

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Science (Third Year)

Subject: Botany

Course Code: BOC 107

Course Title: Microbiology and Plant Pathology

Unit: Plant Disease Management

Module Name-Plant Disease Clinics

Module No: 52

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PLANT CLINICS

- Plant clinics provide a meeting place for trained plant health advisors and the farmers they aim to serve.
- Plant clinic is a forum for sharing knowledge about farming within local communities.
- It is a gateway where policy makers can collect important data to inform research and decision-making.
- A forum where farmers can consult for any advice on how to protect and manage their crops.
- The plant health advisors who have been trained in relevant techniques and skills.
- They provide diagnosis and advice on any problem and any crop to the farmers.

Farmers who are struggling with any plant health problem can take samples of their ailing crops to trained plant health extension officers/plant doctors for free diagnosis and recommendations on how to manage the problem.

Working of a plant clinic

- A farmer has a problem with his or her crop.
- The farmer brings a sample of their damaged crop to the plant clinic, which runs regularly at a local market.
- A trained ‘plant doctor’ diagnoses the problem and recommends an affordable, locally available solution that the farmer can use to manage it.
- The plant doctor has access to information from knowledge bank to assist with diagnosis and pest management recommendations.
- Data about the farmer’s visit is captured in the knowledge bank.

- The farmer follows the plant doctor's advice;
- The farmer follows the plant doctor's advice; losses are reduced and productivity increases.

Success stories of Plant Disease Clinics in India

1. Since 2012, farmers in Thiruvaiyaru block, Thanjavur district in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, have had been using Plantwise plant clinics to help solve problems with pests and diseases. The programme there is run by the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in collaboration with Plantwise. Agriculture is the primary livelihood of 70% of the communities in the region of which more than 90% are smallholders.

A study of this plant clinic has revealed that farmers have gained a great deal of fundamental knowledge over the years, which have helped to reduce losses and enhance their productivity. The key learnings expressed by the farmers were: not only what management action to take but *when* to take it, how to differentiate between common pests and disease with other physiological disorders, awareness of host plants of insects and diseases, vectors that spread infection to other plants and the phytosanitary practices to adopt when viral infection occurs, and last but by no means least, simple agronomic and low-cost pest management practices.

2. In 2020, Plantwise launched in the establishment of 15 plant clinics across 3 districts in the Jammu region. This year sees the launch of an exciting new development, with the roll-out of e-plant clinics to revolutionize the extension system and support the quick transfer of information and advice to farmers via text messages on their mobile phones.

Conclusion

Lack of access to timely information on crop health problems is a major challenge to agricultural production and rural livelihood in many developing countries.

Plant clinics—a novel extension approach in which local plant health extension officers (called plant doctors) provide pest diagnosis and management advice to farmers—has been helping to bridge this gap in over 30 countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas.