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Ensuring on-farm production and utilization of fodder planting materials: A case of Hybrid Napier in rural Uttar Pradesh

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Introduction

Fodder and livestock rearing is sine-qui-non to each other. Feeding assumes highest share (60-70%) of total cost involved in livestock production. Making the green fodder available round the year to the cattle keepers is a great challenge. The country faces the current deficit of green and dried fodder to the extent of 40 percent. The current level of milk production in India to the extent of 128 mt which is expected to be 160 mt by 2050 demands 494 mt dried fodder, 825 mt green fodder and 54 mt of concentrate feed. Probably, it is beyond the capacity of any public or private sector organization to ensure the readily availability of seed and planting materials of fodder crops. The circumstances, thus, prompts to seek the alternative viable option for mitigation of on-farm fodder planting materials' availability. This paper analyzes how empowering farmers for farmer-centric production and dissemination of planting materials for fodder crops can be evolved and validated.

Materials and Methods

The project on National Initiatives for Fodder Technology Demonstration (NIFTD), initiated during 2013-14 across 12 Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the state of Uttar Pradesh resulted in emergence of such cases which were analyzed for the present paper. Two rural youths of the district Sitapur were imparted technical training on production, maintenance and utilization of rooted slips of Hybrid Napier (HyNa) during the year 2013-14. The continuous technological backstopping and constant persuasion led to the encouraging results. These youths were facilitated to establish the mother block for production of rooted slips of Hybrid Napier during the year 2013-14 alongwith supply of 50 numbers of rooted slips for mother block The performance analysis of the intervention was done in terms of technical and economic parameters. The results, thus, obtained was scaled for larger plot area of 1000 sq. mt. Based on the experiences, potential windows for on-farm rooted slips production and utilization have been suggested.

Results and Discussion

Analyses showed that during winter season, the rooted slips got prepared within 60 days (15 January to 15 March) which could be utilized for coming 15-30 days. However, during rainy season, the slips were getting ready for use in lesser time of 30 days (15 July to 15 August) which must be utilized within 12-20 days. The economic advantage was very interesting. By spending Rs 20-30 thousand for the small area of about 1000 sq. meter, one lakh rooted slips may be produced. If sold at the rate of as low as Rs 1/slip, the farmer may earn Rs. 70-75 thousand as the net profit. The major issue as perceived by the those farmers who were involved in on-farm production of rooted slips of HyNy was need for timely disposal of the planting material within 30 days otherwise its roots may get interwoven, thus making them unfit for use.

Conclusion

The major windows for utilization of such planting materials may be in the rural works under MNREGA, fodder development related works and also the works related to land improvement at the village level which may ensure both land development and fodder development. The other related issues have been deliberated in the paper.

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