

IISR imparting training to three SRI scientists



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The Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research (IISR) is imparting training to three scientists of the Sugarcane Research Institute at Udawalwa, Sri Lanka, and it will end on December 29.

The three-member Sri Lankan delegation comprising the scientists, LMJR Wijewardana, Research Officer, Crop Resource Management, V KABM Wanasinghe, Research Officer, Crop Protection, RAPA Ranatunga, Development Officer, post-harvest technologies, are undergoing a two-week-long training programme from December 17-29, 2012, at the IISR, Lucknow.

This visit materialised because of a previous one by Minister of Minor Export Crops Promotion, Government of Sri Lanka, Reginald Cooray, and his high-level delegation to the IISR in June 2012. The minister had then closely observed the work of IISR and was impressed by the technologies developed by it. He had expressed the desire to get scientists from his country to be trained here.

High cost of production, a low yield, a low profit margin, poor technology adoption and preference for cash crops like tea, rubber etc. are some of the major problems of the Sri Lanka sugar industry due to which its sugarcane yield at 45 tonnes per hectare and the sugar recovery at 7 per cent was very low, said Dr S Solomon,

Director, IISR. These has led to an import of 95 per cent for domestic requirement of sugar in Sri Lanka from other countries and its government was trying hard to achieve this target to meet the 30 per cent domestic sugar requirement from its own production in the near future.

Dr Solomon said that there were certain areas like introduction of the high sugar variety, improved production technologies, bio-intensive management of pests and diseases, mechanisation of the sugarcane cultivation, application of GIS & GPS in sugarcane agriculture, training for human resource capacity building, water-saving sugarcane technology, intercropping with sugarcane etc where the IISR could extend help to improve the sugarcane cultivation in Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan scientists are learning modern techniques in emerging areas like diversification of sugarcane production by introducing intercrops to maximise profit from cane cultivation and plant protection measures, especially for woolly aphid which is a major problem in Sri Lanka. The training is being coordinated by Dr M Swapna, Senior Scientist at the IISR. The IISR model of Integrated Communication Strategy for sugarcane development presented by Dr AK Sah, Senior Scientist, impressed the Sri Lankan scientists and they said that this could be implemented in Sri Lanka to improve sugarcane and the sugar scenario there.