

SCAD NIRMAN AGRO CENTRE

In this age of science and advancement our farmers still continue to struggle hard to get technological inputs required for their agricultural operations. Farmers residing in rural areas receive little or no information on new and improved agricultural technologies. Realising the importance of this very vital issue, SCAD Nirman with the support of **AidCamps international** and **AidCamp volunteers** set up an Agro Centre in Tharuvai Tirunelveli in Feb 2017.



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In a situation where a strong research extension farmers' linkage needs to be developed to test suitable adaptable technology that will increase the production and productivity of agriculture and its allied field commodities, SCAD Agro Centre is doing yeoman service among the farmer community and farmers in and around Tharuvai, from roughly about 50 – 60 villages, who have been making good use of this Farm Centre. The centre has not only procured inputs from genuine sources outside but has also produced them from own resources. Special emphasis is given to supply of organic inputs like bio fertilizers, vermin-compost, organic growth promoters, bio-fungicides, plant-based bio-pest repellents, and a lot more organic inputs have been stocked for round-the-year supply. Linkages with input suppliers have also been established for all round supply. Subject matter specialists of SCAD KVK/ Farm Science Centre have been available in the centre on rotation basis to cater to the needs of the farmers and the farmers from the adjoining areas get agricultural assistances from this new centre. The agro centre has put on a sweet and appealing look also because of a **Microbes Brewing Unit** functioning adjacent to the Agro Centre.



Effective micro organism brewing unit

This is another boon to the farmers who wish to promote organic farming among those who cause havoc to the mother earth, which is almost polluted by chemical fertilizers. With the concern of safeguarding mother earth and those who consume what is produced of mother earth, SCAD is keen in propagating organic farming that replenishes mother earth. SCAD Agro centre does not sell any chemical fertilizer. Since SCAD Agro centre is situated in a place where more irrigation takes place, SCAD-Nirman initiated an Effective Micro organism (EM) brew unit at the centre, as this EM has been a boon to many farmers to increase their yields.



The centre is equipped with a very good brew unit that can produce 600 litres of EM in one shot and around 10,000 litres can be produced for a year and distributed to the farmers.



Finished products at Microbes brewing unit ready for dispatch

Failure of monsoons has made everyone, especially farmers, to understand the importance of planting trees. Hence the Agro centre is also equipped with a nursery where farmers can get forest trees, fruit trees and ornamental trees at a discounted price.

The Agro centre is also open for Women's Self Help Groups to sell their products such as art and crafts made of pottery, mats, ornamental jewellery etc. In other words, women's SHGs utilize this Agro centre as their marketing outlet.

As such, it has been highly revealing that the presence of the Agro centre, Tharuvai is a blessing to the farmers who have sought this centre for all their agriculture needs in terms of advice and agri-inputs. The centre has a record of 512 farmers having visited the centre either to get expert ideas from technical persons available at the centre or to buy organic agri-inputs for their land.

We are happy to enumerate some of the successful interactions with the farmers who have vouched the impact of inputs provided to them and an increase in the quality of land in terms of necessary nutrient by the use of the agri-inputs received from the Agro centre, Tharuvai.

1. Mr Senthil, residing at Sanganthiradu, Cheranmahadevi, and has 2.5 acres of land where he planted banana trees, visited the Agro centre with disturbed feelings as the trees planted were not growing healthy enough in spite of he using inorganic fertilizers. Our staff at the centre first counselled him explaining the need of organic agriculture keeping in mind the need of preserving this planet for the generations to come. After being convinced, he was curious to know the list of products available at the centre and the benefits of the same. He was introduced to all the organic inputs including Effective Micro organisms (EM). Staff from SCAD-Nirman accompanied him to his field and inspected the land and the method of plantation he had undertaken. After soil testing it was ascertained that the soil lacked the necessary nutrients. The technical expert of SCAD Nirman recommended EMA to replenish the nutrient of the land and also conducted a demo in his field. After a couple of months Mr

Senthil visited the centre again with the warm smile expressing his gratitude that his banana trees were well grown and the leaves were found with deep green colour which is a very good sign of a plant with rich nutrient and that the plants had started bearing fruit. He was given assurance that all 2,500 banana trees would bare maximum yield compared to the previous years, due to the application of Effective Micro-organisms besides amendment of soil. Looking forward to receiving the good news that he was able to get more yields.

2. Mr karupasamy is a poor farmer who almost lost his hope in agriculture as he failed measurably in cultivating paddy due to monsoon failure. It was at the time he had decided to quit agriculture that the technical expert of SCAD Nirman came in contact with him and visited his field despite his reluctance to invite anyone to his field. On visiting our technical expert really empathized with him on the huge loss. Knowing that 'seeing is believing', he was taken to a field where organic farming is done making use of Effective Micro-organism. He was convinced and wanted to take a reasonable risk by going in for cultivating vegetables. Quality seeds were provided by our Agro centre along with bio char and Effective Micro-organisms. As per our advice he tested his soil and water before going into cultivation. He tilled and prepared the land meticulously treating it with organic inputs like biochar, Effective Micro-organisms, etc. As he soaked the seeds in EM, he acclaimed the germination rate of seeds he received from the Agro centre was more intense compared to the seeds and chemicals in terms of manure he used to buy from elsewhere and apply. After harvesting vegetables, he visited our Agro centre and thanked whole heartedly expressing that his land had given good vegetable yield and that the size of the snake gourd as big enough. He also assured that he got more money by selling ORGANIC Vegetables, than what he had invested. SCAD-NIRMAN feels really happy when farmers who are referred by Mr Karupasamy visit the Agro centre. Let the good news spread!
3. One other farmer received 1.5 tonnes of Vermi compost for his field as his land was very hard to till and the soil surface seemed hard and not nutrient enough as he had been using inorganic fertilizer. After few days' application he reported that the surface soil of his land had become very soft.
4. Trees like Neem, Mango, Papaya, and Lemon are in great demand and farmers who have open wells had bought 225 tree saplings along with EM, Biochar and other bio inputs as well.
5. Inputs displayed in the centre are being sold in their own accord. The following are the details for reference:

- a. 200 packets of Nutrimix have been sold out and there is a rising demand for this Nutrimix as the quality and aroma of the product is unique compared to the products available in the market.
- b. 185 packets of Kitchen Garden seeds are sold. There is a growing awareness among people on the need for organic vegetables which are cost effective
- c. 18 farmers have purchased salt licks for the benefit of the livestock
- d. 1,575 litres of EMA has been produced and distributed to the farmers and awareness on the effectiveness of EM is gaining momentum.



Nursery Unit

The Agro centre is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the benefit of the farmers and for them to make use of the centre and to guide the farmers in farming. To make available the latest technology in agriculture one full time trained and experienced staff is appointed. The centre is open all days except Sunday. Staff in the centre not only offer their expertise to the farmers who visit the centre but also extend their supports in farmers' fields. The main objective of this centre is to disseminate the latest technological inventions of agriculture universities, colleges, Regional Research stations etc to the farming communities using appropriate extension tools and technological inputs like improved high yielding variety seeds, organic fertilizers and pesticides, etc. in time which is happening more than expected.