

## Profit in lakhs

Here profits are spoken in lakhs, though the land area is just one acre and only one or two types of vegetables are grown. Visitors Throng here right from London school of economics to the farmers of Kottayam. Everybody reach here to see 'thulliya pannayam' otherwise precision farming.

The attention of the entire nation is on our neighboring states Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts. They are the largest precision farming experimental plots of the nation and the smallest Indian replica of Isreal. The precision farming technology that has been harnessed by America and Isreal is now in India. Precision farming can be coined as 'exact' or 'precise'. In Tamil it is called as 'Thulliya Pannaya Vivasayam' which means farming using drop by drop of water.

Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri are not unknown to Keralites. Buses plying to Bangalore and Hosur pass through those two places. Dharmapuri is just before Hosur and Krishnagiri is close to Dharmapuri. The four lane highway of L&T crosses through these two districts. A majority of the Keralites should have passed through these districts knowingly or unknowingly. But none of us were aware of the silent revolution that was happening here.

In TamilNadu, the scientists are with the farmers in the field. They stay there for weeks. The result is record yield in all crops. The national average yield of brinjal is 16 tonnes/ha and the best farmers in TamilNadu obtained 80 tones whereas precision farmers got upto 350 tonnes/ha. The growth from 16 to 300's of tonnes is solely due to research. In tomato the national average is 17 tonnes/ha, the best farmer in TamilNadu obtained 60 tonnes whereas in precision farming the yield has 150 tonnes. Similarly banana national average stays at 35 tonnes, while precision farming yielded 120 tonnes. These are wonders indeed.

It was a great challenge for a team headed by Dr. E. Vadivel. They were to find 100 farmers for precision farming experimentation. This was the trouble in the first year. The second year saw yet another trouble of managing the farmers.

Dr. E. Vadivel is the Director of Extension Education in TamilNadu Agricultural University located at Coimbatore. The University took up the task of selling 400 ha of precision farming within 13years on behalf of the government. The university took up the tender for 7 ½ crores against a multinational company which quated 17 ½ crores. Dr. E. Vadivel was the leader with Dr. I. Muthuvel as his right hand, since the project has been successful, the Pondicherry government is now seeking for Dr. I. Muthuvel.

The blueprint of the project is as follows. To start with experimentation will be initiated in 100 ha with 100 farmers. In the second year it will be extended to 200 farmers. This was extended to 400 ha and 400 farmers in the consequent years. The estimate for 1ha of farming was Rs.75,000/- for drip and Rs.40,000/- for crop production. This amount was given as subsidy to the farmers by the government in the first year. In the subsequent year 10% of the subsidy was reduced and in the third year 20% was reduced. The governments aim was to uplift the farmers from the depression caused due to increased cost of production. To make farming profitable Dr. E. Vadivel and his team took up this task. Though discussions with farmers extended to weeks in farms, cattle sheds and godowns, they were not able to get even 50 farmers. They started the project with those available at hand. Other farmers who saw that something was happening around to joined in the project. A silent revolution, without even the media noticing it. Three years later, precision farming was highly talked about in Tamil media. The result was that many stakeholders wanted to become part of the project. The government yielded to this response. The project was sanctioned at 50% subsidy to all the districts.

The journey from Coimbatore to Krishnagiri takes 7 long hours. Hence the Krishi vigyan Kendra located at

Dharmapuri took active participation in the projects' implementation. A Regional Research station is located at Paiyur in between Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri. Here one staff quarters was converted into a guest house for the scientists who came from Coimbatore. The scientists contacted the farmers by staying here and so the distance between the farmers and scientists was reduced.

The farmers felt at home, when they visited the University. The trainees hostel provided for the farmers here is having a star hotels facilities. Five technology parks are established in TamilNadu Agricultural University to facilitate trainings at any time and on any subject. One of these technology parks is equipped with all the latest gadgets in information and communication technology. When university worked for farmers and farmers for university, the 100ha in Dharmapuri spread to the entire nation. There will be a period when TamilNadu will become India's' Israel.

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