Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree breeding, Coimbatore has been organizing Tree Growers’ Mela in several strategic places in Tamil Nadu to spread awareness on tree cultivation using improved planting materials, including clones. Last year, the mela was successfully held at Dharmapuri. In continuation to the efforts, IFGTB organized Tree Growers Mela on 13th February, 2019 at A.S. Mahal, Tiruvannamalai under the theme “Smart Cultivation for Increasing Farm income and Green Cover”, in collaboration with Tiruvannamalai forest division, Tamil Nadu Forest Department.

Tree Growers’ Mela served as an integration platform for Scientists, research institutions, nursery growers, wood based industry and government agencies to equip the tree growers with the information on almost all aspects of planting of trees on farm lands. Industrial partner’s viz., Tamil Nadu Newsprint & Papers Limited (TNPL), Sharon Plywood Limited, Seshasayee Paper Board, KVK Tiruvannamalai and IFGTB contributed their technical inputs on wood requirement, market information and demand for improved planting material of the commonly planted tree species. IFGTB published a media advertisement in local media for giving wide publicity before the event. Overwhelmingly, about 1237 tree growers/farmers and SHG members from districts Tiruvannamalai, Villupuram and Tiruvallur of Tamil Nadu participated in the mela.

Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director IFGTB presided over the inaugural session of the Tree Growers Mela on 13th February. Shri K. S. Kandasamy, IAS, District Collector, Tiruvannamalai and Shri. Kirbasankar, IFS, District Forest Officer, Tiruvannamalai, graced the occasion as Guests of Honour. The mela was organized by Extension division of IFGTB, headed by Shri. Rajesh Gopalan, IFS, Conservator of Forests & Head, Extension. He welcomed the guests and the gathering and presented the significance of the theme and also gave a broad outline of programme, its objective and expected outcome for the tree growers.

Shri K. S. Kandasamy, IAS, District Collector, Tiruvannamalai in his address, highlighted the current year’s erratic rainfall and water deficit leading to poor agricultural productivity. He also stressed the need for looking into the alternative farming system for increasing farm income and safeguard farmers from agricultural distress. He also suggested that tree cultivation could pave way for new alternative to the farmers for realizing increased productivity from the land. He immensely thanked IFGTB,
Coimbatore for hosting the mela in Tiruvannamalai district considering its potential for growing trees in fallow lands. He also wished farmers would take up the technologies showcased by IFGTB and more specifically by adopting high quality planting material for increased productivity.

Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director IFGTB during his presidential address emphasized provisions of the National Forest Policy, National Agro forestry policy and TN Forest policies which strongly advocated planting of trees outside forest land and farm lands as best opportunity for achieving 33% forest cover and the role farm forestry can play to achieve the objective of these policies. He presented the forest cover status of Tiruvannamalai district as per the assessment of FSI 2017 and he stressed that its one of the prioritized district having tremendous potential for trees outside forests. Director, IFGTB also narrated several quires which farmers go thru in their choice for tree cultivation namely what trees to plant, how to get good planting material, how to plant and maintain, when to harvest, where to sell and what would be likely financial return? He further said this tree growers mela offers excellent platform for various stakeholders to come together to address the quires of the farmers.

The technical sessions included; the thematic presentations on “Cultivation practices of different tree species” by scientists of IFGTB on various topics. “Smart Farm forestry for higher income” by Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director, IFGTB; “Teak Farming for enhancing livelihood” by Dr. C. Buvaneswaran, Scientist, IFGTB; “Cultivation and Management of Eucalyptus” by Dr. V. Sivakumar, Scientist, IFGTB; “Cultivation and Management of Casuarina and Tamarind” by Shri A. Mayavel, Scientist. The resource persons shared their knowledge and experience on their respective species in detail and their presentation triggered the awareness regarding the tree cultivation and very importantly on necessity for using improved planting materials in farm planting programmes.

Tree growers interacted with the team of scientists and industrial partners in two independent thematic discussions. The first thematic discussion was on “Cultivation practices of prioritized tree species” was chaired by Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS Director IFGTB, while the second thematic discussion was on “Timber Marketing and Timber trade” was chaired by Dr. Irulandi, IFS (Retd.,) former PCCF Extension, TNFD. The panel members included Scientists, Industry partners and Tamil Nadu Forest Department. The panel members addressed the queries of the farmers; and particularly the industrial partner’s viz., TNPL, SPB and Sharon plywoods detailed their annual requirement, the market value of species and the quality of wood required for their end use.
An exclusive Exhibition was arranged for the farmers by IFGTB to display various technologies in clonal forestry, package of practices recommended for major tree crops, pests and disease management in nursery and plantations. The exhibition also promoted popularization of the Mobile App developed by IFGTB on “Disease Management in Forest Nurseries & Plantations”, and on Insect Pest management. An exclusive registration counter was enabled for enrolling more tree growers to use and benefit from the mobile application. This mela further enhanced the enrollment of more than 250 farmers in the mobile application. The industrial partners and KVK exhibited various technologies in tree cultivation and wood procurement in the exhibition. The participants and farmers were given free copies of the book “MaraSagupadi” and brochures on Gmelina, Pongamia, published by IFGTB, Coimbatore. The Tree Growers Mela was widely covered by local print and electronic media. The media reports of the mela, in brief are annexed in this report.

Stall inauguration and visits of dignitaries
Farmers at the Mela

Dr. Mohit Gera, IFS, Director, IFGTB addressing the farmers

Shri. K. S. Kandasamy, IAS, Collector, during his key note address

Farmers visiting the stall
Farmers interaction during the thematic session

Dr. Mohit Gera, Director, IFGTB interacting with Press & Media

Dr. Irulandi, IFS (Retd), former PCCF, Extension TNFD felicitated by Director, IFGTB
Press Note of the TG Mela 2019

Dinakaran, Tamil Daily, 14.02.2019
திக்கு மூன்றாம் பாண்டிய மன்னரின் காலத்துக் குடியைக் கூறும் வரலாற்றுத் தொடர் விளக்கம்

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IFGTB mela stresses on growing trees

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Vellore

IN an effort to spread awareness on cultivating trees with the help of improved planting materials, the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB) organised a ‘Tree Growers’ Mela-2019’ in Tiruvannamalai on Wednesday.

As many as 700 tree growers in and around the district took part in the programme, which focused on ‘smart tree cultivation for increasing farm income and green cover’. The mela intended to create awareness among farmers on cultivation techniques and the use of high yielding clones for increasing farm income.