

Excerpt from Chorao Farmers Club Meeting August 2009

Club members were asked to identify the problems that they face as they carry out their agricultural work. Several points were recorded and some were discussed in detail. After recapping the “Problems “ that were recorded and the Club members identified the top three problems that they felt they should tackle through the Club.

The entire list of problems is provided below. The first three problems, marked with a star (★) are the ones that have been identified to be addressed at first in the near future.

Problems faced by the members of the Chorao Farmers Club

1. ★ **Unavailability of Farm Machinery:** Farmers felt that availability of machinery on hire like power tillers and tractors from the government department were not available when they needed it.
2. ★ **Silted ponds:** it was felt that several ponds that had been the source of water in several areas had over the years and had been well maintained in the past had now become silted as no one desilted any more. This reduced the availability of water for several members.
3. ★ **Cattle Menace:** This was cited a HUGE problem, especially during the winter months. Cattle owners from both within and outside the village let their cattle loose to go graze without anyone to monitor them. They often ended up in the field of those who planted rabi crops like vegetables, *alsane* etc... and destroyed them. Talking to cattle owners had not helped. Permanent fencing was not an appropriate solution because of the nature of the holdings (often several narrow strips were adjacent to one another). Such fencing would prevent paddy cultivation in the monsoons and would take away a significant amount of from cultivation.
4. **Late demonstration of Paddy Transplanter:** it was mentioned that this demonstration was conducted rather late in the season. Such demonstrations should be conducted earlier so that if farmers want to avail of such machinery, they have enough time to hire it out.
5. **Unavailable power connections:** Some farmers mentioned that they were unable to get power connections (to run their water pumps) because the land that they worked on belonged to some land-owner who refused to give an NOC for the power connection. (*this may be due to poor relations between the two parties concerned*). Consequently, growing winter crops became difficult, if not impossible in certain fields.
6. **Salinisation of fields during Rabi crop:** It was mentioned that several *Khazan* fields were impossible to cultivate during the winter months. The salinity levels were high and therefore nothing could be grown. This is linked mainly to the non-maintenance of bunds by the tenants association, Communitade authorities etc... There is a fear that

- over time, the salt-water ingress may cause many of the *khazan* lands to become mangrove areas thereby losing the cultivable lands permanently.
7. **Non-availability of water:** some members reported that they did not have wells in their fields or even near-by and that made cultivation difficult during the winter months.
 8. **Unavailability of labour:** Several farmers said that unavailability of labour was a big problem, because of which many folks had stopped working their lands.
 9. **Issues with land titles:** It was widely reported that land titles in some cases were not clearly defined. In other cases, the lack of a proper agriculture land-leasing mechanisms meant that several fields were either left fallow (because owners feared they would lose their land to the lessees) or farmers were unable to avail of Government schemes because land-owners did not provide “*No Objection Certificates*” for lessees to avail of Government Schemes.

After this Club members brainstormed about what they expected from the Club and what was their vision for their Club? The following points is a detailed listing of these points:

1. Ms. Jyoti said that we would like to use Agriculture Machinery for cultivation.
2. Ms. Namita said that we would like to increase our agricultural production or yield.
3. Ms. Maria Fernando said we need electricity, water and fencing for agriculture
4. Increase Area under cultivation
5. Mr. Arjun Vision to make a name for the Club in Goa.
6. Make a name for the club in Goa.
7. Mr. Abreu said that his vision is to increase the number members in club as well as to bring increasingly more barren and fallow land under cultivation.
8. Mr. Mukund vision is to see that the Club can make available agricultural machinery for its members. He also said that there should be a proper committee to look after, manage and maintain the all machinery.
9. Another member stated that his vision was to see the whole Chorao island green and lush with crops.
10. Mr. Amrik Singh Deol (Bank Manager - Central Bank of India –Chodan) said that to see that the strength of the Club increases and that all farmers avail of the financial benefits (KCCs, loans and other schemes available) so that no farmer faces any financial constraint.
11. Mr. Mhambare (Chief coordinator of CFC) said that he would like to see the regeneration of village agriculture. He also wanted to see that the village youth actively take an interest in farming activities. He said that *morad* land should also be cultivated under horticulture crops like mango, cashew and other plantation. He also stated that the Club should established a *Krishi Vikas Kendra* for their village that would serve as a

- hub for technology, knowledge information on all govt. schemes as well as create a strong Agri- Business for the members who should benefit economically from these activities..
12. My vision is Govt, Should encourage and support us to give right time subsidy for cultivation.
 13. A member present wanted the Club to help provide wells, pumps and fencing for agriculture activity.
 14. One of the members stated that he would like to see all *khazan* land under paddy cultivation and *morad* land under different horticulture crops, plantation and vegetables.
 15. Another member stated that the Club should encourage more people to restart farming.
 16. Mr. Baitkekar said that the Club should encourage soil testing and help farmers undertake pest control measures
 17. A member present said that he would like he Club to undertake desilting of ponds and thus help avoid water scarcity during summer seasons.
 18. Mr. Pednekar said Club members should undertake mechanized farming like employing the power tiller because it would reduce out dependency on labour and we could conduct our activities with speed.
 19. Mr. Shanker said that he would like to see that the Farmers Club as an all-Chodan Club which helps support all kinds of agriculture and allied activities.
 20. To motivate all farmers under cultivation of barren land.
 21. Mr. Suresh Kalngutkar said that he would like to see Eco-Tourism flourish in their village, and that the Club should be the vehicle to carry this activity forward and that their village should become a model village in Goa for agriculture.
 22. Another one of the members said that she would like the Club to re-create the interest of other farmers in farming.