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'Khet Bachao Abhiyan': CMFRI reaches out to farmers



(**MENAFN**- IANS) Kochi, June 23 (IANS) As part of the nationwide Khet Bachao Abhiyan, ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) scientists engaged with more than 200 farmers, highlighting the need for balanced fertiliser application and a shift towards natural farming methods amid rising concerns over soil degradation caused by excessive chemical inputs.The awareness programme focused on the growing impact of indiscriminate fertiliser use on soil health, water resources, and aquatic ecosystems.

Experts said that overdependence on chemical fertilisers was disturbing nutrient balance and contributing to pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and ecological damage. "Excessive fertiliser application affects soil quality and also impacts aquatic ecosystems through nutrient runoff and environmental degradation," CMFRI senior scientist and soil expert Dr K.S. Karthika said. The fisheries research institute showcased a range of indigenous technologies aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture and building a circular bioeconomy. The innovations included seaweed-based bio-fertilisers and biostimulants, 'Fishliser' - an organic manure developed from fish waste - and Black Soldier Fly (BSF) based solutions for recycling biological resources. CMFRI Director Dr Grinson George said these technologies could help improve soil health while supporting environmentally responsible farming systems. "Marine and biological resources can provide sustainable alternatives that reduce dependence on chemical inputs and strengthen natural farming practices," he said.

The programme also demonstrated the use of BSF larvae as an alternative fish feed and as a sustainable solution for organic waste management. Farmers were provided BSF fertiliser and larvae as part of the initiative. CMFRI scientists have reached nearly 1,500 farmers across 12 districts in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat over the past two months. The teams have also visited around 30 farming villages in Kerala to create awareness on protecting soil and aquatic resources through responsible fertiliser use. The initiative comes amid increasing focus on reducing agricultural input costs, restoring soil fertility and promoting climate-resilient farming practices.