

# Students take agri tech from lab to land in villages



Students have cultivated rice with their improvised techniques

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**Margao:** It's an internship with a difference. Several groups of final year students from Goa's only agriculture institution are now living in villages and using their college education to teach farmers new and advanced methods of agriculture aimed at boosting yield and increasing efficiency, while also gleaning practical wisdom from experienced traditional farmers.

The 'lab to land' rural stay programme of the Don Bosco College of Agriculture in Sulcorna promises to be a path-breaking initiative in the field of rural agriculture in the state.

Inbuilt into the curriculum, the Rural Agricultural Work Experience Programme (RAWEP) entails five months of village stay from June to October and two weeks of agro-industrial training.

Principal Suresh Kunkalikar said that six villages of Goa are presently hosting 42 students, 15 of whom are women. Divided into six groups, the students have been posted in Narvem-Bicholim, Panchwadi, Sacordem, Dabhal, Navelim and Fatorda.

"Besides getting acquainted with the socio-economic condition of the farming community, the students get hands-on training about traditional agricultural practices from experienced farmers. The theoret-

tical knowledge that the students acquire over six semesters becomes live during this stage. This gives an opportunity for students to troubleshoot problems encountered in farm work by using technical knowledge," Kunkalikar said.

The project enables the students to observe the incidence of pests and diseases and recommend to the farmers appropriate management practices.

"The students have tested soil samples from the fields and have recommended fertiliser application according to the soil test reports. They have conducted vaccination campaigns for livestock in their villages and are helping dairy farmers with modern techniques of livestock rearing," explains assistant professor, Rakesh Kawale, who is overseeing the project.

Some students have established Agricultural Technological Knowledge Centres while some have conducted agricultural exhibitions in the villages.

Asilda Vaz, one of the six students staying at Narvem, said the project gives her a sense of satisfaction to know that they are doing their bit to uplift rural farmers, especially women. We have conducted demonstrations for the youth in composting and vermicomposting, and also trained some women in cultivating mushrooms in the organic way."