

## Organic farmer shows the way in paddy cultivation

December 12, 2013



Gadde Satish Babu, a graduate-turned organic farmer from Seetampet, under Denduluru mandal in West Godavari district, remains unaffected even as his counterparts elsewhere have been affected badly from a series of cyclones in the current kharif season.

Swarna, the high-yielding paddy variety, which was flattened due to the swirling gales and turned susceptible to pests, dashed the farmers' hopes. But Mr. Satish Babu, however, is sitting pretty even after raising the same variety in his field, thanks to the method of organic farming which he has taken to.

He attributes his success to the soil health enriched by organic manures which helped him reap 29-34 bags per acre with no traces of chemical residues. He raises a single crop in his field in a year, leaving it to become fertile with organic manure in the rest of the period. He has about 50 buffaloes which are left to roam freely in the field, enabling it to get enriched with their dung and urine during the period of 'crop holiday'. The same animals are then shifted to his other fields of coconut, paddy and maize at Signarajupalli near Nallajarla on a rotation basis for a similar purpose.

### **Ryots wary of Swarna**

Farmers in the delta region are now wary of Swarna variety for its inherent drawbacks which make it prone to lodging at times of calamities. Yet they are still enamoured of it for its high-yielding properties. "It all (lodging and pest attacks in Swarna) happens in the soil when its health deteriorates because of use of pesticide and chemicals in heavy dosages. It is not the case in my field and that it is the secret of my joy," says Mr. Satish.

He said he could manage to save his crop from pests by applying neem cake. He has brought down the cost of cultivation by making his fields zero tolerant to chemicals and pesticides. In addition, he sells his produce (rice) at a price of Rs 99 per kg which is, still, in great demand.

M. Bharatalakshmi, Associate Director of Research, Agricultural Research Station (ARS) at Maruteru, endorses the views of Mr. Satish Babu, stating that the field trials revealed that organic farming is a panacea to all the ills associated with the Swarna variety. An acre and half demo plot with Swarna developed at the research station yielded similar results, she added. Heavy use of urea in traditional farming resulted in vegetative growth in Swarna leading to lodging, she said.