



Papaya with Drip Boosting Punjab's Agriculture



Mian Abid, a progressive grower of Chak Qadeerpur, tehsil & district Multan highlights that traditional irrigation system is needed to be reformed because of acute water shortage. He shared his experiences about shift from traditional to modern irrigation system (drip irrigation) as "Before drip irrigation, we used to grow Rice and Maize crops which required 13 and 10 hours to irrigate only one acre of land through flood irrigation, respectively. Moreover, these crops were not providing better returns due to eruption of the market. So, we decided to abjure traditional farming and installed drip irrigation to grow high value orchard (Papaya). **Now, just 2 hours are enough to irrigate 5 acre of Papaya orchard**".

"I have successfully cultivated Papaya dense orchard with 6' x 5' distance, having 1,400 plants per acre. Irrigation with drip system has significantly improved plant height, stem girth and number of leaves per plant within very short period. Moreover, it is the miracle of drip irrigation that **my orchard has ma-tured within only 6 months and we harvested Papaya fruit about 56 tonnes per acre resulting in net profit of Rs.2.5 million per acre**".

According to agriculture experts, drip irrigation is a boon for the Papaya growers in the Punjab especially in the Southern Punjab as the Papaya plant require less water at all growth stages and drip irrigation offers requisite control perfectly. Actually, it needs only two irrigation in a week during summer and one irrigation in winter for healthy growth and better produce.

Food scientists claim huge benefits of Papaya especially for medicinal and health purpose. **It contains vitamins A & C that help in boosting the immune power in human body. Its leaves help to treat the dengue fever. Many people use it for losing their weight as it has low calories and high nutritional value.**

While sharing his experience regarding drip irrigation benefits, Mr. Abid told that "installation of drip irrigation has reduced my electricity bill of tube well. Moreover, fertilizer efficiency has increased due to application through fertigation and less weeds grow as water is applied directly to the plant roots". He indicated that **"Papaya cultivation with drip irrigation has also created livelihood opportunities for the people of nearby villages. Now 4 females and 3 males are working on my farm for different farm operation"**.

He often advises the neighbouring farmers to benefit from the government facility and grow high value crops like Papaya orchard to get good economic returns due to its high demand in the local market.

