

Government and scientists must encourage rural innovators

The farmer does not interact or share information with scientists

M.J. PRABU

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"In holds grinding nancial const be the preva Unlike a stea antes a m farmer can teed a reg his lands," Patil from Mr. Pa dual pe called yields

A groundnut variety that does not need much water

The pods are stronger and grow at lesser depth

M.J. PRABU

It is natural for farmers to invariably go in ei ther for a che their cro or in



Tackling rural India's problems is the mission of 28 youngsters

Many farmers want more youth to take part in the programme

M.J. PRABU

'Nothing changes' is the cynical reaction to the multitude problems plaguing the country's massive rural sector from farmer suicides to depleting resources. "These issues are debated profusely, triggering circular blame games, with a general conclusion that the responsibility lies in the hands of country's youth to put this right. Yet, every year we the educated youth overlook this sector which is clamoring out loud for their attention," says Dr. G.N. Harilal, Principle co-ordinator, Ram Swaminathan Foundation, Chennai.

Face the challenge

This year however, sons with a maverick spirit have decided to step up to the challenge.

These young people will form the State Biodiversity (SBI) Youth for Biodiversity - a unique initiative to enable educated youth to understand

Naper Bajra grass can generate substantial power for Tamil Nadu

The government is helping in setting up a 10 MW power project

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At a time when Tamil Nadu has been reeling under a severe power crisis for over three months, and the problem may have eased with the arrival of wind power over the past week, the existing demand-supply can possibly be addressed through alternate sources.

One such solution lies in tapping the right renewable green resource like the humble Napier Bajra grass also called as NB CO-4 hybrid or Emperor grass.

Good biomass

"Released by Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU) during 2008, CO4 exhibits phenomenal bio



GOOD ALTERNATIVE: Kumaravelu in front of the demonstration plot in which the grass is grown.

using biofertilizers, nutrients, biochar and chemical fertilizers with drip irrigation to ensure sustained high yield.

principle, announced in the Assembly, that they would help in setting up a 10 MW power project using this

ured for the farmers," says Dr. Kumaravelu. Therefore, apart from electricity production from stem, the team plans to establish a dairy unit utilizing the leaf as fodder for cows.

Twin benefit

The cow dung and urine will be recycled to the plantation. Fodder for the free mulch animal scheme announced by the Government can be benefited from this fodder.

This grass is nutritious and relished by cattle and has enhanced milk yield from 1 to 2 litres per day.

The waste biomass and leaves can be used to generate methane gas, similar to gas



the process strengthening the existing biovillage concept. Ms. Anu Jacob, previously managing the HR activities of a startup, is working on making the 'Every village a knowledge model'