

Sixth Workshop of the Agronomy Society of Nepal (ASoN)
Theme: Agronomy for food security
10-11 March 2010

Venue: DoA, Seminar Hall, Harihar Bhawan.

First Day: Inaugural session

Master of Ceremony: Mr. Madan Thapa, General Secretary, ASoN

Chairperson: Dr. Mina Nath Paudel, President, ASoN

Chief Guest: Bishnu Prasad Aryal, DDG, DoA

Welcome and objective of the workshop: Dr. Suroj Pokhrel, Chief, CDD

Sitting in of the distinguished dignitaries in the dias:

Chair person, chief CDD, founder president of ASoN, (SL Shrestha), founder member of the ASoN (ML Jaisawal, BMS Basnet), IRRI/Nepal Scientist (Dr. BP Tripathi) ASoN executive members, invitees, journalists, and ladies and gentlemen to be seated in their respective seat.

Introduction of the participants: There was a brief introduction of the participants.

Inauguration by chief guest: Mr. Bishnu Prasad Aryal, DDG, DoA by pulling curtain cover of the sign board

Welcome and objective of the workshop: Dr. Suroj Pokhrel

Dr. Pokhrel welcomed all the participants who attended the workshop especially the chief guest, senior scientists of NARC, division chief, director of NARC, directorate of minor crop, director of spices and condiments, DADOs, seed technologists, representatives of SEAN, SQCC, DoA, and all the guest and invitees. He explained the objectives of the workshop as:

To present technical papers related to the agronomic works done across the country

To publish those articles in the first Agronomy Journal of Nepal and

To make policy relate recommendation by the workshop to solve food security problems in the country.

Key note address by the chief guest: Bishnu Prasad Aryal, DDG, DoA

Mr. Aryal was delighted by the ASoN for giving him a chance to inaugurate the 6th ASoN workshop jointly organized by the ASoN and CDD. He emphasized that the theme of workshop “agronomy for food security” is very relevant and it will help address food insecurity problem of 39 hill districts in far and mid western region of Nepal. At the same time he stressed that the workshop would come up with

some suggestions to address the problem of climate change aside from social inclusion, gender perspectives, and youth migration from agriculture. His stress was to work and come up with suggestions that there should be some issues to be discussed for import substitution and export promotion on agriculture context of Nepal. He further highlighted that whatever technologies have been generated by the research those have not been reached to farmers that could be one of the reasons of food insecurity in the country. This lacuna should be bridged by this workshop. He was hopeful for the outcome of the workshop in the context that here was a rich amalgamation of senior agronomists who are still active and their experiences for new agronomists could bring a positive change in the days ahead. At the end he expressed unity for synergy and wished good luck for the workshop.

Few words:

Distinguished dignitaries expressed their few words in the workshop as follow:

Shambhu Lal Shrestha, founder president, ASoN

Mr shrestha told that ASoN should merge experiences and wisdom of senior agronomists with new and energetic agronomists to contribute to the agriculture development of Nepal. As he was retired and good wisher of ASoN he can freely provide feed back to the society without any fear and prejudice, hence ASoN should take advantage of senior agronomist like him and make this organization a model of professional in agriculture development in Nepal. He cited many examples to make ASoN a rich organization of highly experienced professionals.

Mauje Lal Jaisawal, founder member ASoN

Mr.Jaisawal opined that agronomists should believe in action not in the words. He was in the view that action should be louder than the words. There was a vast scope of agronomists compared to other professional in the country to contribute to the food security issue. He was distressed by seeing thin presence of agronomists in the workshop and proposed that agronomists should take challenge of food insecurity in the country. He urged agronomists to make sufficient food production to feed the poor who are living below poverty line earning less than a dollar day and about 25% of population is in this category in Nepal. Likewise, he urged to use indigenous technologies for sustained food production in the country. His view was that agronomists should be proactive to take these things in government policy and make more production than ever to feed hungry mouth.

Dr. Bhaba Prasad Tripathi, Scientist, IRRI/Nepal Office

Dr. Tripathi viewed that the role of agronomists in Nepal has started just now and they should lead the agriculture systems for making this county food self sufficiency. He highlighted that IRRI/Nepal has initiated many such projects to address food insecurity in Nepal and there should be a big contribution of ASoN to meet such challenges of agriculture ahead. He suggested that research generated technologies have not sufficiently been reached to farmers and there should be enough means such as print and electronic media, leaflets, pamphlets and other literatures to disseminate viable technologies to the farming communities to incerse production and productivity in the country.

Sachet Bahadur Nepali Ghimire, Senior Agronomist

He went on saying that agronomists up to now do not seem active; however, ASoN now has brought all agronomists in one forum which is a great initiation and praise worthy initiative. He highlighted the importance of agronomists and proposed all the concerned to let know the significance of agronomists in Nepal where there is food shortage looming large. He stressed that agronomists are not given due priority by the policy maker in Nepal and to make the work of agronomists transparent we professional should knock the door of concerned authority until and unless agronomists are heard by them. He was very sorry by seeing the plight of Nepalese farmers compared to Indian farmers who deserve high priority by the Indian government. He cited the example that in India there is greenery everywhere while in Nepal there is drought, barren filed and poverty everywhere. If Nepalese agriculture remains in this condition we will be poorer day by day and no body can improve such aggravating situations.

Dr. Jagat Devi Ranjit, Chief, Agronomy Division, NARC

Dr. Ranjit was also not happy by seeing poor presence of agronomists in the workshop even though agronomists are in a vast majority in Nepal. She reminded that Agronomy Division is the mother of the entire crop commodity program where there was their birth during 60's. She further added that how important agronomy was but now agronomists are left no where in the Nepalese agriculture; the result is that the country is facing food shortage acutely. She further went on expressing that let us now break the traditional thinking that there is no relation between agronomy and extension which should be abolished and let us work together by hands in hands to address the problem of farmers by involving agronomists and extensionists jointly.

Vote of thanks by Niru Dahal Pandey, Vice President, ASoN

She gave vote of thanks to the chief guest who happily inaugurated the 6th ASoN workshop despite his busy schedule and gave a key note address in the workshop. She also thanked founder executive members and executive members of ASoN who were in the workshop for encouraging all agronomists. She also thanked chief of disciplinary divisions under NARC for attaining ASoN workshop. At the same time she thanked chief of different directorates including CDD, SQCC, National Industrial Crop Development Program, National Spices Crop Development Program and all who accepted the invitation of ASoN to participate in the workshop. At the end she thanked all the staff of Crop Development Directorate and Training Directorate for helping organize this workshop. Also she thanked the entire faculty whose names are not spelt here to shorten the vote of thank. At the end she thanked all the participants for being int the AsoN workshop and make the workshop a success.

Closing remark by Dr. Mina Nath Paudel, Chairperson

Dr. Paudel lauded the contribution made by senior agronomists who, despite their involvement in many activities, have taken initiation to form the ASoN in earlier days. He cited the example that despite being in a vast majority agronomist in Nepal shun assembling. He opined that this could be because of that up to now there is no remarkable work done by agronomists collectively to address pertinent issues of agriculture in Nepal. He promised to document some of the works related to ASoN which should have been accomplished already. However, he was vary cautious in the sense that if promises are made and result of the promises could not be furnished timely it is better not to make false promises now. Despite many logistic and financial difficulties he was happy in the sense that Crop Development Directorate made financial provision to host this workshop hence he thanked Dr. S Pokhrel and Madam Niru Dahal

Pandey and team personally and on behalf of ASoN for immense help and cooperation to make this workshop a success. He also urged ASoN members to further make this organization more effective by supporting full heartily in the days ahead so that ASoN executive committee is compelled to work coherently to bring some tangible outputs. At the end he declared closing of this session until technical session in the after noon resumed.

Technical session: Paper presentation

Chairperson: Bhola Man Singh Basnet

Mr. Basnet handled the technical session for the second half of the first day of ASoN workshop. At the end he highlighted that this is a good start that ASoN is trying to become a professional organization of agronomists who are working coherently irrespective of institutional attachments in Nepal. He also summarized about the technical papers presented in the workshop. His emphasis was that the message of agronomists' workshop should get priority in the media as well. When there is no coverage of work in the media it has little meaning for the masses. Therefore, agronomists should be proactive to deliver technical message by different media and we technicians are lagging behind in this aspect. He also stressed that quality of technical papers presented in the workshop are of improving and this is the good sign of agronomists' professional endeavor. He thanked the organizer for giving him to chair the session and share his view with the agronomists in the workshop.

Second day: 12 March 2010

MC: Mr. Madan Thapa, general secretary, ASoN

First session: paper presentation

Chairperson: Mauje Lal Jaisawal

Mr. Jaisawal chaired the first session where technical papers were presented. He highlighted about the technical papers presented in the session and expressed his happiness that the status of technical papers presented in the workshop were of very useful to address the food deficiency in the country. These papers were of immense importance for the persons working in the agriculture R&D endeavors. He expressed his gratitude to the organizing committee for giving him to chair this important session of technical paper presentation and shared his views with the fellow agronomists presented in the workshop.

Second session: Group formation and group recommendation

MC: Ms. Niru Dahal Pandey, Vice President, ASoN

Chairperson: Sachet Bahadur Nepali, Ghimire

In this session two technical groups were formed one for crop production and management another for seed technology and management. Both of the groups worked rigorously within their groups and presented the group findings as follow:

Recommendation of the workshop

The presentation of crop production and management group was done by Mr. HK Upreti while for seed production and management group it was done by Dr. J Bajracharya. On the theme "Agronomy for food security" the workshop unanimously come up with the following recommendations which should be address to tackle food insecurity in Nepal:

- High priority should be given by the government to agriculture
- Fund for agriculture in general and research in particular should be increased
- Complete package of practices for important technologies and crop commodities should be developed
- Functional coordination between research and extension should be made practical
- Subsidy in agriculture inputs should be recontinued by the government
- Encouragement of campaign based food security programs
- Encroachment of agriculture land for non-agricultural purpose should be discouraged
- Youth force should retained in agriculture
- Proper regulation of seed management system for food crops including hybrids
- Small farmer friendly agriculture equipments (eg. Chinese hand tractor) should be developed for hill agriculture system as well

Group A: Recommendation of crop production and management group

- Priority for location specific agronomic technologies on food crops (rice, maize, wheat, finger millet, potato, amaranthus, poroso millet, oat and buckwheat)
- Emphasis on local food security by conserving and promoting rainfed technologies and C4 food crops
- Provision of agronomists in each district to carry out food security programs
- Formation of high level food security commission by comprising high level professionals (agronomists, breeders, agri-engineer, food technologies)
- Implementation of national seed sufficiency programs for enhancing seed, food and income generation
- There should be no dearth of budgetary and human resources for carrying out research for development related agronomic studies
- Emphasis on PPP program to meet food security regionally and locally
- Climate change context should be addressed by giving priorities on resource conserving technologies (zero tillage, direct seeding, mulching, rainfed technologies and rain water harvest technologies)
- Provision of agricultural graduates in every VDCs along with capacity enhancement of JT/JTAs (academic and non academic program)
- Functional priorities of government for agriculture by providing at least 5% of AGDP for research and development
- Possible farm mechanization and input substitution
- Urgent revival of minikits and PVS (participatory varietal selection) program by the Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) in joint collaboration of Department of Agriculture (DoA)

Group B: Recommendation of seed production and management group

- Regularization of source seed production program in NARC immediately to address seed shortage
- Strengthening of source seed production in NARC giving emphasis on physical, financial and human resource aspects

- Create environment to use full fledged of public seed sector resources.(farm and processing units) to maintain the seed multiplication and production system
- Strictly adopt the system of seed multiplication in generic cycle.
- Systematic location specific seed production and distribution system (DISSPRO, Seed Bank) should be established and strengthened with complete facilities
- Strictly follow and adopt the balance sheet system for demand and supply of source seed
- Upgrading and strengthening of Seed Quality Control and Testing Laboratories under different institutions (NARC,SQCC,RSTL,NSC).
- Establish seed advisory network among the seed stakeholders (planning, monitoring and supervision and linkage)
- Incorporation of hybrid seed research and development program in agriculture policy
- Seed pledging provisions should be implemented
- Strictly follow and adopt the balance sheet system for demand and supply of source seed

After the group presentation, there was a program of few words to be expressed by the different person who attended the workshop. The following persons expressed their views with respect to the importance of agronomists' workshop which was being completed.

Rajan Dhakal, participant agronomist in the workshop

Mr. Dhakal was an employee in the the post harvest directorate. He laid the importance of potato in the food security and he opined that senior agronomists still put potato as a horticultural crop and it is not being justified by the importance of potato in the dietary of Nepalese. Therefore potato should be taken as a staple and post harvest is equally important for food security. He was happy to participate in the workshop and wished for its success in the coming days as well.

Dila Ram Bhandari, Senior Agronomist, DoA

Mr. Bhandari took the chances of expressing his experience of working in the different part of Nepal as an agronomists and District Agriculture Development officer (DADO). His experience in Jumla as a DADO was very interesting and his efforts to make Jumala as organic agriculture was taking momentum in other parts of the country as well. He was confident that his experience of agronomist in the filed of seed management seems very pertinent to make Nepal seed sufficient for important food crops. He was confident that given chance to work in the seed sector he was ready to lead the sector and wanted make Nepal seed sufficiency within short span of time. This will make ultimately food security in the country.

Dr. Suroj Pokhrel, Program Director, CDD, DoA

Dr. Pokhrel was happy for organizing Agronomists' Workshop jointly with ASoN. He expressed his determination that in coming year he would put his program to publish Agronomy Journal as a mandatory program of hid office so that there will be not any budgetary deficit to publish agronomy journal. This will make activity of CDD for journal publication as an inbuilt program under his office. He was pretty happy for completing this workshop successfully.

Dr. Mina Nath Paudel, President, ASoN

Dr. Paudel expressed his gratitude to all agronomists who patiently participated in the workshop. He was specially grateful to CDD and its staff namely Messrs Dr. S Pokhrel, Ms N Dahal Pandey and all faculties for effectively managing this from the core of their heart. He did not want to make big promises for ASoN up to now he has not come up with any concrete outcome. He expressed the hope that his team will come up with some concrete outcome such as publishing Agronomy Journal and directory of Agronomists asap provided all the concerned help in the days ahead. He was extremely happy about the successful completion of the workshop and he thanked all the executive members of ASoN and fellow agronomists who participated in the workshop actively.

Vote of thank by Chandra Kant Khanal, member, ASoN

Mr. Khanal expressed vote of thanks to all the president who chaired different sessions of ASoN workshop. He thanked the chief guest for inaugurating the 6th ASoN workshop despite his busy schedule. He also thanked founder executive members and executive members of ASoN who actively participated in the workshop. He also thanked the entire paper presenters who despite their busy schedule were able to present very good technical papers in the workshop. He thanked chief of disciplinary divisions under NARC for attaining ASoN workshop. At the same time he thanked chief of different directorates including CDD, SQCC, National Industrial Crop Development Program, National Spices Crop Development Program and all who accepted the invitation of ASoN to participate in the workshop. Likewise, he thanked the entire faculty whose names are not spelt here to make this workshop a success. Last but not the least he thanked all the staff of Crop Development Directorate and Training Centre for helping organize this workshop in the Hall of Training Centre, DoA, Hariharbhawan, Lalitpur.

Chairpersons' remark and closing of the session by Sachet Bahadur Nepali Ghimire

Mr. Ghimire was very happy in the sense that ASoN remembered him even after his retirement from DoA by serving long years of his potential life as an agronomist. He was still very active and promised to help ASoN make more professional than ever. He also highlighted about the importance of group recommendation made by seed and crop production group as a valuable assets for the concerned authority to address food security which is looming large in Nepal. He urged agronomists to make valuable contribution to help address food security in the country so that poor who are deprived of two square meals a day could get foods for their livelihood. He then declared the closing of the ASoN workshop and wished good luck to all the participating members.