

“REAPING A RICHER HARVEST” - Success story of an oil palm grower.

Mr. K. Shankarraaj, a successful oil palm grower at Kodangipatti near Bodinayakkanur shared his valuable experience in farming with us. He is now reaping a profit of about Rs.1,00,000 per month from his oil palm plantation. He had established his plantation in the year 2010. Before entering into oil palm cultivation, he had cultivated banana, sugarcane, maize etc. He also has a rich knowledge cum experience in allied activities like dairy and rabbit farming. He had realised the effectiveness of oil palm cultivation by the information that he could get from the Ruchi soya Industries limited. He had entered into a contract with the company. The company had assisted him in various operations and also to get subsidies from the agricultural department.

Cultivation practices:

Area of Cultivation: 3 hectare

Seedlings: Ruchi Soya company itself provided good quality three month old seedlings.

Variety: Tenera, a hybrid variety

Planting: The company had also done planting in his field at free of cost. Pits of 8 ft diameter were dug and the seedlings were planted in it. Triangular method of planting has been adopted by him.

Spacing: 30 X 30 ft.



Plant Population: 500 plants were initially planted out of which eight plants were damaged by rats. Now 492 plants are present in the field.

Irrigation: Drip irrigation is practiced by him. The source of irrigation water is bore well.



Weeding: The oil palm has a number of roots just below the upper surface of the soil. Hence one must be careful during weeding in order to avoid damage to the roots. He uproots the weeds outside the pit with a rotovator driven by a mini tractor. He has been applying glyphosate (Roundup) to destroy the weeds inside the pit.

Fertilizer application: Even though fertigation is recommended for oil palm, he is following top dressing twice a month with a fertilizer mixture of 1 kg / plant, containing following fertilizers,

Fertilizer	Dosage (g) / Plant
Urea	300
Single super phosphate	400
Murate of potash	200
Magnesium Sulphate	100



Harvest: Harvesting is done at 15 days once. Harvesting is done by using a long armed chisel. Only 2 labours are required to harvest 3ha of plantation. During harvest care must be taken to avoid damage to the leaf. If any male flowers are noted, it must be removed.

Yield: The oil palm begins economic yielding from the third year only. Up to third year the emerging inflorescence has to be removed in order to promote the vegetative growth of the plant. Now, the four year old plant yields about 20kg of fresh fruit bunches per harvest from a single plant.



Marketing Details:

The ripened fruit bunches are dispatched to collection centre of Ruchi soya industries limited at Theni. The price for the product is Rs. 7/kg.

Cost of Cultivation:

Since he was doing contract farming, the concerned company itself had done planting of seedlings in his field at free of cost. The initial investment include Rs.1,40,000 for drip irrigation stem installation and remaining 4,20,000 had been given as subsidy from the department. The cost of cultivation per harvest (15 days) for 3ha of plantation is given below,

S.No	Particulars	Quantity	Rate (Rs /qty)	Cost (Rs)
1	Urea	3 bags	280	840
2	SSP	4 bags	360	1440
3	MOP	2 bags	800	1600
4	Magnesium sulphate	1 bag	600	600
5	Roundup	12	175	2100
5	Labour for	2	200	400

	weedicide application			
6	Labour for fertiliser application	2	200	400
7	Labour for harvest	2	300	600
Total cost of cultivation				7,780

Economics of Cultivation:

The economics have been worked out for single harvest (15 days),

- Yield = 9,840 kg
- Price = Rs. 7 / kg
- Gross income = Rs. 68,880
- Net income = Rs. 61,100
- B : C Ratio = 7.8

Farmers experience:

Since there were many risks associated with banana and sugarcane cultivation, the farmer was in search for a farming practice that could provide him stable income and less labour requirements. After a series of analysis, he choose to go on with oil palm cultivation which proves to be highly benefiting option available to him. Though there were some problems like damage of plant by rats and rhinoceros beetle, it doesn't cause a considerable economic loss and he was able to control them. Now he had identified that damage by squirrels as indication of ripening and so he consider it as signal to harvest. He is willing to do mulching with plant waste, but considering the snake problems in his area, he is not practicing at present. Thus a sound knowledge and experience in farming made him to reap a rich harvest.



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(Affiliated to Tamil Nadu Agricultural University - Coimbatore)



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<<<<<< **Thank you** >>>>>>