



## DRIP IRRIGATION: A BLESSING FOR POTOHAR FARMERS



Carruthers & Clark (well-known scientists) stated **“when controlled irrigation is applied with fertiliser, pesticides, and other technologies or inputs which increase productivity, higher productivity and income can be obtained”**. In Pakistan, the best method to provide controlled irrigation is drip irrigation system. This modern system is becoming popular amongst the crop growers who abrogated the traditional irrigation methods and started growing high value crops especially in the areas where canal water is not available/insufficient to irrigate their agricultural lands.

Mr. Abdul Sattar is one of those farmers who decided to grow Peach (high value fruit) with drip irrigation on 5 acres during 2013-14 and got the system installed on cost sharing basis under technical guidance of OFWM staff. He shared his experience indicating that **“Before drip irrigation, I used to grow wheat** which was totally dependent on rain as I was not having enough water for irrigating that traditional crop through flood irrigation. I learnt about the government scheme which supports the farmers to install drip irrigation systems. So, I decided to get benefit from the government subsidy scheme and installed drip irrigation system for growing Peach”.

He proudly apprised that **“I earned about Rs. 225,000, Rs. 275,000 and Rs. 350,000 per acre during 3rd, 4th and 5th years, respectively against profit from Wheat crop valuing Rs. 9,000 per acre annually. It was impossible to get such huge profit with conventional crops having less market value and grown with traditional flood irrigation”**.

According to the drip irrigation experts, this latest water efficient technology has many benefits such as: better produce quality, earlier crop maturity, higher yields, efficient nutrient distribution, less plant stress, minimum plant yield variability etc.

Mr. Asghar Niazi, Assistant Director Agriculture (OFWM) tehsil Hazro, district Attock considers that drip irrigation is a blessing for the farming community of Pothoar region as it provides them **more economic returns with less and efficient use of agricultural inputs especially water**. Before Drip irrigation, majority of the farmers of the area were exclusively dependent on rainwater to grow any crop.

Mr. Abdul Sattar advised the farmers to benefit from government facility and move towards high value crops as Punjab govt. is providing a subsidy package for drip irrigation to shift from traditional farming to modern, precise, mechanized farming and high value agriculture. He considers that this smart technology will enable the farming community to improve their living standards.



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