

S.A PRACTICES PROVE BENEFICIAL EVEN DURING DROUGHTS

Case story of a dry land farmer from Guruvepalli village, Kundurpi

Mr. K. Ramaswamy is a poor dry land farmer from Guruvepalli village of Kundurpi mandal. He is a member of Sasyamithra Group facilitated by AF. His family consists of 5 members. They have 5.19 acres of rain fed land wherein they cultivate groundnut.



The family used to invest about Rs. 27,000 every year, for growing groundnut crop in their 5 acres of dry land. Though they got good yields initially, gradually the yields started decreasing due to recurrence of pests and diseases. During the drought years when there were low crop yields, they suffered losses and used to borrow money from money lenders. Moreover they had been facing continuous Crop failures in 2008 & 2009 kharif seasons. So, again they borrowed money from money lenders for crop investment and their debts became compounded. Consequently the family got entangled in a vicious debt trap and was forced to work as wage laborers in MGNREGS. But, the two earning members of the family could earn about Rs. 12,000, during last year, which they used to clear their debts.

At this juncture, Mr. Ramaswamy and his wife attended a Sustainable Agriculture campaign organized by AF in Guruvepalli village in 2010. They decided to try Sustainable Agriculture practices for one crop season. So, they met the Agriculture Officer separately, gathered all the details and got motivated to adopt SA practices. Under the guidance of AF staff they practiced all the LEISA/NPM methods on their 5 acres of groundnut crop. They applied 20 cart loads of farm yard manure which resulted in good crop growth. They purchased Rs. 8000/- cost of seed. They also arranged pheromone traps and color boards in the field to control the pests. Instead of Chemical fertilizers, they applied "Jeevamritham" to the crop. During August, there was an attack of "Aphids" (Black sucking pests) in the village. Most of the farmers applied chemical pesticides but Rama swamy applied chilly & garlic decoction which costed a meager Rs. 150. They also sprayed Neem oil which costed Rs. 400. They spent Rs. 5,600 towards labor charges for Sowing, Inter cultivation and Harvesting. Altogether they invested Rs. 14,150, on their 5 acres of Ground nut crop.

During Kharif-2010, a Green drought is expected in Anantapur and the expected Ground nut yields have come down heavily. In Guruve palli village the average expected yield this year is about 2.0 - 2.2 Qtls / Ac. Ram swamy's family is expecting an yield of a minimum of 25 bags (10 Qtls) from their 5 Acs of land @ 2.0 Qtls / Ac, on par with other farmers in the village. They are

"We are very happy that we invested only half of the amount the other farmers in my village have invested and got same yields on par with them. We have realized the advantages of using bio-pesticides & bio-fertilizers. We will continue these practices and spread them across our village"

Ramaswamy
Rain fed farmer

expecting to earn at least Rs. 30,000 from the sale of their produce @ Rs. 3,000/- per quintal. After deducting the expenditure they are expecting a net profit of Rs. 15, 850 and Rs. 2,500/- worth groundnut haulm.

Mr. Ramaswamy's family members are feeling very happy for practicing Sustainable Agriculture. Because all other factors being the same, their net income from groundnut crop from their 5 acres of land will increase by at least Rs.13,000/- every year, as their investment has come down from Rs.27,000/- to Rs.14,000/-. Their experience has convinced them that Bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides are equally effective when compared to chemical fertilizers and pesticides, besides being economical, harmless and nature-friendly. The family vowed never to go for chemical farming again. Their neighboring farmers have appreciated their decision of going for Sustainable Agriculture practices and they are also motivated to take up SA Practices in their lands.

Totally, 11,275 farmer families have taken up Sustainable Agriculture practices in their 26,338 ha. of farm lands, during the reporting period.