

Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai promoting innovative tools in mass dissemination of IPM technology in different crops in Punjab

The Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Mumbai has sanctioned a project on 'Use of mKRISHI Based Agro Advisory Services in Punjab', to Reviving Green Revolution Cell to promote innovative techniques for transfer of technology on a larger scale. The RGR Cell is using mKRISHI platform (patent



technology of Tata Consultancy Services, Thane) for this. The technology provides information to farmers on mobile handsets. A large part of the information (so called Frequently Asked Questions) is already loaded in the mobile sets and the information can be seen by farmers anytime. For instant queries the farmers can raise queries in the form of text message and voice message with a facility of sending a picture of the crop



condition, pests, etc. The farmers had to supply some basic information on farm operations during the previous week before submitting a query, so that the expert can understand the situation and then suggest appropriate action. The expert advice is imparted by experts from Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana which is the third partner in

implementing the project.

To implement the project, the mobile contents of the application were finalised between the third week of June and the second week of July. The farmer's selection and training camps were organised between July 22-25, 2009 in six different districts in which representatives of RGR Cell, TCS and PAU participated. Simultaneously the 'facilitators'



training was completed by July 20-25, 2009. The service was launched on July 28, 2009 and the field officer hired under the project started interaction with farmers/facilitators for operationalisation of the project. A total of 110 farmers are being covered, who will use the application for cotton and paddy. Other 10 farmers would be selected for using service for potato crop from September. Potato farmers will use the application for paddy for the time being. At present about 75 handsets have been activated and the rest are likely to be activated by next week. Demo queries were raised during July 28-30, 2009 by selected farmers and the expert accompanying the team answered the queries



on the spot through 'Expert Console' loaded in his/her laptop. After July 30, 2009 the farmers have started using the application regularly and are now raising queries through mobile. The department of entomology, which is the key partner in the implementation of the service has provided space for the experts' sitting. It would be ensured by the department that the queries are answered during Monday

to Saturday (at least 6 days a week). The maximum time limit during which the farmers would be getting expert advice is 24 hours.