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To
The Editor,

Date: 21-6-2017

Sir,

I request that the following matter may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

Farm Varsity Supported Startup Firm on Aeroponics (Soil Less Culture)

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) has established an exclusive 'Directorate of Agribusiness Development' in 2007 with the major mandate of supporting startup companies in agriculture and also commercializing the technologies developed by the institution. GOI-DST sponsored Technology Business Incubator was established and registered in 2011 in the name "Agribusiness Incubation Society" (ABIS) which extends its support to startup firms and is engaged in handholding business support operations to its 182 incubatee members.

Mr. K. Prabhu Sankar, TNAU TBI member and Managing Director of M/s.Thanyas Organic Private Limited has established a 30,000 square feet Aeroponics unit at Sengodampalayam, Palladam. Aeroponics is a unique method of growing plants in an air and mist environment, without the use of soil. By this method most of the uncultivable lands can be utilized. A completely closed greenhouse with 40 per cent sunlight penetration, 60 per cent sunlight diffusion, covered ground with trapezoid aeroponics frame work, automated pulse irrigation and automated climate management are salient features.

Around 6,000 litres of water would be enough to cultivate 900 kg of vegetables a day. Water would be sprayed intermittently at the root zone of the crops the whole day. The crops absorb only 2,000 litres as a top up, and the remaining water would be recycled. Through this technology most of the vegetables like carrot, tomato, chilli, brinjal, greens,

mint, bittergourd, cauliflower and coriander could be cultivated. Since there is no soil involved, soil borne pathogenic infection is prevented. Likewise water is purified and sterilized on each and every recycling operation and so water borne pathogens and infestation is prevented enabling chemical free growing environment., Sponge is used to support the roots of the vegetables and once they grow up to a certain height, one of the free ends are tied using a string to an overhead rope for support.

The Aerponics unit was visited by Dr. K. Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, TNAU Coimbatore, Shri S.N.A. Jinnah, Chief General Manager, NABARD, Chennai Regional Office, Dr. R. Murugesan, Director of Agribusiness Development, TNAU and other officials from TNAU and NABARD on June 20, 2017.

Public Relations Officer