



Better Farm Returns With Drip Irrigation

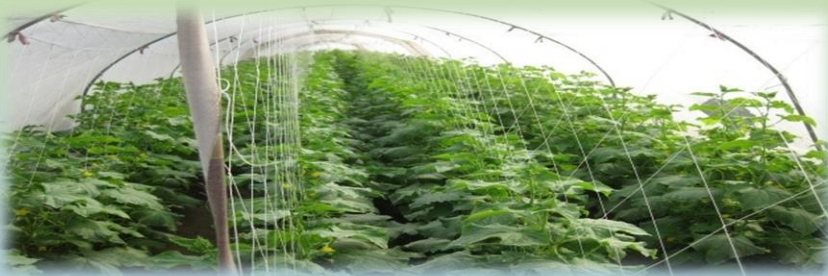
Studies show that Pakistan is storing only 10 % of flowing water inspite of the fact that its water resources are depleting day by day. Agriculture is the largest freshwater consumer using more than 70% of the available freshwater. Estimates indicate that Pakistan’s population will cross 300 million by 2050. At the same time, climate change is negatively impacting agricultural production globally and locally. Climate risks to cropping, livestock and fisheries are expected to increase in coming decades, particularly in developing countries where adaptive capacity is weaker. These facts indicate alarming situation in the near future and we may have to face severe problems like water crises and food insecurity.



On Farm Water Management wing of Agriculture Department is already doing well on adoption of adaptation measures by promoting high efficiency irrigation systems under “Punjab Irrigated-Agriculture Productivity Improvement Project” all over the Punjab. The project interventions are not only climate friendly but also help farmers to produce more crops with less inputs.

Mr. Ali Raza, well-educated farmer, belongs to Chak No. 712/GB, district Toba Tek Singh. A few years ago, he abjured flood irrigation and adopted drip irrigation system on 10 acres of his land. He acknowledges that drip irrigation enabled him to get better farm returns with less inputs (water, fertilizer etc.). He added that in drip irrigation system, the water is supplied directly to the plant roots. As such, there is less water application leading to less humidity in the tunnels and the crops are less prone to fungal diseases. Moreover, water storage ponds built to store water for irrigating crops through drip irrigation provide additional income as many farmers are using these ponds for fish farming.

Another progressive grower, Mr. M. Waheed of Chak No.196/GB indicated that savings in terms of time and money helped me to increase my farm area for growing some high value crops.



Mian Shafique, resident of Chak 24/GB, tehsil Jarwnwala, district Faisalbad told that he is growing off season vegetables under tunnel for last 12 years but his profit margin was very low due to insect/ pest and diseases attack caused by higher humidity with flood irrigation of the crops in the tunnels and he had to apply 7-10 pesticide sprays to control pest/ disease attack at different growth stages of the crops. Moreover, the efficacy for productivity enhancement has been well established in the field now and the drip irrigation system helps farmers to use water efficiently and cutting production costs significantly as well as improving crop yields.

Mr. Habibulla belonging to Chak 239/ GB is growing cucumber with drip irrigation under tunnels who shared that the cucumber crop produced with drip irrigation is more healthy & nutritious and hence fetches better economic returns to the farmers.

Dr. Asif, Deputy Director Agriculture (Water Management) Faisalabad opined that although any innovate technology requires a specific period for adoption by the farming community especially in the developing countries like Pakistan where literacy rate in the rural areas is very low, the adoption of drip irrigation technology is progressing day by day in Faisalabad division. He shared that drip irrigation is one of the best tools to achieve more crop per drop and it is need of the hour as water shortage is a big challenge for our country. Drip irrigation has helped local farming communities to overcome water scarcity and energy problems, improve off-season vegetables production with economized use of water and other farm inputs.

