

## If not cattle, goats also provide low-cost organic inputs



**Mr. V.S. Arunachalam of Erode district in Tamil Nadu**

Getting a good yield is never an easy task for farmers, especially in the present circumstances, when they have to battle rising prices of chemical pesticides and fertilizer shortage. Farmers are ready to try any alternative means that promise a reduction in input cost, and at the same time offer a bountiful harvest. Organic practices seem to fit the slot very well. Several farmers across the country are turning to organic methods for cultivation as they are convinced that organic inputs can be prepared by them personally and are cost and pest effective.

### **Attotam**

Goats are commonly found in all the villages. The milk, dung and urine of a goat have the same value as those of a cow, and the manure made from the goat's milk and waste is called "attottam," explains Dr. Nammalvar.

According to Mr. V.S. Arunachalam, who is responsible for developing attottam, this is among the best plant growth promoters for crops such as paddy, vegetables, cotton, chilli, groundnut, sesame, and flowering plants. It stimulates plant growth, stops withering of leaves and fruit buds, and improves the smell, taste and weight of the produce.

Aattottam is made by taking about 5kg of fresh goat's dung, 3 litres of goat's urine, 1.5 kg of either soya or groundnut cake or green gram or black gram (after grinding), and soaking them in water overnight. The next day about 2 litres of milk (goat's milk), curd, coconut water, toddy and sugarcane juice each, and about a dozen ripe bananas (any banana variety) are added to it.

### **Toddy substitute**

Toddy can also be substituted with about 50 gms of yeast dissolved in 2 litres of warm water and sugarcane juice can be substituted by adding 1 kg of jaggery dissolved in 2 litres of water. All the

ingredients should then be mixed together in a plastic drum and left under shade for about two weeks (14 days), after which the mix can be used.

### **Stir the solution**

It is advisable to stir the solution about 50 times in a clockwise and anticlockwise direction each, once during the day and again in the evening. The mouth of the plastic drum should be covered with a thin cotton cloth to prevent insects and worms from laying eggs on the surface of the solution. The shelf life of the solution is about six months, (provided it is stirred twice everyday in the manner explained above.) If the solution becomes too thick to stir over time, water or tender coconut water can be added to dilute it.

### **For an acre**

For an acre about two litres of attottam diluted in about 100 litres of water should be sprayed on the crops. Before pouring the solution into the hand sprayer, it should be filtered properly so the spraying holes do not get blocked. For good results, spray before flowering and fruit setting.

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