

Alternate cropping

Objective

1. To develop understanding about alternative patterns of cropping for sustainable agriculture.
2. Know about benefits of alternative patterns of cropping.

Background

Increasing demand for food due to ever raising population has created a pressure on agriculture for more production. Excessive use of fertilisers and water for increasing production may be counter productive for sustainable agriculture. There is a need, therefore, to adopt alternative methods so as to make agriculture more productive. Cropping patterns such as mixed cropping and inter-cropping are alternatives to monocropping and are helpful in retaining the fertility of the soil. There is also a possible solution to farmer's woes of crop failure.



Methodology

1. Visit a crop field nearest to your village or locality and talk to the farmers.
2. Interview them and find out the types of crop they sow in their farms and also the area they cultivate.
3. Find out what each farmer is growing and note if they are growing one or many crops.
4. Find out if any farmer has switched over to mixed cropping and intercropping in recent past. If so, what were the reasons and how has that benefited the farmer.
5. If they are growing more than one crop, ask the farmer about the pattern of sowing. Is it at random or in rows?
6. Enquire from the farmers the yield they obtain per unit area in each case.

7. Ask them about the type of fertilizers or manures they use and the amount of each type used. Also find out the type of irrigation used.
8. Find out the various alternatives that farmers plan in case of a crop failure.
9. Tabulate the information.

Farmer No	Cultivation patterns	No of Crops	Names of Crops	Natural / Chemical fertilizers used(Yes/No)	Yeilding (Quintals)

Conclusion

Though you have a very little farmland it is better to harvest different crops like paddy, Jowar, ragi, greengrams, bengal grams, vegetables, fruits and flowers. Through mixed cropping we can arrest the spreading of diseases from one crop to another crop. Moreover, one type of disease can be prevented through another type of insects. Diseases will be reduced so that the capital, and the usage of pesticides will also be reduced hence environment will not polluted.

Prepare a report based on your observations and collected data about different forms of cropping, which gives more yield, more economical.

Follow-up

1. Findout other practices which can make agriculture in a sustainable manner.
2. Prepare appropriate methodology for a project to wheather genetically modified crops cultivated or not.