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## **91.3 % Farmers Aware of Negative Effects of Chemicals and Pesticides**

Jaipur, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2014

91.3% Farmers are aware of negative effects of chemicals and pesticides. However 90.7 % farmers use chemical based fertilizers and pesticides because it gives high yield. These are some of the findings of a study conducted by CUTS International in six major agriculture potential districts: Jaipur, Dausa, Chittorgarh, Pratapgarh, Udaipur and Kota on 1536 Consumers and 1529 Farmers.

Findings of the study were released in 'Annual State Level Stakeholder Consultation and Feedback Meeting' organized by CUTS as part of the 'Pilot Project to Promote Organic Consumption in the State of Rajasthan'. The project is being implemented by CUTS with the support of 'Swedish Society for Nature Conservation' (SSNC).

As special guest of the programme Dr. Shital Prasad Sharma, Director, Agriculture Department, Govt. of Rajasthan appreciated CUTS and SSNC for the integrated efforts to put together the production and consumption sides. He suggested organizing farmers into Farmers Interest Groups.

Amarjeet Singh, Project Coordinator, CUTS through a presentation shared that only 25.2% consumers have purchased organic products at any point of time although 78% consumers are aware of ill-effects of pesticides. The awareness is low among women found at 28%. Encouraging fact is that if organic products are available 98% consumers expressed willingness to purchase. He further shared that 2.8% farmers use only organic input, 39.2% use only chemical while 57.9% farmers use a mix of both organic and chemical inputs. Certification awareness is found to be an issue as only 13.6% farmers are found aware of organic certification.

Sharing the experiences from Sweden, Ms. Sara Nilsson said that 2.5% population of Sweden is member of SSNC, a 105 year old organization and have partners worldwide. She shared that in last two years organic consumption has considerably increased in Sweden and they want this to increase worldwide. Sustainable consumption and Promoting organic is one of the key areas of work for SSNC. She also shared that 40 organizations and 25 countries participated in the green action week organized worldwide in the month of October. During the event International in-charge of Green Action Week Ms. Ulrika was also present.

Mr. George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS welcoming the guests said that under National Mission on Sustainable agriculture promoting organic farming is a key component. He said that 'National Project on Organic Farming' started in 2004 but even after 10 years there is only 0.3% of cultivated land under organic farming i.e. 5.2 million hectare out of which 90% is forest land

Dr. S. S. Rathore, Programme Coordinator, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dr. Surendra Babu, AGM, Nabard, Dr. B. D. Yadav, Professor of Vegetable Cultivation in Agriculture Research Institute, Durgapura, also addressed the participants including officials from state government, consumer activists, scientists from research institutes, NGO representative and farmers.

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