

ALTERNATE (COW PEA) CROP SAVES A FAMILY FROM FINANCIAL BREAK-DOWN

- Case Story of a rain fed farmer going for an alternate crop than groundnut

Mr. Kondappa, is a farmer from Avulenna village of Kalyandurg area. His 4-member family has 6 acres of rain fed land in which they used to cultivate groundnut. The groundnut crop was not remunerative at all, as there had been crop failures year after year. During good crop years he used to get a yield of about 2 tons from his 6 acres of land. He used to earn about Rs.60,000 by selling his produce. He used to invest about Rs. 26,000/- on preparatory cultivation, purchase of seed, purchase of chemical fertilizers & pesticides, Labor cost etc. During a good crop year he used to get a net income of Rs. 34,000. But in the years when the crop failed he used to incur heavy losses. Since the crop failures are on increase and since he had to pay accumulated exorbitant interest for the loans he had barrowed, he was totally shattered financially. To add to his woes, the monsoons did not arrive until late August during 2009 and he could not even sow groundnut. His poor family was on the verge of a financial break-down.

But there was an opportunity even in such distress. AF staff suggested him to; (a) Sow cow pea which can be sown even in August, with very less crop investment (b) Shift to cost-effective and eco-friendly bio-fertilizers & bio-pesticides, instead of spending a lot of money on harmful chemical fertilizers & pesticides. Incidentally he was assisted to get a farm pond sanctioned in his land under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS).



He purchased 50 Kg. of cow pea at the rate of Rs. 40 per Kg. from the village seed bank. That costed him Rs. 2,000/- which he could pay after the crop harvest either in cash or in the form of seed. He purchased 10 carts of organic manure for Rs. 2,500/-. Further

“My friends and relatives have praised me for taking a good decision by choosing to sow cow pea. My wife and daughters are happy to add one more food grain to our food stock. Above all it gave me good profits that helped me to recover, thanks to AF.

**- Kondappa, Rain fed farmer
Avulenna village.**

he spent Rs. 1,500 on jeevamrutham and other bio-pesticides. He also spent Rs. 12,000 on labor costs. Totally, he invested Rs.18,000 on his 6 acres of land. The yields were average this year. Even then, he got a yield of 18 quintals of cow pea and the produce was sold @ Rs. 3,600 per quintal. He also sold the dry cowpea fodder for Rs.1,200. The total income was Rs. 66,000/-. After deducting his investment, the net income from his 6 acres of land is Rs. 48,000. This was better than what he used to get during a good crop of groundnut (Rs. 34,000), using chemical fertilizers & pesticides. Also his land has become enriched with nitrogen because (a) the cow pea is a legume fixing nitrogen in the soil, (b) crop-rotation.

The family is delighted and wants to continue with alternate crops like cow pea and practice Sustainable Agriculture in future.