Coimbatore: Noted proponent of zero budget farming Subhash Palekar pulled up the state run Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) for its alleged promotion of chemical fertilisers.

“People need to ask the university on why they are promoting chemical fertilisers instead of finding a solution for declining soil fertility,” said Subhash Palekar, who was in the city to conduct an eight-day workshop on zero budget natural farming organized by GreenHands, an project by Isha foundation.

Further, he said the question was not just for Tamil Nadu, but for almost all the agricultural universities across the country.

Subhash Palekar believes chemical fertilizers and hybrid varieties are just ways to exploit the farmers and the soil.

“Hybrid varieties of seeds are given to farmers promising higher yields. However, they are also told to use chemical fertilizers for better yields,” he explained.

“All this obviously raises a farmer’s production cost, because they are also forced to spend for irrigation, power, labour and machinery,” he said.

Zero Budget Natural Farming is defined by agriculturist Subhash Palekar as way of farming where cost of production can be recovered completely from the sale of intercrop produce.

Palekar says the philosophy of zero budget natural farming removes a majority of the above costs. He promises that he can farm 30 acres of land with just one cow in the locality.

“Plain organic farming recommends use of cow manure, dug or vermicompost directly. Zero budget natural farming propagates use of microorganisms and macro-organisms which can be prepared at home and will facilitate the seeds and roots to absorb nutrients from the soil better and moisture from the air,” he said addressing 1,300 farmers from across the district, state and even South-East Asian countries like Sri Lanka, Dubai and Singapore.