

Farmer Field Schools, a success story

The National Centre for Agricultural Research and Extension NCARE has enforced the Farmer Field Schools FFS methodology as part of an Italian-funded regional pest management programme.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation's FAO Regional Integrated Pest Management IPM Programme in the Near East started its activities in Jordan in 2004, funded by the government of Italy and FAO from special Trust Fund for Food Security and Food Safety.



The programme functions in 10 countries to improve food security by enhancing sustainable intensification of agricultural production with special emphasis on ecology based integrated pest management that contributes to the reduction of pesticide-associated risks.

It seeks to Promote local adaptation of IPM strategies to horticultural crops, build on farmers' participation and improve the understanding of local ecosystems using the FFS method.

FFS is a core activity of the IPM community-based approach, to train and empower farmers on improving crop production and pest management, while reducing the use of pesticides, thereby contributing to the protection of farmers' communities, their environment and facilitation of better access to high value crop markets.

FFS is a participatory methodology, based on non-formal adult education approaches and encourage hand-on active learning, testing and validating scientific concepts as well as local knowledge in local conditions reaching to the concept of farmer to farmer extension approaches.

The programme is focusing on the capacity building and strengthening of IPM/FFS approach, taking in consideration local eco-system, participating of women in the activities, improving access to markets and developing a comprehensive strategy to promote IPM and pesticide management in the country.

Using ecology-based IPM approaches to promote sustainable management of pests, about 170 FFSs have been established by NCARE in Jordan since its inception, training approximately 2,400 farmers.

With the support of the programme in NCARE, farmers have started organizing themselves in order to carry out field experiments, train other farmers, and interact effectively with research and extension.

NCARE Director General Faisal Awawdeh told Petra that FFS seeks to promote local adaptation to the integrated crop management mechanisms in order to achieve a healthy production through regular controls of farming fields and reduction of dependence on chemicals and pesticides.