

Direct seeding method a hit with farmers

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The direct seeding methodology of rice cultivation has crossed 10,000 acre mark this year in Punjab if statistics provided by the research and development wing of a food and beverages company are to be believed.

Though PAU experts have not confirmed the 10,000 acre mark, they said the direct seeding methodology had multiple benefits. It saved labour as well as water and a farmer could finish sowing in a well-stipulated time.

According to experts of the company that is offering farmers a free access to direct seeding machines, the direct seeding methodology results in 30 per cent reduction in water consumption apart from Rs 1,500 per acre reduction in the cost of cultivation and about 50 per cent reduction in labour per acre.

During a programme organised yesterday at Barnala, the company felicitated the farmers who had switched over to the direct seeding methodology.

The farmers claimed that



Farmers at a programme on direct seeding methodology near Ludhiana. PHOTO: INDERJEET VERMA

! Paddy consumes more than 50 per cent of water consumed in agriculture. Traditionally, paddy is grown by planting seeds in a small nursery and manually transplanting the paddy saplings after about four weeks to the main cultivation area. The saplings are then allowed to grow and the fields are kept under about three to four inches of water, mainly to reduce the growth of weeds. This "flood irrigation" method results in high consumption of water

they were being provided technical support throughout the cultivation process by trained field extension staff and also offered free seeds in the initial stages.

"In 2007, the land covered under the direct seeding methodology in Punjab was

150 acres. It increased to 500 acres in 2008. The year, 2012, now marks a 20-fold increase to 10,500 acres in the state. Presently, our company has brought over 13,000 acres of land under direct seeding in India," claimed the company officials.