

Says farmers can save 30 pc of water, benefit cost-wise too

PepsiCo Optimistic Of Direct Paddy Seeding Project In Punjab

FW BUREAU
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Enthused by successful trials of innovative methodology of direct seeding for paddy cultivation at Jallowal, PepsiCo India has planned to implement the technology on about 1000 acre of land in Punjab, Rajasthan, UP and Maharashtra in the current paddy season.

Nearly 600 farmers will be engaged in this new way of paddy transplantation this year. In Punjab and Rajasthan, the company has planned to cover about 600 acre of land,

benefiting more than 400 farmers. Company officials have held that through this technology, farmers can save 30 pc of water and can also reduce the production cost by Rs 1250 to Rs 1,450 compared to traditional paddy cultivation.

As per the information, PepsiCo India carried out paddy trials for the first time in 2004 at its R&D farms in Jallowal, using direct manual seeding of paddy rather than transplantation of paddy saplings. Direct seeding was then carried out in the fields of 12 farmers, covering about 20 acres, an area which last year

was increased to 100 acre. The irrigation frequency for direct seeding was reconfirmed to be lower by about 30 pc and the production costs decreased by over Rs 1000 per acre.

The output in direct seeding was found to be marginally higher due to better seeding density. Local farmers, who visited PepsiCo's R&D farm where the trials were held, were shown the crops before harvesting and the advantages of direct seeding was shared with them.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sushil Sankhiyan, General Manager-Agriculture, PepsiCo

India, said, "Paddy cultivation is known to be very water intensive. Over a period of time, this has resulted in a decline of the water table in Punjab. PepsiCo India, as a part of its effort to improve sustainability in Indian agriculture and to reduce water consumption, has introduced this unique technique of paddy cultivation through direct seeding. We are delighted to see that the technique has been accepted extremely well by the farmers."

He further added, "PepsiCo India aims to implement the methodology to over 1000 acres of land nationally." ♦