

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Ropar

Year round mushroom production by Sh. Karnail Singh

Introduction

Sh. Karnail Singh Grewal is a small scale farmer who owns 1.5 acres of land in village Bhaini Tehsil Nangal of District Ropar. After completing his senior secondary education, he joined Indian army to serve his country. After 17 years of service at the age of 36 years, he retired from the Army and returned to his roots. Being a small scale farmer he started looking for alternatives to boost his farm income. After serious introspection he started thinking of mushroom farming as a subsidiary occupation.

Training

Formal training is a crucial first step to establish a profitable venture, hence he decided to get training in mushroom cultivation. For this he came in to contact with Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Ropar and got his formal training during 2017. After training he started mushroom farming at his farm, which grew in leaps and bounds. On his quest to make his farm a continuously growing enterprise, he also went to Directorate of Mushroom Research, Solan to get 10 day training in mushroom farming. This helped him to supplement his knowledge and gain more practical experience of doing the things. Initially he started with a few mushroom bags stacked in a room at his farm. Later on, as his business grew, he constructed some sheds and eventually made two of these units artificially air conditioned. This enables S. Karnail Singh to grow mushrooms almost round the year thus maintaining a steady flow of income at the farm. His perseverance and dedication to uplift his farm economy is exemplary.

Output

At present, Sh. Karnail Singh has two air conditioned units along with four other normal air ventilated units for mushroom production, spanning on 4 kanals or half acre area of his land. On the remaining land he grows wheat, paddy and maize. The straw of wheat and rice is completely used at his own farm. The wheat straw is used for preparing substrate or growing media, while the paddy straw is used as mulch on roofs of sheds. Apart from this upon harvest of mushrooms, he uses the compost from the bags in his own fields. On his mushroom farming unit he grows button mushroom during two main seasons *viz.* summer and winter. For the summer season crop, he initiates the culture in the month of July under the controlled conditions with the help of air conditioning, and continues to harvest till the months of September-October. Then in the month of September he starts winter crop, which he continues to harvest till March-April.

Outcome: Average production of mushroom at his farm is 1-1.5 quintals per day with total production during winters to the tune of 18 tonnes and during summer total production is less, i.e. 12 tonnes. His mushroom sells anywhere between Rs. 80-150 per kg, which varies according to season,

averaging to Rs 100 per kg during winter and to Rs. 120 per kg during summer. The average cost of production for mushroom ranges from Rs. 70-75 per kg during winter and Rs. 80-90 per kg during summer which includes the expenses on seed, labour, raw material, etc. For instance during off season production in summers, the cost of production rises due to air conditioning. The rising cost of wheat straw has increased his production cost to Rs. 80-85 per kg even during normal growing season. Upon its sale he usually gets a margin of Rs. 30 per kg during winter, and Rs. 20 per kg during summer generating total profit of about Rs. 5,40,000/- and Rs. 2,40,000/-, respectively during both the seasons.

Takeaway

S. Karnail Singh is generating additional income along with the traditional farming on this farm. Earlier people in surrounding villages were not aware about mushrooms and its benefits. But after seeing S. Karnail Singh's farm they have become his regular customers. He sells a daily average of 20 kg mushroom in his village itself, while rest of the produce is supplied to the larger markets in the cities of Kiratpur Sahib and Ropar and sometimes to Chandigarh and Ludhiana also, depending upon the quantity. He does this himself in his own vehicle, starting his day as early as 2 am.

Impact:

- He has become a torchbearer for the hard working small farmers who wish to enhance their economic position, but are indecisive on the means to do so.
- He has paved a way for lucrative enterprise where need of capital is not too high and profits can be gained with careful planning and hard work.

