

New technique in paddy cultivation reduces water consumption by 40%

States Bureau
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PepsiCo India on Wednesday said that its direct seeding experimentation for paddy cultivation in Punjab has been successful. The technique, the company said, has reduced water consumption by 40% and production costs by over Rs 1000 an acre.

The trial fields, which were cultivated using the new technique, are in the process of being harvested. The colagiant conducted the last leg of the trial, in partnership with farmers in Jallowal, on 20 acres of land.

Prior to field trials, the company had carried out experiments to reduce water consumption during paddy cultivation at its R&D farms in Jallowal, for over three years.

Generally, paddy is grown by seed plantation in a small nursery and then manual paddy saplings' transplantation is done. The saplings are then allowed to grow and fields are kept under three feet of water, mainly to reduce weeds' growth. But water consumption of this puddle irrigation method is high.

The direct seeding methodology, successfully tested by



PepsiCo India, has shown to substantially reduce water consumption and production cost. PepsiCo India's executive director (exports and external

affairs) Abhiram Seth 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. Moreover, farmers have been incurring high-energy cost due to extensive running of the pump sets."

The company, in an effort to improve sustainability in agriculture, started the project three years ago to share the results of the direct seeding trials with a larger community of farmers.

It also wants to popularise the method to reduce water consumption and production costs during paddy cultivation.