

Pig Farming under Coconut garden - A farmer's quest for a solution ends in pig success



The farmer, Mr. Ranga Prabu of Theni district, Tamil Nadu along with his pigs.

“Farmers, equipped with an acute sense of traditional knowledge and wisdom, find a solution even when scientists seem to give up hope on dealing with some infestations or pests. A farmer’s perseverance and determination in finding a cure for his problem has brought about surprising results,” says Dr. G. Namalwar, organic scientist.

Take the case of a farmer named Mr. G. Ranga Prabu at Pudhupatti village in Theni district, Tamil Nadu. With several acres of cardamom plantations and nearly 1,000 local variety coconut trees, Mr. Prabu had nothing to worry about in terms of monetary returns.

Difficult solution

But problems started some years back, when several of his coconut trees started to wither. Though a number of reasons were attributed by experts, hundreds of trees in Theni, Bodi and surrounding areas started to die. “We tried our level best to control this problem by spraying chemicals. But it only aggravated the situation rather than control it. Like me, several farmers were desperate for a solution,” says Mr. Prabu.

Government officials who visited the district advised the farmers to cut the trees and were willing to pay Rs.250 as compensation for every tree cut to prevent the spread of infestation. Mr. Prabu had also cut down some trees from his garden. About 100 hybrid white pigs are also grown in the coconut garden. The pig sheds are cleaned at regular intervals by two manual labourers. The dung and urine of the pigs are diverted through a small pipeline which flows into an open well.

“This saved my men a lot of labour, as otherwise they have to manually transport the waste to some other place and dispose it,” says Mr. Prabu. As usual, the well water was used for irrigating the coconut trees.

Surprising result

“In about 6-7 months, I was surprised to see many of my sick trees becoming healthy. Even the trees marked for cutting down starting growing. New fronds were noticed in almost all my trees,” says Mr. Prabu.

In addition, each tree started bearing about 80-100 nuts (a tree under normal conditions bears 60-70 nuts a year). Seeing this transformation, farmers and officials have started visiting his farm. At present, the coconuts are being sold at Rs.6 each and the demand for the nuts is “encouraging,” he says.

Some alterations

Mr. Prabu decided to use the same method of using pigs’ waste on his cardamom plants with some alterations. Accordingly, he added one litre of diluted effective organisms (EM) along with 10 kg of pigs’ dung, 40-50 litres of pigs’ urine, 1kg of jaggery and virgin soil (soil in which no chemical fertilizers or pesticides are present) each.

“The result was amazing” says Mr. Prabu. “It took 6-7 months to see the results for my coconut trees but when I sprayed the EM solution on my cardamom, “I was able to see the result in 24 hours. All the leaves became dark green in colour, the foliage more dense and the cardamom which was plucked was well formed, healthy with a pleasant smell.“But farmers should take care to use water from a borewell or open well for making EM and chlorinated water should be avoided,” he emphasises.

Price of an animal

In addition Mr. Prabu also sells his pigs. Full grown animals (10 months) reach a body weight of 125-135 kg and are sold for Rs. 12,500 each (1kg costs Rs.100).

For more information you can contact Mr. G. Ranga Prabu at the following address.

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