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GAINS Phase II project under RKVY scheme

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GAINS (Generating Advances in Incomes and Nutrition through Sweetpotato) is a 3 year Project (2018-2021) supported by Government of Odisha under RKVY scheme. GAINS Project Phase II, is an extension of GAINS Phase I project implemented from 2013-2017 under RKVY scheme that had benefited large number of farmers in Odisha. GAINS Phase II will be implemented by International Potato Center (CIP), a Peru based organisation having its Liaison office in Bhubaneswar in association with Directorate of Horticulture, Government of Odisha, ICAR institutes and ICRISAT. It will be implemented in Keonjhar, Gajapati, Angul and Rayagada districts of Odisha with project cost of INR 8.46 crore over a period of 3 years.

Today a Memorandum of Agreement was signed by Dr. Bijay Ketan Upadhyaya, Director, Horticulture and Dr. Jurgen Kroschel, Country Manager, International Potato Centre at Krushi Bhawan in presence of Sri Pradeep Maharathy, Minister, Agriculture & Farmer's Empowerment, FARD, Panchayatiraj and DW.

The project envisages to intensify Orange fleshed Sweetpotato across Odisha which is naturally rich in Vitamin A apart from the traditional white and yellow fleshed sweetpotato currently available in state. It will mainly focusses on Sweetpotao production and value addition for raising incomes of poor farmers, and ensuring their food and nutritional security. GAINS Phase I received good response from farmers, for obtaining higher yields using improved variety of sweet potato, and increasing of the planting material availability from established farmer field nurseries in different operational districts of Odisha.

In order to increase market demand and to popularise the sweetpotato consumption for providing better nutrition, mostly focusing women and children, several promotional activities have been planned under this project. Sweetpotato awareness campaign to increase its utilisation is likely to spread across Odisha with nutrition messages. Taking into consideration the high nutritional value of orange fleshed swetpotato, its inclusion under school mid-day meal scheme of the state can also be considered.

To reduce cost of cultivation, GAINS project will develop a platform to introduce farm machinery like sweet potato harvesters and small scale processing machines for making value added products, especially sweetpotato chips and flour. Sweet potato processing industry could come up to cater the needs of growing food industry in the state.

Odisha occupies first place in India in respect to sweet potato production with annual average production of 4 lakhs MT in 42000 hectares of land. Today, with the signing of MoU between CIP- Peru and Director of Horticulture, the Government of Odisha aims to include another 1625 hectares of under sweet potato cultivation over a period of 3 years.

Dr. Gagan Kumar Dhal, Agriculture Production Commissioner, Dr. Sourav Garg, Principal Secretary, Agriculture and Farmer's Empowerment, Sri Bhasakr Sharma, Spl. Secretary, Agriculture & FE, Dr. Sreekant Attaluri, Project manager, CIP-Bhubaneswar were present.

Tapas Kumar Saha
Information Officer