



# Farm – India

## Annual Report 2005 – 2006

### **Preface:**

Farm – India (*Federation for Agricultural Research Methodologies*) was founded by a group of enterprising women to play a crucial role in uplifting the rural economy. We identified the following work areas for our action. We strongly believe that bringing light into the life of under-privileged young children is an act of serving the god. So we at Farm India always consider these school children as our own children.

### **School Children:**

1. Quality Education for under-privileged rural children.
2. Environment consciousness programs.
3. Teaching aids & support systems.
4. Computer skill development.
5. Spoken English classes
6. Kalvi Thiruvizha – Annual meet at Kalpatti Middle School.

### **Farming Groups & Women:**

1. Trainings on Organic Farming.
2. Water Management.
3. Training program on “Plant Growth Regulators”.
4. Organic Certification for poor small farmers.
5. Women empowerment programs.

### **Senior Citizens & Social Harmony:**

1. Support to senior citizens.
2. “Kaman Pandigai” – a village festival to create social harmony.

## **Farm – India’s activities during 2005 – 2006:**

### **School Children:**

#### **1. Quality Education:**

As we always mention in our reports & speeches, our main focus is on the quality education to the under-privileged school children. Most of the students from our localities lack the competitive edge in computer skills, language skills, sports skills, etc over to their city counter parts.

Just because they were born for poor parents, how can we deny their basic rights of learning? Given an opportunity, these children should out-perform the city based students. And it has been proven in many occasions.



We at Farm India continued our support to the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan** program. We have been working within Nadupatti CRC (Cluster Resource Centre) member schools. The list of schools is tabulated as follows.

- a. Nadupatti Primary School
- b. Nadupatti Higher Secondary School (Middle section)
- c. Kalpatti Middle School
- d. Karaiyampatti Primary School
- e. Pudukkottai Middle School
- f. Pudevadi Middle School
- g. Pudevadi – Pudur Primary School
- h. Seekampatti Primary School
- i. Kalliankattupatti Model School
- j. Keeranur Primary School

Our activities with these schools vary from physical contribution to financial support. The list of programs that we organized during this year as given below.

- a. Our activities begin with Enrolment Awareness Campaign. We join school teachers and children to arrange a rally to highlight the importance of education. This has helped a lot to convince the poor villagers to send their children to schools.
- b. In addition to this rally, we also make a door to door campaign to meet the parents personally and persuade them to send their children to schools. Farm India's members are highly respected by the villagers due to their contribution to these young children and the local society. This helps us to make a positive impact into the villagers mind.
- c. Government of Tamilnadu distributes free text books to all school children study in government and also government aided schools. But the fact remains that most of the students from poor families can not afford to buy note books, guides and school uniforms. Farm India happily arranged school uniforms for the entire school children of Kalliankattupatti Model School. Most of the children from this school either lost their parents or living away from their parents. The grand parents are not even able to support themselves. So we decided to help these children by providing school uniforms and note books.



## 2. Environment Consciousness Program.

Environment is a major concern for our members. Even if we are able to give good education to the poor village children, they do not have right exposure to environment issues. This is due to the following reasons.

1. Most of schools do not have Agriculture or Moral Science teachers at this moment.
2. At home these children watch only movie related programs. Most TV channels are concerned only about TRP rating and their profits. There are only very few channels telecast environment related programs, and unfortunately these children have remote chances to view these programs.
3. Parents and even many school teachers are less concerned on environment issues and how one can expect the poor children be taught with these concerns.

So, Farm India tries to fill the gap. We take 40 – 50 school children from our member schools and arrange Eco – Tour. The children from Nadupatti primary school visited **Manitham Organics Farm** and forest nurseries. We took classes on the following issues.

- a. Rain fall and trees.
- b. Safe disposal of plastics & less usage.
- c. Soil fertility- Earth worm & Vermi Compost.
- d. Keeping the school, street and home clean for a healthier life.

We also arranged video shows from Discovery Channel, Animal Planet & National Geographic Channel to these participants.

Our dream project “Green Bag Movement” (GBM) will be introduced shortly to all our member schools. We make arrangements in terms of preparatory lessons to our school children on how to reduce plastic usage, etc. and we sincerely hope we can launch this project during next academic year.

## 3. Teaching aids and support systems:

“Seeing is Learning.....”

We understand this principle. So we try to provide practical oriented lessons to our children. Farm India supported all our member schools during this academic year to but teaching aids like hand tools, maps, pictures, etc.



We also arranged one electrical / electronic circuit board which could make tailor-made circuits. Using this electronic tool, our children could easily understand how electrical appliances like electric bulb, fans, buzzers, etc. work.

We also provided DLP projector based lessons using new era software to develop Spoken English skills.

#### **4. Computer skill development:**

We identify the students who can not afford engineering courses due to their poor economic conditions and train them in the following lines.

- a. Typing skill development
- b. Basic Computer Knowledge
- c. A fairly good spoken English

These students will be posted with some BPO industries. Thus Farm India plans to bring financial sustainability to the poor families.

The students and teachers from Naduppatti Higher Secondary School have shown great interest in this program and we are working hard to meet the people's expectation. However, we need to pay attention to the routine academic system also so that the students Board Exam results are not affected. We are sincerely thankful to the Teachers of Naduppatti Higher Secondary School for their sincere support.

#### **5. Annual Meet (Kalvi Thiruvizha):**

We provide a platform for these poor village children to show / develop their skills. We have been successful in conducting "Kalvi Thiruvizha" for the third consecutive year. The following events were conducted at Kalpatti middle school. But all our member schools participated in this festival. Farm India provided vehicle support to fetch and drop all students & teachers from their respective schools.

- a. Science Exhibition
- b. Sports and games
- c. Drama and folk dances
- d. Literary competitions like Poetry, Speech, Singing, Drawing, etc.
- e. Community Lunch.

Teachers, parents, students and Department of Education officials attended this function. It was really great feeling for everyone at Farm-India to see the happiness of the poor village children while participating and winning in the competitions.

We could identify some special skills from these programs and we have a plan to develop those special skills to bring them into State / National levels.



## **Farming Groups & Women:**

### **1. Training on Organic Farming:**

Our target is to train our local farmers to follow “No/Low External Input – Sustainable Agriculture”. We are insisting the farmers with the following points:

1. Try to minimize the external input as much as possible
2. Make your own farm inputs like vermi compost, panchakawya, amutha karaisal, etc.
3. Learn new technologies (rediscovered technologies)
4. Spread the knowledge to other farmers.

We also conducted few programs for the villagers from Nadupatti, Kalpatti, Sakkampatti & Ponnambalampatti. More than 150 farmers had utilized our trainings.

### **2. Water Management:**

We understand the importance of water very well and we understand fully that water is not going to be available for ever if we continue our apathy towards water conservation. We conducted 4 trainings for our local farmers during this year.

We have created various models of Micro water distribution systems like Micro Sprinklers, Easy Drip, etc. in our farm “Manitham Organics” to give a practical lesson to our entire farmers in this subject.

We also help our farmers to buy irrigation equipments like drip / sprinkler systems at a marginal price. This really helps our people to make quick decision to change over from conventional irrigation to modern irrigation.

### **3. Training on “Plant Growth Regulators”:**

In modern agriculture, usage of plant growth regulators is inevitable. But the awareness about this is not at all levels of farming community. Even though we recommend Low External Input to our farmers, these PGRs can revolutionize the yields. So we conducted a special program on these PGRs.

1. Natural Brassinolides.
2. Effective Micro Organisms.



We always keep in mind that whenever we impart these kind of programs, we never compromise on going away from Organic farming.

#### **4. Organic Certification:**

Our main plan is to bring international market or city market to our local farmers. So getting Organic Certification for our farmers is an important step. But due to high cost and poor knowledge about the complex procedures, we are not able to get certification.

We are negotiating with SKAL and Indocert to give group certification. We can minimize the cost in this method.

We can export the following items, if we can get through this certification process.

1. Cashew nuts
2. Herbs
3. Tea
4. Mango
5. Peanuts

Moreover we can also tie up with agri-business companies to help our farmers to market our produces. We are very keen to work closely with like minded NGOs.

#### **5. Women Empowerment Programs:**

Making women financially dependent will be the only way to empower the women. We have identified three major areas for them.

1. Bamboo mats weaving
2. Sanitary Napkin production
3. Organic Farm Input production.

We have already trained 20 women in making bamboo mats. They are fully independent and are able to run their business themselves. As we mentioned in our last year report, we have decided to import some bamboo processing machines to support them.

But due to government laws and financial issues, Farm India could not do it directly. So we have decided to join hands with social minded business people to help us in this project. If everything goes well, next year, a Bamboo based industry would be running and this would help our women groups in a big way.

A WHO report says more than 70% of rural women are affected by uterus related diseases due to improper usage of sanitary napkins. So we decided to bring these products to our village women. At the same time we plan to provide jobs for our women who are otherwise jobless. We have given few training programs by Nichi-In



Bio sciences, Chennai to understand the importance and production of sanitary napkins. We hope we can start a production unit run by women SHGs by next year.

As we did last year, we continue to train our women folks in the preparation of Herbal pesticides, Panchakawya, Vermi compost, etc.

## **Senior Citizens & Social Harmony:**

### **1. Support to Senior Citizens:**

This still remains un-attended by us due to financial problem. However we have already started in a small way to help few of the poorest senior citizens in terms of cloths, food and moral support.

We also try to provide counseling to these elder people to give piece of mind at their old age. We are seriously looking for external support to make our dream become true.

### **2. Kaman Pandigai – A Village festival to create Social Harmony:**

This year being the 150<sup>th</sup> Year of this festival, Farm India made it as a special occasion. This festival is a cultural identity for our region. People cutting across the society poor or rich, lower or higher cast, everyone joins in celebrating this festival.

We are really proud in sponsoring this festival which is a great symbol of Social Harmony. We also have a plan to invite foreigners to join this festival as a part of heritage tours.

### **Conclusion:**

We are happy to announce our success in the following lines.

1. Bringing quality education to our children
2. Successfully conducting “Kalvi Thiruvizha”
3. Providing computers to our member schools
4. Creating awareness in Organic Farming
5. Training our folks in Napkin production
6. Training in Bamboo mats.
7. Maintaining social harmony

We wish to thank one and other who extended their hands in our march towards rural development. To mention few of them, we wish to record our sincere thanks to AHIMSA, Thalaanmai – Agri. Magazine and KVK Gandhigram. We expect our performance would be still better in the coming years.

***We Love Nature & God***