

News monitored for: Pepsi - Corporate

MAIL TODAY

MAKING FARMING EASIER WITH TECHNOLOGY



A PERSISTENT labour shortage and the dwindling water table in Punjab has motivated a large number of farmers to shift to the direct seeding method, using a mechanised seeder to grow rice. Earlier, most depended on transplantation to grow rice. The mechanised technique ensures a better yield, reduction in input cost and conservation of water. The method was first introduced by the soft drink giant PepsiCo India in over 10,000-acre area.

The results have been verified by several research institutes including the Indian Agriculture Research Institute and the International Rice Research

Experts say the mechanised seeders let farmers save ₹1,500 per acre by using less energy and water to sow rice

Institute. Gurmel Singh, from Sekha village in Punjab's Barnala district, said he was apprehensive when PepsiCo provided him a seeder in 2006. Singh, the first farmer to adopt the technique, fully endorses the mechanised process now. "Farmers pay ₹2,000 to labourers to transplant paddy in one acre. Now I pay ₹250 rent per acre for hiring a tractor," he said. Farmers also get about two quintal more rice per acre, thanks to uniformly sowed seeds, according to Muktsar district's Sukhdev Singh. Since the process also consumes less water, experts say the technique saves ₹1,500 per acre during seeding and requires less than half the labour that was used earlier.