

Awareness and Training Programme under “*Khet Bachao Abhiyan*”

Date: 23 June 2026

An awareness and training programme under the *Khet Bachao Abhiyan* was successfully organized at Varude village, Khed taluka, Pune district with the objective of creating awareness among farmers on soil health management, environmental conservation, and advanced onion production technologies. The programme was conducted by Dr. Satish Kumar, Senior Scientist; Dr. Soumia P.S., Senior Scientist; and Mr. Dhananjay Shirsat, Junior Research Fellow, from ICAR-Directorate of Onion and Garlic Research (ICAR-DOGR), Pune. The programme was coordinated by Mr. Sushant Pawle from TVS and was attended by 27 farmers.

Addressing the gathering, the scientists highlighted the objectives and significance of the *Khet Bachao Abhiyan* and emphasized the importance of adopting sustainable agricultural practices to enhance crop productivity while conserving natural resources. Farmers were sensitized to the need for protecting soil health, maintaining ecological balance, and reducing the indiscriminate use of agrochemicals through integrated and environmentally sound crop management practices. The participants were provided with comprehensive guidance on onion bulb and seed crop cultivation with reduced dependence on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The scientists stressed the importance of soil testing and Soil Health Cards for assessing soil fertility and enabling balanced and need-based nutrient management. Farmers were advised to promote the use of organic manures, biofertilizers, and micronutrients based on soil test recommendations to improve soil fertility and sustain crop productivity.

The experts also emphasized the adoption of integrated crop management practices, including the selection of suitable onion varieties for different growing seasons, timely intercultural operations, efficient water management, and integrated nutrient and pest management strategies, pre-harvest, and post-harvest practices to minimize storage losses and enhance the shelf life and marketability of onion bulbs. Experts also sensitized farmers to the adverse effects of excessive and indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides, including issues related to pest resistance, pesticide residues, and environmental contamination. Awareness was created regarding the safe and judicious use of pesticides, including the importance of using recommended doses, observing waiting periods, and wearing protective equipment during pesticide application.

Furthermore, farmers were encouraged to adopt biofertilizers and eco-friendly approaches for pest and disease management, including the use of biocontrol agents and botanical pesticides. The importance of conserving beneficial insects and maintaining farm biodiversity for sustainable crop production was also highlighted. The special emphasis was laid on the “One Village – One Variety” approach for onion seed production to maintain varietal purity and enhance seed quality.

During the interactive session, farmers raised queries regarding Soil Health Cards and crop management practices, and the scientists addressed their concerns by explaining the role of balanced nutrient management in improving soil fertility and ensuring sustainable crop production. The programme concluded with an interactive discussion and a vote of thanks, with farmers expressing their commitment to adopting eco-friendly and scientifically recommended practices for enhancing productivity while safeguarding soil health and the environment.

