

## Tribal farmers of Leh district of Ladakh shown keen interest in adoption of CPRI improved potato varieties

With the aim of empowering local farmers and enhancing sustainable agricultural production and income generation for the tribal farmers of Leh district, Union Territory of Ladakh, the ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Leh, Ladakh laid out Front Line Demonstration (FLD) programme of improved potato varieties, viz., *Kufri Himalini*, *Kufri Karan*, *Kufri Chandramukhi* and *Kufri Jyoti* in seven villages (Likir, Nang, Sankar, Gangles, Tukcha, Saspol and Sakti) of Leh district, Union Territory of Ladakh.



A two-days training and demonstration program was conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2024 for the tribal farmers of Lekir village, Leh, Ladakh. The programme was attended by Dr. Alok Kumar, Principal Scientist & Head, Division of Social Sciences, Dr. Salej Sood, Senior Scientist, Dr. Pynbianglang K., Scientist from ICAR-CPRI, Shimla and Dr. Kunzang Lamo, Scientist (Vegetable), Dr. Diksit Dolkar, Scientist (Fruit science) and Ms. Jigmet Laskit, Programme Assistant from KVK Leh, Ladakh. The program was attended by 50 enthusiastic tribal farmers, with a significant presence of female participants.

The programme began with an inaugural address by Dr. Kunzang Lamo, Scientist (Vegetable) who welcomed all the farmers, officials and scientists. She highlighted the importance of frontline demonstration and capacity buildings for sustainable agricultural production and income generation. This was followed by a brief speech by Dr. Alok Kumar who emphasised the use of quality seeds of improved varieties and scientific potato cultivation practices and motivated the farmers to share the seeds within the other farmers in the nearby villages. During the technical session, extension folders containing packages of potato cultivation practices in high hills were distributed to each participant. The farmers were encouraged to read the extension folders and each practice were comprehensively discussed during the session.



During the two days programme, field visits were also carried out in beneficiaries' fields at Likir village. Throughout the visits, the farmer shared several problems related to potato cultivation, while the scientists offered practical solutions. The harvesting was also carried on some fields of the beneficiaries and based on experts' evaluation, *Kufri Himalini* was found to be the best performer in the village with the yield of about 34-36t/ha, subsequently followed by *Kufri Chandramukhi* and *Kufri Karan* with the yield of about 28-30 t/ha and *Kufri Jyoti* (23-25 t/ha). The local variety yielded only about 18t/ha. The farmers were very satisfied with the yield of *Kufri Himalini* and also like its shape and a good storage life during winter months under cellars. On an average, *Kufri Himalini* generated about double income than the local variety. The performance all the demonstrated varieties has been shared with District Agriculture Department and in view of its performance and exceptional acceptance, *Kufri Himalini* is further expected to cover more area and Likir village would serve as one of potato seed villages in the coming years.