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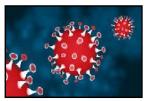


Extension and advisory services during lockdown due to COVID-19: Efforts by KVK in Barmer district of Rajasthan

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Coronavirus outbreak was first reported in Wuhan, China on 31 December, 2019. Coronavirus (CoV) is a large family of viruses that causes illness. It ranges from the common cold to more severe



diseases like Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). The novel coronavirus is a new strain of virus that has not been identified in human so far.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or exhales. These droplets are too heavy to hang in the air, and quickly fall on floors or surfaces.

India has taken early action to limit the spread of COVID-19, ordering a 21-day nationwide lock down for its population of 1.3 billion people starting 25 March 2020 and then nationwide lockdown has now been extended till 3 May. Central and state governments have recognized the challenge and responded aggressively. Till 28 April, 21632 active cases of corona were active, 6868 cured, 934 deaths had occurred and one migrated. In Rajasthan 2185 active cases of corona were active and In Barmer 01 active case of corona.

In Barmer district ongoing lockdown to control the spread of coronavirus is threatening its agriculture sector. As it overlapped with the time of crop harvesting, the lockdown derailed threshing, harvesting and marketing operations. Lack of agricultural labour to help in harvesting and transportation of agricultural produce has worsened the situation. The lockdown period has been of great stress to farmers and farm families. The coronavirus pandemic may likely have an extensive and long-term influence on the agriculture industry.

Immediate challenges in agriculture: COVID-19 is disrupting some activities in agriculture and supply chains. There are disruptions in supply chains because of transportation problems and other issues. Prices have declined for wheat, vegetables, cumin and other crops, yet consumers are often paying more.

First, harvesting and marketing crops at the farm level is in crisis across the district, because are (a) disruptions in the procurement of mustard, gram, wheat by government agencies; (b) disruptions in the collection of harvests crop especially cumin and isabgol from the farms by private traders; (c) a shortage of workers to harvest the Rabi crop; (d) a shortage of drivers in the transportation sector; (e) closure or limited operations of Krishi Mandis; and (f) shutdowns in the retail agricultural markets (g) the shortage of livestock feed and their availability. These factors have led to a crisis in a range of crops too: wheat, pomegranate, cumin, isabgol, mustard and castor.

Initiatives of KVKs to combat Covid-19: KVKs of Barmer II (Gudamalani) is proactively engaged in issuing specific advisories on field crops, livestock, Horticulture crops and other associated issues using information and communication technologies (ICTs). KVK is sharing information on markets, availability of critical inputs, maintaining social distance, facilitating the installation of Aarogya setu app, immunity enhancing protocol, etc. Apart from these, KVKs also engaged in specific activities to respond to COVID19. These are discussed below.

Farm Advisory Services:

- KVK provided farm advisories through Kisan Mobile Advisory Services by covering 763 farmers in the KVK jurisdiction area.
- KVK provided farm advisories and created awareness on beware of COVID-19 through FPOs and 6 Whatsapp group by covering 1854 farmers in the KVK jurisdiction area.
- KVK published 05 newspaper clips on prevention of COVID-19
 - KVK posted in the Whatsapp group on Arogya Setu
- KVK provided extension services on importance of wearing mask in field activities
 - KVK provided Regularly farm advisories on online











phone, Whatsapp group.

- Maintaining social distancing at farmers' fields.

Social distancing helps to minimize contact with those having COVID-19 infection. KVK have persuaded farmers to practice social distancing while doing farm operations. This message was also conveyed to other stakeholders.

Measures to avoid infectins on KVK premises: KVKs is committed to providing realistic, up-to-date information and resources to support essential work during the pandemic. KVK is involved in spraying chemicals to avoid any contamination on their premises, equipment and other public places. However, there is a great need to make farmers aware in disposing off the used materials (infected items like mask, gloves etc.) to prevent from 6 contamination with livestock or other animals. An advisory issued by KVKs asked the farmers to: "Wash hands properly with soap or use sanitizer before and after carrying out field operations. Maintain at least one metre distance between workers. Prevent unknown persons from









entering fields. Don't spit, shake hands or hug each other during field operations."

Inputs services:

- Vermicompost 10 kg (03 farmers)
- Azolla 100 kg (13 farmers)
- Ethophone 950 Injection (21 farmers)
- Waste decomposer 02 litres (9 farmers)
- Nutrition garden seeds 500 g (21 farmers)

- Soil water testing 32 samples (26 farmers)
- Mask prepared by SHGs 5000 (05 SHGs)

Inspiring SHGs to help common people capacity building of farmers, farm women, youth and other stakeholders is one of the main tasks of KVK. KVKs are also involved in promotion of self-help groups (SHGs) and farmers producer organisations (FPOs). As face masks were lack in markets, KVK, took timely initiatives to inspire







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SHG members for the preparation of face mask. Supporting farmers on marketing aspects:

- During lock down period in co-ordination with ITC, started cumin purchasing at village level which were helpful for farmers.
- KVK progressive farmer Mr. Santosh Vishnoi has cultivated vegetables, arranged the Door step delivery of Supply of Vegetables to the consumer.
- KVK progressive farmer Mr. Sharvan Vishnoi running Milk collection centre 20-22 cane milk (800-840 lit milk) per day (Skimmed whole milk), arranged the door step step delivery of supply of milk to the consumer.

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