Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative leads to increase in Sugarcane yield

AFARM is implementing the Ghod river basin development programme in 19 villages of Shrigonda and Parner blocks of Ahmednagar district with the support of ITC Ltd. Some of the villages are in the command area of the Kukdi irrigation project. Therefore, sugarcane is one of the prominent crops being cultivated in the project villages. Sugarcane being a high water consuming crop, AFARM has taken up the initiative for sustainable sugarcane with the technical assistance of Vasantdada Sugar Institute (VSI), Pune. The objective of sustainable sugarcane is to enhance productivity, promote efficient water use and to reduce the cost of production.

AFARM has introduced Single Bud Cultivation, seed treatment, plantation as per SSI technique of 5x2 feet spacing on raise beds, drip irrigation, organic farming, etc. through demonstrations and farmer's field schools. Further, farmers were taken for exposure visits to Krushi Vignan Kendra, Mahatma Phule Agriculture University, Rahuri, for learning new techniques.

Shri Sonyabapu Dhavale being one of the active FFS famer from Dhavalgaon village from Shrigonda block adopted package-of-practices of sustainable sugarcane production in 1 acre. He could produce 71 tons in the area of 1 acre and earned Rs. 1.75 lakhs.

He said, "Increase in sugarcane yield is mainly due to adoption of Single Bud Cultivation method."

He further said that "only 50-60 kg sugarcane seed was required to cultivate 1 acre sugarcane over 2-3 tons sugarcane seeds in traditional cultivation". In the early stage of the sugarcane crop, he has also taken inter crop of onion. The total production of onion was 4 tons, which gave him additional income of Rs. 0.8 lakhs. Thus, the profit was almost 3 times the investment. He become the super champion farmer in his village. The said package-of-practices was adopted by other farmers from his village in 14 ha area. This methodology is highly sustainable and also lucrative in terms of return.