Vellingiri farmers reap benefits by eliminating middlemen

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Coimbatore: Farmers in Vellingiri say their profits have gone up by 15% to 20% after eliminating middlemen, as they are now able to sell their produce directly to vendors at market price itself. This was part of the financial report presented at the Farmer Producer Organisation’s annual general body meeting held at Isha Yoga Center on Friday.

The Farmer Producer Organisation was formed in 2013 to bring together small farmers and directly in contact with vendors, so as to increase their profits. The project, coordinated by Isha Yoga Center, aimed to allow farmers enjoy market price of their produce. The organisation made a business of nearly Rs10 crore in just a year of their formation.

“Coconut worth about Rs8 crore was sold directly to the Kangeyam Mill and arecanut worth around Rs1.5 crore was sold directly to vendors,” said Venkataraman, coordinator for FPO.

They said the middleman was eliminated in two ways—by creating their own harvest and de-husking infrastructure and introducing them directly to sellers. “Earlier they used to depend on traders for harvesting the produce and de-husking the nuts.

But now we have five to six harvesting and de-husking teams, which makes our product market ready,” said Venkataras. “Then we educated them about the prevailing market price, so they could demand a comparatively reasonable rate from the vendors,” he said.

The organisation’s member strength, which has gone up from 250 people in 2013 to 1,000 and 12 directors two years later, was also highlighted at the meeting.

Other activities taken up include training farmers on fertilizer management by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, increasing productivity by scientists from CPCRI, Kasargode, and rainwater harvesting by Ayyappa Maasagi from Bangalore.

“In addition to this, loans were sanctioned to 30 farmers to install drip irrigation facilities. Farmers were also accorded permission to sell their produce directly in Uzhavar Sandhais across the city,” said K Radhakrishnan, advisor at FPO.

For the benefit of the farmers, a retail store that sells manure, fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural products was also opened near Isha Yoga Centre in Vellingiri.