



Drip Irrigation Converting Pothohar into 'Grape Valley'



Net Productivity Returns
Rs. 375,000 per acre



Landscape of Pothohar plateau is most suitable for growing orchards, especially grapes and olive because of its favourable agro-climatic conditions. The development of this beautiful terrain of the Punjab was, however, constrained due to lack of technological innovation in irrigating the crops in the undulated topography. Introduction of Drip Irrigation has provided the ultimate solution to the Pothohar farmers for converting their lands into **"Grape and Olive Valley"**. Drip Irrigation Technology has all the ingredients enabling the farmers to grow high value crops particularly orchards in areas which are not known for such diversity. Mr. Tahir Mahmood is one of those progressive growers who adopted the drip irrigation in 2015 for growing high value crops.

Mr. Tahir was initially not so impressed with the drip irrigation system because of its hi-tech operation but with the passage of time, his confidence on technology has been raised and now he is highly satisfied with the utilization of this reformatory technology. He shared his experience as **"Before drip irrigation, I used to grow wheat and other such crops which grow under rain-fed conditions and depend on rainfall.** Sometimes, it was not possible to get any income from these crops due to less/ insufficient rainfall. So, I decided to get rid of the traditional farming practices and installed drip irrigation system for growing grapes on 3 acres only. Actually, I intended to check/test efficiency of drip irrigation system. This experience remained so successful that I recovered all expenses on installation of drip irrigation system from income of the first fruiting of Grapes". Now, I have planned to install this efficient and modern irrigation system on more area.

While responding to a question about profit and market potential of grapes in Taxila, Mr. Tahir indicated that **"the grapes grown with drip irrigation matured one year earlier than flood irrigation. We earned about Rs. 375,000 per acre from our first harvest, last year. Rawalpindi/ Islamabad is a potential market providing better rates for our good quality grapes which is just 50 km away from our grapes farm. Grapes having uniform size and bright color fetch better rates in shopping Malls/ markets of capital city Islamabad"**. He further added that **"expenditure on weedicides has also been reduced as the irrigation water is applied to plant roots only. Accordingly, less weeds grow resulting in little expenses on weedicides"**.

Mr. Tahir excitedly shared that **"Growing grapes with drip irrigation has created more employment opportunities for the labor especially women on my farm. Currently, about 5 women and 3 men are working on my farm for different farm operations"**.

On the basis of his four years' experience, Mr. Tahir opined that **"drip irrigation is the most suitable system for grape orchards to provide favourable environment for plant growth. Owing to its huge benefits and facilitation by the government, the progressive growers of the Pothohar region are adopting this system and growing high value crops to get more economic returns. Moreover, Punjab government with the World Bank assistance is providing financial and technical support to the farmers for promotion of drip irrigation in the province.** It is considered that the shift from traditional irrigation method to drip irrigation will prove a big step for addressing Pakistan's water scarcity issue and bringing revolution in the irrigated agriculture of the province.

Water Is Life

Cherish Every Drop

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