

The Mymensingh Conservation Agriculture Declaration

We, the 236 delegates from Bangladesh, having gathered at BAU, Mymensingh from 14-16 February 2017 together with 7 experts from Australia, USA and India, and having considered the findings of four keynote papers, 30 oral papers, 25 poster papers, 7 exhibitions and seen promising examples of planter operations in field demonstrations at the 2nd Conference on Conservation Agriculture for Smallholders, declare that:

Conservation Agriculture being the practice of:

- ✓ minimum soil disturbance
- ✓ retention of crop residues and mulch as a soil cover and
- ✓ diverse rotations in cropping systems;

has multiple benefits for national food security and farm profitability in Bangladesh when adopted by smallholder farmers by:

- ✓ reducing costs of crop production,
- ✓ saving labour requirements for crop production,
- ✓ improving timeliness of crop establishment, and
- ✓ increasing or maintaining crop yields;

has demonstrated benefits for the environment by:

- ✓ increasing soil organic matter;
- ✓ decreasing greenhouse gas emissions;
- ✓ decreasing soil erosion; and
- ✓ has been demonstrated to farmers in 23 districts of Bangladesh with many crops (rice, wheat, maize, lentil, mung bean, jute, mustard, chickpea) and is suitable for mechanised crop establishment in small fields by planters operated by the two-wheel tractor.

Whereas the benefits of conservation agriculture were gained by farmers worldwide on 161 million hectares, these benefits are now within the reach of smallholder Bangladesh farmers.

Therefore, we recommend:

- ✓ The Government of Bangladesh adopts a Conservation Agriculture policy for implementation by its agricultural extension, research and university sectors;
- ✓ The establishment of a Bangladesh Centre for Conservation Agriculture Research & Development to represent, coordinate and guide the conservation agriculture programmes of research, development and extension (R, D & E) agencies, agricultural universities and research funding agencies;
- ✓ Allocation of Government of Bangladesh funding to conduct R, D & E on conservation agriculture to adapt it to the conditions and requirements of Bangladesh agriculture;
- ✓ Implementation of conservation agriculture practice by donor programmes in the crop production sector;
- ✓ Review of laws, regulations and policies that hamper the profitable adoption of conservation agriculture and farm machinery by farmers;

- ✓ Removal of bottlenecks for profitable engagement by the private sector in promoting conservation agriculture and farm mechanisation;
- ✓ Provide support for all planters, including those developed by the private sector, that are capable of establishing crops under conservation agriculture;
- ✓ Biennial Conservation Agriculture conferences to report on, review and plan for the widespread adoption of conservation agriculture in Bangladesh.

We, the participants of the 2nd Conference on Conservation Agriculture for Smallholders humbly request the delegated representatives to present this Declaration to the Government of Bangladesh and explain the significance, opportunity, future benefits and urgency of implementing the above recommendations for the improvement of farm livelihoods, food security, and environmental sustainability in Bangladesh.

Signed by:

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