New paddy variety bursts onto East Godavari Agency scene

DRR Dhan 44, developed by Indian Institute of Rice Research, has come out with flying colours in field trials

A new paddy variety introduced on a trial basis in eight Agency villages of Vara Ramachandrapuram mandal in East Godavari district holds promise for farmers of the region.

DRR Dhan 44, developed by the Indian Institute of Rice Research (IIRR), has fared better than MTU 1001, a common variety in this area. In addition to yielding four bags more than other varieties, Dhan 44 has withstood well the long dry spells. ICRISAT is giving 50 % input subsidy to identified farmers.

Consortium approach

The consortium approach has evoked a good response with tribal farmers coming forward to cultivate new varieties of paddy, pulses and other crops.

This project has been taken up under Rythu Kosam in Andhra Pradesh (AP Primary Sector Mission) and trials were conducted by ICRISAT under the guidance of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) located on its campus in Hyderabad with the help of the Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Department, the IIRR, and ASDS, an NGO.

Cooking quality of this variety has also been found good like basmati. This variety yields more under minimal fertilizer application making it most suitable for the Agency area where farmers don’t buy much fertilizer. This year, more farmers have came forward to take part in participatory demonstrations. IRRI senior scientist A. Narayana Rao said with the confidence gained from the VR Puram demonstrations, the approach will be tried out in Gangavaram and Y Ramavaram mandals in the East Godavari Agency area.

Spreading the word

Interacting with the farmers of Gangavaram and Yarlagadda villages, he highlighted the success stories of DRR Dhan 44 and other varieties in VR Puram mandal. About 20 farmers, four groups, five members in each group came forward to participate in the demonstration during kharif 2018 with DRR Dhan 44, KNM 118, RNR 15048 and DRR Dhan 46 along with other crops such as sorghum, ragi, and groundnut which are being upscaled in these mandals for the last two years. Rajesh Nune, visiting scientist, ICRISAT, said there was a possibility of growing green manure and chickpea during the rabi season if cattle were constrained to non-crop areas for grazing. He suggested setting up of ‘community groups’ to prevent cattle from entering fields.