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Tamil Nadu



Efforts on to increase cultivation of red gram

Special Correspondent

NAMAKKAL: Dismayed over the sharp fall in the cultivation of the major pulse, red gram, from 10,000 hectares to a mere 1,000 hectares in a decade, the Department of Agriculture in the district has undertaken an integrated approach to enhance the coverage of the rain-fed crop area especially the red gram from this year.

The red gram, one of the major pulses, had been an intercrop with ground nut so far in the district.

Joint Director of Agriculture (In-charge) A. Prabakaran told The Hindu that concerted efforts had been taken to increase the pulses' area under the National Agricultural Development Programme with emphasis on red gram.

The production of red gram was 15 tonnes some 10 years ago in the district, which had come down to a mere 1.5 tonnes today.

He further pointed out that farmers had discarded the pulses due to lower remuneration, absence of high yielding varieties and pod borer menace during the harvest stage.

The farms officials had taken steps to address these problems and bring back the pulses area by stocking high yielding variety (ICPL-85063) for the duration of 120 days for red gram and also integrated pest management.

Demonstrations were planned with seeds, inputs, know-how, demonstrations, bio and fertilizers, all free of cost. This he hoped would enhance the crop area to 1,000 hectares exclusively for red gram alone.

The sowing would be taken up during June and July. The district commands an area of 42,000 hectares under rain-fed conditions after the onset of South West monsoon, which covers 40 per cent of annual total rainfall of 776 mm.

While ground nut occupies 25,000 hectares, cholam and pulses cover another 10,000 hectares and 5,000 hectares respectively. But this year after the effective implementation of Task Force programmes, the district has already covered 5,000 hectares under pulses and an additional 2,000 hectares is expected to be added – possibly before July.

For sowing, 40 tonnes of certified pulses have been distributed and 10 tonnes red gram have already been stocked.

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