

Green Productivity for promoting sustainable agriculture

Over the past 50 years, global agricultural production has witnessed phenomenal growth averaging 2.3% per year which ensured consistent availability of food for the increasing and wealthier global population. But agricultural practices leading to production beyond the natural system's potential using synthetic inputs resulted in overexploitation of the environment and natural resources. There are increasing concerns that the agricultural production system during the next four decades may exceed the environment's carrying capacity. Therefore, there is an urgent need to identify good practices and effective policies to overcome impediments in the development of environment- and producer-friendly agrifood production systems and embrace opportunities to implement policies. Such practices and policies should aim at enabling the food and agriculture sector to ensure global/national food security in the face of increasing food demand, changing dietary preferences, and looming impact of climate change on both agriculture and the environment. The success of future agrifood production systems will be determined by high productivity coupled with good environmental performance, sustainability, and profitability for producers, contributing to the socioeconomic development of local communities in particular and nations at large. Adoption of the Green Productivity (GP) strategy could help in developing such smart agrifood production systems.

To enhance participants' understanding of the GP concepts, approaches, and technologies and to share best practices in GP in agriculture, the APO, Ministry of Jihad-e-Agriculture, and National Iranian Productivity Organization jointly held a workshop on Best Practices in Green Productivity in Agriculture in Tehran, 7–11 December 2013. Twenty-three participants from government, academia, NGOs, and NPOs of 10 member countries shared their experiences. Seven experts from Japan, the ROK, IR Iran, and India made thematic presentations. Twenty-seven local observers also attended. To observe good practices of GP in agriculture, the participants visited the Caviar Kaviar aquaculture farm and Fadak Olive Agro-industry Co. in Qom province. Both farms are situated in a desert. Fadak Olive Farm is a totally natural, chemical-free farm where agricultural resources are recycled.

After exhaustive deliberations, workshop participants formulated strategic recommendations for enhancing policy frameworks and governance systems including: vision and objectives of national GP strategy; improving natural resource management and implementation framework of GP strategy for agriculture; development, transfer, and adoption of GP technologies for sustainable and profitable farming; and capacity building and community-empowerment initiatives. 