



Jute-ICARE -- An Initiative of The Government to Double the income of Jute Farmers

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Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise for Jute (Jute – ICARE) was launched in 2015 to popularize/introduce some of the better agronomic practices and recently developed microbial assisted retting among farmers intensively in a few blocks in West Bengal and Assam on pilot basis. The improved agronomic practices include -- line sowing of jute using seed drill to increase yield by 10-15%; weed management in jute by wheel hoeing/nail weeder instead of hand weeding for reducing the cost of weeding; and distribution of quality certified seeds at 50% subsidy.

Central Research Institute for Research in Jute and Allied Fibres (CRIJAF) developed a microbial consortium called SONA, to enhance the quantity of fibre yield by 20% as well as its quality in terms of grade by at least 1 ½ grades. Also, under the project, regular SMSs are sent in regional languages on improved practices in jute cultivation, to registered farmers. On an average over 50 SMSs are sent to each farmer at various intervals during the project. Supply of Seed drills and Nail weeders is undertaken for demonstration purpose.

As a result of these interventions, the earnings of jute farmers have increased by more than Rs.10000 per hectare.

In view of the encouraging results of the Jute I-Care pilot project, a joint meeting was held on 22.03.2017 by Hon'ble Minister of Textiles and Minister of Agriculture for extending the reach of Jute I-Care programme through the State Agriculture Extension machinery. Representatives from State Governments, Agricultural Research Agencies, National Jute Board, Jute Corporation of India etc., participated in the meeting. Some of the highlights of the action taken under the Jute ICARE programme are given below:

1. All the Chief Ministers have been advised to take up Jute ICARE programme under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) and create awareness amongst farmers for use of certified jute seeds through Krishi Vikas Kendras (KVK). States have also been requested to supply farm implements under the Sub-mission in Agricultural Mission (SMAM) and construct Retting Tanks under MGNREGS and RKVY.
2. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on 12th May 2017 by National Jute Board, Ministry of Textiles with National Seeds Corporation and Jute Corporation of India for supplying certified Jute seeds of a new variety to Jute Farmers -- 800 MT for Year 2018; and 1500 MT for Year 2019. There will be an enhancement of availability of certified seeds by 60%, in 2018 and 87.5% in 2019.
3. Harvesting started from 2nd week of July and will continue upto August 2017. It has been reported that the average height of the jute plant under the project is 10 to 13 feet (against the normal height of 9 feet). The JR 204 seed variety is thus found to be very promising and productive to the farmers.
4. The popularity of Jute-ICARE project can be judged from the fact that the number of farmers who registered during the Year 2017 under the project had increased by 147% approximately; that is, 103122 farmers were registered against 41616 farmers last year. The area covered under the project for 2017 is approximately 70,328 hectares covering 26 Blocks in 6 jute growing states-- an increase of 167% as compared to 2016.
5. Action Plans for undertaking Front Line Demonstrations by CRIJAF and National Institute of Research in Jute and Allied Fibres (NIRJAF) in Coordination with NJB, have been approved.
6. Krishi Melas are being held to support farmers. The next series of Krishi Melas will be held in October-November, 2017, as follows:-

Forbesganj in Purnia	12 th - 14 th October 2017
Siliguri	13 th Oct - 1 st November 2017
Guwahati	8 th - 10 th November 2017

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