

Shri Parshottam Rupala, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agri. & FW, GoI addressed the Workshop on Soil Health Card Day and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for NER, on 19th February, 2020

A Workshop on Soil Health Card Day and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for NER programme was organised by ICAR-ATARI, Umiam in collaboration with ICAR RC for NEH Region on 19th February, 2020 at Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Hall, ICAR RC for NEH Region, Umiam, wherein Shri Parshottam Rupala, Hon'ble MoS (MoA & FW), Govt. of India was the Chief Guest and Dr. (Ms) Alka Bhargava, Addl. Secretary, MoA & FW, Govt. of India was the Guest of Honour of the programme.

Dr. Bidyut C. Deka, Director, ICAR-ATARI Umiam on his opening remarks welcomed dignitaries and presented a brief overview of achievements, outcome and impact of the Soil Health Card Scheme of the institute which is being implemented across the states of North east India through KVKs. This program was attended by the officials of all the states of North East Region, Scientists from ICAR RC for NEH Region and ICAR-ATARI, staffs of KVKs, progressive farmers.

The Hon'ble Minister in his address appreciated the activities of all stakeholders for development of agriculture in the region through Soil Health Card Scheme and Organic Mission. He urged upon the concerned officials, KVKs and farmers to intensify their efforts through holistic approach for improving soil health leading to enhanced productivity, profitability and sustainability in agriculture. He was also happy to learn that some states in the region initiated steps for exporting organic agricultural products such as fruit, vegetable and spice crops to other countries. The Hon'ble MoS also emphasised that successful implementation of Soil Health Scheme is one of the major strategies for achieving the primary goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022 by reducing input cost of cultivation. For this, the Hon'ble MoS urged upon all stakeholders of this region to play a pivotal role to promote organic farming through judicious use of fertilizers as per prescription provided in the Soil Health Cards. He also congratulated Ms. Trinity Saïoo, the Padmashree Awardee from the state of Meghalaya on her remarkable achievement towards development of agriculture and enhancement of income of farmers in the state.

Dr. (Ms) Alka Bhargava in her address stated that Soil Health Card should be used as a medium of promotion of organic agriculture in the region. She also stated that this scheme could act as a medium for checking the pattern of jhum cultivation in the region by

strengthening the jhumia farmers. She was highly enlightened by the response from the farmers and gave her suggestions for the success of the programme and mainly for overall livelihood improvement of the farmers. She also mentioned the importance of training programmes for potential farmers in the states so that they may act as master trainers for other farmers in agriculture development.

The officials from various line departments of the different states of North Eastern Region briefed about their achievements, outcome and impact of Soil Health Card Scheme in their respective states. Some of the progressive farmers of the states of Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya also shared their experiences and views for development of agriculture and horticulture during the workshop. The programme was attended by over 450 participants from across the region.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. B.K. Kandapal, Director, ICAR RC for NEH Region, Umiam.

