

7th National Agronomists' Workshop

Day 1 (inaugural session): 1st session (Chaitra 14, 2067, 28 March 2011)

- Master of ceremony (MC): Madan Thapa, General Secretary, ASoN
- Chairperson: Dr. Mina Nath Paudel, President, ASoN
- Chief Guest: Dr. Bhartendu Mishra, Executive Director (ED), Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC)
- Special Guest: Dr. Bishnu Datta Awasthi, Deputy Director General (DDG), Technology Transfer, Department of Agriculture (DoA)
- Welcome and objective of the workshop: Dr. Suroj Pokhrel, Chief, CDD, DoA
- Inauguration of the workshop: Dr. B Mishra, Chief, Guest
- Keynote address
- Few words
- Vote of thanks
- Chairperson's remark

With permission of chairperson Mr. Madan Thapa, started the program requested to take seat in the dais by the dignitaries and to all participants wherever they are seated. Moment after this the workshop was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Dr. Mishra by pulling string of the banner of the 7th National Agronomists' Workshop 2011. It was followed by a brief introduction of participants that started from the MC.

Welcome and objective of the workshop: Dr. Suroj Pokhrel

Dr. Pokhrel welcomed all the participants who attended the workshop especially the chief guest, DDG, Senior Scientists, Division Chiefs, Directors, Program Directors, DADOs, Seed Technologists, representatives of SEAN, SQCC, DoA, NARC, LIBIRD, FORWARD, former ASoN executive members, and all the guest and invitees. He explained the objectives of the workshop as:

- To present technical papers related to the agronomic works done across the country
- To publish those articles in the first Agronomy journal of Nepal and
- To make policy relate recommendation by the workshop to solve food security problems in the country.

Few words

Dr. BD Awasthi, DDG (Technology Transfer), DoA

Dr Awasthi started his saying by citing the case of rice sterility in far western region where World Food Program (WFP) had distributed rice to farmers for general cultivation. Agriculturists are blamed for jobs they are not held responsible in such cases. Farmers of

that region were unable to claim for compensation mainly due to their inability to come to Kathmandu. They are so desperate that they had hardly anything to eat for their rice crop failed completely in areas where WFP should be made accountable for creating the problem. During the past agriculture has made some tremendous progress in the field of vegetable production especially off season production. There are problems in agriculture but we are giving all of such problem brought about due to climate change and it has become a penance to cure all ills. He stressed that Agronomy is very important just like a mother who takes care of her children and so is the Agronomy which nourishes all the disciplines of agriculture. There is a need to develop related science to develop agriculture. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MoAC) should take technology generated by Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC). MoAC and NARC should work hands in hands to foster agriculture as a whole. There should be strong collaboration between NARC and DoA and other organization do not help agriculture but it is we who should help each other to work for agriculture. He also gave emphasis that technology could be brought from neighboring countries provided they are validated by NARC. He was pleased by the proposition of Dr. MN Paudel who in his key note address to 7th Workshop of the ASoN, proposed to assign two agriculture officers in each VDC to address food insecurity in the country.

Rajman Prasad Chaudhary, Adviser, ASoN

Mr. Chaudhary started his deliberation by saying that even though he is retired but not tired and viewed that he could be the senior most agronomists in the workshop. He was happy because he is the member of the mother of all the agriculture sciences, the Agronomy. He emphasized that during his career as an agronomist in the field of research and extension; he had a deep respect for them as institutes involved for technology generation and dissemination, respectively. He went on saying that this year budget of NARC has been increased almost by the double of the previous year but NARC was constrained by budget in the past mainly because of inefficiency of secretary to MoAC particularly from secretaries having background of agriculture. He elaborated that history will judge the performance of agriculture secretary with background of agriculture during their tenure for agriculture research was suffered heavily due to their negative biasness towards NARC. The ultimate result is that Nepalese agriculture has been suffering bitterly and he was particular to an agronomist who was secretary to the MoAC, during his tenure, agriculture in general and NARC in particular suffered severely and this tendency of neglecting NARC from MoAC has still been continuing. He toned that the negative tendency of secretary having agriculture background is very misfortunate to agriculture research of Nepal. However, he advised to the ministry that until and unless agriculture research is not given due consideration and priority agriculture development cannot be geared up in Nepal to meet the present challenge of food insecurity. He was especially thankful to Dr. Paudel who in his key note address highlighted overall scenario of agriculture in Nepal with respect to budget priority of the government to agriculture R&D. Mr Chaudhary was critical about the progress made in

Indian agriculture during 70's when Dr. Swaminathan led the Green Revolution whereas in Nepal NARC is down looked by the MoAC and ED of NARC is unnecessarily troubled by ministry. He pointed out that this could be one of the reasons why agriculture in Nepal is becoming hopeless day by day. At the end, he opined that until and unless government of Nepal does not give emphasis on technology generation there is hardly any message to deliver to the clients by the extension. Finally, he was thankful to the organizing committee for giving him to express his ideas among agronomists.

Govinda Prasad Pandey, Member ASoN and Former Secretary MoAC

Mr. Pandey thanked ASoN for publishing the first volume of the Agronomy Journal of Nepal. He was not in favor of blaming to anybody because there are new ministers in MoAC whereas secretary is permanent and during his tenure as a secretary he did his best in his capacity. He was quite frank to express that there is an anti lobby of NARC in the ministry and this could have resulted negative consequences to NARC. He was in view of reevaluating the jobs carried out by I/NGOs for farmers and agriculturists have been suffering much by their deeds such as in far western region there was sterility in rice varieties distributed by WFP in 2010 rice growing season as a result farmers of that region suffered heavily. He was sorry about NARC because he could not do anything to develop research infrastructure during his tenure as the secretary in the ministry. He was not in a position to say that there is no work of extension rather he emphasized that there should be much work assigned to extension as well. He advised that agriculturists should shun politicizations and low morale of agriculturists should be boosted up. He wished that he was in the periphery of DoA and even after his death he will roam out DoA as a ghost for he loves agriculture so much. At the end he thanked ASoN for performing wonderful job and giving him this opportunity to share his feeling among participants.

Dr. Bhartendu Mishra, Member ASoN and ED, NARC

Dr. Mishra was grateful to ASoN for giving him this opportunity to say something being an agronomist. He cited examples of senior agronomists like late NB Basnet, Dr. BB Shahi, Mr. AN Bhattarai, Mr. GR Rajbhandari, and Mr. RM Chaudhary whose contribution to develop agronomy and bring it in present form. He was proud to be an agronomist as well. Those senior agronomists were farm managers and their role as a manager of the farm was quite remarkable in the past. It shows that agronomists are capable of doing their jobs as agriculturists in holistic ways. He also remembered late Noble Laurate NE Borlaug who told that variety as the engine and fertilizer as the fuel of agriculture system as a whole. He opined that NARC was not able to accomplish its role effectively mainly in the past due to many constraints such as logistic, manpower and political instability in the country. To serve farmers R&E should work jointly. He recalled that due to hard work of agriculturists during mid 1980's when the relation of Nepal with India was not good even then there was enough food for Nepalese. He remembered that during 1970's Nepal used to export food to

Bihar and UP but the situation is reverse now. His saying was that because of low priority to agriculture given by the government and the donors in the past the result is food insecurity in the country now. The senior agronomist like Mr. AN Bhattari used to go to the field and collect data himself whereas now what we agronomists are doing? He questioned to agronomists that are we following the disciplines set by our seniors? This is the time to evaluate ourselves. He further remind that in the past departments (DoA and DLS) used to blame NARC in Regional Agricultural Technical Working Group (RATWG) seminars when NARC alone used to conduct RATWGs but now these departments are also conducting RATWGs mandatorily and it is the time for you as to which of these institutions are performing their duties honestly. He internalized that ASoN should come more vigorously and it should guide all the other professional societies. He ended his deliberation by congratulating ASoN for publishing the first volume of the Agronomy Journal of Nepal.

Vote of thank by Niru Dahal Pandey, Vice President, ASoN

Ms. Niru thanked Dr. B Mishra, ED, NARC for inaugurating 7th ASoN workshop and deliberating few words despite his not being physically well. She also thanked senior agronomists who accepted ASoN's invitation in a short notice for actively participating in the workshop as well as giving their valuable suggestion to improve ASoN in coming days. She was especially thankful to all who are present in workshop and without their active participation the workshop would not have been a successful one. At the end she thanked all who are present in the workshop.

Closing remarks by the Chairperson Dr. MN Paudel

Dr. Paudel was grateful to Dr. B Mishra, ED of NARC, Dr. Awasthi, DDG of DoA, Mr. RMP Chaudhary, Adviser, ASoN, and senior agronomists Messrs GP Pandey, NP Adhikari, BMS Basnet and all fellow agronomists for their sincere participation in the workshop. He promised to document all the concerns expressed by agronomists of the 7th ASoN workshop in the forth coming issues of the 2nd volume of the Agronomy Journal of Nepal. At the same time, he highlighted the important accomplishments done by ASoN in last year. These accomplishments were as follow:

ASoN's achievements (2009/10 – 2010/11)

- Email of agronomists in the google group: agronomists@googlegroups.com
- Agron JN Vol.1 Published
- Website of ASoN [http:// www. Ason.org.np](http://www.Ason.org.np) launched and Agron JN and brief statute (*Bidhan*) of ASoN uploaded in the web site
- ASoN became member of Nepal Agriculture Federation(NAF)
- Established ASoN office in Agronomy Division, Khumaltar, Lalitpur
- Agron JN sold and some funds has been raised
- Life member and General members of ASoN kept on increasing

Finally Dr. Paudel expressed his gratitude to all participants for their concerns to make ASoN a truly professional society thereby helping food and seed security in Nepal as envisaged a mission by the 7th ASoN workshop. He then declared the inaugural session of the 7th ASoN workshop closed until commencement of second session in the afternoon.

Day 1 (technical session): 2nd session (Chaitra 14, 2067, 28 March 2011)

MC: Mr. Bimal Thapa, ASoN member

Chairperson: Mr. Rajman Prasad Chaudhary, Adviser, ASoN

In the second session all together five technical papers were presented by the scientists. There were presentations of technical papers by researchers involved in different filed pertaining to the agronomy and related disciplines. Papers were related to milling recovery of quality of different varieties of rice in varying degree of polishing under Khumaltar condition, effect of human urine as fertilizer on crop production, study of upland rice genotypes for Bhajhang district, economy of potato production in Taplejung district, and variation of Nepalese foxtail millet genotypes. After presentation, there was discussion about those presentations. In the discussions all presenters tried to satisfy the queries raised by the participants. It was also agreed that the presenters would incorporate the comments and suggestion given by participants before the articles are finally submitted to the reviewers of the Agronomy journal of Nepal.

Chairperson's remark

Mr. chaudhary was happy to chair the second session of the first day. He opined that papers presented in the sessions were very useful to address food and feed security in Nepal so far as agronomists are concerned. He urged scientists to work inherently for the benefit of farmers and the country and do not go for whims such as creating red rice instead of white rice for rice to us is white and not red as that proposed by non-rice eaters. He also cautioned agronomists that farmers are milling their rice in exchange of bran and if we want to eat rice having bran intact there is already the cost incurred for milling rice. He further stressed that we are a democratic society and one cannot impose his idea even if they are beneficial, hence we should develop technologies that are palatable to society where we are one of the members. There is still a tendency to discriminate those who are actually working in the field of agriculture especially farmers; however we agronomists should respects farmers who are working in the field throughout their life. He even cited an example of almost two decade back when he was in Jumla he did not get a chance to taste poroso-millet (*chino*) now he is happy that there are research article in chino as well. Food habits are determined by the society and culture. He then declared closing of the session until for tomorrow.

Day 2 (Technical Session): 1st session (Chaitra 15, 2067, 29 March 2011)

MC: Mr. Madan Thapa, General Secretary, ASoN

Chairperson: Mr. Bhola Man Singh Basnet, Member, ASoN

This was also a technical session and there were six technical papers presented by the scientists working in agronomy and related disciplines. Papers such as study on biology, cover mulch and herbicides on winter annuals at Khumaltar condition, quality analysis of marketed seeds in Nepal, prospects and constraints of rice seed supply systems in Nepal, performance of hybrid maize in Chitwan, response of mulch, variety, and potash level in maize, and climate resilient and stability analysis for grain yield of mid hill rice genotypes had been presented by the concerned workers. After presentation of those papers the floor was opened for discussion.

In the discussion, there was a sharp response to the hybrid maize study at Rampur. The objections were particularly concentrated as to how the sole authorship was put for the paper despite the fact that the study was conducted at the National Maize Research Program, Rampur in collaboration between NARC and DoA. There are still issues pertaining to hybrid varieties of crops in general and maize in special that how hybrids should be treated fairly so that growers are not in a loss as in the last year when government of Nepal paid a compensation of NRs. 200 millions to hybrid maize growers in central terai districts of Nepal due to infertility of hybrid maize. The chief of seed quality control centre (SQCC), MoAC objected that until and unless entry of hybrid seeds is not done as per the seed law data presented in the workshop are still questionable and it is very risky to evaluate performance of these hybrid on the basis of one year data. Therefore, the house decided to drop this paper and it should not be included in the Agronomy Journal for publication. Similarly, there was a concern about technical report presented on the basis of one year data. The house came to conclusion that one year data can be presented according to the guidelines of Agron JN, however the responsibility lies solely within the jurisdiction of editorial committee what types of research article are to be included in the journal. Likewise, all presenters should take note of comments/suggestion given by the participants for papers to be included in the forth coming issue of the journal.

Chairperson's remark

Mr. Basnet expressed his remarks that there were six technical papers presented in the workshop which were worth discussion. He stressed that direct seeded rice (DSR) and transplanted rice (TR) do not have yield difference provided due agronomic practices are followed. He was stressing importance of DSR to address labor shortage during rice harvesting and wheat sowing. When DSR is followed there is adequate time for wheat showing and it also addresses climate change issues when there is no timely rainfall DSR should be a practice. His point was there for a massive scale up of technology and there should be a provision of media approach to disseminate recommended technologies as there

are many prints and electronic media across the country. Therefore these should be tapped as tools for technology dissemination. He gave some of the pertinent example of improved varieties of cereal that are being grown across the country where there is the road accessible and the credit goes specially for improved seed which is a composite of the complete package of practices. Those varieties were being popular because of minikits distributed by the crop commodity programs in the past when NARC and DoA were not separated. His view was that intervention through improved seed should be a principle for addressing food security issue in the food deficit regions. Instead of maize mission there should be rice mission because rice is the number one crop of the country. His observation was that NARC is technically more competitive and expertise of NARC should be fully utilized by the government of Nepal. He advised to the MoAC that there should be the national food security mission involving experts of the concerned fields to address food security issue. He was thankful to ASoN for giving this opportunity and wished that ASoN recommendation would be followed by the authority concerned. He declared the session closed until the second session starts in the afternoon.

Day 2 (Group Recommendation) : 2nd session (Chaitra 15, 2067, 29 March 2011)

Chairperson: Mr. SL Shresths, Former President, ASoN

MC: Mr. Madan Thapa, General Secretary, ASoN

This was the discussion session about the technical papers presented in the 7th ASoN workshop. This session also has got mandate of formulating group recommendation of the workshop.

The group came up with following recommendations from the 7th ASoN workshop which were as follow:

- Food security could be obtained through seed security. Therefore utmost attention should be given to seed security of staple crops for attaining food security.
- There should be a provision of two agriculture officers (crop and animal science) based in each village development committees (VDCs) across the country thereby giving full attention for household level food and nutritional security.
- At least one agronomist should be immediately posted in all the 75 districts to address regional and local level food security concern.
- Agriculture should be policy issues of the government and it should provide functional priority to agriculture because lip service of priority to it does not yield result oriented impact to boost production and productivity of agriculture commodities.
- Food is basic human rights and government should take responsibility to provide healthy and nutritious food to the people.

- While importing seeds the importers should be made accountable for quality and adoption of the imported seed in question. At the same time, there should be provision of crop insurance for failure of crops.
- In district level, at least there should be 10% budget allocation for agriculture to effectively implement devolution program of the government.
- Due to arbitrarily plotting of agriculture land for housing Nepal would soon face chronic food deficiency. To check such embarrassment in agriculture land, a proper land classification system should be immediately imposed by the government and check conversion of agriculture land into housing and nonproductive sectors.
- To check erosion of local germplasm, farmers' seed bank should come into effect in important agro-ecological niches.
- Strong research policy should be implemented to develop hybrid crops by research because farmers are growing hybrid of many crops imported from unknown sources which are menace to them.
- Potato should be included as staple crop to reduce food insecurity.
 - Establishment of at least one agriculture university in each development region to address location and site specific problems. University curriculum should be based on Nepalese agriculture perspective at least for academic research studies.
 - Compulsory curriculum of agriculture in high school level.

Few words

Mr. DR Bhandari, Chief, Seed Quality Control Centre, MoAC

Mr. Bhandari was critical about maintaining seed quality and availability by strictly following seed law. He was in favor of seed production by big projects involving I/NGOs and public institutions thereby seed increment and quality maintenance could be achieved to the national requirement. His capacity as the member secretary of National Seed Board he was in line with maintaining seed quality and standard in the country. Nepal is importing seed of worth of about NRs 4000-5000 million annually. His concern was that NARC should come up with detailed of foundation seed and should work seriously only then can certified seed production be done by the extension agencies otherwise dependency on seed importation keeps on increasing. To achieve this target there should be clear policy of foundation seed and nuclear seed production. He observed that seed replacement rate (SRR) at present in Nepal is around 9% and if we can increase SRR up to 20% food security could be achieved. He was sure of success of seed business in Nepal. Finally he thanked ASoN for giving this opportunity.

Mr. DD Baral, Chief, National Spices Development Program, DoA, Khumaltar

Mr. Baral was worried in the sense that in the name of development there is no development of seed industry in Nepal. Government should assist seed business to sustain food security in the country. Extension workers were benefited from the ASoN workshop and it is very

good forum for field agronomists to refresh current advances in agronomy. ASoN is a professional organization and policy makers in the country do not listen to the recommendation of ASoN for it cannot give hard pressure to the government like other trade unions. He cited an example of agronomists during his visit to Europe that they were considered leader of agriculture encompassing all the husbandry practices of crops such as staples, vegetables, horticulture, plantation crops, and all the field crops as well. He was sorry about to hear whether potato belongs to agronomic or horticulture crop in Nepal. And he urged all the concerns to understand the meaning of agronomist in Nepalese perspective. He recalled an experience with Japanese who came to Nepal and told “*Nato Nato*” meaning talking only doing nothing. Therefore, we agronomists should be action oriented not the talk oriented as experienced by the Japanese. He was appreciative of ASoN for giving this opportunity to share with fellow workers.

Vote of thank by Dr. MN Paudel, President, ASON

Dr. Paudel was thankful to Dr. B Mishra, ED, NARC for accepting to come to the workshop and inaugurate the workshop. He also thanked Training Centre of DoA for providing training hall and logistic for the workshop. He was very much indebted to Dr. S Pokhrel, Program Director of Crop Development Directorate (CDD) and all his staff especially Ms Niru Dahal Pandey for agreeing to host ASoN workshop jointly. He was also thankful to senior agronomists, DDGs of DoA, Directors, Program Directors, Division Chiefs, senior scientists, DADOs, fellow agronomists from different institutions, participating scientists, executive members and participants of ASoN, and all invitees of the workshop. His special thanks go to support staff of CDD for serving snack and tea. He also thanked senior agronomists who accepted ASoN’s invitation in a short notice and for actively participating in the workshop as well as giving their valuable suggestion to improve ASoN in coming days. He was especially thankful to all who are present in workshop and without their active participation the workshop would not have been a successful one.

Closing remarks by the chairperson

Mr. SL Shrestha was grateful to ASoN for giving the opportunity to chair the closing session of the 7th ASoN workshop. He came to participate in the workshop despite his busy schedule for he was the founder president of ASoN. There should be still more participation of agronomists because it a forum for sharing ideas among professionals. He was specially obliged to the executive committee of ASoN for being able to publish the first volume of the agronomy journal of Nepal which is a great achievement of the society. He was particularly worried during his tenure because despite their sincere efforts they could not come up with some concrete results of the ASoN. This society is group of wise scientists and it should lead all other professional societies of agriculture related disciplines. He wished all the best of the society in coming days. Lastly he declared closing of the 7th ASoN and wished good luck to all.