**Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture and Centre for Sustainable Agriculture**

**Masters Training on Sustainable Agriculture**

**Why Sustainable Agriculture?**

With more externalisation of agriculture inputs and increasing costs of the inputs, the costs of production are increasing. The economic, ecological and social crisis is taking away lakhs of lives and crores of livelihoods from the rural areas.

As per the National Crime Records Bureau, from 1995 to 2013, 2,96,496 farmers have committed suicides and suicides in rural areas are continuing. Many of the initiatives by the government in the last decade had made very little impact. In addition, the ongoing global food crisis has shattered the myths of industrial agriculture as a hope for future of the human food security. On the other hand, research studies by various institutions reveal that more and more toxic residues are found on the food items that are available in the markets.

In this background, sustainable models of agriculture which are based on sound ecological principles making effective use of local resources and natural processes are gaining importance. Across the Indian states, lakhs of farmers are now switching over to adopt these agro-ecological practices to sustain their livelihoods. These initiatives are called variously as ecological farming, natural farming or organic farming based on the main focus, philosophies, clients and the driving forces.

**Characterising the new revolution:** The main objective of this new ecological revolution is internalising the inputs and is based on principles of the ecological farming viz., a) locally adopted cropping systems, b) based on crop and genetic diversity, c) locally adopted seed, d) improving soil and crop ecology to have ecological balance of insects and microbes, e) effective use of local knowledge, skills and resources.

These models evolved over a period by reinterpreting the traditional farming knowledge with modern scientific learning and contemporary innovations. This is not just romanticisation of the past practices, as many sceptics argue.

Similarly the new generation Cooperative Movement have broken the traditional institutional, social and economic barriers forming new Community Based Organisations (Women Self Help Groups and their Federations, Producer Cooperatives, Common Interest Groups etc) which seek to empower the community to have more direct access and control over the resources.

The emerging experiences show that the ecological farming models can be effectively scaled up through the CBO platforms. All this calls for a paradigm shift in the policy framework which supports sustainable models of agriculture. Against this backdrop **Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA)** and **Centre for Sustainable Agriculture** **(CSA)** are organising season long training course on Sustainable Agriculture.

**How the course would be organised?**

The course is designed for development professionals working to promote ecological farming/ organic farming/sustainable agriculture.

The training course would be a season long course with two short term contact classes 5 days each, and a monthly review online (phone or video depending on their access). The participants who are nominated should continue for the entire season and attend both the contact classes and attend the review regularly.

The course is designed in a way to give initial orientation to understand and practice sustainable agriculture and skills in making various preparations. The participants are expected to organise weekly farmer field schools in the villages they are working and every month share the experiences during the review. The course material would in Hindi/English would be given in the initial session itself. The course coordinator would be available on phone for any clarifications during the season. At the end of the season again the participants would be trained after reviewing their learning so that they can work with farmers effectively.

**Who can participate?**

The course is open for members of Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture. The members and Member organisations can send in their nominations in the enclosed format. The decision of the organisers is final in selecting the candidates.

Nominations are requested from the partner organisations in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh states. From each state there will be 5 (five) participants thus making the total number to 30. The same sets of participants have to attend the second training too. No changes in the nominations are entertained. At least 50% of the participants would be women so we encourage you to nominate more women.

Travel will be reimbursed (per person not more than Rs.2400/- to and fro)

All the other expenses during training including the resource material would be borne by the organisers.

**Schedule**

**1st session:** 18th to 22nd November, 2014, Hyderabad

Monthly reviews: every third Saturday 3-4 pm. (online <http://www.krishi.tv>)

2nd Session: 17th to 21st February, 2015, (venue would be Hyderabad or Wardha-need to finalise)

**Medium:** The entire course would be in English/Hindi. Translation arrangements would be there for telugu.

18th Nov 2014 – 22nd Nov 2014.

The course broadly covers:

* Understanding cropping systems and planning at the village level
* Understanding of Pests & Diseases and management through Farmer Field School approach.
* Understanding of Soil Fertility Management.
* Understanding of Seeds Management.
* Importance of Institutions / Institutional building.
* Learning various preparations.

The participants will visit the field – do the FFS, observe various preparations.

The training would be in the form of lectures, discussions, interactions and field visit.

Send your nominations to:

**Mr. G. Chandrasekhar**

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Email: training@csa-india.org

Last date: 10th November, 2014

Centre for Sustainable Agriculture

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