plant of their own.

Another attraction of this Mela was inauguration of five extension brochures on Broom Grass Cultivation and Management; Manual of Boucherie Machine for Bamboo Preservation; Bamboo Charcoal Production; Noni Cultivation and Management and *Melia dubia*: Cultivation and Management.

In the Interactive Session, farmers interacted with a panel of experts from different background. Dr. Bipin Khangia, Professor, Horticulture, Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat; Sri S K Thakuria, Divisional Forest Officer (Logging), Tinisukia; Sri Mayur Bora, Assistant General Manager, NABARD; Sri K. K. Saikia, Divisional Forest Officer (Social forestry), Sivasagar; Sri Samiran Bhatta, Subject Matter Specialist, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Jorhat and Dr. T. C. Bhuyan, Retired Scientist, RFRI, Jorhat participated in the interactions with participants.

There were eleven Exhibition Stalls which were installed in vicinity of the experimental plots of respective species. Each Stall was equipped with complete information on the concerned species. Live demonstration of various propagation techniques, nursery practices, plantation technology, disease-pests problem and their management, livelihood generation issues, market information etc were some of the highlights of the '**Knowledge Mining**' sessions.

GLIMPSES OF RFRI TREE GROWERS' MELA



Tree Growers' Mela | 2015



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The Telegraph

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Jorhat, March 19: Save the trees and the planet. This is the message to be conveyed at the tree growers' mela beginning at Sotai tomorrow.

The fair, to be held at Rain Forest Research Institute, 17km from here, will witness a congregation of nearly 300 growers, foresters, wood-based industrialists and stakeholders who will chalk out issues relating to the cultivation of valuable wood and other trees and their uses.

"The *mela* is being held to sensitise tree growers on issues related to cultivation and management of tree species on farmland, the technologies and products developed, marketing of various non-timber forest products, livelihood options from forest-based industries and skills development," Rajib Kumar Kalita, a scientist at the institute, said.

Kalita said the importance of the tree growers' fair was the bringing together of a large number of farmers, self-help groups, NGOs, joint forest management committees, wood-based industries, state forest departments and forestry research organisations on one platform. This would help them understand the issues related to tree farming and exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences.

Farmers will be given an insight into how forest produce other than timber can be harvested in a sustainable manner and marketed.

One of the issues is using up of hillsides and other wasteland for the cultivation of tea by small tea growers.

"We will try to make them aware that they are growing tea, which is a mono-crop, on land where a large species of trees once grew. Growing tea on vast tracts is adversely affecting tree diversity and their preservation," Kalita said.

"Many have not seen the mulberry (*noni gos*) on which the silkworms feed and how they are cultivated. We will have a stall showing the details of the mulberry. We shall also demonstrate how to propagate bamboo through seed, cuttings or tissue culture," he added.

Moreover, as trees meant for firewood are no longer easily available, they will ask the people to grow this variety, the scientist said.

Financial institutions like NABARD, departments such as agriculture, soil conservation, horticulture, sericulture, scientists, foresters, social activist working in forest related issues, national and international awardees in forestry, persons with success stories in forestry, and the Territorial Army have also been invited. There will be 11 exhibition stalls showcasing the activities of the institute.

The Sentinel

of this land, for its people

Focus on capacity building and livelihood opportunities for farmers, tree growers

From a Correspondent

JORHAT, March 21: To increase awareness among farmers, foresters and other counterparts of the society about the need for tree plantation for livelihood management and mitigation of climate change, a two-day Tree Growers' Mela has been organized from March 20 to March 22 at Rain Forest Research Institute (RFRI), Jorhat.

Organizing secretary and scientist of the institute, Rajib Kalita said that more than 300 progressive farmers of north-eastern States would take part in the Mela, apart from students of universities like Kolkata State University and Assam Cooperative Management University, Sibsagar, representatives from NGOs, SHG, JFMCs, industries, State Departments like Forest, Soil Conservation, Horticulture, Sericulture and NABARD.

Delivering the welcome address in the inaugural session of the Mela, Director Dr NS Bisht described about the ongoing land reclamation activities of RFRI Jorhat to encourage livelihood opportunities and capacity building for farmers, tree growers and small industries holders of the region. Dr. Bisht gave special emphasis on cultivation of bamboo and agar and their value added products.

Dr Rafiquz Zaman, Vice Chancellor, Rajiv Gandhi Co-operative University and chief guest of the inaugural session of the Mela in his speech described about the Rasthya Krishi Bikash Yojna and invited the farmers to take advantage of it. He explained about the farmer-friendly activities of Rajiv Gandhi Co-operative University, Sibsagar and urged the farmers for a cooperative movement. He invited the beneficiary of RKBY to Assam Rajiv Gandhi Cooperative University with the concept of Co-operative (Samabai) Society in forestry, agriculture, and pisciculture. He directed the farmers to do the work by forming a legal forum, making an enterprise with like-minded people to get more benefit.

The guest of honour, Dr D. Ramaiah, Director North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST), Jorhat enlightened the gathering through a lecture. In his lecture he emphasized the importance and responsibilities of the farmers. He described to the farmers about friendly technologies innovated in NEIST, Jorhat including agro technologies like production of citronella, lemon mushroom. He appealed to people to take advantage of these research findings by acquiring and applying them in their respective fields.

On this occasion, RFRI, Jorhat felicitated a renowned botanist, popular science writer and retired scientist of Tocklai Experiment Station, Jorhat, Ananda Chandra Dutta for his outstanding contributions and activities towards promotion of science. In his lecture, Dr. Dutta mentioned the need for conservation of locally available medicinal and firewood plants to mitigate future fuel scarcity. He urged the farmers to incorporate such trees in their plantations to enhance livelihood options.

Another attraction of this Mela was inauguration of five information brochures on broom grass cultivation and management, Boucherie Machine for bamboo preservation, bamboo charcoal production, Noni and Melia Dubia cultivation and management.

Also present were Dr. Bipin Khangia, Scientist & Professor AAU, Jorhat, SK Thakuria, DFO Tinsukia, Mayur Bora, Assistant General Manager NABARD, KK Saikia, DFO Social Forestry, Sibsagar, Samiran Bhatta Krishi Vigyan Kendra Jorhat and Dr. D. Bhuyan, RFRI, Jorhat.

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Guwahati, Monday, March 23, 2015