

Agro-forestry Brings back smile to Dhani Ram

Dhani Ram Kushwaha alias Dhanua, a farmer of village Ubaro, Tehsil Niwari, Distt. Tikamgarh (MP) owns 4 acre cultivated land adjacent to forest area which is far away from his village. His holding is sloppy with typical red soil having poor nutrient status. This is only source of livelihood for Dhani Ram. Due to age old practices and continuous drought heTincome of Rs.14,000 per annum from land could barely meet his expenses On earning that an institute (NRC for Agro-forestry) has initiated a program in his village on water harvesting, crop demonstrations, and agro-forestry Dhani Ram approached the institute and requested to look at his field.



He opted for demonstration of agro-forestry systems in his field and installation of two gabion structure in nallah passing through his field. In kharif 2006, for demonstration Sh. Dhani Ram was provided with groundnut seed var. Kaushal and balanced doze of fertilizer for one acre land. He harvested 6 q groundnut yield from demonstration plots which was 1.5 times higher than his traditional practice. In following rabi season, he sowed w heat in four acre area out of which one acre was put to demonstration of var. WH-147 with recommended doze of fertilizers and package of practices.



The Centre demonstrated guava and citrus based agroforestry system on his three acre crop land. Sixty eight guava plants (cv. Allahabad Safeda) and forty two citrus plants (Kagzi) were planted at spacing of 6x8 m. Expenditure on pitting, FYM application, weeding and watering were met by farmer himself. During kharif and rabi demonstrations for ground nut and wheat were arranged which included truthful level seed of groundnut var. Kaushal and wheat var.WH-147 and balanced doze of fertilizer in terms of N P & K for one acre each crop.

During the year 2007, check dam near Dhani Ram's field over flew twice in monsoon resulting in 2 m water recharge in well. His income doubled in the very first year from crops. Farmer was supplied with seedlings of Lasoda for plantation along roadside, Karonda as live fence along one side of field boundary and teak on boundary bordering forest. [Live tree guards- to fight against annapratha] He was given aonla plants (cv Krishna) for planting in crop land on other side of nallah. He sowed sweet chilli in an area of 0.5 ha on the other side of nallah. He contributed forty percent for field bunding across the slope. Good rains, plenty of water in well, one year old improved seed of wheat accompanied with across the slope field bunding resulted in bumper wheat yield to the tune of 35 q/ha. After rabi harvest, he sowed brinjal, karela, chilli, bottle gourd, etc. in about 0.2 ha area for regular cash income during summer. In 2009 due to good antecedent moisture condition, the check dam over flew and again he harvested bumper kharif and rabi crops. Guava plants flowered and yielded about 2.0 q fruits which added to his regular income. In a small patch of about 50 m² he has transplanted napier grass for feeding to his bullocks. During rabi 2009 he had 21 crops/vegetables/spices/fruit trees in combination in the same field. The vegetables, fruits, crops, grasses are grown from the same land almost simultaneously. He never leaves field without crop and maintains the fertility of soil by use of organic manure. His family is getting year round employment and earning regular income. For the last 2 years, he is earning around 40-50 thousand per annum from his land. The smile brought back to Dhani Ram.

(Source: NAIP sub project on Mass Media Mobilization, DIPA base on inputs from Dr. S. K. Dhyani, Director, National Research Centre for Agroforestry, Jhansi)