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1st Summit on

“HATCHING HOPE FOR ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF SMALLHOLDER FARMERS”

WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER 2023

HOLIDAY INN @ AEROCITY, NEW DELHI

SOUVENIR

HOLIDAY INN @ AEROCITY, NEW DELHI

Inaugural Session



Hatching hope for economic sustainability of small holder farmers' - a summit focussed on enhancing the livelihood opportunities of shareholder farmers was organized on October 18 2023 at Holiday Inn, Aerocity New Delhi. **Dr. Abhijit Mitra** (Animal Husbandry Commissioner), **Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Gautam**- (Director, Small Farmer Agribusiness Consortium), **Ms. Rina Soni**(Executive director, Heifer India), **Mr. Nishant Gupta** (Social and environmental Impact Advisor to Walmart Foundation), **Dr. Dipanwita Chakraborty**, (Regional Director, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Asia Pacific, Cargill) and **Dr. MJ Khan** (Chairman, Indian Chamber of Food & Agriculture) lighted the ceremonial lamp and set in motion the events for the day.

While welcoming the audience **Ms Rina Soni** reiterated the commitment of Heifer International towards small holder farmers and their communities and their resolve in uncovering opportunities for locally-driven, sustainable solutions.

Mr. Sanjeev Kumar Gautam shared the relevance of the government's flagship programme of promoting formation of 10,000 FPOs and the progress achieved so far. He said that the Cluster Based Business Organizations were supposed to help in the formation of FPOs. He said that focus should be on addressing the challenges faced by the FPOs such as lack of logistics, access to market and packaging.

Dr. Abhijit Mitra, talked about Women empowerment. He observed that 70% of the total agriculture work force is comprised of women and 1/3rd of whole poultry industry is backyard poultry. He suggested that the organizations Instead of working on the same area should divide it and work on it differently. He also pointed out the relevance of biosecurity and the need to create market for linkages.

Mr. Nishant Gupta stressed on the role of Walmart in creating impact in the small holder farmers' ecosystem. He opined that FPOs are a great instrument and are becoming the bridges between the smallholder farmers and the market. He informed that Walmart has committed to reach about a million farmers by 2028.

According to **Dr MJ Khan**, FPOs are very powerful institutions created at the village level. He pointed out that that smallholder farmers are more productive considering the area of land that are operating and they can be empowered with technologies. He also pointed out the need to enable farmers with the new developments.

SESSION 1 : “LEVERAGING POULTRY POWER IN WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP”

The session panelists were **Mr. Amit Kumar Patjoshi** -CEO, Palladium; **Mr.Suresh Chitturi**-MD, Srinivas Farms; **Mr Saikesh Goud**-Co-founder & CEO, Country Chicken; **Ms. M Mahitha**-Additional Director, SERP, Andhra Pradesh and **Dr. Chandrasekhar** -Manager- Marketing, Kemin Industries. The session moderator was **Ms. Dipanwita Chakroborty** - Regional Director, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainable Development, Asia Pacific, Cargill.



Mr. Suresh Chitturi highlighted the significant impact of the poultry and egg industry in India and pointed at the enormous employment opportunities created by the sector. He said that the vision was to increase egg production from 100 eggs per capita to 600 eggs within the next 25 years, with a particular focus on smallholders due to their exceptional farm performance. However, smallholders face challenges, primarily related to their limited purchasing power. He emphasized on the need for creating a supportive social network system for smallholders and women in rural areas. “Leveraging technology and innovation is seen as the path to achieving this ambitious goal. Ultimately, the goal is to create more opportunities and jobs in the industry, with the recognition that women play a significant role, constituting approximately 40-50% of the workforce, particularly in rural areas,” he added.



Mr. Amit Kumar Patjoshi pointed out that this year alone Palladium has supported 75 million farmers across the globe with the run rate of 50% women. “It is easier to support women entrepreneurs as compared to male entrepreneurs but it is important that the approach is more relevant,” he said. He also discussed the challenges faced by small holder farmers such as the small size of their land holdings and market system development. He was of the view that women were better informed decision makers and as facilitators they need to be informed about financial linkages available and provide them with women mentors which have been proved to be effective.



Dr. Chandrasekhar was of the belief that balancing efficiency and volume, learning from past agricultural revolutions, focusing on genetic improvement, proper nutrition, and rural poultry are the key to success. “This approach creates business

opportunities while emphasizing fundamental education. Success is dependent on the interplay of efficiency, genetics, and efficient distribution channels,” he added.



Mr. Saikesh Goud shared that his company was focusing on stimulating demand for their unique meat stores, targeting diverse age groups and creating an attractive environment to draw in women and children. They aim to educate customers about the quality of their chicken and the farmers behind it. He informed that on the backend, they have integrated with 15,000 poultry farms across Telangana, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.



Ms. M Mahitha introduced the Society for the Eradication of Rural Poverty (SERP) which is actively engaged in rural poverty eradication efforts in Andhra Pradesh the primary focus of

which is on empowering rural women through Self-Help Groups (SHGs). “In Andhra Pradesh, SERP has successfully established 8.47 lakhs of SHGs, benefiting women from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, SERP is also involved in promoting Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to support agricultural initiatives, covering a substantial 6 lakh farmers across 478 FPOs”. It was also brought to the notice that SERP also encourages entrepreneurship among SHG women and collaborates with food processing facilities and NGOs to prepare various food and non-food products, contributing to economic growth and poverty alleviation in rural areas. Notably, SERP have recently partnered with Heifer International and an AP project, further enhancing market linkages and benefiting 15,000 farmers with a future goal to expand collaborations with more farmers.



Ms. Dipanwita Chakroborty summarizing the session opined that the poultry sector's future growth rate was uncertain, but it presented opportunities for small and older women farmers, promoting rural women's entrepreneurship. “Success relies on creating an enabling ecosystem, leveraging technology, and social networks. Women's significant role in the industry underscores the need for education and support. Balancing efficiency, genetics, and distribution channels is key”, she said. She suggested that in the private sector, focusing on education, creating demand, and engaging with farmers was crucial. She emphasized on collaborations and market linkages and considered them to be essential for expansion. She also said that enhancing nutrition in poultry and eggs was vital for sustainable growth.

SESSION 2 - "STORIES OF SUCCESS AND STRUGGLE OF FPOS"

The session panelists were **Mr. Rajshekhar**- Small holder farmer & BOD, Rytu Nestam, FPO, Narpala; **Ms Singaramma**-Tribal CAVE- Rampachodavam FPO; **Ms Rajeshwari**- BOD, Pamidi FPO and **Ms Maheshwari** -BOD of Peddavaduguru FPO & MSME Entrepreneur. The session moderator was **Anand Naik**- Senior Program Officer - Business Development, Heifer India.



Mr. Rajshekhar said that how in 2021, a government-supported group consisting of 20 members has grown to an impressive 550 members, with invaluable support and inputs from Heifer and Walmart. He shared that over the years, the FPO has successfully conducted business worth of approximately Rs.60 lakhs in business, all while gaining essential knowledge and insights. "This includes not only quality business practices but also effective commodity marketing strategies". Looking forward, he said that their ambitious goal is to reach Rs. 2 crores in the upcoming years, driven by their newfound expertise. It was inspirational to find that despite their initial lack of knowledge, they have managed to secure better prices and, consequently, a significantly improved income.

Ms. Sringaramma shared her life's journey in which she had took on multiple roles, serving as a teacher, vaccinator, saleswoman, and businesswoman. "These diverse responsibilities have enabled me to achieve a level of self-sufficiency. The invaluable support from Heifer International



has played a pivotal role in my growth and transformation into an entrepreneur. Their guidance and assistance have empowered me to overcome financial hardships and become more self-reliant, marking a significant turning point in my life," she said.



Ms. Rajeshwari brought to light the support extended to her by her husband, in a village marked by stringent restrictions on women's mobility. "He has defied the norms and never imposed any limitations on me, allowing me the freedom to pursue my work outside the home. His unwavering encouragement has been instrumental in breaking through the societal constraints that often hinder women's opportunities, empowering me to pursue my aspirations," she said.



Ms. Maheshwari, a vital member of the board of directors, serves as a strong and unwavering pillar for her FPO, contributing significantly to its success. Beyond her professional role, she plays a crucial part in her family's life, taking a lead in educating her children. It was also evident that her influence doesn't stop there – she actively encourages her husband to engage in organic farming, demonstrating her commitment to sustainable agriculture. Her multi-faceted support extended to various activities within the FPO, showcasing her dedication to fostering growth and positive change.



Mr. Anand Naik informed that with support from Walmart and Cargill, Heifer International was implementing a project in Andhra Pradesh, encompassing two districts: East Godavari and Anantapur. "This initiative engages over 9000 farmers, promoting the backyard property value chain, he added. One significant achievement of the project was that it reduced the role of middlemen in maize and banana procurement, saving farmers hundreds of rupees during the winter season. With the help of collaborative efforts of local product directors and the Heifer team, they have successfully sold 9 loads of maize without middlemen, resulting in a substantial profit of 45,000 rupees, with each load yielding 5,000 rupees in profit.



SESSION 3 – “SCALING UP FARMER PRODUCER COMPANIES AND BUILDING SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM FOR FPOs

The panelists of the session were Mr. Nishant Gupta- Social & Environmental Impact Advisor to Walmart Foundation; Mr. Subhash Kiran, Deputy CEO, Andhra Pradesh Food Processing Society, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh; Dr Dinesh Chauhan- Vice President, Dehaat; Mr Anil Pareek- Chief Strategy Office, Lead Connect Services Pvt. Ltd and Mr. Anand Chandra- Co-founder, Arya Ag. The session moderator was Dr SK Malhotra- Director DKMA, ICAR.



Mr. Nishant Gupta highlighted the global efforts of Walmart Foundation in enhancing market access for smallholder farmers, including those in India. “These collectives address critical challenges in the agricultural ecosystem, particularly the constraint of small landholdings and limited individual output. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) emerge as a potent solution by aggregating inputs, such as high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and advisory services, while also uniting the output of numerous smallholder farmers to strengthen their market presence. FPOs further contribute by providing essential infrastructure like primary and secondary processing facilities, cold storage, and warehouses, substantially increasing the value of the farmers' produce. The sustainability of FPOs is closely tied to their adaptability to climate change and commitment – to gender equality, making them a

cornerstone in empowering smallholders worldwide,” he opined.

Mr. Subhash Kiran believed that the primary focus of the food processing department was to empower various collectives, such as Self Help Group (SHG) collectives and farmer collectives, including corporate societies and farmer-producer organizations (FPOs), in creating value for agricultural produce across various sectors.



“Whether it is crops, horticulture, dairy, or poultry, the realization is that the value of the harvest cannot be maximized until it is transformed into marketable products. FPOs were conceived with the vision that they would evolve from being mere collectives facilitating input supply to becoming processing enterprises, ultimately yielding the best results for farmers. In Andhra Pradesh, there are over 100 government-promoted FPOs, and the state has supported over 200 FPOs in the agriculture and horticulture department, he added. He said that the prospect of significant benefits attracted farmers to join and establish FPOs. “The department also encourages FPOs to elevate their operations by investing in physical infrastructure, such as sorting and grading mechanisms, to enhance product quality. Interestingly, despite financial support being available, many FPO members remain unaware of their role and potential. Even after extensive efforts to educate and facilitate bank loans for infrastructure development, it was surprising that not a single FPO was willing to take the loan” he said.



Mr. Anil Pareek discussed about Lead Connect which was an organization that focused on three critical problem areas: market linkage, connectivity, and technical support. "In the realm of corporate support for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), investment plays a pivotal role. Collaborating with FPOs and recognizing them as essential intermediaries is crucial for corporations, as FPOs provide a vital gateway to connect with farmers, addressing trust issues that often hinder direct corporate-farmer interactions. To foster this collaboration, seamless integration of FPOs into the corporate supply chain is imperative, ultimately enhancing the visibility and effectiveness of these organizations in serving both farmers and corporate partners," he suggested.



Mr. Dinesh Chauhan pointed out that two fundamental challenges in the formation of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) were their ability to instill a strong work ethic and access to credit and financing. "Enabling FPOs to develop a strong work culture is essential, as is securing financial support to help them scale up. The financial market's readiness to invest in FPOs remains an evolving challenge, necessitating the introduction of specialized products from banking and financial institutions. Notably, despite government initiatives in the agricultural sector over the past two decades, infrastructural challenges persist. The reason for this is primarily due to higher subsidies and support granted to individual farmers, rather than corporate entities, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach in promoting agricultural development.



Mr. Anand Chandra believed that the FPO ecosystem holds significant potential for promoting sustainability, particularly in the realm of environmentally friendly agricultural technology. "A noteworthy shift in perspective has been the realization that when we export rice, we're essentially exporting around 4,000 liters of water required for its production. To grow just 1 kg of rice demands a substantial amount of water. In response to this, numerous organizations are actively advocating and disseminating innovative technologies that aim to reduce the environmental impact of agriculture, highlighting the importance of sustainable practices within the FPO framework," he said.

Dr. SK Malhotra surmised that in India, the majority of farmers, about 12 crore in number, are smallholders with an average landholding of just 1.1 hectare. “Due to limited volumes from these small farms, farmers often struggle to secure fair prices for their produce. To address this issue, the Indian government introduced the concept of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), with a goal of establishing 10,000 FPOs in the country with a budgetary allocation of approximately Rs. 6,865 crore. Fostering a culture of FPOs is essential, with a focus on both primary and secondary processing and providing necessary infrastructure. The government plays a crucial role in supporting these initiatives, which encompass production-oriented programs, infrastructure creation, training, and network development. The objective is to connect FPOs with various sectors, such as beekeeping, poultry, animal husbandry, and other agricultural programs, and empower farmers through this institutional system, enabling each FPO to establish its unique brand and empowering smallholders in the process,” he concluded.



SESSION 4 – “ROLE OF CORPORATE SECTOR IN BUILDING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FOR SMALL HOLDER FARMERS ”

The panelists were **Mr. Ravinder Grover** -Regional Coordinator -Asia, Harvestplus- IFPRI; **Mr. Gaurav Sharma**- Global Agribusiness Research Lead, Agriculture; **Mr Ajeet Chahal**-Head Commercial Key Accounts & Community Lead Smallholder Initiative, India, Bangladesh and Sri-Lanka, Bayer; **Mr. Subhash Thakur**- National Sales Head, IPL Biologicals and **Mr. Dhananjay M Edakhe**- National Business Head, Inera. **Mr Abhimanyu Sahu**- Director, Schneider Electric was the moderator.

Mr. Ravinder Grover informed that Harvest Plus operates within the development sector with a primary focus on enhancing plant varieties to improve human health and nutrition.” National Family Health Survey data reveals a concerning issue where one in three children and women suffer from hidden hunger. To combat this problem, a straightforward solution involves revisiting plant varieties that have lost their nutritional value over the years.



The chapati and rice we consume today are less nutritious compared to those from 50 years ago, consisting of more empty calories,” he added. The organization has been collaborating with smallholder farmers and hence has not only strived to boost nutritional levels but also to ensure these efforts result in improved livelihoods for these farmers.

“Innovations don't always have to be groundbreaking; they can be simple, practical solutions. What truly matters is their relatability to the people they are intended for. If innovations are not relevant to the needs and context of the users, their impact may be limited,” he commented.

Mr. Gaurav Sharma pointed out that Accenture, a global technology organization, played a significant role in the agriculture and food sectors, particularly in supporting smallholder farmers.



He informed the audience that they offered various solutions, including precision agriculture and a connected crop solution that involves collaboration between farmers, agri-input companies, and field agents. “Accenture also partners with technology and agri-business entities to support startups like Jal Jeevika, which focuses on improving fish farming for small-scale fisheries and farmers using innovative technologies. Accenture's role in carbon removal is vital. Moreover, Accenture extends its support to rural women by providing access to resources and helping them expand their businesses in rural areas,' he said. He informed that over 12,000 women have already been enrolled in the program across 16 states and 2 union territories. Additionally, Accenture's collaboration with the UN Development Program also aimed to enhance the adoption of digital agriculture and precision agriculture among smallholder farmers in developing countries across Asia and Africa. This effort involves multiple stakeholders, including government bodies and private companies, to benefit farmers and promote agricultural innovation.

Mr. Ajeet Chahal acknowledged that Bayer recognizes the challenges smallholders face, including limited access to inputs, advisory services, finance, risk management, and suitable markets for their produce. He enlightened the panel about Bayer's global smallholder strategy which comprised of three pillars. "Firstly, they aim to develop customized solutions for smallholders. Secondly, Bayer has committed to supporting over 100 million smallholder farmers by 2030, with a focus on India contributing more than 40% of this target.



We are working on digital solutions to provide technology access, inputs, and value chain support. The third pillar involves value chain partnerships, exemplified by the Better Life Farming initiative. This alliance aims to provide one-stop solutions to smallholders within a five to seven-kilometer radius," he added.

Mr. Subhash Thakur talked about IPL Biologicals Limited, offering agri-input solutions through biologicals, distinguishing itself as India's top microbial solution company. Their approach focused on providing smallholder farmers with valuable services, including training and capacity building. This encompasses enhancing nutrition quality, reducing dependency on chemicals, and promoting chemical-free food production. Moreover, IPL emphasizes offering a comprehensive solution to the challenges faced by farmers. They maintain an in-house technology development

center entirely dedicated to chemical-free cultivation and prioritize environmental sustainability, ensuring their services benefit smallholder farmers while respecting the surrounding environment. "The biological space in the agri-input sector remains relatively small, making it an attractive area for corporate investments. It is poised to play a crucial role in comprehensive soil health and crop management through an integrated approach. However, challenges persist, particularly from a farmer's perspective. Limited pan-India presence of companies offering high-quality biological inputs hinders availability. Quality and pricing issues further complicate matters, as the supply constraints often result in elevated costs and difficulties in accessing these inputs when needed," he opined. He also found convincing farmers to embrace biological inputs to be a challenge, with large fertilizer companies sometimes promoting pseudo-biological products through their channel partners. He recommended providing financial support to smallholder farmers to encourage the use of biological inputs could be a valuable solution, akin to the subsidized approach for urea, which has seen widespread adoption.



Mr. Dhananjay E Dakhe began his address by introducing Absolute, which is dedicated to uplifting small landholding farmers in India. Their organization focuses on various aspects of the agricultural value chain, offering comprehensive solutions.



INERA, their biological input solution platform, and UPAJ, a technology-based platform, provide innovative tools for farmers. UPAJ introduced a groundbreaking soil testing device, offering quick and highly accurate results. They also offer free agro advisory services, crop insurance solutions, and support Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Absolute's work spans across different verticals, reaching nearly 20 lakh farmers, guiding them in cultivation practices, agro advisory, and purchasing their produce. He has found that the adoption

rate of better technologies by common farmers is low mainly because lack of awareness and also lack of access to the product. He believed that companies providing end to end solutions can help the farmer at their own level.

Mr. Abhimanyu Sahu said that the small holder farmers who basically owns less than two hectares of land, accounts for almost 86% of the farmers and there are around 126 million, smallholder farmers in India whose monthly income was around Rs.10,218. "Smallholders require trustworthy local entrepreneurs for support. To address their challenges effectively, a global approach must be combined with a local perspective. Leveraging technologies like drones and mechanization can significantly benefit smallholder farmers, but the solutions must be tailored to their specific, local needs," he added.



SESSION 5 – “MICROFINANCE AND BEYOND : EXPLORING FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS FOR SMALLHOLDERS AND LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO REACH RURAL FARMERS”

Panelists were **Mr. Ashudeep Garg** -Senior President, Inera; **Mr. Neelam Gupta**- Head Agriculture , JB Boda Group; **Ms. Meenakshi Meena**-AGM, NABARD; **Mr. Abhishek Shah**- Digital Inclusion, South Asia, Mastercard and **Ms. Megha Desai**-Lead-National Farmer's Forum Network, Sewa International. The session was moderated by **Mr. Mashar Velapuratha**-Managing Director, AFC India Ltd.

Mr. Ashudeep Garg was of the view that the farmers cultivating commercial crops play a pivotal role in the lending proposition, where the value of their crops and the agricultural inputs they utilize significantly influence financial decisions. “This input data is crucial for lenders, insurance providers, and other stakeholders looking to engage with these farmers. Technology, particularly satellite-based imagery, provides precise insights into one-acre plots, offering detailed information on crop growth, ground conditions, and factors like water stress, temperature, and humidity.



These insights empower lenders to assess farm performance accurately. Moreover, this data is valuable for service providers in optimizing the timing of agri-input sales, purchasing farm produce, and drafting contracts. Micro-finance institutions and other lending entities benefit from these technological advancements, enhancing their interactions with farmers,” he added.

Mr. Neelam Gupta stated that economic sustainability cannot rely solely on protective measures, as financial institutions and government schemes, such as Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bhima Yojana, primarily benefit land-owning farmers.



“In India, where 86% of farmers are small and marginal, comprising nearly half of the country's crop production, a significant portion remains uninsured. Parametric insurance products exist, but they can be complex, especially for landless farmers. To address this gap, designing such products with the assistance of microfinance institutions and bundling them with financial instruments is crucial. Additionally, addressing price fluctuations and carbon credit insurance for farmers engaged in activities like afforestation and carbon credit production presents opportunities for parametric solutions to provide coverage effectively,” she suggested.

Ms. Meenakshi Meena observed that following the significant expansion of the banking network post-nationalization, a proportional institutional finance was lacking for the public. “In response, NABARD initiated an action-research program in 1987 to address this gap. In 1992, NABARD introduced the Self-Help Group (SHG) program on a pilot basis, with the goal of linking 500 SAGs with banks. This pilot program proved highly successful, resulting in three transformative changes in the banking sector. It allowed banks to recognize informal groups as individual clients for both credit and savings, introduced collateral-free lending, and permitted lending without specific purposes or projects,” she said. SAGs, typically consisting of 10-20 individuals, mainly women from similar



economic and social backgrounds, engaged in collective savings and internal lending, which is then credit-linked with banks. "This NABARD concept has evolved into the world's largest micro-finance program, impacting 16.23 crore households and forming 1.34 crore SAGs, with 42.96 lakh SAGs credit-linked as of March 31, 2023. This initiative has significantly bolstered the micro-finance sector, operating across 641 districts, she added.

Mr. Abhishek Shah was of the view that to drive social impact, expertise in technology, ecosystem orchestration, and managing complex transactions involving multiple parties is essential. "The MasterCard Foundation, the largest stockholder in MasterCard, shifted its focus from a foundation perspective to leverage the value created for shareholders for societal benefit. Recognizing the need to empower marginal farmers with technology, they created technology solutions



through MasterCard's Community Pass. This offline platform facilitates connections between farmers and markets, input suppliers, and financial services, all while capturing valuable transaction data for customized credit solutions. This innovative technology not only benefits farmers but also reduces customer acquisition costs for lenders through digital channels, ultimately aiming to empower 500 million farmers globally," he said.

Ms. Megha Desai discussed about SEWA, which has over five decades of experience working with informal sector women workers. "The poor don't seek charity; they need an enabling environment to thrive and contribute. Many women in rural India engage in agriculture, animal husbandry, and land-based activities. However, structural and cultural barriers often prevent them from being recognized as farmers, as they lack land titles.



This exclusion results in limited access to government schemes and mainstream financial resources. SEWA acknowledges two significant risks in this context: climate and market risks. Recent climate impacts have affected small and marginal women farmers, who heavily rely on rain-fed agriculture for income. To address these challenges, SEWA aimed to create an alternative solution, providing immediate access to funds, even for smaller expenses like seeds and fertilizers," she said.

Mr. Mashar Velapuratha summarizing the discussion said that in India, the directed credit lending directive from the Government and Reserve Bank of India is crucial for agricultural and rural development, especially for small and marginal farmers. "Despite the announcement of substantial agriculture credit figures, only around 20% of the 12.56 crore small holder farmers in the country can access credit. An alternate financial mechanism like microfinance is essential, providing hassle-free, collateral-free, small amounts of finance at the doorstep, benefiting the agriculture sector significantly. Agri-fintech is emerging as another source of credit, particularly for women farmers, leveraging technology, including satellite imagery, to facilitate credit provision. Additionally, micro-insurance products, such as parametric, weather-based, and price fluctuation insurance, are becoming essential in mitigating climate risks. The carbon credit market in India is growing, offering additional income sources for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) as they aggregate and scale carbon credit initiatives. Education and empowerment of FPOs are key to ensuring their success in this evolving technological landscape, as the next decade is set to be driven by technology," he concluded.



VALEDICTORY SESSION



Shri Purushottam Rupala, Hon'ble Union Minister of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Govt. Of India was the Chief Guest of Valedictory Function. **Ms. Rina Soni** (Executive Director, Heifer India), **Mr. Prabaharan Rajarathinam** (Programme Director, Heifer India and **Ms. Dipanwita Chakraborty** (Regional Director, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability Development, Asia Pacific, Cargill) were also present.

Mr. Prabaharan Rajarathinam- Program Director, Heifer India elaborated on the Accelerated Income Project, a groundbreaking initiative that addresses the challenges faced by small and marginalized farmers in other countries. He remarked that the project has improved various parameters such as feeding practices by 89%, shelter and construction adoption by 92%, etiquette management and vaccination usage by 77% and waste management practices by 63%. He also said that a majority of FPO members have adopted breeding methods, improved egg collection and implemented biosphere methods. The project has also created employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.





Unveiling the special report by Heifer India on Hatching hope- Acceleration Income **Sh. Parshottam Rupalaji** stated that, "All over the world, workers are paid hourly. But only Indian farmers work throughout rigorously even after facing several losses. Such type of farmers can be found only in India and at no other place. Organisations should focus on how their company will benefit the small holder farmers." He also said that it is good to know that now poultry is also becoming organic with products like organic eggs and organic chicken. "Small farmers need technologies to link their products with the industries and we should focus and work on that. Farmers are worried about their product's value. Organisations should work on solving this problem and if they need any help from Government, we are ready to provide that. Among all the high value crops like rice and maize, dairy itself produces the maximum profit. India itself produces approximately 10lakh tonnes of milk and is the first country in terms of production and also in per capita availability."



He also felicitated the 10 FPOs from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha working in the field of poultry and goatery.

List of FPOs Felicitated

- ❖ Rampachodavaram Agriculture & Allied Producers Mutually Aided Cooperative Society Limited
- ❖ Gangavaram Agriculture & Allied Producers Mutually Aided Cooperative Society
- ❖ Addateegala Agriculture & Allied Producers Mutually Aided Cooperative Society
- ❖ Narpala Rythu Nestham FPCL
- ❖ Tanakallu Chaitanya FPCL
- ❖ Rolla Kamdhenu FPCL
- ❖ Pamidi Mahila Rithu Paraspara Sahayaka Sangam Ltd
- ❖ Peddavadugurumahila Rithu Paraspara Sahayaka Ltd
- ❖ Dulal Farmer Producer Company Limited
- ❖ Thakurmunda Farmer Producer Company Limited
- ❖ Maa Durgadevi Producer Company Limited



GLIMPSES OF THE EVENT



GLIMPSES OF THE EVENT



Recommendations :

The 1st Hatching Hope Summit for Economic Sustainability of Small holder Farmers on 18th October 2023 jointly organised by Heifer International and Agriculture Today was an effort to address the key challenges of small holder farmers and develop solutions for their economic development and sustenance. The Summit successfully addressed the long standing need of promoting meaningful dialogues among stakeholders and formulate strategies to not only address the pertinent problems of small holder farmers but also guide them towards the path of financial security. Post five highly fruitful panel discussions centred on five critical topics, following suggestions evolved that has the potential to shape and create a road map to improving economic sustainability of small holder farmers.

- Address challenges faced by the FPOs such as lack of logistics, access to market and packaging
- Awareness on biosecurity especially in poultry segment
- Creating Market linkages for farmers' produce
- Creating awareness on new technologies and developments among small holder farmers
- Creating awareness on financial support available to FPOs
- Creating a supportive social network system for smallholders especially women in rural areas
- Providing financial linkages to women farmers
- Connecting women mentors with women farmers for better efficiency
- Focus on genetic improvement and proper nutrition in rural poultry
- Reduction in the number of middlemen in value chain
- Creating value for agricultural produce across various sectors
- Encouraging FPOs to invest in physical infrastructure, such as sorting and grading mechanisms to enhance product quality
- Addressing trust issues in corporate-farmer interactions
- Augmenting collaborations between with FPOs and corporations
- Seamless integration of FPOs into the corporate supply chain
- Instill a strong work ethic in FPOs
- Developing specialized products by banking and financial institutions
- Connect FPOs with various sectors, such as beekeeping, poultry, animal husbandry, and other agricultural programs,
- Enabling each FPO to establish its unique brand and empowering smallholders in the process
- Innovations should be relevant to the needs and context of the users (farmers/FPOs)
- Customized solutions for smallholders
- Digital solutions to provide technology access, inputs, and value chain support
- Training and capacity building for small holder farmers
- Providing financial support to smallholder farmers to encourage the use of biological inputs
- Leveraging technologies like drones and mechanization
- Micro-finance institutions and other lending entities should leverage technological advancements such as satellite-based imagery for developing products
- Designing financial products with the assistance of microfinance institutions and bundling them with financial instruments
- Addressing price fluctuations and carbon credit insurance for farmers engaged in activities like afforestation and carbon credit production



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