

NOTE ON THE TREE GROWERS MELA HELD ON 18.2.2010 AND 19.2.2010 AT INSTITUTE OF FOREST GENETICS AND TREE BREEDING, COIMBATORE

Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore had organised a Tree Growers' Mela on 18th and 19th February, 2010 at Coimbatore. It was inaugurated by Shri Jairam Ramesh, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent charge), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. During the function he released four clones of Eucalyptus and four clones of Casuarina equisetifolia, that have been developed for dryland conditions. They were distributed to the user agencies like Forest departments, Forest Plantation Corporations, Wood-based industries and farmers. He also released a book of abstracts of publications made by the Institute in the last two decades and brochures on the Institute, teak, botanical garden and the newly released clones of Eucalyptus and Casuarina. He launched the quarterly newsletter of the Institute, titled Van Vigyan. He distributed awards to those who had contributed to the development of the newly released clones and those involved in successful demonstration of technologies in field and outreach activities.

He announced a grant of Rs. 25 crores to the Institute over a period of the next two to three years, to make it a world class Institute. He also announced the launch of the annual event called the Indian Forestry Congress, the first one to be held at Dehradun in December, 2010 and the next one to be at Coimbatore in December, 2011. He wanted the Institute to develop varieties that can be harvest at short rotation of three to three and a half years. He stressed the importance of the forestry scientists spending more time in the field than in the laboratories. He advised the scientists to focus on soil fertility, crop productivity and adaptability of crops to climate change due to erratic rainfall and increase in the number of dry days. He congratulated the Institute for its contribution to forestry research.

The Director General, ICFRE, PCCF, Kerala, Member, Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission, District Collector, Coimbatore and CCF (Extension), Tamil Nadu felicitated the event.

The highlights of the event were a workshop on Plantation technologies for dryland farming and an exhibition on Tree cultivation technologies. The workshop focused on seven tree species suitable for dryland conditions prevailing in the State of Tamil Nadu, namely, *Ailanthus excelsa*, *Melia dubia*, *Santalum album*, *Anthocephalus cadamba*, *Gmelina arborea*, *Casuarina species*, *Eucalyptus* and teak. The nursery techniques, cultivation practices, utilization and marketing of these species were discussed at length. The efforts taken by the Institute for the genetic improvement of these species were highlighted. The wood based industries discussed about their schemes related to contract farming and captive plantations of industrial wood. A representative of NABARD spoke about the options available for financing of industrial wood plantations. The farmers from all over the State participated in the deliberations and shared their experiences in cultivation of tree species on their lands. At the end of the workshop decision was taken to form species network involving scientists, farmers and forest department for twenty species of economic

value, suitable for dryland farming. The identified species are *Ailanthus excelsa*, *Melia dubia*, *Khaya senegalensis*, *Anthocephalus cadamba*, *Acrocarpus fraxinifolius*, *Casuarina spp.*, bamboos, *Gmelina arborea*, *Grewia tilaefolia*, *Acacia auriculiformis* and its hybrid, *Bombax ceiba*, *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Thespesia populnea*, *Dalbergia latifolia*, *Toona ciliata*, *Santalum album*, *Pterocarpus marsupium*, and *Pterocarpus santalinus*.

In the exhibition research Institutes like the Institute of Wood Science and Technology, Bangalore, Indian Plywood Industries Research and Training Institute, Bangalore, Forest College and Research Institute, Mettupalayam, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment, Bangalore and wood based industries like the Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Ltd., Seshasayee Paper and Paperboards Ltd., Vasam Match Industries Ltd., Splints and Veneers Ltd. Participated and explained their programmes aimed at dryland farming. Manufacturers of farm and irrigation equipment like Vasumita Energy Systems, Jain Irrigation and Need Services Pvt. Ltd., showcased their products. Nurseries producing quality planting stock like Nivee Gardens, Amritha nursery, Growmore Biotech, Tree growers' associations and organizations dealing with non-timber forest produce and medicinal produce also participated.



