

PROFITS IN ORGANIC FARMING

CONCEPT AND SUCCESS STORIES

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ORGANIC FARMING

Organic production is a holistic system designed to optimize the productivity and fitness of diverse communities within the agro-ecosystem, including soil organisms, plants, livestock and people. The principal goal of organic production is to develop enterprises that are sustainable and harmonious with the environment.

Organic farming is very profitable. But to gain these profits care should be taken & all the agronomic practices i.e., from soil management techniques, selection of planting material, selection of varieties, planting methods, weed management, disease management to pest control everything has to be done organically. Use of chemicals is prohibited in organic farming. Different soil building practices such as crop rotations, intercropping, mixed cropping, symbiotic associations, use of cover crops, use of organic fertilizers and minimum tillage are central to organic practices. The crop should be selected according to the climatic conditions of the growing area. Farmers can consult the agriculture department of their area for the better understanding of the practices involved in organic farming.

PROFITS IN ORGANIC FARMING THE SUCCESS STORIES

Success Story 1

"ORGANIC FARMING BROUGHT HUGE PROFIT FOR ME"

- Story of Renupada Bagdi

At the age of 70, Renupada Bagdi of Doniapur village in Birbhum district of West Bengal is on a mission to convince his fellow farmers to take up organic farming just like he did few years ago. He knows from his experience that chemical fertilizers do not yield upto the extent as the companies make it out to be. Chemicals just deteriorate the soil and the produce while organic farming results in healthy and nutritious food and also saves the environment.

Renupada Bagdi did farming by using chemical fertilizers for around 30-35 years. He said that he didn't find conventional farming profitable as he could grow only a single crop. He hardly used to earn around Rs 3,000 per month which was barely enough to meet the expenses of his family.

In the beginning he was not convinced about organic farming when a team from the Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC), a non-governmental development organization, first approached him with the idea of organic farming in 2012. He was worried that it could not only hamper his farming but could also destroy his land making it unfit for further cultivation. Contrary to his expectations, it brought huge profits for him. His income soared from Rs 3,000 to Rs 12,000 every month because he started growing multiple crops on his farm in one season. And he started motivating his fellow farmers to practice organic farming on their farms.

Success Story 2

PUNE BROTHERS QUIT HIGH PAYING JOBS FOR ORGANIC FARMING & EARNING ABOUT RS 30 LAKHS PER MONTH

Satyajit and Ajinka Hange grew up alternating between two very different worlds. One was their Anglo-Indian boarding school in Pune city and the other was their rural agrarian family. From kindergarten to post-graduation, the sibling-duo lived in the city. Having completed their Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from Pune University, they climbed the corporate ladder to work for top MNCs like Citibank, DBS, HD FC, and HSBC for nearly a decade. The monthly paycheck and lifestyle were cushy but there wasn't satisfaction or inner peace. Their weekend trips to the village had instilled a love for farming in them. Then they decided to do organic farming. Initially the Hange brothers started practicing organic farming on a small piece of land. Now they are doing organic farming on a 20-acre farm, making an annual turnover of Rs 3 crore "The big switch".

In Western Maharashtra, where sugarcane was chemically grown on a large scale, the Hange brothers decided to go natural with a mixed fruit orchard. It was water-efficient, required lesser tilling and had a longer shelf-life. For the first four years, they ran into losses. The middlemen had turned them helpless. With no logistics, the two brothers put the papayas in a commercial tempo and turned to the local haathgaadi (hand-cart) vendors under bridges. They worked with these street vendors for eight months, until the head of a Star Bazaar tasted the papayas. A

meeting with the owner of the enterprise went from 15 minutes to nearly two hours. They were given a rack at each of the mall outlets with no extra charge or rent. They moved on to have a successful stint selling with top retailers, but over the time, they realized that there were hardly any dedicated organic markets which would fetch them the price their top-notch produce was worth. Ajinkya said that they thought that "On the floor of a mall, our produce was being sold like any other crop which was grown chemically. To us, we were growing gold. So we wanted someone who would sell that gold with the same vigour".

Soon, they distanced themselves from middlemen and retail chains and worked for their produce to reach their customer's doorstep. Today, their customer base, in addition to the hundreds of organic food enthusiasts, includes top business tycoons and A-listers from Bollywood too.

It is concluded that Organic farming is very profitable, but for this farmers need to take some precautions and lots of care. All the agronomic practices should be practiced organically. Use of chemicals should be avoided. It is necessary for the organic growers to get their produce certified. If growers are making efforts wholeheartedly then organic farming can actually change their lives by increasing their income and raising their standard of living.