

Mr. Rakesh Dev

– an exemplary farmer of medicinal plants
from East Champaran, Bihar



Regional-cum-facilitation Centre, Eastern Region (RCFC-ER)
National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India
Jadavpur University, Kolkata - 700 032



Champan is a region of Bihar, known for the historical agricultural revolution. Mr. Rakesh Dev, 53 years old, resident of Bada Govind village under Bada Chakia block of East Champaran district, Bihar is one of the pioneer of the agricultural revolution. After completion of Intermediate, Mr. Rakesh Dev took a resolution to make his inherited 10 acres of land as a source of his livelihood. He went to Maize Research Center in Begusarai, Bihar in 2007 to learn about scientific agro-techniques of traditional agricultural/food crops through proper training, where a local farmer instilled interest in his life for cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants. In that decade of 2000s, Begusarai was considered a major producer of Mentha oil production and medicinal plants cultivation.

In the same year i.e, in 2007, Mr. Rakesh Dev along with the farmers of Begusarai and Lucknow brought the root sucker of Mentha of Kosi variety for cultivation and in the first year Mentha was cultivated in his 2 acres of land. He purchased an old distillation plant from Begusarai and started extraction of Mentha oil. Realizing the profit, he formed a group with another two farmers and expanded their Mentha cultivation in 20 acres of land that is continuing till date. Earlier there used to be a profit of 20 to 25 thousand per acre from food grains crops, whereas Mentha farming started to provide a profit of 50 thousand per acre. Mr. Rakesh Dev also cultivates Khus, Tulsi, Lemon grass, Wild marigold and Jafri marigold for oil extraction. Apart from this, he also cultivated Artemisia, Kalmegh and Lata Kasturi. In the first two years there was profit in Artemisia, but in the third year, Artemisia, Kalmegh and Lata kasturi suffered from huge loss due to lack of buyers. After this incident, Mr. Rakesh Dev started farming on the basis of market demand. Earlier, he used to earn profit of 1 to 2 lakhs per annum from orthodox farming, now he is earning annual income of 6 to 8 lakhs from medicinal plants farming.

In the year 2019, Mr. Rakesh Dev went to Chhattisgarh State for exposure visit to learn prevailing agro-practices, primary processing & value addition and marketing of medicinal Plants produces organized by Regional cum Facilitation Centre (RCFC), Eastern Region (ER), Jadavpur University and again in the same year he participated in the training course on "Development of Quality Planting Material for Medicinal Plants Propagation" organized by RCFC-ER at Jadavpur University. He continued the cultivation of medicinal plants with acquired knowledge and new energy. His endeavour and success attracted the farmers to participate in the agricultural training and exhibition of medicinal plants organized by the state and districts from time to time, resulting more than 50 farmers have taken interest in medicinal farming and their income have been increased. At present there are six distillation plants under his supervision, set up at different places in the district and he also impart training on extraction of oil. In the year 2022-23, he has started cultivation of Chia with the guarantee of purchase of Chia seeds through the intervention of RCFC-ER along with cultivation of Akarkara under the supervision of RCFC-ER.



Mr. Rakesh Dev is a member of the Farmers Advisory Committee since 2001 under the Atma Yojana of the Government of India and in 2010 he became the founding member of the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Growers Association of Bihar. From 2012 to 2019, he had received grant for medicinal and aromatic cultivation under various schemes of Horticulture Department of Bihar Government and through this he also installed two modern distillation plants, which increased the quantity and quality of oil of aromatic crops. In 2016, he organized selected farmers from some blocks of the East Champaran district and formed "Maa Boudhidevi Farmers Producer Company Limited" and joined as Board of Directors and started making plans to increase the income of the farmers.



During this year 2023, Mr. Rakesh Dev is cultivating Khas over 10 acres, Mentha over 5 acres, Tulsi over 3 acres, Akarkara over 2 acres, Chia over 1 acre, Wild Marigold over 1 acre, Jafri Marigold over 1 acre and Lemongrass over 1 acre of land. Apart from this, he has also started cultivation of white sandalwood and dragon fruit. He is doing his farming by taking 10 acres of his own land and 15 acres of land on lease from local farmers. Due to his interest in modern agricultural machinery, he has a tractor, three types of plough, bund and drain making machine, thresher etc., for easy cultivation. This year, an agricultural machine has also been made in Lucknow under his supervision for easy harvesting of khas which is tractor-driven.

CIMAP, Lucknow has provided 30 kg of root suckers of two advanced Mentha cultivars (Sim-Kranti and Sim-Unnati) under the Aroma Mission this year, nursery of which has already been established. Apart from above, Mr. Dev also does animal husbandry, dairy production and vermi composts for farming.

Through various innovative approach, consisted effort and application of modern technology in medicinal plants farming established Mr. Rakesh Dev as an exemplary farmer of East Champaran, Bihar.



For more information please contact:

Prof. (Dr.) Asis Mazumdar
Nodal Coordinator
coordinatorrcfc@jadavpuruniversity.in

Dr. Sanjay Bala
Regional Director
rdrcfc@jadavpuruniversity.in

Regional-cum-Facilitation Centre, Eastern Region
NMPB, Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India
Jadavpur University, Kolkata - 700032
Tel: +91-33-24146979, Fax: +91-33-24146886
Email: rfcnmpb@jadavpuruniversity.in, Website : <http://www.rcfceast.org>