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Multiple varieties and different cropping pattern for higher income



Farming as a profession, requires patience. Normally, the farmer need not depend on anybody for obligations. "Though today this might not be true for several farmers in the country, I want to differ on this. Look at my area, just 2 acres and some cents, and my annual income is between Rs. 7 lakh and Rs. 8 lakh in a year," says farmer Sadananda from Tapasihalli village, Doddaballapura taluk, Bangalore rural district proudly. "Earning money is not a difficult job for farmers. The secret lies in making use of the available land area and making best use of available resources and technologies," he says.

Not satisfactory

Mr. Sadananda started cultivating vegetables initially and realized a reasonable income. But he says "the income and marketing did not prove satisfactory". He planned the cropping pattern in such a way that it included a combination of perennial, annual, and seasonal crops as well as livestock rearing. Accordingly, he planted 50 coconut trees, most of them around the field

borders, and also planted Chikku, Jack (bearing round the year), Agase (fodder trees), Teak, Silver Oak, Pongamia and other trees. In about 20 cents he planted arecanut and adopted organic mulching.

“Till 2003-04, I planned my own cropping pattern including dairy, sheep and biogas and obtained a net income of around Rs. 3 lakh. During 2005-06 I came into contact with Rural Bioresource Complex Project (RBRC) project staff from University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, and acted on their advice to shift the cropping pattern from more of vegetables to floriculture, nursery raising, adding improved breeds of sheep, vermicomposting, backyard poultry, and azolla production,” he explains.

Poultry

The farmer started rearing of giriraja and girirani poultry birds in the arecanut plantation by using shade net as fencing material and planted rose in one acre and twenty cents of land. Subsequently, he started raising a vegetable nursery in an area of 10 cents based on the local demand. Two cross-breed cows generate 6,000 litres of milk annually.

A water storage tank dug at the entrance to the field is used for fish rearing and also for irrigating the crops. “Since I got free cow dung I set up a bio gas plant and also erected drip irrigation to use water judiciously. Since labour is a problem, I modified my old scooter into a power sprayer for spraying, and fertigation for my crops,” he adds.

According to him, money generation serves as a big energy booster for a farmer. “What farmers in our country need today is finance. Practically all other inputs are available for them.

Must be practical

Whatever be the technology, they must be able to deliver results — be practical and feasible. Merely talking cannot solve the problem,” seems to be his conviction. He further adds, “If you look at some of the available government and international websites, they give details of the area of sowing, the seasons, cropping and other information. But in reality this information does not help grassroots farmers. Of what use are these data for farmers when they are suffering?”

he asks. There is absolutely no basis to expect the impossible. Careful study, interacting with other experienced farmers and experts alone will help, according to him.

Good example

“A field should be like a kirana store (provision store),” he says.” One can get almost any edible item from the shop. Similarly a farmer must start growing different crops along with fish, poultry, and cattle. Crops are like long term deposits and animals are for the short term, that mature in some months. There is a much needed safety and lesser risks for a farmer practicing more than one avocation. Even if one fails, the other will bail him out,” he explains.

Several awards

Mr. Sadanand has been conferred with several State and national awards in recognition for his work on integrated farming. “The most important features of Mr. Sadananda's farming are use of own manure, least dependence on external input, and use of family labour.” In view of well balanced combination of enterprises the annual income generated from seasonal, annual perennial, livestock, and fishery is encouraging and motivating many farmers' in the area to follow him,” adds Dr. K. Narayana Gowda, Vice Chancellor of the University.

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