



PIPIP Feature Story

MIRACLES START HAPPENING Story of Papaya Cultivation with Drip Irrigation



It was an astonishing moment that took everybody's breath away when Ch. Zulfiqar Ali, a progressive grower of Gujranwala district of Punjab, Pakistan shared about profit of PKR 4.5 million (USD 35,000) per acre from his Papaya orchard. It is unbelievable for everyone as cultivating Papaya in the central Punjab with such returns has never happened before. While responding to this **miracle**, he shared that "I have successfully cultivated dense orchard of Red lady Papaya on 6 acres with 6' x 6' distance having 1,200 plants per acre. I got first harvest of Papaya fruit @ about 66 tonnes per acre fetching net profit of Rs. 4.5 million per acre, which is ten times more than the crops (Rice, Wheat etc.) grown with traditional farming method. **It was not possible at all without drip irrigation technology**".

"Before drip irrigation, I used to grow Rice and Wheat crops but these crops were not so profitable. In search of doing something different, I consulted with agricultural and water management experts, who gave me the idea of adopting drip technology to grow fruits like Papaya for higher returns per acre. Initially, I was not so convinced with the idea because fellow farmers apprehended that climatic conditions of Gujranwala area are not suitable for fruits such as Papaya and irrigation & fertilizer application are difficult farm operations for orchards. However, I decided to take up this challenge because I found the irrigation and fertigation solutions in the form of drip technology. I must appreciate the contribution of OFWM Staff especially former Director Agriculture (OFWM) Gujranwala, Mr. Akhtar Ali, who supported me not only in understanding the drip irrigation technology but also guided me in other crop operations. After successful venture of papaya cultivation with drip, I am **planning to grow another high value orchard (Malysian seedless lemon) with drip irrigation on 7 acres**. Now all my neighbouring farmers are convinced with my success and planning to shift from traditional to high value agriculture using drip irrigation system". He added.

One of the neighbouring farmers, Mr. Mian Mahmood has been inspired from the Papaya orchard of Ch. Zulfiqar Ali and planned to grow Papaya with drip irrigation on 9 acres this year. He indicated that "**I have not seen such bumper orchard in my entire life**. Papaya is a high value orchard having good potential in local as well as international market". **Mr. Zulfiqar has now applied for the permit to export his produce in the international market like Dubai and other Arab countries**.

According to Agricultural Extension experts, although the innovators are very less in farming business but they take risks to adopt any new technology to set an example for other farmers and mostly get higher returns. It has been observed that many other farmers particularly neighbours adopt the technology after seeing the results of interventions successfully harvested by the innovators.

Mr. Zulfiqar indicated that "Papaya cultivation with drip irrigation has also created livelihood opportunities for the people of nearby villages. **Now 5 females and 5 males are working on my farm for different farm operation on daily wages**".

Mr. Munir Ahmad Duggal, Deputy Director Agriculture (OFWM), Gujranwala advised other farmers of the region to visit this Papaya orchard grown successfully with drip irrigation and learn from the experiences of the progressive grower for making their farming more profitable with innovations. In fact, his experiences will help other farmers to cultivate high value crops/ orchards with drip irrigation to deal with the challenge of water scarcity, climate change impacts and enhance profits.

**Net Profit
PKR 4.5 millions
(USD 35,000)
per acre**

