

Press Release

Farmer Field Day: Improved crop residue management

25 Feb 2019, Ludhiana: The Confederation of Indian Industry organized a farmer field day to interact and discuss on crop residue management in Govindgarh village in Raikot, Ludhiana, Punjab. Over 100 farmers from this village came together and collectively enabled 1100 acres of land to become crop residue burning free in the ongoing cropping season. Govindgarh is one of the 11 villages in Ludhiana district where CII ensured improved crop residue management. The project was implemented by CII Foundation in partnership with the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) and Department of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Government of Punjab; with field support from 3 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and GBDSGNS Foundation; and financial support from ONGC, Renew Power and Cummins.

Representatives from CII, ONGC, PAU, Punjab Agricultural Department and district officials addressed the farmers and visited farm fields where *in situ* machines like Happy Seeder, Rotavator, Mulcher, etc. were used to enable zero stubble burning. The farmers shared their experiences, which included advantages of not burning crop residues like reduction in input cost like weedicide application, sowing and irrigation.

“When CII came to us and sought ONGC’s support towards initiating the project, we gladly agreed to support the cause. We are delighted that our support has enabled farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices.” Mr Mahendra Singh Kushwaha, General Manager, HR, ONGC

Appreciating the initiative, Dr Baldev Singh, District Agricultural Officer, Ludhiana said “Farmers from other villages must meet the farmers from Govindgarh and see how the use of Happy Seeder and other machines has improved sowing experience and reduced the cost for farmers.”

Dr DS Bhatti, Additional Director- Extension Education, PAU said “Tonnes of crop residue burning every year, badly affects the air quality in Punjab and nearby states. We have observed in numerous surveys and research that stubble burning impacts the soil health and gravely reduces its nutrients.” He further urged the farmers to continue the sustainability and ensure non-burning of stubble in the coming years as well.

“Last year, I adopted no burning in 70 acres of land (16 acres own land and rest on lease) in Govindgarh and Rajgarh villages. This was especially cost effective as the machine was provided by the FPOs at a much cheaper cost. There was also a reduction in the cost of weedicide and diesel.” Darshan Singh, farmer from Rajgarh village in Raikot, Ludhiana.

“This year I had sowed using Happy Seeder in 6 acres of land. The crop so far looks healthy and I look forward to good yield this year.” Jagga Singh from Jalaldiwal village in Raikot, Ludhiana.

“When we initiated the project with CII, everyone said that this can’t be done as the farmers won’t agree. This project is successful today, because all stakeholders, especially farmers stood together and pledged for zero stubble burning.” Dr Harmender Singh Sidhu, Director, GBDSGNS Foundation.

In Punjab, CII has been engaging with over 3000 farmers in 19 villages covering 16000 acres of land in Ludhiana and Patiala to enable improved crop residue management. The outcome of the project has been very encouraging as more than 80% farmers adopted *in situ* technology and 12000 acres of land became stubble burning free.