

►► AGRICULTURE

cient. Being a mix of organic material exclusively, when it is mixed with soil after fermentation it retains the moisture so less water is needed for irrigation.

Mr. Barve insists, "Farming is our main source of income but it is supported by manufacturing and selling of Green Harvest." Ginger (satar), black turmeric (rich in medicinal properties) and bhagwa pomegranate are grown at the farm along with mango, sugarcane, cereals and pulses. All the produce is sold in Pune and Mumbai markets. "Though our farm is organic, we do not sell our produce under organic label but shops in Pune and Mumbai are selling our farm grown pomegran-

ate under organic label regularly. They give us premium price for the same," he shares. Farm has more than 1000 mango trees having 14 varieties. Biodiversity is maintained at the farm. "We are also growing specific vegetables on contract basis," he adds. A small dairy unit of 45 desi cows is also maintained at the farm. "We procure 30litres milk/day. 10 litres milk is sold, 5-6litres is used by us and rest we process to make ghee. We sell milk at Rs. 80/litre and ghee is sold at Rs.3000/kg. The income we get with cows is Rs. 30,000-40,000/month," he informs. Farming is self-sufficient profession if done with systematic planning and awareness like the farming

model of Mr. Jayant Barve. "Only farm produce goes out from my farm and not money! Instead of only thinking on getting higher price in the market farmers must focus to bring down input cost in farming and growing healthy food," he concludes. Up gradation of soil every year could be called the bonus of the organic farm.

Our Correspondent

Contact details- Jayashree Organic Garden & Sustainable Agriculture Research Institute, No. 484, Kaushik Vita, Taluka Khanapur, District Sangli – 415 311, Maharashtra, Phone: 02347 -272141 , 09422615878 Email: jjbarve@yahoo.com, ncfvita@gmail.com Web: <http://www.naturecarefertilizers.com/>

Harvest Fresh Farms

Promoting farming through agri tourism

“ We got into agri tourism to ‘in spire’ people visiting our farm to get into farming,” Mr. Kurian Jose Jr, CEO Harvest Fresh Farms shares, with having started the business in 2009. “Also it helps to earn additional revenue to run the farm independently.” They are into organic farming. Farm is located at Melagudalur, near Thekkady, Kerala. Produce of the farm include organic fruits namely pomegranate, papaya, passion fruit, mango, guava, sapota, coconut, tender coconut etc. The products are sold under the brand name Harvest Fresh in retail packages of 1 and 2 kg.

“We started developing the property in 2009. It is part of our family business started by my father Mr. Kurian Jose Sr. We started the project in a barren land and we started from scratch,” he shares. Initially about INR 2 crore was invested to develop the farm. Also there are plans to invest another INR

2.5 crore to add 10 more independent cottages with a farm, restaurant, swimming pool, conference facility for 30 people, and both indoor and outdoor recreations. “We have received more than 500 guests so far for daytrips as well as farm stay,” he shares. “Even corporate companies have started showing interest to come over when we have more facilities to accommodate more people.”

Guest are provided complete farm tour and kept engaged in various farming activities like learning organic farming, making of compost, organic manure and feeding cows and poultry. Other activities include cycling, reading books from library, playing board games, and trekking or visit to nearby farms. “They can also visit Periyar Tiger Reserve (Thekkady) which is only 12 km from our farm,” Mr. Jose Jr adds.

“We have guests from abroad as well



Kurian Jose Jr.

as from India,” he shares proudly. “And we are well experienced now to cater to guests from abroad as well as from India.”

“Farm stay needs more care and effort since the guest spends more time at the farm and we have to take care of them, keep them engaged and occupied,” Mr. Jose Jr shares. However equal importance is given to both farm stay and day trips because “Both the activities are very important for us.”

The farm house comprise of 3 bedrooms, a living room and a kitchenette. “We can accommodate up to 12 guests by providing extra bed,” Mr. Jose Jr adds. However a group up to 160 persons can be attended in case of day trip. Cooking at the farm is done using biogas produced at the farm however LPG gas is also used when there are more guests. Service includes day trips or



farm stay. Bookings have to be done 24 hrs in advance. "We only cook food against confirmed bookings," he clarifies. The farm is listed with prominent online booking sites such as booking.com, makemytrip, agoda, cleartrip, travel guru, trip advisor etc. "We also have online booking facility through our web www.harvestfresh.in," he shares.

Tariff includes INR 3500/- per room inclusive of breakfast for two persons. Lunch and dinner is also provided for additional cost. The cost for a guided farm tour is INR 200 with only welcome drink and INR 850 with lunch or dinner. Bullock cart ride is also offered at Rs 1500. Only local cuisine, either Kerala or Tamilnadu food is provided. "The best time to visit is from September to February," he shares. "The monsoon period from July is also equally good." The farm employs a manager, 2 supervisors, and one supervisor for F & B and housekeeping. "We also have plumber, electrician, cook, and security and approximately 15 to 20 workers everyday are working at our farm," he adds.

"We had to train our staff and local workers from the neighborhood right from welcoming the guest, serving food, setting the table, housekeeping, conducting farm tour, and explaining the various activities at our farm," Mr. Jose Jr explains some challenges faced. Also some renovation was done at the farm to serve the guests better. To promote the business of the farm the company has a website and an active Facebook page wherein all the activities at the farm are updated. Advertisement through the media and participation in travel and organic trade fairs are also done. "A lot of TV channels have covered our farm and that has created a lot of awareness about our farm and its activities," Mr. Jose Jr shares.

The farm plans to start producing pomegranate syrup, jelly juice etc. "We will also introduce organic honey," Mr. Jose Jr highlights. Some recreations to be introduced include basketball, volleyball, pool table and table tennis. A complete weekend getaway!

Our Correspondent

Contact details- Harvest Fresh Farms
Lower Camp, Melagudalur, Near Thekkady,
Idukki (District), Kerala Ph: 093886 10249
Email: info@harvestfresh.in
Web: <http://www.harvestfresh.in/>

R S Farm

Dairy farm in Punjab provides free cooking gas to 75+ homes

Free cooking gas!!! In today's world where nothing comes without money R S Farm supplies free bio gas across Bahadurpur village, Punjab. R

S Farm is a dairy farm maintaining the herd of 150 cows. The milk produced is processed into value added products and sold through farm's own outlets in cities in and around Bahadurpur village. The by-product of bio-gas, the left over waste is sold as manure to farmers in the village.

"We had developed sewage system and rainwater system in our village five years before. Due to this effort entire village was transformed into a global village just like in a developed country. Next step was to put up a biogas plant to produce free cooking gas.

We asked our fellow villagers to deposit cow dung at the plant if they wish to get free gas. It was a challenging to keep waiting for cow dung collection so we started our own dairy farm," shares Mr. S. Dilbar Singh, head of Singh Family, founders of R S Farm.

The farm was set up as a small initiative to produce free cooking gas but later it had grown and expanded into a processing factory to produce milk based food items. First talking about bio-gas, "We got the plan and design of bio-gas plant from a professor at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. Following the design we constructed the plant through the local contractors," says Mr. Singh. The bio-gas plant is 130 cubic meters in size installed in 60*40 ft area. 10 thousand liters of cow dung along with cow urine is fed into the bio-gas plant and after processing the bio gas is produced. It is a complete automatic process that does not need any human intervention. The produced bio



S. Dilbar Singh

gas is supplied to 75 plus homes in the village through pipelines. "If we fill the gas cylinders then approximately 10-12 cylinders/day will be filled easily," says Mr. Singh on approximate quantity of bio-gas produced at the plant every day. The plant runs 24/7 hence all through the year unlimited gas is supplied for free to all the village homes except four months in winters when it is restricted to 6 hrs/day. When asked reason for giving biogas for free he promptly says, "We foresee to make our village independent in best way possible and we wanted to do something good for our homeland." The waste/slurry left behind after producing bio gas is rich manure. It is sold to the farmers in Bahadurpur and nearby villages at a very minimum price in order to keep farmers away from

RAJ & COMPANY

King of Herbs

India's No.1 Medicinal Plants seed
supplier and more than 360 types of
Raw herbs available!

Behind Katzu Market, Near Parsi Temple,
Neemuch (M.P.) 458441
Phone: 07423-221600 Mobile: 09826021601
Email: rajspicenmh@yahoo.in
Website: www.rajnco.com