

Training Programme on Agroforestry

A three day training programme on *Recent Advances in Agroforestry and its role in Natural Resource Management in North East* has been organized jointly by the Zonal Project Directorate, Zone-III, ICAR, Umiam (Meghalaya) and NRC for Agroforestry, Jhansi, w.e.f. 23-25 August, 2011 at the premises of CIFRI Regional Centre, Guwahati. Altogether 30 Subject Matter Specialists representing as many KVKs of the north eastern region have participated in the training programme.

At the onset of the inaugural session, the background and objectives of the training programme were outlined by Dr. A.K. Gogoi, Zonal Project Director, Zone-III, ICAR. He sketched a brief background of the AICRP on agroforestry in the north eastern region since its first deliberation in 1979 at Manipur. He said that the concept of agroforestry has taken up additional dimensions in the present context with emerging areas like aquaforestry coming under its fold. In the unique situation of north eastern India, agroforestry can play a pivotal role in the integrated farming system from the points of view of natural resource management, biodiversity conservation and economic benefit generation, he added. He emphasized that agroforestry system must not be compartmentalized and viewed as an individual component, but should complement and go hand in hand with on and off farm activities. On behalf of the entire zone, he welcomed the participants and resource persons to the training programme.

Dr. B.K. Bhattacharjya, Head, CIFRI Regional Centre, Guwahati, underlined the importance of informing, educating and capacity building of farmers for giving an impetus to agroforestry in the region. He also emphasized on the scientific integration of fishery component with agroforestry systems.

Agroforestry systems can contribute up to 13% of the global food demand by 2025, said Dr. S. Saikia, Chief Scientist of Horticultural Research Station, Assam Agricultural University, Guwahati. He opined that agroforestry systems can go a long way in mitigating the ill effects of global warming and consequent global reduction in food production. Evaluation and estimation of carbon sequestration potential of the different agroforestry systems for carbon trading has to be initiated and taken up in earnest in the north eastern region, he added.

Delivering his address as the chief guest of the inaugural session, Dr. A. Chakraborty, Director of Research (Veterinary) of Assam Agricultural University, said that agroforestry forms a part of the cultural heritage of the people of the north east as it has been traditionally practiced by the people, albeit in an unscientific manner. He emphasized that the different components of the agroforestry systems have to be judiciously exploited such as sericulture in north east India. He highlighted that scientific agroforestry has the potential of providing additional livelihood options for the small and marginal farmers of the region. He concluded his remarks by stating that agroforestry systems must include and integrate other components such as fishery, animal husbandry, sericulture etc. for reaping maximum economic benefits.

