

CASHEWNUT: A CASH CROP FOR GADAG DISTRICT

SUCCESS STORY OF A FARMER

Krishi Vigyan Kendra is not sparing any technology that addresses the livelihood constraints of farm families caused by frequent occurrence of agriculture drought in Gadag district. After succeeding promotion of dry land mango cultivation that has brought smile on the faces of the farmers of red soil area, KVK has introduced cashewnut cultivation in the district. The crop is new to the district. KVK consulted Scientists of ICAR-Central Coastal Agricultural Research Institute, Goa and Directorate of Cashew Research, Puttur and planted cashewnut in 3 acres in KVK's Instructional Farm in the year 2011-12. There has been a lot of discussion between KVK Scientists and farmers regarding the adaptability and profitability of cashewnut cultivation. The crop was established well in KVK's Instructional Farm.

Shri Siddappa Karikatti, an innovative farmer of Hulkoti village in Gadag district who was impressed by the cashewnut orchard in KVK's Farm, introduced cashewnut (Variety:Ullal-1) in his farm during 2012-13 as an inter crop in intra row spacing of his 6 years old mango orchard of 3-32 acres. A total of 180 cashewnut grafts were planted. KVK facilitated him to procure grafts from Directorate of Cashewnut Research, Puttur and provided the guidance of cashewnut crop cultivation. After seeing the successful establishment of cashewnut, the farmer introduced another 100 plants as an inter crop in his adjacent mango orchard of 2 acres during 2014-15.

It is interesting to note that there is no irrigation source for the farmer. The crop is established very well under rainfed situation with supplementary watering through his own water tankers. The water was brought from nearby Chikkahandigol village tank. Mr. Karikatti says that 18 tankers (3000 litres capacity) are needed to water the plants once. He says that during establishment stages of crop during first year, he used to water 5-6 times in a year. Now the crop has been established very well and watering is given only during flowering and fruiting stages, he says. There are some 80 gaps in the orchard which have been filled by planting Vengurla-4 variety brought from Fruit Research Station, Vengurla, Maharashtra State.

Apart from harvesting good yield from Mango crop, Mr. Karikatti harvested first batch of cashewnut fruits during 2014-15. On an average he harvested 1 kg of raw fruits per plant. A total of 3.3 quintals of raw fruits were harvested. He sold the fruits to the traders in Belgaum city at the rate of Rs.104/kg, thus earning an income of Rs.46,000 from 3-32 acres. During the subsequent year, 3.70 quintals of raw fruits were harvested. Nuts were sold at Rs.150/kg, earning an income of Rs.59,000/-. Mr. Karikatti says that this is a good income considering drought situation during 2014-15 and 2015-16. Apart from income from cashewnut, he got good income from Mango (Rs.64,000/-) and intercrop of Greengram crop (Rs.70,500/-)

When asked about comparison of cashewnut cultivation with that of mango, Mr. Karikatti says that, cashew is hardy crop, less labour intensive and minimum incidence of pest of disease. The fruiting season of both cashew and mango are same and hence there is least maintenance cost. Further, he says that mango is an alternative bearer and cashew is regular bearer. Profitability in

cashewnut cultivation is more as prices are stable compared to mango and mango fruits are perishable in nature whereas cashewnuts can be stored for longer period.

The profitability in cashewnut can be further enhanced if processing facilities of raw fruits are made available. The apple which is left unutilised can be processed into different value added products, he says.

Looking into the successful cultivation of cashewnut by Mr. Siddappa Karikatti and in KVK Farm, 60 acres of area has been brought under cashewnut cultivation by the farmers in Hulkoti and surrounding villages under the guidance of KVK Scientists. Further, KVK motivated these farmers to organised in to an association named "Cashewnut Farmers Association". KVK has been guiding the association members in cashewnut production technology and value addition activities. In the years to come it is expected that more area would be brought under cashewnut cultivation and more profitability through processing and value addition activities.