



RAITA TEERPU

[Farmers' Verdict]

Between December 1st and 3rd, thirty of us, farmers and farm labour, women and men, gathered as a jury of farmers at the Fireflies Intercultural Centre near Bengalooru and heard the depositions on agricultural research from a panel of expert witnesses working in various sectors of agricultural research, governance, academia, farmer movements, pastoralism and consumer groups. Having heard these witnesses, we have strongly felt that there is a need for a fundamental shift in agricultural research keeping in view the interests of small and marginal farmers, women farmers and farm labour in this country. In this context, on this day, December 5, 2009, we are placing this Verdict in front of the government, policy makers, universities, agricultural scientists and all those who are interested and responsible for the future of the farmers of this country.

1. Today the farmers in this country are unable to return to traditional farming nor can they pursue expensive modern farming practices. At this critical juncture there is a great need for pro- farmer agricultural research.
2. Government must seriously recognise farmer innovations, respect such innovators and suitably compensate them just the way they compensate scientists in the formal institutions. Such innovations must get sufficient publicity.
3. We don't want research in hybrid crops which demand repeated purchase of expensive and chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Instead we demand research on local landraces that are adaptable to their ecosystems, are drought resistant, provide quality and tasty food and fodder and can be produced by the farmers themselves.
4. Information on agricultural research done in public private partnership must be transparent and accessible to farmers
5. Agricultural universities and other public sector research institutions must make farming men and women partners in their research and offer an equal share of the profits resulting out of this research to farmers.
6. When private/multinational corporations conduct farm trials on the fields of their own or on farmers fields the effects of these trials on farmers' health, the changes in the soil and the impact on the surrounding environment must be monitored by citizen groups that include farmers. This information should be made known every year to the farming community through the media and Gram Sabhas. If there are negative consequences [resulting from such trials] the companies/corporations must be held responsible and accountable for those consequences.
7. Farmer Field Days and Farmer Field Schools conducted on various crops must be held under the jurisdiction of all Gram Panchayats [Village Council] all over the state.
8. Information related to agricultural technology and research must be in simple local languages and must be accessible to farmers.
9. We feel that sufficient research on sugar cane which is an important crop in Karnataka. Therefore there is an urgent need to set up a research centre to research improvement of sugarcane and its cultivation.
10. Weather based crop insurance schemes must be abolished and every farm must be made a unit for the assessment of losses and the resultant compensation.





11. In order to make available soil and water testing facilities to farmers, Mobile Soil Testing Laboratories must be set up by the government.
12. There must be scientific system to predict reliable information on the possible rainfall or the absence of it, excess or deficient rainfall. This information must be accessible for farmers
13. In partnership with the farming community, government must establish at every Hobli level cottage industries for processing of agricultural produce and value addition to them. Such cottage industries must be related to the local crop produce and must be funded by the government
14. Seed Banks of local seed varieties must be established at the level of every Gram Panchayat [Village Council]. Seed distribution, seed festivals, Field trials and seed improvement programmes must be through them with government support.
15. We oppose anti farmer seed laws
16. In view of the fact that farmers constitute 70% of the population of this country and that farming sector makes a very important contribution to the economic system of this country, the state and central governments must have a special Agricultural Budget
17. The pastures and tanks which were reserved for the grazing of cattle and sheep have disappeared. They must be renewed and made available to the community.
18. In order to educate the younger generation on agriculture and to help them develop interest in this sector, agriculture must be incorporated in the school syllabi.
19. Stop grabbling land from farmers in the name of development and Special Economic Zones.
20. Forest Department must stop free distribution of saplings such as Acacia and Eucalyptus to farmers. Instead of planting such species which harm the environment and result in the depletion of ground water levels as mono cultures, the Department must plant diverse species that protect land and water and are needed by animals, birds and human beings.
21. Small farmers, farm labour, artisanal communities such as carpenters and potters who produce farm related implements must be taken into partnership in the formulation of agricultural policies that are location specific.
22. Shepherds and pastoralists must be a part of the Karnataka Sheep Development Board and must play a role in the formulation of related policies.

Members of the Jury committee :

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| 1. Ajjamma B. Illeppanavar | 9. Hombiah | 18. Maruthi T. Kamble |
| 2. Chittappa S. Guddagollarahalli | 10. Hoysala S. Appaji | 19. Maruthi Ningappa Hosmani |
| 3. Chikkabore Gowda | 11. Jayatanubi Peersab Nadaph | 20. Muniamma E. Varadayya |
| 4. Eraiah Killedar | 12. Kallavva Malleshappa Haklad | 21. Rudrappa M. Zulapi |
| 5. Gangamma Puttarsaiah | 13. Lalitha G. Bhat | 22. Sadashivappa |
| 6. Gurulingayya S.M. | 14. Laxamma N. Doddaballapur | 23. Shantimoole M.T. |
| 7. Hachche Gowda | 15. Laxmi Siddhi | 24. Shivaganamma B. Hosamani |
| 8. Hemavva T. Lamani | 16. Laxmibai M. Kamble | 25. Shivamma R |
| | 17. Lalitavva | 26. Shobhavathi R. Tugave |
| | | 27. Siddarajappa |
| | | 28. Sumitravva K. Nayaka |
| | | 29. Syamavva Sayabanna Inachakal |
| | | 30. Talavar Ajjappa. S |

