

Constraints and Suggestions of the Banana Growers in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh

Key words : Constraints

Andhra Pradesh is one of the major states growing Banana. Banana cultivation is prominent in Guntur district. In spite of fertile soil and adequate irrigation water available in some areas are growing more under Banana cultivation. However, farmers from this area do not follow package of practices for cultivation of Banana. Therefore, this particular study has been planned to know the constraints behind non adoption of improved package of practices.

The study was conducted in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh through ex-post facto research design. Kollur, Kollipara and Bhattiprolu mandals were selected purposively based maximum area of Banana cultivation. A total of 120 Banana growers were selected through proportionate random sampling method. Collected data was analysed by using suitable statistical tools and necessary inferences were drawn.

Recommended suckers per acre

Lack of knowledge (71.67%) and lack of technical guidance (28.33%) were the major constraints identified in this group. Hence the extension personnel had to educate the farmers about the importance of recommended suckers per acre and provide timely technical guidance (47.50%) for adoption of recommended practices in Banana crop.

Selection of sucker and sucker treatment with chemicals

Lack of knowledge (80.83%), high cost involved (52.50%) and lack of awareness of practices (10.00%) were the major constraints identified in this group. So sufficient technical staff is needed to guide the farmers at the field level. At the same time, steps should be taken by the government for providing suckers and chemicals on subsidized rates.

Planting of suckers as per the recommendation

Lack of knowledge (35.83%), high cost involved (27.50%) and lack of awareness (15.00%) of the practice were the major constraints identified in this group. Hence, the extension functionaries have to educate the farmers about the package of practices of Banana through training programmes

and various extension activities such as group discussions *etc.*

Farm yard manure (FYM) and fertilizer management

Lack of knowledge on fertilizer recommendations(93.33%), non availability of FYM and fertilizers(81.66%), high cost of fertilizers(61.66%), lack of technical guidance(39.16%) and lack of money at the time of fertilizer application(35.00%) were the major constraints in that group. Steps should be taken by the government to provide sufficient farm yard manure and fertilizers on subsidized rates, timely credit support through banks (40.00%) and posting of sufficient technical staff needed to guide the Banana farmers at field level.

Weed control with Herbicides

The important constraints of this group reported by the farmers in order of their importance were labour problem (69.16%), high cost involved (52.50%), ineffectiveness of chemical weeding (35.00%) and lack of knowledge (30.83%). Steps should be taken by the government to supply the herbicides at an affordable cost and alternative means of weed control.

Plant protection measures

Lack of knowledge in identification of symptoms of pests and diseases (62.50%), high cost of chemicals (61.66%), lack of knowledge in application of chemicals (29.16%), no faith in recommendation (20.00%) and lack of technical guidance (10.83%) were the major constraints identified in this group. Training is necessary to the farmers for adoption of innovations. Hence, there is a need for providing training to the farmers on large scale. At the same time, sufficient technical staff needs to be posted to guide the farmers at field level. Steps should be taken by the government to provide sufficient, timely and easily available plant protection chemicals to needy Banana farmers through cooperative societies since, availability of inputs is a critical factor for adoption.

Desuckering method

Labour problem for timely operation (65.83%) and lack of knowledge about desuckering method (11.66%) were the major constraints identified in this group. By the extension personnel, method demonstrations are to be conducted to educate farmers about desuckering method and labour efficiency *etc.*

Intercropping system

High cost involved (51.66%), lack of knowledge (26.66%) and lack of technical guidance (17.50%) were the major constraints identified in this group. To tackle this problem, credit support through government agencies, exposure visits to research stations are to be taken up by the Department of Horticulture and to educate the farmers about the intercropping system.

Use micronutrients

High cost involvement (46.66%), lack of knowledge (24.16%) and lack of awareness of practice (12.50%) were the major constraints identified in this group. The State Department of Agriculture may provide the micronutrients on subsidized rates and laid out the demonstration plots in farmer's fields.

Harvesting of the crop

Labour problem (64.16%) and lack of knowledge about *symptoms* of harvesting (30.83%) were the major constraints identified in this group. Steps need to be taken by the Agricultural University and Department of Agriculture to introduce mechanization in Banana and also to train the farmers on *symptoms* of harvesting through training programmes.

Practice wise Constrains faced by the farmers in Banana cultivation

Marketing

High transport cost (77.50%), lack of support price to quality of produce (67.50%), lack of technical guidance (55.83%) and lack of knowledge (24.16%) were the major constraints identified in this group. The government of Andhra Pradesh should formulate new technology frame work for providing remunerative price. The Department of Agriculture and Department of Marketing and Co-operation shall have to improve the knowledge and create better facilities for the benefit of farmers.

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Post harvest technology

Lack of knowledge on value added products (87.50%), lack of awareness of ripening practices (68.33%) and lack of knowledge about packaging practices (47.50%) were the major constraints identified in this group. Therefore, efforts should be made to educate the Banana farmers on these aspects through training programmes. These findings were in conformity with the findings of Walke *et.al.* (1999).

Suggestions given by the farmers for better adoption of recommended practices

Suggestions made by the farmers to overcome constraints as order of their importance in Banana cultivation were provision of support price to quality produce(95.83%), provision of fertilizers and chemicals on subsidized rates(93.33%), provision of good transport facilities(81.66%), providing good quality suckers at cheaper rate(77.50%), developing standardized control measures for the pests and diseases(71.66%), release of virus resistant varieties(51.66%), timely technical guidance and soil testing(47.50%), provision of timely credit facilities(40.00%), improving crop insurance facility(35.00%) and provision of pump sets at subsidy rates(32.50%). Similar observations reported by Kulkarni *et.al.* (1998).

Thus the responsibility of Department of Agriculture and Department of Horticulture at state and central level are to see that the above suggested facilities are provided to the Banana farmers to overcome the constraints in adoption of recommended practices in Banana cultivation, so as to make better living.

LITERAURECITED

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