

TAMILNADU AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, COIMBATORE

RURAL AGRICULTURAL WORK EXPERIENCE (RAWI)

MADATHUKULAM BLOCK

TIRUPUR DISTRICT

SUCCESS STORY

INTERCROPPING IN JUVINILE COCONUT PLANTATIONS

The practice of intercropping in coconut plantations, though wide spread in several pockets of Tamilnadu, has not yet been recognised in Madathukulam Block. Breaking this convention, Th.Marimuthu a progressive farmer of Jothampatti, had established intercropped coconut plantation that distinguishes him from his counterparts. Establishment of intercrops in juvenile coconut garden bears several benefits like upkeep of soil health, ecological stability and additional remuneration.

The farmer cultivated **Ash gourd** in the interspaces between the coconut trees. Seeds sown were procured from a private source and sown at the spacing of 45 cm between plants in the field that was already preconditioned with FarmYard Manure.



Crops were irrigated in beds and channels at an interval of 10 days, owing to the then prevailing drought period. Weeding practices include a pre-emergence herbicide spray and three subsequent hand weedings at regular intervals. His uniqueness lies in the method of fertilization in which he dissolves fertilizers in his irrigation water. This serves as the only source of nutrition for both the vegetables and juvenile coconut crops.

The farmer also uses organic crop supplements like **Panchakavya** to enhance yield by boosting plant growth and reducing pest incidence. In addition to the above mentioned INM practices, farmer had also adopted Green Manuring, prior to the crop season, with **Daincha** (incorporated on 25DAS) or Kolinji. Crop is harvested at 100 DAS to reap an yield of 9 ton/acre. Apart from Ashgourd he also grows his kitchen garden in the interspaces of Coconut which includes crops like Tomato, Bhendhi, Onion and Chilli.

He opines that these practices have enhanced his soil quality and lead to considerable labour saving. He also advocates these practices to neighboring farmers to turn this practice into a community effort.