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Balancing Crops and Cattle: A Journey Towards Sustainable Prosperity (Progressive Journey of Mr. Deepak Kumar)

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Farmer Details

Farmer Name: Mr. Deepak Kumar
Age: 33

Introduction

Agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods in Punjab, where farmers often depend upon a mix of crop cultivation and livestock rearing. Mr. Deepak Kumar, a 33-year-old farmer from Deh Kalan village in SAS Nagar (Mohali), represents a progressive example of integrated farming. Through continuous effort and practical learning, he has developed a system that combines crop production with dairy farming, ensuring both regular and seasonal income.

Dairy farm

Initial Farming Conditions and Challenges

Until 2019, Mr. Deepak Kumar had limited resources and faced several challenges. He owned only about 12–15 acres of land, which restricted his production and income. His farming mainly followed the traditional rice–wheat system, with little diversification Income from crops was seasonal and often not enough to meet household needs. Along with this, he had a small dairy unit consisting of only 2–3 animals, which produced very little surplus milk for sale. He also faced multiple difficulties such as rising input costs, lack of access to modern machinery, and limited knowledge of improved farming and livestock management practices. Market fluctuations and uncertain weather conditions further increased the risk, making farming less profitable and more challenging.

Transformation and Improvement Process

With growing experience and determination to improve his condition, Mr. Deepak Kumar began making gradual changes in his farming system. He started by leasing additional land to expand his operational area. At the same time, he increased the number of dairy animals step by step. Through regular interaction with fellow farmers and local networks, he gained knowledge about better agricultural practices. He also adopted the use of farm machinery, which helped him perform operations more efficiently and reduce labour dependency. By integrating crop production with dairy farming, he was able to utilize crop residues as fodder and reduce feeding costs. This combination allowed him to generate regular income from milk while continuing crop cultivation, making his farming system more stable and sustainable.

Present Farming System and Production

At present, Mr. Deepak Kumar manages around 35 acres of owned land along with approximately 45 acres on lease, making a total of nearly 80 acres under cultivation. He grows crops such as rice, wheat, maize, and fodder crops like berseem. The cropping pattern follows seasonal cycles, with rice and maize grown in the kharif season and wheat and fodder crops in the rabi season. Mechanization has helped him carry out farming operations in a timely and efficient manner, reducing labour costs and increasing productivity. Dairy farming has now become a major component of his enterprise. He currently maintains around 5 cows and 20 buffaloes. The dairy unit produces nearly 200 litres of milk per day, which is supplied to the Verka milk cooperative societies, ensuring a steady and reliable source of income.

Resource Utilization and Farm Integration

One of the key strengths of his farming system is the effective integration of crops and livestock. Crop residues such as wheat straw are used as fodder for animals, while surplus material is sold in the market. Fodder crops grown on the farm help meet the nutritional needs of livestock, reducing external input costs. This efficient use of available resources not only lowers expenses but also improves overall farm productivity.

Economic and Social Impact

The shift towards an integrated farming system has significantly improved the farmer's economic condition. The combination of crop and dairy enterprises provides both seasonal and daily income, reducing financial risk. His success has also influenced other farmers in the village, encouraging them to adopt different farming practices and improve resource utilization. The model demonstrates how gradual improvements and better management can transform traditional farming into a more profitable enterprise.

Conclusion

The journey of Mr. Deepak Kumar clearly shows that consistent effort, practical knowledge, and diversification can bring significant improvements in agriculture. By integrating crop cultivation with dairy farming, he has created a balanced and sustainable farming system. His experience highlights the importance of adopting improved practices, efficient resource use, and income diversification in ensuring long-term stability and growth in farming. This model can serve as an inspiration for other farmers aiming to enhance their productivity and livelihood security.