

Proceeding of the Core Group Meeting of CRP on CA at KAB-II, New Delhi on
22nd March, 2015

A meeting of the core group members of the Consortium Research Platform on Conservation Agriculture was held on 22nd March, 2015 at KAB-II, New Delhi. The Core Group Meeting started with the welcome address by Dr. A.K. Biswas, Platform Coordinator of the CRP on CA. Dr. A.K. Patra, Director, ICAR-IISS, Bhopal also welcomed the delegates and briefed the house about the purpose and need of the project. The meeting was attended by many dignitaries viz. Dr. H.S. Gupta, DG, BISA, Dr. RK Gupta, Senior Consultant, BISA, Dr. PS Minhas, Director, ICAR-NIASM, Baramati and Dr. HS Siddhu, BISA, Ludhiana centre as special invitees. Directors from the partner institutes namely Dr. AR Sharma, ICAR-DWSR, Jabalpur and Dr. Ch. Srinivasarao, ICAR-CRIDA, Hyderabad, also participated in the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Dr. AK Sikka, DDG (NRM) and Dr. S.K. Chaudhari, ADG (SWM). About 44 delegates from different consortia partners participated in the meeting.

Honorable ADG (SWM) Dr. S.K. Chaudhari in his remarks pointed out the need to revisit, and replan the platform considering the limited resources and time availability. He emphasized on the need to reprioritize the project work plan and activities to be taken up for the available two years period. Overall presentation about the CRP on CA was delivered by Dr. AK Biswas. He explained about the background, objectives and importance of the project and also about the multi-pronged approaches, work plan, and anticipated output and outcome of the project.

Dr. HS Gupta in his remarks explained that the way forward for sustainability in the future production system is possible through adoption of conservation agriculture practices and he emphasized that CA is more important for the rainfed areas which are more vulnerable to the future climate change scenarios. He also pointed out that site specific demonstration and strategic research is required under CA. He indicated to prioritize the activities and avoid duplication of work. Capacity building of stakeholders is important for CA. Young scientists to be exposed to CA practices to make them aware and convinced about the practices.

Dr. RK Gupta pointed out to realign partnership and create impact of CA. He also stressed the importance of CA under fallow land areas, rolling topography for reducing soil erosion and integration of system like crop-agroforestry-livestock system. He also highlighted the importance of crop residue retention under CA. It is a magic for the rainfed region, which takes care of all the things in these regions.

Dr. AR Sharma, Director, DWSR, Jabalpur made a presentation on different aspects of weed management under CA. He told that weed management had to be integrated cover crop included in a yearly crop calendar helps in management of weeds. He pointed out that very effective herbicides/new molecules are now available for most of the important crops for an effective and economical chemical weed control in CA. He also pointed out that training

of the stakeholders on weed management with herbicides is required for increasing the effectiveness of weed management.

Dr. G. Pratibha and Dr. I. Srinivas from CRIDA, Hyderabad showed an integrated no-till seed drill fabricated at CRIDA which at the time of seed sowing can also simultaneously place fertilizers and herbicides in the soil under no tillage condition under rainfed system with less residues. She also pointed out that the problem of soil moisture during the dry spell for spraying of herbicides is also a constraint for effective chemical weed control in Alfisols in semi-arid regions and thus integrated weed management is required.

Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao - pointed out the issue of greater weed emergence under CA rainfed region. Therefore, ACRIPDA centre and DWS, Jabalpur Centre should jointly take experiment and address the weed related issue under rainfed region.

Dr. TK Das, IARI pointed out that in dry rainfed regions availability of residues is a problem due to their other competitive use and thus alternative approaches like alley/strip cropping etc. may be practiced for generation of residues *in situ*.

Dr. HS Siddhu mentioned that Happy Seeder is required to sow crops when residue load is more than 6 tonnes/ha and if residue is less than 5 tonnes/ha normal zero-till seed drill will be sufficient. Thus, in less residue covered field zero-till seed drill can work smoothly. For adoption of CA practices in small farm holding areas custom hiring of implements are essential. He also mentioned that simultaneous spreading of residues in the field at the time of harvesting with combined harvester is very much needed.

Dr. PS Minhas highlighted about the sugarcane production and constraints of utilization of sugarcane trash in the field. He pointed out need for development of CA practices for sugarcane production in the country to avoid burning of the huge quantity of sugarcane trashes.

Dr. RC Singh, CIAE presented regarding fine-tuning of the machinery for CA. He also interacted with Dr. P.S. Minhas and agreed to improve upon and fine tune the sugar cane trash cutter-cum-spreader.

During discussion Dr. SK Chaudhari, ADG (SWM) mentioned to relook on the technical programme and focus has to be given more on the adaptive research. He also emphasised for the location specific CA technologies.

Hons. DDG (NRM) Dr. AK Sikka stressed that CA should be on system mode i.e. it should be followed for both the rainy and winter season crops. He mentioned that general purpose CA machinery may not work in all the places and so machinery needs to be developed for different types of residue load situation. He also mentioned that new set of recommendations may be required for fertilizer and irrigation water application under CA. He highlighted to optimally utilize the limited resources for better outcome from the

programme. There should be detailed study of herbicide residue and weed shift under CA practices. He also mentioned that importance should be given to crops which are not covered under CA and also to use uniform protocol for recording information across all the partner institutes and focus more on the applied part of the project.

The following action points were decided to be undertaken is due course of time:

- All the participating institutes are required to go through the guidelines and prepare projects as per the guidelines. (Action: All PIs through respective Directors)
- Lead Centre will make an initial exercise based on the core-group meeting and budgetary provision made in BE of 2015-16 (Action: LCPC)
- Lead centre will collect all projects from different centres and submit before PIC for its approval (Action: LCPC)

The meeting ended with vote of thanks proposed by Dr. J. Somasundaram of the lead Institute.
