

Even small farmers can benefit from newer technologies



Frequent crop failures and low agricultural productivity are the main constraints threatening the livelihood security of many Indian farmers. Dr. S.J. Ankegowda, Senior Scientist and Head, Cardamom Research Centre, Madikeri, Karnataka said that the farmers who follow traditional agricultural practices alone are more vulnerable to such crises. Adoption of scientific technologies in crop production is the only available weapon in farmers' hands to tide over such situations.

Not possible

Unlike annual crops, farmers growing perennial crops cannot frequently replace them for new high yielding varieties as and when new varieties are released by any research institutes. He said that the best way to increase yield in such crops is to adopt better crop management practices. Effective scientist-farmer interactions can build confidence in farmers for adoption of improved crop husbandry methods.

Adopt technologies

Mr. Numan Adil and Mr. Mahamad Iqbal, both progressive farmers from Karnataka strongly believe that farmers should come forward to adopt farmer-friendly technologies developed by scientists for getting good returns from their farmlands. Both of them inherited 80 acres of ancestral land and mainly grow arabica and robusta coffee varieties in 75 acres. In the remaining five acres they grow arecanut, black pepper and orange as an intercrop. Coffee is planted at a spacing of 6.5 x 6.5 feet (for arabica) or 10x10 feet (robusta) and black pepper at 15 x 15 feet. The vines of Panniyur 1 black pepper variety are trailed on silver oak, palwan, or jungle trees inside the farm. The duo have been planting black pepper in 40 acres for nearly a decade, but they could harvest only four tonnes from the plantation. The planters happened to attend a seminar organized by the Cardamom Research Centre (CRC).

Various problems

After initial interaction during the seminar, they visited the Centre for more detailed discussions' on various problems faced by them. The scientists convinced them that adoption of crop management technologies alone can help them in increasing crop yield. A team of scientists made several visits to their plantation and identified the major bottlenecks. They prepared a plant health management schedule for them to be meticulously followed. The yield from the plantation remarkably increased to 10 tonnes from a mere four tonnes. During 2009-2010, they realized a yield of 15 tonnes.

Net profit

Mr. Numan Adil said that we owe our success only to the scientific package suggested by the scientists. Mr Iqbal said that we are spending only Rs. 4 lakhs for the entire black pepper plantation of 40 acres for adopting the technologies and the net profit increased 3-4 times. Dr. M. N. Venugopal, former Head of the Centre said that technologies are available for successful cultivation of any crop and a farmer needs to only follow the scientific package for maximizing returns.

Always ready

Dr. Ankegowda said that always available to the farming community for any kind of scientific discussion

and the success of our farmer brothers in Belur is not only applicable to planters but also to small and marginal farmers.

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