

SRI in Palakkad District, Kerala

A project of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (National Farmers' Development Campaign, RKVY) on 'Validation of SRI for Higher Productivity in Palakkad Region' was approved with an allocation of 52.70 lakhs (\$100,000) for improving productivity of rice farming under SRI. A land area of 9 acres under six different farmers from Erumaiyur, Malampuzha, Perumatty, Kodumbu, Kannadi Panchayats has been identified for demonstration plots. Under the demonstration, farmers are using varieties like CORH3, UMA and Jyothi.

The observations made in the ongoing trials showed an increase in number of tillers with an average of 35-40 on SRI plants while only 20-25 under wetland conditions. The hybrid variety CORH 3 under SRI cultivation gave an average grain output of about 7 tons/ha while grain yield for the same variety cultivated under wetland conditions was only about 5.5 tons/ha. Average number of grains per panicle was 196 under SRI while it was 170 under wetland conditions.

The incidence of insect pests, i.e., yellow stem borer, caseworm and whorl maggot, was low with SRI in comparison to usual cultivation practices. White ear incidence was low under SRI, with average number of white ears in SRI method of 0.25% compared with 5.25% under wetland conditions. A higher incidence of leaf folder under SRI was noticed in the farmer's plots of Malampuzha. The incidence of bacterial leaf blight were low under SRI.

Now we are planning to expand SRI demonstration to two other villages, Kongad and Kadampazhipuram, where paddy is cultivated as summer crop, for another 15 ha area where SRI practices were not followed. The project will be continued for five years with the view of bringing more paddy areas under SRI for improving productivity in Palakkad region.

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