

SUCCESS STORY

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF LEMON GRASS CULTIVATION

“Nobody says it better than those who had a tremendous impact with the techniques of good management. This project is a shining example of how technology and innovative cultivation methods can transform the agrarian economy and uplift the lives of farmers”.

The initiative under Institute of Forest Productivity (IFP, Ranchi) along with Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic plants (CIMAP, Lucknow) has created remarkable impact on Lemon grass growers/farmers in Bundu area of Ranchi district in Jharkhand. Lemongrass is the source of Lemongrass oil, a good source of natural citral, which is used as a basic raw material for synthesis of β -ionone



used for synthesis of a number of useful aromatic compounds and Vitamin-A. Lemongrass oil is thus used as a main substitute for 'Cod Liver Oil'. Citral itself is used in perfumery for



various grades of soaps detergents, cosmetics and flavor agent for soft drinks. Consumption of Lemongrass in Ayurvedic preparation like Balm is also increasing. The present

domestic requirement is about 150 MT/year and about 70 MT is exported every year. The total world production is estimated to 1300 MT/year. The crop provides maximum herb yield from second and third year after planting and thereafter declines. The leaves yield essential oil on steam distillation containing 70-90% citral.

Seeds supplied to the farmers of this location by IFP under the project funded by National Medicinal Plant Board, New Delhi during 2009 have shown overwhelming returns. A



comprehensive training on cultivation and processing of medicinal and aromatic plant was conducted in collaboration with CIMAP at IFP during July, 2009. After the training seeds were distributed to a group of farmers of Bundu block of Ranchi district which was sown in the same year under the supervision of IFP over a farm area of about 50 ha. In 2011, the harvest has been assessed for oil content which has shown a notable yield of more than 200lts



with 88% citral from the produce of about 35 tons. Implementation of better management along with input assistance has been the core of the success achieved in the project. It is a matter of great pride for the institute whose initiatives have given way for increment of the income of the farmers by about Rs10,000 p.a. with the sale of the lemongrass oil and its dry leaves. The farmers have thus reaped good harvest and have come up with the hope of sustained lemongrass cultivation.