Quality seed production in sugarcane through Farmers’ participation

Limited resource availability at the ICAR-SBI, Coimbatore has provided an opportunity to explore other alternatives for seed production under ICAR Seed Project due to the demand for large quantity of quality seed cane.

To begin with the seed requirements of all the sugar factories for raising seed nursery programme were calculated and ascertained. Progressive sugarcane farmers were selected after ascertaining the field conditions, suitability, infrastructure, expertise and resources available and trained in seed production.

According to the demand, planting was done at Vedapatti, Coimbatore district and Vaiyapurigoundenpudur, Tirupur district during January 2016, at Vaiyapurigoundenpudur, Tirupur district and Veerapandi and Vellamadai, Coimbatore district during July 2016 and Neelampur, Narasimhanaickenpalayam and Veerapandi villages of Coimbatore district during February 2017.

View of the Seed plot in the Former’s Field
The crop was monitored by a team of Breeders time to time. To gain the confidence of the indenting factories and the producing farmers, interaction programmes were conducted at the farmer’s field where seed production had been taken up during every supply cycle.

A total quantity of 816 and 620 tonnes of quality seed cane were produced and supplied to the indenters during 2016-17 and 2017-18 till October 2017, respectively. The average seed cane yield at age of six months was 111 t/ha which is more than state average yield of 100 t/ha from 12 month old sugarcane crop. In addition higher seed cane cost of Rs. 3000/t could earn an additional income of Rs. 30,000 /ha to the farmer. Thus doubling the farmers’ income has been successfully demonstrated though quality sugarcane seed production.