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THURSDAY



A Gold-Producing Crop in the Drought Land

Anantapur farmer Pandurangappa turns barren land into a profitable areca nut plantation

Once known for dust, despair and migration due to water scarcity, Madakasira mandal in Anantapur district is now witnessing a green transformation. Farmer Pandurangappa from Kothula Gutta village is an inspiring example, successfully cultivating areca nut along with mulberry, pomegranate and groundnut and earning good profits.

Key Cultivation Details

- 450 areca nut plants per acre
- Pit planting with compost and drip irrigation
- Hybrid varieties yield in 4 years, local varieties in 6–6.5 years
- Best yield in 8–10 years
- Each tree yields around 10 kg of areca nuts
- Once planted, it can yield for nearly 100 years

Market Prices & Returns

- Fresh areca nuts: ₹5,500 – ₹6,000 per quintal
- Processed dried nuts: ₹45,000 – ₹50,000 per quintal
- Pandurangappa harvested 50 quintals and sold at ₹6,300 per quintal
- Total income: ₹3,15,000
- Annual investment per acre: ₹60,000

Net Profit: ₹2,50,000 per acre

Farmer's Demands

- Local market facility in Anantapur
- Subsidy for concrete drying yards and gunny bags
- 24-hour water supply through Handri–Neeva project
- Currently, only 4 out of 10 borewells are working
- Assured irrigation can stop migration and improve farmer livelihoods



Grapes Bring Sweet Profits

Anantapur farmer Krishnareddy's 40-year journey in grape cultivation

Farmer Krishnareddy from Ramanepalli village, Raptadu mandal, Anantapur district, has been successfully cultivating grapes for 40 years. With the Handri–Neeva project, water availability has improved, making grape cultivation easier and more profitable.

Cultivation & Investment

- 250 plants per acre (₹150 per plant)
- Initial investment: around ₹5 lakh per acre (wires, poles, labour, plants etc.)
- First harvest in 18 months
- Drip irrigation with 12-62-00, EsPOTASH, 10-26 complex fertilisers
- Back cutting in December, harvest in 100–120 days
- Planting: January–March | Harvest: June–August

Yield & Income

- 40–50 tonnes from 2 acres
- Gross income: around ₹25 lakh
- Net profit (first year): ₹5–6 lakh
- Market price: ₹56 – ₹60 per kg (sometimes ₹40)
- Traders from Guwahati, West Bengal, Nepal, Delhi, Odisha, Nagpur buy directly from the farm

Advantages

- Drip irrigation reduces water and fertiliser use
- One person can spray with tractor (earlier 4 labourers)
- 40–50 labourers per acre for harvest (₹600 per day)

Impact

- Improved family income
- Children studying in corporate colleges
- A role model for other farmers



El Nino Hits Tandoor Pigeon Pea Crop

Even fields near the project face severe water stress

Due to El Nino impact, pigeon pea crops are drying up across Vikarabad district, leaving farmers in distress. Despite expecting rains, the lack of rainfall and power cuts have severely affected the crop. Even fields just one kilomete from the Sarpanpalli project have dried up.

Key Facts

- 2025-26 production: 1.67 lakh quintals (Vikarabad)
- Area under cultivation this year: 1,11 lakh acres
- Tandoor pigeon pea got GI tag in Dec 2022
- Crops in Vikarabad, Kodangal, Pargi mandals severely hit

Expert Suggestion

- Provide irrigation once or twice to save the crop
- Tandoor pigeon pea has high domestic and international demand
- Without timely rains, remaining crop may also be lost

– Dr. Sudharani,
Tandoor Agricultural Research Centre

Farmer's Experience

- B. Jangayya from Gottimukla village spent ₹40,000 per acre
- Crop dried up due to lack of water and power supply
- Despite a nearby stream, water could not be supplied
- Finally removed the pigeon pea crop and sowed chickpea (Bengal gram)