

Reaping Success with Organic Farming

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Abstract: Mr. Santosh Divakar of Raigad District is very popular among organic farmers in Konkan region. After the traditional farming in 4-5 years he was forced to change his farming practices for increasing the yield of crops. As a result, he started using high yielding varieties, fertilizers, pesticides etc. There was a quantum jump in his yields because of adopting improved practices. Then, he started practicing organic farming thinking that it would help in reducing the cost of cultivation and would reduce the pH of the soil. In the initial years he had the problems of pests and diseases and soil was also not good enough to give better yield. He contacted KVK scientist and officials from department of Agriculture for discussing the problems in farming. He owns five excellent dairy cows of *Gir* species. The cows supply valuable manure. He makes good profit from selling the milk. He started preparing vermicompost with farm wastes and cow dung (FYM). He also started preparation of organic inputs like *Jeevamrut*, *Dashaparni Ark* etc on his own farm. They are applied in the field as and when necessary. He is paddy farmer and follows paddy-pulses-vegetables cropping system in his farm. He started fresh water fish farming as a subsidiary farming activity by rearing Indian Major Carps under the guidance of KVK, Raigad. His net income through organic paddy was Rs.16000 from one acre of paddy crop. He has good kind of outreach activities and awarded by prestigious institutes.

Keywords: success, organic farming

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Santosh Divakar of Raigad District is very popular among organic farmers in Konkan region. He is engaged in organic farming i.e. cultivation of Paddy, Pulses, Papaya, Vegetables etc., supply of organic inputs and running subsidiary enterprises like fresh water fish farming, rearing of Gir cows and backyard poultry. Now-a-days he is very busy in answering farmers' queries on the phone, giving advice to the farmers, attending various seminars, meetings related to organic farming. A sea change has been observed in his life from the last 7 years, all because of organic farming.

Mr. Santosh Divakar aged 40, living at Yashwantkhar, Po. Sanegaon Tal. Roha, Dist. Raigad having the education of Bachelor of Arts

has been doing farming for the last 15 years on 1.8 ha of cultivable land. He entered into farming during the year 2005. After the traditional farming in 4-5 years he was forced to change his farming practices for increasing the yield of crops. As a result, he started using high yielding varieties, fertilizers, pesticides etc. There was a quantum jump in his yields because of adopting improved practices. He used to clarify his doubts with the extension personnel, progressive farmers and neighbors. Moreover, he used to read package of practices and other agriculture related books for updating his knowledge.

WAY TOWARDS ORGANIC FARMING

Over the years, this had been his routine and he enjoyed doing farming. However, since late 2013

he was not satisfied with the farming because of loss incurred due to high cost of agricultural inputs. He noticed that the cost of inputs had almost doubled but the price of agricultural produce had remained same, the water level of irrigation well went down drastically and the pH of the soil increased. There started bad days for Mr.Divkar and he was confused about what to do. He discussed his problems with neighbor's, progressive farmers and extension personnel. But he got no clear-cut-remedies for these problems. He found ray hope in 2013 when he discussed with scientist of the University (DBSKKV, Dapoli Dist. Ratnagiri, M.S.) and KVK, Raigad, Maharashtra. He also read some books, articles and attended some workshops on organic farming. He thought of practicing organic farming as it would help in reducing the cost of cultivation and would reduce the pH of the soil. At that time, he also contacted KVK scientist and officials from department of Agriculture for discussing the problems in farming. The scientist too emphasized the importance of organic farming. Finally, he had full conviction in organic farming and decided to practice it.

He started practicing organic farming from 2014. In the initial years he had the problems of pests and diseases and soil was also not good enough to give better yield. He used to visit farmers' field to gain various experience. Moreover, his innovative character made him to try various techniques of doing organic farming. He came to know about the importance of the livestock, organic recycling, crop rotation, diversification etc. As a first step he decided to improve soil fertility. For this in one acre of land he sown different crops seed viz. cereals, oilseeds, pulses, millets and green manuring crops and they were ploughed into the soil 50-60 days after sowing. By following this method for 4-5 years he could improve the soil fertility.

He owns five excellent dairy cows of *Gir* species. Cows were kept in clean stalls in a cowshed and fed properly. The cows supply valuable manure. He makes good profit from selling the milk. He started preparing vermicompost with farm wastes and cow dung (FYM). He also started preparation of organic

inputs like *Jeevamrut*, *Dashaparni Ark* etc on his own farm. They are applied in the field as and when necessary. All these made him very famous among the surrounding farmers, extension personnel, researchers and scientist. He started supplying the organic products and started giving advice to farmers since year 2018 on various aspects of organic farming on his farm itself for that he has all required facilities. He teaches about various organic preparations required for effective nutrient, pest and disease management. He is paddy farmer and follows paddy-pulses-vegetables cropping system in his farm. He started fresh water fish farming as a subsidiary farming activity by rearing Indian Major Carps under the guidance of KVK, Raigad. Also done plantation of papaya variety Taiwan on bunds of the pond for additional returns. Under livestock farming he is rearing *Gir* cow breed and backyard poultry breeds like *Giriraj*, *Vanaraj* and selling the produce in local markets

ORGANIC FARMING IN PADDY

He uses 40 kg of paddy seed per hectare of cultivation. Seeds are treated with *Azospirillum* and cow urine. For nursery he uses vermicompost and green manure and main field green manure during transplanting operations. In the main field green manure seeds of 30 kg are sown and after 60 days they are ploughed into the soil to improve the soil fertility. At the time of last ploughing vermicompost is applied before transplanting. Before transplanting, the seedlings are soaked in *Azospirillum* solution for five minutes and planted. At the time of transplanting the water level is maintained at 2-3 cm so that planting would be easy. After 15-20 days hand weeding is done to remove the weeds. The water level of 5 cm is maintained. Applied cow dung + cow urine once in 15-20 days to build up the microbial population in the soil. Pests and diseases are easily and effectively managed by the natural enemies in his field. In addition, he uses light traps and bird perches to control pests in natural way. Harvesting is done after proper maturity.

All he spent about Rs.34000 per acre of paddy and obtained the yield of 16 qtl/ acre in 2018. The paddy was processed and parboiled to

add value. He got 12qtls. of rice from one acre. He sold it @ Rs.40/kg and from one acre he got about Rs.48000. The value of paddy straw was around Rs.2000. Altogether per acre gross income was Rs.50000. His net income was Rs.16000 from one acre of paddy crop.

OUTREACH IN ORGANIC FARMING

- Master trainer in programmes organized by KVK, ATMA, Panchayat Samiti, NGOs etc.
- Member of farmers group for organic farming under ATMA
- Organization of demonstrations on irrigation systems, water saving technologies, preparation and selling of organic inputs for farmers.
- Guidance to nearby farmers planning to move to organic farming
- Expert in ICT tools, use of social media for marketing as well as information sharing
- Key personnel of KVK for conducting RAWE programme.

AWARDS

- Felicitated as a progressive farmer in organic farming by Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli, Dist. Ratnagiri, (M.S.) in March 2020.
- Felicitated as a progressive farmer by Roha Taluka Shetkari Vikas Pratishthan (Regis.) in Nov.2019
- Promoter of organic farmers' group
- 'Progressive farmer's award by Roha Youth Welfare Association

Acknowledgement

Mr. Santosh Divakar aged 40, living at Yashwantkhar, Po. Sanegaon Tal. Roha, Dist. Raigad is duly acknowledged for providing necessary information with respect to his organic farming activities which is an ideal unit of better management practices and livestock-fisheries model.

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