One lakh model farms created in TN

Chemical fertilisers cause suicide for farmers: Palekar

The well known organic farming crusader, Subhash Palekar, has charged that the use of chemical fertilisers for crop cultivation is the key reason for the continuing, poignant trail of suicides by debt-ridden farmers in India.

Use of chemical fertilisers initially increases productivity, but in the long run, has ruined the soil, led to low yield and piling debts for the farmers, eventually prompting the farmers to commit suicide, Subhash Palekar said. He was in Palladam in Tirupur to inaugurate the eight-day workshop for farmers on Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) organised by the Isha's Project Green Hands and Sony.

However, Subhash Palekar struck a note of optimism, adding that he had seen the hope that more youth will take up organic farming and become aware about theills of using chemical fertilisers.

About one lakh model farms under ZBNF have been created in Tamil Nadu with the support of Isha. “It will grow more in the coming days,” he said.

The focus has been on farmers to follow natural farming, since the concept of ZBNF has the potential to make India self-sufficient in agricultural production. India is still depending on import of various agricultural products.

A retired superintendent engineer of Tangedco, R. Ponmurugam, has also jumped on to the organic bandwagon. He says although he used to engage in farming during his service in Tangedco, now he has turned into a full-time organic farmer. He has cultivated maize, vegetables, coconut and greens in his four acres of land near Tirupur.

What makes organic farming lucrative? Low cultivation cost and satisfaction yield, which is almost on par with farming using chemical fertilisers, he says.

Organic farming votary Subhash Palekar at the inauguration of workshop on Zero Budget Natural Farming at Palladam in Tirupur district on Thursday. DC

Go green, you won’t be in red, say Tamil Nadu organic farmers

S KATHTHASAMI | DC

Organic farming is not just healthy for your body, but profitable for your purse too. If you go green, you can avoid being in the red, say organic farmers in western Tamil Nadu.

Farmers have shifted to organic farming as they are deriving profits from their crops.

A coconut farmer Radhakrishnan from Athappan Goundan Pudur in Coimbatore district is now in his withering 78s. He was at one time on the brink of suicide, but he shifted to organic farming.

“About a decade ago I switched over to the natural farming based on guidance from Isha. I have benefitted from organic farming,” he says.

Subbayan started with 10 acres of experimental organic farming. But now, he has extended it to 25 acres, taking lands on lease.

“I am maintaining coconut farms through natural system of agricultural practice and also producing fodder and various crops,” he said.

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Besides, organic food crops like rice and wheat are in huge demand because of the soaring awareness about the ill effects of chemical fertilisers.

Thangaraj, a farmer from Uduimalpet says, “There is more demand for the paddy cultivated in my land by natural farming. There is a huge difference in quality of organic rice and inorganic rice.”

A farmer from Hosur, Chandrasekaran, is growing sugarcane and vegetables in an organic way. ‘The quality of cane and vegetables in my farm is really much better. With guidance from experts, some issues that crop up in organic farming can be resolved,” he asserts.