

Remarks by Dr. Yutong Li, Head of CSAM

Virtual Workshop and Demonstration on Integrated Management of Straw Residue

Wednesday, 28 Oct 2020
(14:00 - 16:00 hrs Beijing time/GMT+8)

Prof. Li Hongwen, Director, Conservation Tillage Research Center, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China / Professor, China Agricultural University

Mr. Xingmo Cheng, Vice Director-General, Qingdao Administration of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

Mr. Dongyue Wang, Vice Mayor, People's Government of Laixi City

Distinguished presenters,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning / Good afternoon!

On behalf of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP-CSAM), it gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this Virtual Workshop and Demonstration on Integrated Management of Straw Residue. Although this event had to be postponed from the earlier planned date of 16 October due to unforeseen developments relating to the Covid-19 situation, we are pleased to be able to organize it today.

At the outset, I would like to thank our partners and co-organizers - namely the China Institute for Conservation Tillage of China Agricultural University, Qingdao Administration of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Laixi Administration of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and Qingdao Zhitao Agricultural Machinery Specialized Cooperative - for their support and commitment in organizing this event at a difficult time.

Burning of straw residue in the field is a major challenge in agriculture in many countries of the Asia-Pacific region as it contributes not only to air pollution, worsening of public health and environmental degradation, but also to agricultural losses caused by soil impairment. Integrated straw management is an approach to address this problem by utilizing straw residue in an innovative, adaptable, and

technically feasible manner while generating environmental, economic and social benefits.

However, one of the main constraints to improve and upscale the integrated straw management approach is the lack of reliable agricultural machinery and equipment. There is a need to test and promote integrated models of utilizing straw with a focus on enhancing the performance of relevant machinery in the specific contexts of different sub-regions.

In 2017, CSAM launched a regional initiative on Integrated Straw Management to address the issue of straw burning while contributing to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) as well as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 12 (Sustainable Production and Consumption) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). Following a research study to ascertain the status of straw management, two pilots were initiated in China and Viet Nam, and a third one in Nepal is expected to be initiated soon. These pilots aim to analyze and demonstrate technologies for using straw as fertilizer, fodder, energy source and substrate for mushroom growing in order to help reduce straw burning. A regional knowledge sharing study tour was also organized in India while options for initiating more pilots in countries such as Cambodia and Indonesia are currently being explored.

In continuation of this regional effort, today's Virtual Workshop and Demonstration on Integrated Management of Straw Residue has invited representatives of the three pilot teams from China, Nepal and Viet Nam as well as speakers from Cambodia and Indonesia to share good practices and experiences on integrated management of straw residue in their respective countries. In addition, we will witness an onsite demonstration at the China pilot site in Laixi, Qingdao, which will show the practical application of agricultural machinery for integrated straw management.

We hope the virtual workshop and demonstration today will enable useful knowledge exchange as well as learning which can broaden the range of technical as well as programmatic options available to us to combat burning of straw residue using agricultural machinery. I believe this event is especially timely at the current juncture when the Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the entire agricultural value chain in many countries of the region and brought into focus the vulnerability of food systems and the farming community (especially smallholders) to shocks. Sustainable approaches such as integrated straw management which build the overall resilience of the farming community can - and must - be an important part of the longer-term solution.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I trust the event today will help promote a better understanding of integrated management of straw residue as well as the role of

sustainable agricultural mechanization in it, so that we can join hands to make agriculture in our region more resilient, inclusive and sustainable. I very much look forward to a vibrant round of discussions today.

Thank you.