

Tree Growers Mela, 2013

21 and 22 February, 2013

Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding Coimbatore

Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore organised the 5th Tree Growers Mela on 21 and 22 February 2013. Shri K. Ravichandran, IFS, Head Forest Economics and Extension, welcomed the gathering. During his welcome address he mentioned that The Tree Growers Mela is organised every year since 2009 with an aim to sensitize the tree growers on issues related to cultivation and management of tree species in farm lands, the technologies and products developed. He informed the gathering that 2013 is IFGTB's silver jubilee year and the Tree Growers Mela is the first programme in the silver jubilee year. The Mela would provide an opportunity for interaction between farmers, scientists, government departments and wood based industries. It also enabled the farmers and others to share their experiences, flag the issues which require the attention of scientists and government officials to provide solutions through research and capacity building programmes and also catch up with the latest development in R&D of Forestry and allied sectors.

Dr. N. Krishnakumar, IFS, Director, in his address provided an overview about the Tree Growers Mela and informed that tree farming in farm lands have gained momentum in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry which necessitated the institute to organise Tree Growers Mela and the response over the years is tremendous and ever swelling. He underlined the research and extension activities of the institute focused mainly on the need and demand of various stake holders. He mentioned that clones of Eucalyptus and Casuarina which were developed a few years ago have been received well by farmers and industries and informed that another 15 new varieties will be released in the coming years. He also mentioned that nearly 145 trees which have the economic potential will be domesticated for the benefit of farmers.

Shri T.S. Srinivasa Murthy, IFS, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Working Plan mentioned that the farmers in Tamil Nadu exhibit high entrepreneurship. The Forest Department has launched the Tree Cultivation in Private lands and the scheme has picked up momentum. More than 10 crore seedlings would be distributed under the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity and Greening Projects and more than 30 percent outlay under the TBGP would be spent in outside forest areas. He stressed the importance of working in a convergent way where the department, research institutes and farmers to work together to gain maximum benefit.

Dr. M.H. Swaminath, Chair of Excellence for Climate Change in his felicitation address congratulated ICFRE and IFGTB for organising Tree Growers Mela which is the need of the hour to bridge relationship between farmers, industries and scientific organisations for profitable tree farming. He mentioned that developmental activities and rapid urbanization has affected the climate in the country in the country like several other developing nations. There are significant increase in temperature over the last 25 years and urged the farmers, industries and the departments to go for tree planting which is the answer to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Dr. S. Nagarajan, Chair of Excellence Forest Genetic Resources in his felicitation address requested the Director General, ICFRE to introduce exposure visit and take farmers of Tamil Nadu to other states to share their knowledge, learn many new things and adopt the best practices in their farming activities.

Shri M. Karunakaran, IAS, District Collector, Coimbatore presided over the inaugural function. He congratulated the ICFRE and IFGTB for organising Tree Growers Mela. He pointed out the economic growth had its impact on natural resources and there is a growing concern over tackling the garbage problems, plastic waste management and pollution of water resources. He said the impact of urbanization is a major concern which needs immediate attention to preserve the ever depleting forest wealth and there should be more awareness on protecting our natural resources. He said as part of the afforestation drive 64 lakhs trees have been planted in Tamil Nadu last year and 65lakhs trees would be planted this year.

Dr. V.K. Bahuguna, IFS, Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education inaugurated the Tree Growers Mela and delivered the inaugural address. He mentioned that Farmers are food god since they produce food grains and fed millions of people in the country and requested the farmers to be environment god by planting more trees and safeguard the environment. In response to the appeal made by Dr. S. Nagarajan, Chair of Excellence for Forest Genetic Resources, Dr. Bahuguna, IFS, DG, ICFRE mentioned that ICFRE would soon begin a unique Exposure visit programme for three weeks in which farmers from Tamil Nadu will visit other states to learn agricultural practices there and share their knowledge with farmers there. He mentioned that a scientist would accompany the farmers group to facilitate their visit and the new venture is the first of its kind in the country as farmers are accompanied by the scientists. The entire expenditure for the exposure visit would be borne by ICFRE.

Dr. V.K. Bahuguna, IFS, DG, ICFRE informed that ICFRE would network the Van Vigyan Kendras with all the Krishi Vigyan Kendras and Forest Extension Centres in the state. The state forest Extension centres located in 30 districts in the state would be effectively linked for the benefit of farming communities. ICFRE would create more Van Vigyan Kendras in the coming years. This would facilitate the farmers, industries to get direct information on products, technologies and seeds and seedlings.

DG, ICFRE in his address mentioned that Farmers faced hardship in harvest of trees due to non availability of manpower and high cost involved in removal of trees when he visited Villupuram, Cuddalore and Puducherry areas during December 2012 for distribution of Casuarina seedlings for the Thane cyclone affected farmers as announce by Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan, Hon'ble Minister of state (independent charge) for Environment and Forests, Government of India and launch the interactive meet with farmers under the VVK and KVK networking. He announced that an amount of Rs. 25 lakhs would be made available to purchase harvesting machines through IFGTB and farmers may form clusters and use the harvest machines.

DG, ICFRE informed that the demand for good quality planting material and seeds are on rise since large number of farmers have adopted tree farming as a mode of livelihood. ICFRE has

set apart 60 lakhs to establish three centres for producing high quality seedlings in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala.

Dr. V.K. Bahuguna, IFS, DG, ICFRE mentioned that IFGTB would establish a "Prerana Centre" an outlet to commercialize the products developed by IFGTB in lines with the "Prerana" opened at Dehra Dun. The outlet will sell all the products developed by self help groups, village forest communities besides the products developed by IFGTB. He mentioned that the Bureau of Forest Genetic Resources will be set up in near future and steps would be taken to establish a National institute of Forest Genetic Resources by upgrading the IFGTB institute. He congratulated the Director, officers, scientists, staff and employees of IFGTB for successfully organizing the Tree Growers Mela for the fifth consecutive time.

Dr. V.K. Bahuguna, IFS, DG, ICFRE unveiled the silver jubilee year commemorative stone of the IFGTB.

As part of the Workshop on **Sustainable Tree Farming: Wood Security, Food Security and Livelihood Options** was organised. Issues related to improved farming and land use techniques, Integrated Farming Systems, Bio-manures and Bio-fertilizers, organic farming, Bioenergy and Biofuels, Agroforestry practices, Medicinal plants, Seed certification, Certification of nurseries, Public Private Partnership in Plantation forestry, Cost effective techniques for quality planting stock production, Value addition, Market linkages, Plantation health, Raw material requirement and its sourcing by wood based industries, Farmers experience on tree farming, Disposal of their produce and industries, Crop insurance, etc were discussed and deliberated.

Shri M. Karunakaran, IAS, District Collector inaugurated the exhibition on **Plantation technologies for sustainable Tree Farming**. A total of 32 organisations namely Forest Departments, Forest Development Corporations, Scientific and academic institutions, wood based industries, industries in the field of farm machineries and farm equipments, irrigation, self help groups, farmers, nurseries, etc participated in the exhibition.

More than 1700 farmers from all districts of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Palakkad district in Kerala participated in the Tree Growers Mela.

A press conference was organised at IFGTB in which all the leading newspaper in English, Tamil and Malayalam printed from the city and all TV channels participated in the press meet. Dr. V.K. Bahuguna, IFS, DG, ICFRE, addressed the print and electronic media on a wide range of issues namely forest types, the research and extension initiatives of ICFRE, direct to consumers scheme, forestry research and extension in the service of nation, etc.