



CropLife India & Agriculture Development Trust's KVK, Baramati celebrate "Madhu Sandesh day" to promote pollination amongst farmers & beekeepers

- Madhu Sandesh project creates substantial gains in yield and income, over the past year, underscoring the importance of pollination to agricultural outcomes in Pomegranate and Onion Seed production.
- 17 project farmers recognised for outstanding contribution to promoting awareness of pollination and responsible use of crop protection products, **Madhu Sandesh project, in Baramati region of Maharashtra**
- CropLife India and Agriculture Development Trust, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Baramati to expand "Madhu Sandesh" project to more crops and farmers, to promote pollination through honeybee hives.

3 November 2016: Baramati, Pune, Maharashtra: CropLife India in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Agriculture Development Trust (ADT), KRISHI Vigyan Kendra(KVK), Baramati held an award ceremony to felicitate the participants of the "**Madhu Sandesh**" pollination project which provided rental beehives and personalized crop care support. The ceremony was held to review and celebrate the outstanding outcomes of a project to promote beekeeping and pollination services in agriculture.

Over the past one year, CropLife India, and Agriculture Development Trust's KVK, Baramati, has been working closely with the farmers and the bee keepers about technical applications on the responsible use of crop protection products, pollination and beekeeping practices. This integrated approach facilitated improvement in crop yields and better quality pollination services, encouraging the use of crop protection techniques and technology in farming practices.

Dr R.K. Thakur, Project Coordinator, ICAR-AICRP, said "When we see the overall scenario of the country, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has 26 centers across the country which are being in different agroecological zones. Now is the time where we should start thinking about protecting pollinators while utilizing different IPM tactics, which has been initiated through this project".

Mr Rajendra Pawar, Chairman, Agriculture Development Trust, Baramati, said, "Agriculture Development Trust's, KVK Baramati, through its depth of agriculture extension experience, organized awareness and training programs for farmers and beekeepers on the importance of pollinators and good bee keeping practices to promote a sustainable environment for agriculture."

Mr Brij Uberoi, CEO CropLife India said, "As an industry trying to work towards better practices in crop protection, this project helped us bring together various stakeholders and technology for remarkably better proven results in both crop yields and quality pollination. Through CropLife's pollinator strategy, we were able to bring together crop protection industry, farmers, government agencies, scientists, universities and beekeeping organizations to work towards one goal - protecting pollinator health. Aligned with the government's "Grow Safe Food", campaign, the project has demonstrated a way to incentivize IPM (Integrated Pest Management) compliant behavior, helping farmers witness the value through stakeholder partnership groups."

Dr Syed Ali, Head Scientist, ADT, KVK, Baramati, said "Through an integrated approach to Pollination, using Honey Bee Hives, the project farmers, have experienced extraordinary crop yield and incomes in Pomegranate and Onion Seed Production, the key crops in the Baramati region of Pune district in Maharashtra, which essentially underscores the potential gains for India's agriculture through the promotion of pollination and collaboration with the apiculture industry. "



CropLife India provided 250 beehives to Agriculture Development Trust's KVK, Baramati, to support 150 pomegranate growers and 34 onion seed producers, while bi-weekly visits by project staff kept a check on beehives and offer crop-specific IPM trainings covering 46 Villages across the Baramati tehsil in Pune district of Maharashtra. Thus, demonstrating and promoting the proliferation and professionalization of the beekeeping industry, through institutional capacity building, entrepreneurship, and the provision of training opportunities for beekeepers in the region.

Pomegranate farmers from the project saw their yield increase by 35 percent, corresponding to an income gain of 42 percent. Onion farmers reported their yields and incomes increase 17 percent and 19 percent respectively. Both groups reported they felt tangible improvements in crop quality.

Mr. Santhosh Mohite, Pomegranate Farmer, Indapur, Pune: *"I rented three honey bee boxes from KVK Baramati and set them up in different locations of my one acre farm. Last year, it took almost 3 months to get fruit setting. This year I could see that there was 25-30% increase in fruit setting and that too in a single month."*

Mr. Vijay Vinayak Rao Jadhav, Onion Farmer, Parinche, Pune: *"We are thankful to the project, we have earned 25-30% more income. We received export quality produce for the first time."*

Over the past year, CropLife India signed an MOU with [Indian Council of Agricultural Research \(ICAR\)](#) and [Agriculture Development Trust \(ADT\)](#), Krishi Vigyan Kendra [\(KVK\) Baramati](#) (Pune) to create awareness amongst farmers pollinate their crops with beehives and responsible use of crop protection products. Madhu Sandesh, a pilot project was designed to help farmers and beekeepers communicate and achieve optimal quality and crop yields, through the usage of pollination, good beekeeping practices and the responsible use of crop protection products, usage of PPE (Personal Protection Equipment), Spraying techniques, including the usage of the Mobile App "**Madhu Sandesh**", which can be downloaded from the Google App store. In Hindi, Madhu denotes Honey while Sandesh means Message. <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.beekeeperasia>.

Initial phase of the project ran from November 2015- May 2016. The project is set to continue through to 2018, with hive rentals and IPM training being offered to a broader group of farmers in drumstick and other pollination-dependent crops.

Knowledge partners in the project, constituted the All India Coordinated Research Project on Honey Bees & Pollinators (AICRHBP), IARI, New Delhi; KVIC Mahabaleshwar; CBRTI Pune; MPKV Rahuri, who inducted the project participants with awareness and training on pollination services, Honeybees as pollinators, IPM (Integrated Pest Management), Responsible Use of Crop Protection Products, Good Bee health and Bee Keeping practices and Impact of pollinators on crop yields while sustaining quality. In addition, few local youths were developed into young professionals, around the project area by ADT, KVK, Baramati, who were trained as "Train the Trainers", while they travelled to far off villages to impart training on Good Bee Keeping practices including spraying techniques and usage of PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) equipment during spraying activity.

Per the FAO (Food & Agriculture Organization of UN), India is home to the world's largest honey bee population, with 11.5 million bee colonies in 2010. The pace of growth has accelerated markedly since 2005. Nearly 35% of the food crops in the world are pollination dependent and this is where bees come to the rescue of the human population- "increased food production through healthy bee population." Despite India being home to one of the world's largest (managed) bee population, the contribution of bees to food production is underappreciated and underutilized. Especially within the farming community, one finds less awareness regarding the benefits of bees to agriculture and the necessity of protecting them.



Recognizing the importance of Honeybees as Pollinators: The crop protection industry recognizes the vital role pollinators play in global food production and the need to protect pollinator health. As such, the industry is committed to support research into pollinator health and to promote farming practices that support the health of pollinators. Successful stewardship requires collaboration, engagement and support by all stakeholders. Where this occurs, the community can be assured that best practices are being consistently applied for the safety of users, consumers and the environment for managing any risks to pollinators.

CropLife India: is an association of technology – driven crop science industry, representing 14 R&D based member companies committed to responsible crop care and crop production for the safe and sustainable development of Indian Agriculture. It promotes the benefits and responsible usage of crop protection products, as well as sound science based regulatory system to protect people and the environment, timely access to crops, usage of new pesticides to support a sustainable agriculture system in India. A unit of CropLife International, a global federation of the plant science industry present in over 91 countries, CropLife India believes in a strong and science-based regulatory system to protect people and the environment such that timely access to new crops, new crop protection solutions or new uses for existing crop protection products are promoted.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Baramati: is a district level Farm Science Center established by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, at Agricultural Development Trust Baramati district Pune for speedy transfer of technology to the farmers' fields. The operational area of this Krishi Vigyan Kendra comes under the western Maharashtra dry Zone. The aim of Krishi Vigyan Kendra is to reduce the time lag between generation of technology at the research institutions and its transfer to the farmer's field for increasing production, productivity and income from the agriculture and allied sectors on a sustained basis.

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