

Meeting of Haryana Kisan Ayog with the Farmers of Kisan Club of Mewat District

Date : 17 May 2011 at 9:30 A. M.
Venue : PWD Guest House, Firozpur Jhirka

The meeting of HKA was held to discuss all agriculture related problems of Mewat Region on May 17, 2011 at Firozpur Jhirka under the Chairmanship of Dr. R. S. Paroda, Chairman, HKA. The meeting was attended by Dr. R. S. Dalal, Dr. D. P. Singh, Dr. Mehmood Khan, Shri Sharma SDM, Tehsildar, B.D.O, A.D.O, Incharge KVK, Palwal, Mr. Taiyab Hussain, Chairman Kisan Club and several members of Mewat Kisan Club.

At the outset Dr. R. S. Dalal, explained the purpose and the Terms of Reference of HKA and invited the participants to express their problems and suggest probable solutions. The following points emerged related to agriculture sector and other general developmental problems of Mewat district.

General Problems:

The participants brought out the following general problems of Mewat Region to the notice of Chairman, HKA.

- There are about two dozens of High Schools in Mewat District, but there are inadequate number of Science Teachers.
- There are very few Gynecologists in the Hospital to look after the Health related problems of Women.
- There is no provision of separate toilet for girl students in the schools, which is a great disincentive.
- There is acute shortage of drinking water in the schools.
- The women are in general anemic and weak due to large scale deficiency of vitamins, iron and other micro-nutrients in the day to day diet.
- The Mewat area is very densely populated as compared to other districts of Haryana due to lack of proper education and poverty.
- There is no University in the Mewat and nearby adjoining area.
- There are about 250 villages in the Mewat Region, but only three ADOs are posted. More than 20 posts are lying vacant. The Mewat district has two Blocks.
- There is no KVK in the Mewat Region, At present, the KVK staff of Palwal is providing technical advice and need based training to the farmers, which is quite inadequate. Moreover, KVK Palwal has no SMS of Soil Science and Plant Protection to help the farmers of Palwal as well as Mewat Area.
- ,The most of the Govt. staff including teachers are not posted as per the requirement, and if posted they either do not join duty or remain on long leave which affects adversely desired service delievery and development activities of Mewat area.

Suggestions:

- These basic problems need special attention of Govt. of Haryana to provide minimum livelihood security and proper education and health care facilities to the people on par with other parts of Haryana.
- The first posting of teachers, Govt. Officials, KVK staff, ADOs and others should be atleast for two years with adequate Backward Area Allowance. This is happening in army and other central Government. Department., including Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), New Delhi.

Issues related to Field Crops and Natural Resource Management:

- There are always problems of timely availability of quality inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) to the farmers.
- The farmers demanded quality seeds especially of lentil crop for Nagina area, for which support of IARI and ICARDA was considered necessary.
- The pulse and other crops are damaged by the Blue Bulls, being a major problem.
- There is a lack of knowledge about agro-technology, agro-based small enterprises and inadequate training programmes to cover agricultural and its related activities due to no KVK in Mewat District. Hence, a new KVK must be opened for which HAU should submit the proposal to ICAR as a matter of priority.
- There is a strong demand to provide loans at lower interest rates and cover all crops under profitable MSP.
- They also demanded insurance cover at village level rather than at block level against natural calamities and damage of crops by blue bulls.
- There is a very heavy infestation of *Orabanche* in mustard and tomato crop in Mewat Area. Thus, its effective control was needed.
- There is a general problem of soil degradation (poor infiltration rate, compaction, soil sodicity/ salinity) in the area.
- There is acute shortage of good quality water for drinking and agriculture purposes.
- There is great demand for laser leveling and conservation agriculture in Mewat District.
- There is often dispute among farmers in laying out under ground pipe lines to carry good quality waters from Arawali Hill side to nearby area for drinking and irrigation purposes.
- The supply of electricity is not regular and mostly available during night hours to lift irrigation water for irrigation purposes.

Suggestions:

- There is an urgent need to start a separate KVK for improving knowledge base of farmers of Mewat region. The Kisan Club has also suggested the availability of Govt. land for this purpose.

- The non-irrigated land of 20 acres should be treated equal to 5 acres irrigated land for the purpose of providing subsidies to resource poor farmers of Mewat Area.
- Timely availability of various inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) should be ensured to the farmers.
- Self Help Groups (SHG) should be encouraged for multiplication of foundation/hybrid seeds at farmers' fields for easy and timely availability of quality seeds at cheaper rates at the doorsteps of farmers.
- Farmers suggested to have more sale points for the supply of good quality seeds and other agro-chemicals by employing well trained agriculture graduates with provision of sale licenses.
- Farmers need specific advice for reclamation of sodic and saline soils, and water logging conditions to improve the degraded soils for higher productivity. There is a need to conduct adequate numbers of soil and water tests to recommend location specific amendments (zypsum, phosphozypsum) and other measures to treat problematic soils and waters of the area.
- There is an urgent need to ensure greater supply of zypsum at subsidized rates to cover all crops, including Rapeseed and Mustard, keeping in view the soil sodicity and sodic under ground waters used for irrigation purpose.
- There is a need to monitor soil health through mobile soil testing labs, and suggest concrete measures to prepare various kinds of organic manures, green manures and biofertilizers to maintain good soil health and high productivity of field crops.
- Members also suggested to develop Kotala Jheel as water reservoir through proper survey to meet the irrigation/water requirement and reduce water logging conditions in the area.
- There is a need to strengthen the water storage capacity of Kamada Dam, Rawali Dam and local ponds in the area.
- The farmers should be provided profitable MSP to cover all major crops and loans at lower interest rate with full transparency.
- The village as unit should be considered for insurance cover against losses of crops due to natural calamities and wild animals, such as blue bulls.
- The MNREGA programme should be stopped during peak sowing and harvesting times. It should be utilized more for cleaning and digging of water bodies and ponds as well as bunding of field boundaries by proper monitoring at Panchayat levels.
- There should be proper government direction and notification to layout under ground pipe lines at certain depth on other farmers land without any hurdle to facilitate irrigation and drinking water supply from Arawali Hills.
- The present subsidy of Rs 50000/- to lay down under ground pipes for irrigation is inadequate and actual cost comes out to Rs 3-5 lacs. Thus, subsidies be enhanced to cover the actual costs and it should be based on depth and length of under ground pipes.
- There was also strong demand to involve the Water Technology Centre (WTC) at IARI (ICAR) New Delhi to address the Soil and Water Management problems, training on High Tech irrigation and survey to

develop proper water storage structures, in Mewat Area. WTC should adopt Mewat district as a challenge for improving its natural resource base and prepare a comprehensive water management plan for the Mewat district. Also there is an urgent need for large scale demonstration of irrigation technology and conservation agriculture (CA) practice in Mewat Area.

- There is a need to control the population of blue bulls and also provide adequate subsidy for fencing to protect the high value crops, especially the orchards.

Issues Related to Horticulture and Agro-forestry:

- Farmers of the area are cultivating tomatoes on large scale, but crop suffers from infestation of *Orabanche* and *Helicoverpa*. Hence, good quality seeds and weedicides are needed.
- There is a good scope for cultivating fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) and other spices, but there is a lack of technical know how and availability of quality seeds.
- The fruit crops of guava and pomegranate are well adapted to the agro-climatic conditions, but the availability of quality planting material and proper post harvest management know how is lacking.
- There is a good scope for plantation of agro-forestry, especially *Prosopis juliflora* on saline dry land and other grasses or multi purpose trees such as Khejri (*Prosopis cineraria*).

Suggestions:

- There is a need to provide effective control measures to reduce the damage of tomato crops by *Orabanche* and *Helicoverpa* on community basis. Also seeds of good quality vegetables be made available through involvement of some good private seed companies such as Raasi seeds having their base in Gurgaon.
- The farmers should be provided quality planting material of guava, pomegranate, ber and other horticultural plants.
- A pilot project to propagate *Prosopis juliflora* and *Khejri* on large scale along with its mechanical harvesting, coal making, gasification, lac cultivation etc to cover saline dry land and other problematic soils be initiated by HAU.
- Processing and value addition units for tomatoes, spices and other horticultural crops are to be established in the area.
- The farmers should be provided at least 50% subsidy for fencing to protect the horticultural crops from blue bulls and other stray cattle

Issues Related to Animal Husbandry:

- There is acute shortage of green fodder in the area.
- There is a great scope of goatery and back yard poultry in Mewat Region, but there is no Mewat specific programme to cover these activities.

- There is abundant scope for brakish water fisheries but there is no programme to demonstrate its importance in the area.

Suggestions:

- Supply of good quality seeds of fodder crops/varieties for improving the productivity of livestock has to be ensured.
- There is a need to demonstrate the utility of multipurpose fodder trees including thornless varieties of *Prosopis juliflora* and thornless cactus in the area to provide green fodder to goaterly and other livestock.
- Farmers need adequate training and technical knowhow for brakish water pisciculture and supply of proper varieties of fishlings for inland fish production.
- There is need to develop integrated farming system models for small and marginal farmers by raising crops, trees, horticulture crops, livestock including poultry and piggery and other complementary enterprises like bee keeping, mushroom production for livelihood security in Mewat District.
- Need based vocational trainings to farm women and farmers for nursery raising, fisheries, goaterly, piggery, honeybee, mushroom production and other small agro-based enterprises for employment and income generation are needed as a matter of priority.

Other Suggestions:

- Need to strengthen the Kisan Clubs by providing small office space and some financial help to hold interaction meeting with officials and experts to improve need based agricultural related activities in backward area of Mewat should be a high priority for consideration of the Department of Agriculture, Haryana..
- Farmers also need proper schooling for their children with financial support from the Government in the form of fellowships and purchase of book sets and technical publications/magazines.
- The Mewat area need mission mode programme for natural resource management, conservation agriculture, agro-horticulture, agro-forestry and fisheries.
- There is an urgent need to supply fresh canal water for drinking and other purposes in Mewat Area.
- The office bearers of Kisan Club made frequent request to the Chairman, HKA to have a new KVK sanctioned for Mewat Area without any further loss of time. Also support for the development of Kotala Jheel and other water storage bodies, involve WTC, IARI, New Delhi for NRM in Mewat Area.
- HKA to hold a meeting of all Kisan Clubs of the State at HQ, Hisar to understand their problems and to explore options to strengthen their activities.
- The other demands and suggestions were similar to earlier interaction meeting conducted by HKA with the farmers of Gurgaon division.

At the end , Dr. R. S. Paroda concluded by assuring the farmers to take up their problems with concerned authorities in the Government of Haryana, beside HAU and ICAR. Mr. Taiyab Hussain, Chairman, Kisan Club offered a vote of thanks to the Chairman, Member Secretary and all officers present.