

New technique for paddy cultivation

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PepsiCo India, food and beverage company, has spread wings in Uttar Pradesh and covered 300 acres in Bijnaur and Nazibabad this year under direct seeding for paddy cultivation.

On the success of direct seeding of paddy cultivation at Jallowal village near here, Dr Susheel Sankhyan, General Manager (Agriculture), claimed the company targeted to cover 25,000 acres under direct seeding by 2012. The methodology is being used under its contract farming programme launched in Punjab in 2004.

He claimed the area covered under this programme had gone up to 6,000 acres from 1,000 acres.

The technique has saved water and lowered production cost, besides certain environmental benefits like reduction in emission of greenhouse gases like methane. This also improves soil porosity and helps increase yield.

Dr Sankhyan claims the initiative saves 30 per cent

(900 KL per acre) of water in direct seeded fields and helps reduce farmers' cultivation costs by Rs 1,500 per acre.

The company has developed direct seeding machine at its (Research and Development) farms at Jallowal village for sowing seeds uniformly at specified gap and at uniform depth. Using the seeder, direct seeding was carried out on 20 acres by roping in 12 farmers under the contract farming in 2004. The area under the direct seeding was increased to 100 acres in 2007 and 1,000 acres in 2008. The company has carried out direct seeding in 6,000 acres benefiting 1,500 farmers this year.

Sukhjot Singh, Mohinder Singh and Pragat Singh, farmers who opted for direct seeding technique for paddy claimed having saved on labour, electricity and diesel cost.

Singhara Singh, a Kisan Union leader in Bathinda, refuted claims of the company saying the paddy sown with this technique required more water while the yield was less compared to the paddy transplanted manually.