

Only zero-budget farming can double food production, says Palekar

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Farmer Krishnappa displaying arecanut cultivated with zero-budget farming
Advocate of zero-budget spiritual farming Subhash Palekar has claimed that farmers' suicide in the country was observed among those practicing the chemical-farming methods.

Making a plea for encouraging chemical-free farming, Mr. Palekar said there were nearly 4 million farmers practicing zero-budget farming in the country who were prospering. Mr. Palekar, who interacted with media persons here on Saturday, said there was not a single example of farmers practicing zero-budget farming committing suicide, due to higher yield and low cost input. Zero-budget agriculture entails no external chemical inputs like fertilizers or insecticides.

While chemical farming methods yield about 12 quintals of basmati rice per acre, under the zero-budget farming method, yield was observed to be as high as 18 to 24 quintals, according to Mr. Palekar. Similarly, about 6 quintals of wheat per acre was the normal yield while it was 18 quintals under zero-budget farming.

The country's food output cannot be doubled through chemically-intensive agriculture methods or even conventional organic agriculture. Only zero-budget farming was could meet the country's food requirements.

Despite the obvious advantages of alternative methods, not many farmers were switching over to it due to government policies which link all credit, marketing, and insurance facilities to chemical-based agricultural practices, said Mr. Palekar.

More popular

He noted that the alternative method of farming was more popular in Karnataka, than in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh or Bihar.

He came down heavily on the organic farming policy of the State government on the grounds that it was more expensive than chemical-based agriculture. In Mysore region, there were nearly 400 to 500 farmers who had switched over to zero-budget agriculture and Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha leader Badagalpura Nagendra said the organisation was working to create awareness among farmers about its benefits.