

Revitalization of rice farming in Idukki District with high yielding Akshaya variety of rice

Details of success stories:

1. Background

The agriculture in Kerala has undergone significant structural changes in the form of decline in the share of Gross State Domestic Product and commercialization of agriculture. The gross cropped area and the net sown area in the state have declined over a period of time. During 1999-2000, and 2017-18 districts like, Idukki, Ernakulum, Palakkad, Wayanad and Kannur districts have shown declining growth rate in area under paddy cultivation which is less than the state average. Idukki, known as the spice bowl of the state have shown declining trends in both area and production.

To bring about a change in this negative trend, and to create an awareness regarding the importance of rice cultivation in maintaining ecological balance, KVK, Idukki has started a demonstration on cultivation of Akshaya variety of rice in 2019-20. Akshaya (PTB-62), is developed from the two varieties of Pranav and Chettadi by Regional Agricultural Research station, Pattambi. Akshaya with a better yield than Uma, Swetha and Karuna will help to bring back the lost glory of Idukki in rice cultivation

Source of Technology: Regional Agricultural Research station, Pattambi

2. Intervention process

- Accessibility to the technology and availability of all basic resources
- Timely intervention on different stages of growth of Rice
- Advisory services.
- Follow-up visits and technical support as and when required.

3. Intervention Technology

- The demonstration was initiated during the years 2019-20 in 2 ha of area with a broad vision to bring back the farmers to rice cultivation.
- Between 2019 and 2020, in order to educate the farmers regarding the various requisites of rice production, KVK has conducted numerous trainings regarding the production practices of Akshaya variety of Rice.
- Timely intervention, was provided not just for farming activities, but also for allied support inventory.

4. Impact - Horizontal Spread

Before the intervention of KVK, rice cultivation was almost getting wiped away from the agricultural map of Idukki. After the demonstration farming on 2ha of land, the number of farmers who are interested to take up rice farming has increased. This is evident from the increased requests for more trainings and planting materials.

5. Impact- Vertical spread

During the period 1980-81 to 2011-12, Idukki, have lower negative cumulative growth rate in area compared to the state average. But through this demonstration farming, KVK was able to obtain a better grain yield of 7 t/ ha and a straw yield of 14 t/ha. This will surely prove to be an eye opener for the farmers, that rice cultivation can also be profitable in their local conditions.

6. Impact - Economic Gains

On the basis of costs incurred and revenue generated an economic analysis was conducted and we obtained a Benefit Cost ratio of 2.8. The ratio point towards the popular myth that only cash crop cultivation is profitable.

Conclusion

Akshaya variety of rice when cultivated on 2ha of land was successful with good grain and straw yield. This initiative of KVK, will throw light upon the forgotten rice cultivation history of the district.

Steps for Scaling – up:

- Large Scale demonstrations will be conducted in convergence with line departments of Idukki.
- The KVK will ensure that the majority of the growers are benefited by such programmes.
- Trainings will be conducted to popularize rice framing among the farmers.
- Brochures and other literary works will be published to give the farmers a quick summary.
- Feedback will be obtained and their constraints will be met on a timely basis.

