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Integrated Farming System- an Approach to Double the Farmer's Income

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SUMMARY

Integrated Farming System is the type of farming in which various types of agricultural production activities or agricultural enterprises take place simultaneously. It delivers more sustainable agriculture, provides dynamic approach and can be applied to any farming in the world. The benefits and goals of integrated farming system is enhancing productivity, livelihood improvement and environment safety. The practice of farming system leads to promotion of agro-forestry, increase input efficiency, cost minimization, employment generation, energy saving and continuous income throughout the year.

INTRODUCTION

Integrated Farming System (IFS) is an interrelated and interdependent often interlocking production systems and which is based on a small number of crops, animals and related subsidiary enterprises in such a way that reduces the utilization of nutrients of each system and minimize the negative effects of these enterprises on environment. Integrated Farming System (IFS) is a farming practice meant for all-round development of agriculture with animal husbandry and other occupations related to core agricultural practices. It has the capability to make the sector profitable. It is based on the concept that 'there is no waste' and 'waste is only a misplaced resource' which can turn into a valuable material for another product. Sustainable agriculture, an integrated approach to increasing the farm yield and managing resources in order to address all three critical aspect of sustainability: economic, environmental and social. The IFS approach has multiple objectives of sustainability, food security and poverty reduction. In general farmers work hard but do not make profits due to high cost of production and inputs. However, the emergence of Integrated Farming Systems (IFS) has enabled the feasibility of small sized farming operations in relation to larger ones. It refers to agricultural systems that integrate livestock and crop production or integrate fish and livestock and may sometimes be known as Integrated Bio systems. In this system, an inter-related set of enterprises is used so that the "waste" from one component becomes an input for another part of the system, which reduces cost and improves production and/or income.

So, why Integrated Farming?

- IFS involves two or more production systems to function together on parallel footing
- Enhanced productivity
- Recycling of resources
- Reduction in production cost
- Enhanced efficiency in resource utilization
- Reduced investment risk through diversification of crops.
- Sustainability l Increased income
- Improve standard of living

Doubling Farmer's Income through Integrated Farming System:

If the majority of the farmers operated on a combination of farming enterprises which gave them sustained cash flow to manage many of the farm activities. Fundamentally there are three ways in which income of farmers may be enhanced by increasing the gross income, reducing the costs and stabilizing the income. Complementary relations that could exist among farm enterprises are rarely exploited as farmers have been increasingly depending on purchased inputs and preferring solo enterprises rather than a mix of them. Integrated farming system (IFS) is an innovative and unique approach to promote efficient land use and animal management techniques based on biophysical resources, particularly of small and marginal farmers. In spite of the advantages

of farming systems, their adoption by farmers is not high due to limitation of available production technologies, biophysical or geophysical constraints, labour and input market constraints, financial and credit constraints, social norms, inter-temporal trade-offs, policy constraints, and constraints to knowledge or skills. Diversification can be a major game changer. Diversification towards high value crops is required to improve both income and resource use efficiency. Similarly, diversification towards livestock, poultry and non-farm activities is considered ideal, especially for small holders who do not possess adequate land to generate enough income for the family. Diversification of agriculture offers food and nutrition security, income growth, diversification of sources of income, poverty alleviation, employment generation, judicious use of land and water resources, sustainable agricultural development, and environmental improvement. The substantial additional income could be generated by practising different enterprise combinations based on the location specificity and capability of farmers (Rautaray *et al*., 2005; Ponnusamy, 2006).

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that diversification of existing farming systems with change in crops, cropping systems, addition and improvement of livestock components, inclusion of horticulture, kitchen garden, primary and secondary processing, boundary plantations are essential to improve the on-farm income of small holders in India. This also paves way for meeting the household demand of balanced food, improved recycling of nutrients and water besides increasing the on-farm employment for family."Thus, Integrated Farming System (IFS) can enhance farmers' income if we provide a well-designed system,"

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