

[Back](#)

[Other States](#) - [Puducherry](#)

MSSRF service for farmers on mobile phone

Sruthisagar Yamunan

It will roll out services in association with NABARD

Project to be a pilot programme with a timeframe of one year

Information will be disseminated in Tamil in form of text and voice messages

PUDUCHERRY: The regional centre of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), in association with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), will soon roll out advisory services through mobile phones for farmers in four commune panchayats here.

The project will be a pilot programme with a timeframe of one year starting on Thursday. The services will be provided to 150 “progressive” farmers, who have been shortlisted by the MSSRF based on their willingness and track record for adopting new technologies.

According to D.S. Girija, project associate at MSSRF Puducherry, the services, provided through the Village Resource Centre (VRC) here, would include both market information such as fertilizer prices and specific agriculture inputs with focus on paddy and sugarcane.

The information would be disseminated in Tamil in the form of text and voice messages to the farmers' mobile phones. In total, the service would cover 23 villages in Bahour, Mannadipet, Nattapakkam and Villianur commune panchayats at an initial cost of Rs.3 lakh which was sanctioned by NABARD recently.

The foundation would also set up a helpline to attend to farmers' queries in case they are not satisfied with the information provided.

Capacity-building programme

The VRC would also undertake a capacity-building programme for the fisherfolk in several coastal villages in the Puducherry region.

Under this programme, fisherwomen would be trained in making value-added products such as fish pickles and dry fish to enhance their earnings. They would also be educated about the benefits of forming into a Self Help Group.

This apart, the programme would include three other projects such as Global Positioning System (GPS) training to fishermen, which would help them in identifying Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ),

“engine repair training” that would help them cut maintenance cost of their boats and training on sea safety measures which would be imparted with the help of the Coast Guard.

This programme for the fishermen would begin after the northeast monsoon season in January.

© Copyright 2000 - 2009 The Hindu