



DRIP IRRIGATION MAKING IT HAPPEN: STORY OF PEACH CULTIVATION

IMPACT
STORY

Few years back, fruit cultivation was not so popular amongst the farmers in the Punjab due to issues like higher water requirement, shortage of irrigation water and lack of production technology particularly efficient irrigation system capable of water application to fruit plants only. Wheat-rice is the dominant cropping pattern with sown area of over 21 million acres (8.7 million ha) whereas the area under fruits is less than one (1) million acres in the Punjab. During recent years, introduction of Drip Irrigation technology by the On Farm Water Management (OFWM) wing of Agriculture Department with the World Bank assistance has made it possible to grow variety of fruits in the entire province. Peach is one of those fruits, which was not considered Punjab's product as it is mostly grown in Baluchistan (Quetta, Kalat) and KPK (Peshawar, Swat valley) provinces. Pothohar area of the Punjab has, however, huge potential for producing fruits like peach due to conducive environment.

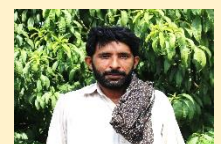
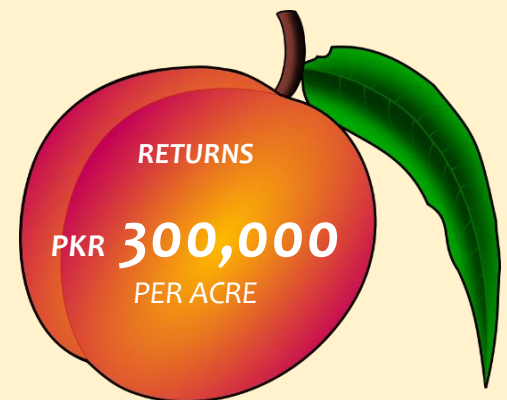


Mr. Sarwar Khan, a progressive grower, resident of village Noshehri Khan, tehsil Taxila, district Rawalpindi is one of those pioneers who installed Drip Irrigation system under the “Punjab Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Improvement Project” to grow peach. Mr. Hassan Ali, Farm Manager, shared the story of peach cultivation with drip irrigation as “**before Drip Irrigation**, we used to cultivate **wheat and maize** crops which require **more water, intensive labor work** for flood irrigation, **extra time to irrigate** and most importantly have **less market value of the produce**. We were looking for such a technology which enable us to grow high value crops with lesser inputs. **OFWM staff had introduced the Drip Irrigation technology** and we decided to grow peach with drip irrigation. Now, **only one person (Farm Manager) is enough to irrigate 12 acres** of peach orchard”.

Mr. Hassan is very much convinced about revolution with the Drip Irrigation in the Pothohar region. He explained that “**Drip irrigation** enabled us to cultivate **more land with less available water** and other inputs like fertilizer because water and fertilizer are applied directly to the plant root zone according plants requirement and there is **no chances of wastage of costly inputs** during application at any stage of plant growth”.

While sharing the economic returns, he told that “the size and growth of peach plants is uniform due to equal application of requisite amounts of essential inputs through **Drip Irrigation**. The peach orchard started fruit bearing within three years, earlier than the flood irrigated orchard. We **earned about PKR 150,000, PKR 250,000 and PKR 300,000 per acre** during 3rd, 4th and 5th year, respectively. On the other hand, the profit from Wheat and Maize crops were not more than PKR 20,000 per acre”.

Mr. Hassan further explained that Drip Irrigation system is easy to operate and the best production crop management tool which provides more returns per acre as compared to traditional farming. Due to impressive growth of my peach orchard, my neighbor farmers have also planned to shift from traditional to high value agriculture by adapting Drip Irrigation technology for growing orchards and vegetables. The dawn of innovative farming has begun in Pakistan and **Drip Irrigation is playing a pivotal role in modernizing the Punjab's agriculture**”.



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