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Livelihood Improvement through Poultry and Dairy Integration in Crop Farming: A Rural Case Study

*Khushi, Dr. Navjot and Gurshaminder Singh

University Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Chandigarh University, Mohali, India

*Corresponding Author's email: mahajankhushi641@gmail.com

Neelam Devi, a determined woman farmer from Kotli village near Chandigarh, has emerged as an inspiring example of resilience and innovation in small-scale agriculture. Through hard work, strategic diversification, and effective farm management, she transformed her family's struggling farm into a sustainable source of income, demonstrating how allied agricultural activities can significantly improve rural livelihoods. Their family depends mainly on agriculture for their livelihood. They own a small piece of land where they grow crops like wheat and maize. A few years ago, Neelam's family was going through a difficult time. Her husband Rakesh Kumar was suffering from asthma, which made it hard for him to work for long hours in the fields. Because of his health problem, he often felt weak and tired, so he could not do heavy farm work regularly. Due to this situation, their farming work slowed down and the family income became very low. Managing daily expenses and their children's education became a big challenge.

Neelam Devi was a brave and determined woman. Instead of losing hope, she decided to take responsibility for improving her family's condition. She started managing the farm work herself, such as preparing the soil, sowing seeds, watering the crops, and taking care of the fields. To increase the family income, Neelam also decided to start poultry farming. With her small savings, she bought 12 hens and built a small shed near her house. At the same time, the family already had one cow, and Neelam started taking proper care of it to increase milk production. Neelam worked very hard every day. Early in the morning she fed the hens and cleaned the poultry shed. She also took care of the cow, milked it, and used the milk for household needs and for selling in the village. After finishing these tasks, she went to the fields to manage the crops. Her husband Rakesh could not do heavy work, but he helped her with small tasks like bringing fodder for the cow and selling eggs and milk in the local market.

After some months, Neelam started earning money from selling eggs and milk along with the crops from her farm. People in Kotli village and nearby areas of Chandigarh liked the fresh eggs and milk from her farm. Slowly, her number of customers increased. With the profit she earned, Neelam expanded her work. She increased the number of chickens and later bought one more cow. This helped her earn more income and improve the financial condition of her family. Today, Neelam Devi is known as a successful woman farmer in Kotli village. Her hard work and determination have changed her family's life. Many women in the village are inspired by her story and want to start small farming activities like poultry and dairy. Neelam's story shows that hard work, courage, and determination can overcome any difficulty. Even when her husband could not work fully due to health problems, she managed the farm, poultry, and dairy work successfully. Her journey is a great inspiration for other women farmers in the village.