

## **Benefits of Sustainable Agriculture - Ramanjineyulu sets an Example.**

A piece of five and half acres of poor quality soil has turned out into a fertile one and has become a assured source of income for Ramanjineyulu, which in normal situation, would have remained undependable as any other land of Anantapuram District .Ramanjineyulu, belong to SC community, is living in Uppinesinapalli (v),Raphthadu Mandal. His family consists of his wife Muthyalamma and 2 sons. He understood the practices and principles of Sustainable Agriculture through trainings, exposure visits organized by AF EC. He also involved himself with AF EC in SA activities in his village. With motivation of AF EC he started farming with LEISA practices. AF supported him by providing local cow to prepare Jeevamrutham, inputs like seed (Millets, Pulses & Vegetables) and other resource material to pursue this practice.

AF team inspired him to go ahead with S A practices while he was ridiculed by peer farmers and also strongly opposed by his wife Ms.Muthyalamma.“ My relatives laughed at me because in first year, the farm did not give any additional income though costs have come down to little extent” recalls Ramanjineyulu. He further intensified his efforts in SA by building a shed near his farm with two Cows and a setting up a cow urine collection pit. This made his life easier due to availability of cow urine and dung which are the prime ingredients in preparing ‘Jeevamrutham’( A liquid concentrated fertilizer).

As per AF team’s advice, Ramanjineyulu made contour trenches and a farm pond.” I do not want even a drop of water to escape from my land” He says. He continued enriching the soil by applying ‘Ghana Jeevamrutham’ once every month and started growing biomass plants around the land. He set up a micro irrigation system and mixed liquid Jeevamrutham while irrigating his crops.

“I witnessed the bountiful returns from my, otherwise low productive, land after couple of years. By the end of second year, Tomatoes grown in my land has become talk of the village. They are large in size very fresh looking and tasting very delicious compared to conventionally grown with chemicals. The buyers at Anantapur Market just grabbed my stuff” Says Ramanjineyulu with pride. He observed that earth worms had returned in his land and the texture of soil has changed.

The net return has been very encouraging for Ramanjineyulu. “My cost of cultivation when compared with chemical practices has reduced by Rs 5000/- per acre in Tomato and by about Rs 8, 000/-per acre in Ground nut. And so I have not borrowed from any money lender”, said Ramanjineyulu. His crop income from 5.5 acres land in 2012 is Rs 120,000/-.

Gradually he is diversifying his crops with Horticulture, Floriculture; multiple crops (Millets, Pulses and Vegetables).The land is supporting itself with sufficient Bio Mass, proper water harvesting, susustainable farming methods. Now Ramanjineyulu is now purchasing very little external inputs.” In another 2 years I will earn Rs 30,000/-every month through periodical yields of different crops entire year like an employee” says Ramanjineyulu confidently.

Ramanjineyulu, an independent and eco friendly farmer has become a role model among his peer farmers. Now he is on a mission to educate other farmers on sustainable Agriculture and converted 4 farmers already to sustainable Agriculture. He says “Many farmers are suspicious of SA practices and I want to share my experience with all of them and I want them to visit my farm.”