



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Wheat supply and price prospects

The descending trends in wheat production need to be reversed to ensure food security of our growing population. The threat is further aggravated by the shortfall in wheat production at the global level. In the past, warnings about global shortfall in food have been proved wrong and food production has risen faster than growth in demand. As a result, international prices generally followed downward trend in real terms. This may not happen in future because of following reasons (a) global warming and climatic change are throwing formidable challenge to counter their adverse effects on food production, (b) a part of output and area under cereal crops is likely to be diverted to biofuel production, and (c) natural resource base for agricultural production is getting degraded and stress on natural resources, particularly water, is rising. All these factors underscore the need to pay adequate attention to wheat and other staple food crops to ensure that their annual production grow at least at the rate of two per cent. Failing to this, basic food security of the country would be under threat.

Field management committee (FMC): a driver for rural prosperity

In Assam, the concept of FMC at village level is an institution which normally has about 50 voluntary members, possessing land holdings in the contiguous area, facilitating collective management. The FMCs help farmers in forming cohesive groups, enhancing their capacity and facilitating access to information for improving their livelihood. The innovative initiative has resulted in increased crop production, enhanced adoption of modern technology, and diversified production portfolio. A typical impact of the FMCs, according to the villagers, is a shift from acute poverty to access to at least two-meals a week.

Agricultural insurance in India

Agriculture insurance in the country has served very limited purpose despite various schemes launched in the past. The insurance coverage in terms of area, farmers and value of agricultural output is very small. Payment of indemnity based on area approach does not consider the affected farmers outside the compensated area, and most of the schemes are not viable. This requires renewed efforts by the government in terms of designing appropriate

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mechanisms and providing financial support for agriculture.

High-value agriculture in the Northeast region

Fruits and vegetables have the largest share in value of agricultural output (35%) and growth (49%). High-value segment in Northeast region has been growing at a rate of 5.1 per cent a year, faster than the crop sector as a whole. Future growth of this sector is constrained by a number of factors. There is a need to (i) enhance investment in roads and transportation, and (ii) promote innovative market institutions like cooperatives, self-help groups and contract farming that provide an assured market to producers, quality inputs, technology and credit.

Adoption of plant protection practices

Based on NSSO (54th round) rural household dataset across crops and irrigation regimes, it was found that proportion of sample cases using pesticides under unirrigated production environment is about half of that under irrigated conditions. Highest incidence of pesticide use is found in West Bengal (82%) followed by Tamil Nadu (80%), Andhra Pradesh (79%) and Punjab (71%). Use of weedicide is observed to be higher on large farms than small holdings. Size variations are quite pronounced across crops. In case of paddy less than 22 per cent of marginal farmers use weedicide in contrast to 48 per cent of the farmers owning very large holdings. There is a need to promote plant protection practices among small and marginal farmers.

Farmers' access to different information sources

Based on NSSO (59th round), only one-fourth of the farming households were observed to have access to at least any single source of information. Farmers' access to information was negligible for most of the sources of information e.g., KVK (0.15%), newspaper (2.07%), radio (4.09%) and TV (4.43%). Interestingly in irrigated region, the access to extension worker was the lowest (1.64%), but it was partially substituted by access to input dealers (13.29%). In the case of hill and mountain region, the farmers greatly depend upon mass media channels viz., TV (14.5%) and radio (21.49%). It is recommended to frame extension strategy based on these regional dynamics to improve information flow in agriculture.

PUBLICATIONS

Research Papers

Chand, Ramesh. 2007. Wheat supply, price prospects, and food security. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(19):1659-1663.

Pal, Suresh, R Tripp and N Louwaars. 2007. Intellectual property rights in plant breeding and biotechnology: assessing impact on the Indian seed industry. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(3): 231-240.

Raju, S S and Ramesh Chand. 2007. Progress and problems in agricultural insurance. *Economic and Political Weekly* 42(21):1905-1908.

Raju, S S. 2007. A framework of sustainable agricultural development in the context of globalization. *Journal of Global Economy* 3(1): 33-36.

Popular Articles

Chand, Ramesh. 2007. FCI must compete with private sector. *The Economic Times*, 6 April.

Chand, Ramesh. 2007. Convert agri-sops into investments. *The Economic Times*, 1 June.

Joshi, P K. 2007. Import food only as a last resort. *The Financial Express* (Debate Column), New Delhi, 2 January.

Joshi, P K. 2007. Incentive investment in farm sector. *The Economic Times* (Edit page, Face-Off Column), New Delhi, 14 May.

TV TALK

Preparing for green revolution-II, DD Lok Sabha Channel, 19 May 2007 (P K Joshi).

PARTICIPATION IN SEMINARS

National Conference on "Expanding freedom: towards social and economic transformation in a globalizing world", Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi, 11 April 2007 (Ramesh Chand).

2nd Indian Horticulture Congress 2007 at Meghalaya, ICAR Research Complex for North Eastern Hill Region, 18-21 April 2007 (K K Datta).

National Seminar on "Rainfed agriculture", Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, 23 – 24 April 2007 (Ramesh Chand and P K Joshi).

Seminar on "Agriculture during XI Plan: major concerns and strategy" IRMA, Anand, Gujarat, 8 May 2007 (Ramesh Chand).

Seminar on "Strategy for accelerated and inclusive agricultural growth in XI Plan", CACP, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi, 11 May 2007 (B C Barah, B. Ganesh Kumar, Harbir Singh, K K Datta, M B Dastagiri, P Adhiguru, P K Joshi, Ramesh Chand, S S Raju and Suresh Pal).

Training-cum-Workshop on "IP and technology management in ICAR system", NAARM, Hyderabad, 28-30 May 2007 (Harbir Singh and Suresh Pal).

National Symposium on "Agriculture cannot wait: new horizons", NASC Complex, New Delhi, 5 June 2007 (B C Barah and P K Joshi).

Convention on "Corporate response to climate change", Palampur, 8-10 June 2007 (K K Datta).

MEETINGS

The final meeting of QRT was held on May 15, 2007. The team focused on the relevance and quality of research work and organizational issues. The team made recommendations to take the Centre to a higher path of scientific excellence.

VISITS ABROAD

Training on "Food and agri-business management programme: accessing global markets", Cornell, Ithaca, New York, USA, 2-9 May 2007 (S K Pandey).

World Agriculture Congress on "Creating prosperity through investments in agriculture", St. Louis, USA, 8-10 May 2007 (A Janaiah).

Third Bureau Meeting for IAASTD Bureau Members, Washington, DC, USA, 29-31 May 2007 (P K Joshi).

Meeting of the multi-country project "Supply chains in agribusiness", Asian Productivity Organization, Tokyo, Japan, 5-7 June 2007 (P S BIRTHAL as National Expert).

NEW INITIATIVES

NAIP project proposal on "Visioning, Policy Analysis and Gender (V-PAGE)" has been approved with NCAP as the lead institution and NAARM, IASRI, NRCWA, Yes Bank and Agriwatch as partners.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

An orientation of Eviews software was given by Dr Ramesh Chand on 16 May 2007; and an in-house training by an expert from SPSS was organized on 17 May 2007.

PERSONNEL

Awards/Recognitions

Dr P K Joshi was inducted as Fellow of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) in an award ceremony held on 4 June 2007 at NASC Complex, New Delhi.

Dr P K Joshi was nominated as a member of the Sub-Group on "Adoption and generation of relevant technologies and their dissemination to the farmers", constituted by the Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi.

Promotion / Deputation

Dr Harbir Singh has been promoted as Senior Scientist with effect from 9 January 2007.

Dr A Janaiah has joined as Professor in the Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University, Hyderabad with effect from 26 June 2007.

Mrs Seema Khatter has joined as Personal Assistant in the Directorate of Maize Research, New Delhi with effect from 30 June 2007.

New Joining

Dr B Ganesh Kumar and Dr (Mrs) Usha Rani Ahuja joined the Centre as Senior Scientists on 16 April 2007 and 26 May 2007, respectively.

Training

Mr Inderjeet Sachdeva attended a training programme on "Purchase policy" organized by

Centre for Training and Social Research during 14-16 June 2007.

POLICY ADVOCACY

ICAR-NCAP-USDA workshop on "Contract farming: methods and experiences" under Indo-US Agriculture Knowledge Initiative was organized on 5-6 May 2007 at NASC, Pusa, New Delhi. The workshop was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture Mr Sharad Pawar and chaired by Dr Mangala Rai, Director General (ICAR) and Secretary (DARE). The workshop was attended by over 100 delegates from India and USA.

A high-level consultation meeting was held to discuss the Global Report on International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) on 18 May 2007 at NCAP. Dr Mangala Rai, Director General (ICAR) and Secretary (DARE) chaired the meeting. Senior officers from ICAR such as Financial Advisor (DARE), Secretary (ICAR) and DDGs from different disciplines and several professionals attended the meeting.

A brainstorming session on "Women and agricultural R&D" was organized on 11 June 2007 to develop the details for organizing a national seminar on "Agriculture science and technology for women farmers: prospects and priorities" to be held in September 2007. Dr P Das, DDG (Extn.) chaired the session and Dr Usha Ahuja from NCAP presented draft proposal for the proposed national seminar.

NAIP sponsored project launching workshop on "Visioning, Policy Analysis and Gender (V-PAGE)" was organized on 26-27 June 2007 at NCAP. Dr. S S Acharya, Former Director, IDS, Jaipur and former Chairman, CACP chaired the inaugural session. Important speakers during the inaugural session were Dr K M Bujarbaruah, DDG(AS), Dr Mruthyunjaya, National Director, NAIP, and Dr Paul Sidhu from the World Bank. It was attended by over 60 delegates comprising project partners and professionals.



DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Dr Christopher L Delgado, Senior Economic Adviser, World Bank, Washington, DC USA delivered a seminar on "Enhancing control of highly pathogenic avian influenza in developing countries through compensation: issues and good practices" on 17 April 2007.

Dr Greg Johnson, Horticulture for Development Jamison ACT 2614 visited on 24 May 2007.

Dr D A Somayajulu, Deputy Chairman, Agriculture Technology Mission and Advisor to Government of Andhra Pradesh, visited on 14 June 2007.

Dr Emile Frison, Director General and Dr. Mauricio Bellon, Programme Director, Biodiversity International, Rome, Italy visited on 19 June 2007.

ARIS

NCAP website was accessed by more than 18,000 users during this quarter. Of these users 42 per cent were from outside India which includes 27 per cent from USA. NCAP publications were accessed more than 10,000 times during the quarter.

SPORTS

A contingent of 14 employees of the Centre participated in ICAR Zonal Sports Meet organized by IARI during 24-28 April 2007. This small group won pride to the Centre with 5 medals. Ms Sonia Chauhan bagged medals in 100 m race, chess and long jump, and Ms Seema Khattar bagged medals in 100 m and 200 m races.



ANNUAL DAY

NCAP annual day function was organized on 1 May 2007. In the forenoon session, Dr V S Vyas, Chairman, IDS, Jaipur, was the Chief Guest and Mr A K Upadhyay, Secretary, ICAR Chaired the function. Dr Vyas delivered special annual day lecture. This was followed by release of recent NCAP publications i.e. Policy Paper 23, Workshop Proceedings 14 and the first issue of NCAP eNews. In the evening, cultural program was followed by prize distribution for various events and dinner. Family members of the NCAP staff were also invited on the occasion.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- Brainstorming Workshop on "Mainstreaming gender in agricultural research and education", 10 July 2007.
- National Seminar on "Agrarian crisis: causes and remedies", 1-2 August 2007.
- Policy Dissemination workshop on "Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators for India", 13 August 2007.
- Brainstorming Workshop on "Centre-State relations in agriculture", 24-25 August 2007.
- Brainstorming session on pipeline technologies in wheat (date to be announced).