



DRIP IRRIGATION PAYING BACK TO THE ORCHARD GROWERS

About five years ago (2012-13), a progressive farmer, **Mr. Mubashar Naeem**, resident of district Layyah, decided to grow high value crops with drip irrigation. Actually, canal water shortage in Thal area, sandy soils and brackish groundwater compelled him to shift from traditional crops to high value agriculture vis-à-vis citrus orchard for profitable farming with drip irrigation.

Mr. Mubashar is an educated person and well aware of the fact that flood irrigation method is not efficient especially in sandy soils and can't be adopted for successful orchard growing under water shortage scenario. Drip irrigation is the only option for orchard cultivation in sandy and undulated terrains of Layyah. He acknowledges that drip irrigation technology made it possible to save precious inputs like water, fertilizers etc.

While sharing his experience of growing citrus orchard with drip irrigation, he indicated that **"Plants grow healthier under drip irrigation due to better aeration and direct injection of water & nutrients in the root zone for raising the plants. I became able to cultivate my entire land with limited available water with less fertilizer and other agricultural inputs after installing drip irrigation system. Moreover, the orchards cultivated with drip irrigation are matured one year earlier than the traditional method of irrigation. He also shared per acre income of his orchard @ Rs. 100,000, 200,000 and 300,000 on 3rd, 4th and 5th year of planting, respectively, which is huge gain as compared to traditional crops"**.

It was further shared that **"Drip irrigation enabled him to increase production, improve quality of produce and farm profitability through saving precious irrigation water, fertilizer and other farm inputs"**. He added that **"moving from traditional to high value agriculture has helped him to save some money for the education of his son in a better university and now he is doing a respectable job"**.

While sharing his future plan for extending drip irrigation on more land, he stated, **"I have a pleasant experience with drip irrigation and, accordingly, planned to extend it on remaining land to grow other high value orchards (Guava, Pomegranate etc.) on large scale in the coming years so that he can earn more and provide better livelihood to his family"**.

He often advise the neighboring farmers to benefit from the government facility and shift to high value agriculture especially in current scenario of acute water shortage in the country. He opined that drip irrigation technology can convert the traditional and outdated farming into modern, smart and profitable agriculture.

