

Dr YSR Polambadi (Farmer Field Schools)

Introduction:

Indiscriminate application of insecticides has caused various adverse consequences like stagnation of yields in agriculture, erosion of soil fertility, pests and diseases becoming more resistant and elusive for control by chemicals, an unusual spike in cost of cultivation, surge in environmental pollution etc., posing big challenge to sustainable system of farming.

The Government of Andhra Pradesh have adopted the concept of Farmers Field Schools locally terming it as Dr YSR Polambadi as a viable and effective tool to fight these challenges. Dr YSR Polambadi (FFS) transforms the farmers into the best decision makers to rationalize the usage of chemical inputs that ultimately brings in affect a considerable decline in cost of cultivation and notable increase in productivity of the crops.

Objectives of Dr YSR Polambadi (FFS): It is organized to empower the farmers to study and analyze the agro-ecological factors existing in the field for taking viable and economical decisions for reducing cost of production through optimization of inputs, and enhancing crop productivity as well as output quality by employing Integrated crop management technology that contains Integrated Pest Management, Integrated Nutrient Management, Integrated Weed Management, Water Management and Farm Mechanization as its core ingredients.

Module for implementation: Dr YSR Polambadi is being organized adopting the module of Farmers Field School devised by the FAO.

RBK is the unit of operational jurisdiction: AP Government have established 10778 Rythu Bharosa Kendralu (RBKs) in the State to bring every nook and corner of the rural areas under its ambit to deliver multiple services to the farming community besides implementing the programs like Dr YSR Polambadi @ one in the vicinity of every RBK in both Kharif and Rabi seasons in Andhra Pradesh.

Salient features of Dr YSR Polambadi (FFS)

- It is a field based training imparted on participatory approach to farmers for 14 weeks in a crop season @ one session per week on the analogy of learning by doing.
- It is implemented in the vicinity of every Rythu Bharosa Kendram (RBK) with 30 selected farmers.
- It is conducted in 25 acres of a selected crop in 14 sessions @ one session per week during the currency of a crop season from sowing to harvesting.

- The Village Agricultural Asst (VAA) is the designated field functionary to play the role of a facilitator of the program and monitored by next level functionaries in the hierarchical jurisdiction.
- The VAA organizes the program on a fixed day falling on Tuesday to Thursday in the row of a week.
- Farmers are facilitated to conduct base line survey in the village to identify the gaps and constraints that stand out to be obstacles in maximizing productivity of crops, and to formulate suitable strategies to mitigate the identified gaps.
- The course curriculum for 14-weeks training would be prepared with the involvement of the farmers to cater to the local needs identified through the base line survey conducted by the farmers.
- Farmers are also facilitated to learn and practice various field exercises on their own like Agro Eco-system Analysis (AESA), Participation Action Research (PAR) experiments, Method Demonstrations, Group dynamics etc, in the field to grasp the technological essence of these themes.
- Farmers are also exposed to various Special topics on crop technologies like Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Integrated Nutrient Management (INM), Integrated Weed Management (IWM), Water Management, Farm Mechanization etc, to enable them leverage the technologies.
- Critical interventions/Good Agricultural Practices that could contribute to sustainability in agriculture are implemented in ICM Plots to manifest their impact in enhancing crop productivity.
- Farmers are trained in groups on studying, understanding and analysing the field conditions every week in a crop season and to get involved in collective decision making process based on their observations made in the field.
- Farmers are supplied critical inputs like Bio-fertilizers, Bio-pesticides, IPM Kits, Pheromone traps & lures etc., to understand their use and advantages.
- The program is organized with complete and collective participation of the selected farmers in the field.
- The program is regularly monitored by the Senior level officers, Resource persons of the Department of Agriculture and the Scientists of ANGRAU to strengthen the technical rigour of the concept of the program

- A field day would be conducted at the end of the training program and the impact of FFS in decreasing the cost of cultivation and increasing the yield is studied by making a comparative analysis of both FFS and Non-FFS plots for the above two factors.

Progress of Dr. YSR Polambadi (FFS):

The program is being organized in Field crops like Rice, Cotton, Maize, Pulses, Oilseeds, Millets etc grown in different districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Sl.No	Year	No.of Polambadis organized	No.of Farmers benefitted in Lakhs
1	2019-20	5222	1.56
2.	2020-21	18840	5.65
3	2021-22	16067	4.83
4	2022-23(Kharif)	8509	2.55
	Total	48638	14.59

C) Impact analysis of Dr YSR Polambadi on cost and Yield factors in 2021-22

- The impact analysis of Dr YSR Polambadi (FFS) done in 2021-22 illustrates that, the cost of cultivation has been substantially decreased due to adoption of the approach of Dr YSR Polambadi (FFS) when compared with Farmers practice adopted on their own, and the cost reduction is found to be ranging from 10 to 22% in different crops like Rice, Maize, Cotton, Groundnut and Pulse crops. This cost reduction is mainly attributed to significant decline in the intensity of usage of chemical inputs like fertilizers and pesticides.
- The impact analysis also gives a positive inference on the dynamics of yields. Integrated Crop Management (ICM) Technology adopted in FFS plots has contributed to significant increase in yields ranging from 6 to 24% when compared with Farmers practice in the above crops.

Future vision of Dr YSR Polambadi (FFS)

- The Government of Andhra Pradesh envisions Dr YSR Polambadi (FFS) as a good technical tool for production of quality output. The Government have chosen the

FFS as an effective and suitable platform to take forward the concept of **Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)** to farmers' level to enable them produce quality output that would be tagged with quality accreditation by issuing a GAP Certificate for fetching good remunerative prices to the farmers.

FAO- ICAR- TCP Programme:

- The Government of AP has imparted trainings under FAO-Technical Cooperation Programon(TCP) on **“Strengthening capacities of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to support AP Farmers to adopt sustainable Agri-food systems”**to all the State level officers of Agriculture & Horticulture Departments including the Scientists of ANGRAU &Dr YSRHU, Divisional & Mandal level Officers and farmers during Kharif, 2022.
- The district level training to 130 identified Officers and 240 Farmers has been organized in 3 spells in the months of June, July and September 2022 under FAO-Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP)

Formation of Dr YSR Polambadi Clusters for implementation of GAPs and Certification:

- Polambadi clusters have been formed @ one per each District to implement the program of GAPs & certification on pilot basis from Rabi 2022-23 onwards. Each cluster is formed in 100 Hects cultivated with major crop grown of the District.
- All the ADAs, ADHs, MAOs & HOs have been imparted training on GAP & Certification at District level in October 2022.
- GAP & Certification trainings to all the VAAs are being conducted at Divisional level in November 2022
- Intensive trainings are being imparted on GAP & Certification at Cluster level to all the Cluster farmers in the month of November 2022.