



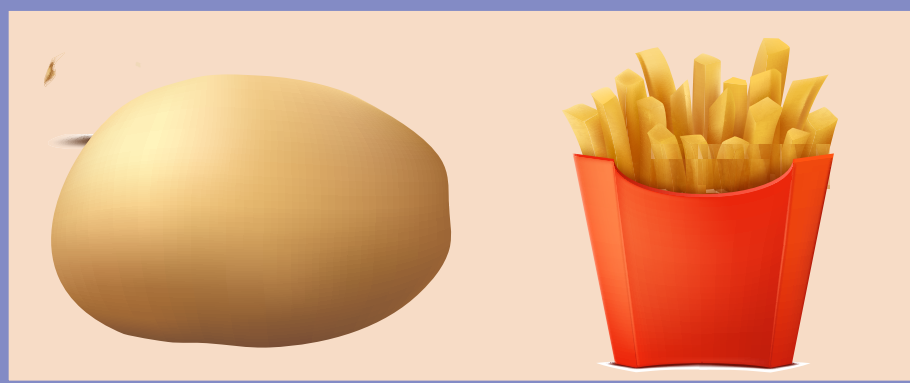

The Hidden Treasure

A Story of Potato Cultivation with Drip Irrigation

**PIPIP
Feature Story**

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) is grown in more than 100 countries under temperate, subtropical and tropical conditions. It requires a well-drained, well-aerated, porous soil with pH of 5 to 6. Compacted soils are not good for its growth as they affect root penetration, water and nutrient uptake and tuber enlargement. Globally, potato is the fourth most important food crop after corn, rice and wheat in terms of production. Asia and Europe are the world's major potato producing regions, accounting for more than 80% of world production. In Pakistan, potato is grown on 187,200 hectares area, having production of 3,853,900 tonnes (Economic Survey of Pakistan 2017-18).

Mian Ahmad Raza Maneka is an educated & progressive potato grower of district Pakpattan. He belongs to a well-known political and influential Manika family of the area. He used to grow potato with conventional flood irrigation method for last many decades. Last year, he has successfully grown potato crop with drip irrigation on 10 acres and harvested significantly higher yield, uniform size and good quality produce. He shared very useful information about advantage of growing potato with drip irrigation vs flood irrigation in terms of fertilizer requirement and crop yields.

Fertilizer	Drip Irrigation (Kg/Acre)	Flood Irrigation (kg/Acre)			 <i>Mian Ahmad Raza Maneka</i> Ph #: +92-300-6949025 Peer Ghani Estate, Tehsil & District Pakpattan Punjab Pakistan
			Yield (Kg/Acre)		
			Drip Irrigation	Flood Irrigation	
Urea	50	125	12,600	10,920	
Nitrophos	10	25			
Sulphar	05	25			
Potash	20	20			
Amonium Sulphate	10	50			
DAP	75	100			

Mr. Ahmad Raza shared his practical experience as "Growing potato (Lady Rosita variety) with drip irrigation has proved to be highly contributing in its successful and profitable production. Drip irrigation helped me to get higher yields, save precious canal water, reduce fertilizer application and improve quality of tubers (grade and composition) in comparison to conventional flood irrigation method".

While responding to a question regarding yield enhancement, he told that "although many farmers in the Punjab raise their voice against the low rates of potato in the market but focus on yield enhancement makes it profitable crop. There is a dire need to establish industry for value addition to get high value potato products. Government should develop a policy to support the industrialists and the potato growers in this regard".

Mr. Khaliq Dad Wattoo, Deputy Director Agriculture (OFWM), Pakpattan highlighted that drip irrigation is a complete production technology and getting popularity day by day amongst the progressive potato growers of Pakpattan district. It is helping the farmers to get more economic returns per acre, apart from saving precious agricultural inputs.

While discussing the potato cultivation with drip irrigation technology, Malik Muhammad Akram, Director General Agriculture (Water Management) Punjab indicated that "Okara, Sahiwal, Kasur and Pakpattan districts are very famous for potato cultivation due to suitable and favorable climatic conditions. It is highly encouraging that the farmers of these districts are showing interest to shift from traditional flood irrigation to drip irrigation method after observing neighboring farmers' successful crops".

