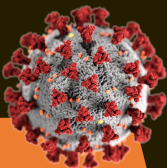




VNR Impact

Volume – 20, April to June 2020

www.vnrseeds.com



Special Edition on
New Normal
during COVID-19

IN THIS ISSUE

- ❖ Knowledge Zone
- ❖ Promotions
- ❖ VNRites Zone
- ❖ Farmer's Success Stories

Dear Readers,

By the time we're releasing this issue, it seems that the world has changed. Living with COVID-19 is the new normal and we've gotten a lot use to it now. However, adaptation is the key and we the human race is known across the species who can quickly understand the changing environment and then change for good. In this issue, we've bought exclusive insides from each and every functional unit of our company as they talk about the impact of Coronavirus outbreak in their roles and management style. VNR leadership team has talked for the first time expressing from some of their concerns to their passionate optimism to grow despite of this disruption so we, as a company can keep working in the interest of farmer.

Along with such insides, we've got a change to cover some of our team members who witnessed the effect of lockdown. We've captured their months long stories setting examples of extraordinary resilience as well as reflecting extraordinary patience at the time when it was needed the most.

VNRites are concerned about the nation and they've very creatively expressed their emotions. While some penned down the fine humane lines feeling the pain and suffering during this catastrophe and some others have sketched their feelings out. There's a lot to go through in VNRites column this month and we really wish you like it. We have also brought few farmers success stories, showcasing the benefits reaped out of using our practices.

Last but not the least, we wanted to express out the New Normal so instead of making same ol' boring posters we decided to pep it up a bit in Comic Style! Don't forget to comprehend those underlying tips in the comic that is really essential to follow during this pandemic. Caution! Links in the document are real so please go ahead and click each one of them to make sure you've been taking sufficient precaution from Coronavirus!

Happy Reading

Impact Editorial Team

New Product Launch



Vaani

- First harvest: 55-60 Days
- Avg. Fruit Weight: 80-85 Gm
- Shape: Round
- Early hybrid with Heavy Fruit bearing
- Plant type: Semi-Determinate
- Sour in taste
- Target Season - Rabi/Kharif
- Good Heat Set



Veer

- First harvest: 45-50 Days
- Fruit length: 6-7 Cm & Width: 4-4.5 Cm
- Avg. Fruit Weight: 200-250 Gm
- Dark purple fruit colour with low seed
- Green Non-Spiny Calyx
- Shape: Round with Less seeds
- Bushy plant canopy with more branches



Tarun

- First harvest: 50-55 Days
- Attractive Dark green Uniform fruits
- Avg. Fruit Weight: 120-140 Gm
- Avg. Fruit Length: 18-22 cm
- Avg. Fruit Width: 4-4.5 cm
- Medium early hybrid
- Uniform fruits through successive pickings



Uma

- First harvest: 60-65 Days
- Avg. Fruit Weight: 80-90 Gm
- Shape: Flat-Round, Firm fruit
- Sour in taste
- Early blight tolerance
- Heavy Fruit bearing
- Plant type: Semi-Determinate



Kuhu

- First harvest: 40-45 Days
- Attractive Dark green fruits
- Avg. Fruit Weight: 120-140 Gm
- Avg. Fruit Length: 22-24 cm
- Avg. Fruit Width: 3.2-3.5 cm
- Early bulker
- High yield potential



Shyama

- First harvest: 45-50 Days
- Attractive Dark purple fruits with high pungency
- Avg. Fruit Length: 9-11 cm
- Avg. Fruit Width: 0.8-1.0 cm
- Big plant canopy
- Fetches good mandi price due to fruit colour and shine
- High yield potential

What are Locusts and Why are they Attacking in Millions?



Source: <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/christians-respond-as-desert-locusts-devour-and-destroy/>

What is Locust?

Locusts are grasshoppers, different from their peers in their ability to change behaviour, habits and migrate over large distances. Grasshoppers, or hoppers, are solitary creatures that don't live in groups. But if driven by hunger caused by drought or food scarcity, they start to gather together while foraging for food.

As their population increases in an area, they start becoming "gregarious".

In ecology, gregariousness is the tendency of animals to form social groups to hunt or eat together. It tends to induce hoppers to start coordinating their movements and form swarms. Gregarious hoppers are referred to as locusts.

There are three forms of swarms

- Small pockets confined to certain areas, called outbreaks

- Slightly larger groups, called an upsurge that are still geographically confined;
- Mega groups, called plagues, of locusts that are separated by breeding locations but gather together in swarms.

<https://theprint.in/science/why-the-worst-locust-attack-in-decades-has-invaded-north-india/431257/>

Where was the origin of this locust gang?

This desert locust crisis traces back to May 2018, when Cyclone Mekunu passed over a vast, unpopulated desert on the southern Arabian Peninsula known as the Rub' al Khali, filling the space between sand dunes with ephemeral lakes, which allowed locusts to breed undetected. This was further amplified in October 2018 by Cyclone Luban, which spawned in the central Arabian Sea, marched westward, and rained out over the same region near the border of Yemen and Oman. These

- Three villages in Gujarat’s Banaskantha district, which shares a border with Pakistan’s desert areas, came under fresh locust attacks in January (2020).
- The districts adversely affected by the large scale coordinated attacks by locusts include Sri Ganganagar, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Churu and Nagaur. India has been able to bring swarms of desert locusts under control in two key oilseed producing states.
- Most locusts have already matured since their arrival as hopper bands or immature adults in India in April.
- Most locusts have already matured since their arrival as hopper bands or immature adults in India in April.
- In May, amid the coronavirus pandemic, parts of India such as Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh were severely affected by locust swarms measuring a kilometer wide, the worst locust attack in 27 years.
- Last week of May and early June, when swarms of locusts unusually spread to states as far as Chhattisgarh in the east and Maharashtra in the south.
- Till mid-June, breeding was underway in Bikaner, Nagaur, Barmer and Jodhpur districts. They are now being joined by spring-bred swarms from Iran and southwest Pakistan.
- On 27th June 2020, millions of locusts swarmed on a massive scale in Gurgaon, Delhi-NCR region, made look like a sand storm in the sky.
- By July 2, locusts spread to almost a dozen districts in the Himalayan country where the kharif crop cycle is underway.

How many Locust can there be in a Swarm?

- A one square kilometer swarm contains about 40 million locusts. They can eat as much food as 35,000 people assuming that each individual consumes 2.3 kg of food per day.

How much damage a gang of Locust can do?

- In Gujarat, locust attacks in December(2019) damaged crops, mainly rapeseed and cumin seed, planted on about 17,000 hectares.

unusually heavy rains were tied to fluctuations in the Indian Ocean Dipole, which in turn is affected by climate change. Locusts grow exponentially in this kind of climate and ultimately, these two 2018 cyclones enabled three generations of wildly successful locust breeding in just nine months, increasing the number of insects buzzing over the Arabian desert roughly 8,000-fold.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019%E2%80%9320_locust_infestation

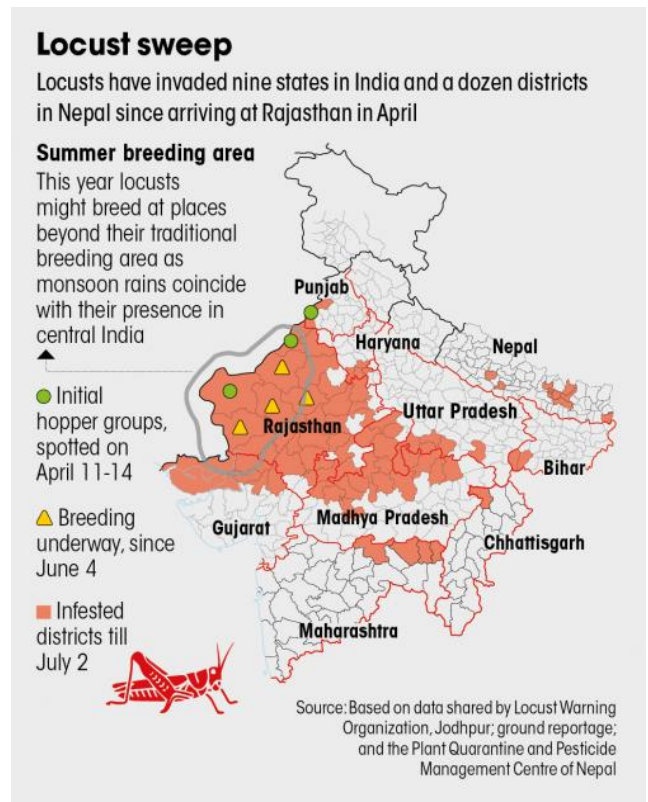


FIGURE 1: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/wildlife-biodiversity/is-india-headed-towards-a-locust-plague-72119>

Where in India it attacked?

- The swarms in India came from Iran and Pakistan, the outbreak began late 2019 in Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- Parts of western Rajasthan have destroyed crops spread over at least 350,000 hectares of land.
- The pests, which infested around 100,000 hectares across states till June end.

What can be done to protect crops from Locust attack?

- As the swarm usually fly in the day time, the locust should not be allowed to rest at night, as per the advisory read.
- An advisory has been issued that in case there is an attack by locusts, people should gather at a place and bang dhols, drums, tin boxes and thalis and create noise.

Was Seed Industry really Immune from Coronavirus?

Interviewed by: G. Swapnil, Marketing

We all are facing the heat of this pandemic and this period is going to be a talk of the lifetime. Coronavirus outbreak, that started as rumors of a deadly virus from neighboring nation was already troubling, but the gravity of situation was felt only months later as it started effecting one nation after other. Finally, it was March when it first landed in India.

An anticipation of a chaos was in the offing however, there came an announcement of immediate lockdown by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India and the nation was frozen and still bearing its after-effect. We interviewed HODs of all verticals at VNR Seeds asking their counter measures, damage repairs and methods which was used to face this challenge.



Mr. Kumar Rahul,
General Manager Sales

We know Sales team must travel a lot; how did you meet this challenge during COVID-19 situation?

Answer: COVID-19 has impacted the way we work. We started reaching our team by WhatsApp, calling, and staying in touch with distributors and retailers over the phone. But these are new tools and considering this the only way for lot of other companies too so now there's a need to measure how was our impact. We often get to hear from farmers saying, "You're the 1st company or 3rd company who're contacting us for feedback", so it's a clue for us to understand exactly how these tools are working for us.

What is the next challenge in Seed industry?

Answer: One of the challenges I suppose is creating a new customer base, it was difficult this year. Generating new customer is a challenge, it's because it is important to have a visual appeal like video & contents for a farmer to either switch or endorse to our product. We'll need a multimedia approach and the tools like YouTube, LinkedIn, and Facebook to propagate these messages.

What are your speculations for this year?

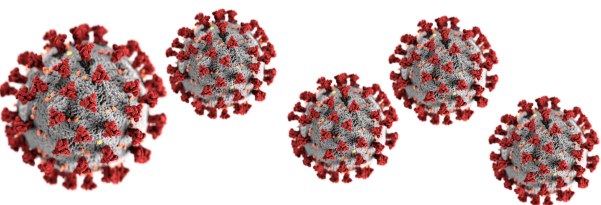
Answer: In agriculture, for cereals the market still might look good. But for vegetables – it is hard because it requires transportation. We're already witnessing a deduction in vegetable farm area. So for short term, we will need growth injection in vegetable and then in field crops. Acreages in veg is going down, its' not only because of consumption pattern but also because of the fear of buying from local vendor, fear of transportation and in the end, fear of not getting good prices in mandi. June/July – Vegetable production was coming down. If things are normal, we'll have a good season. Farmers will change brand only under extreme recommendation from their fellow farmers, so we're taking it up as a challenge.

Something that you'd like to say to the team.

Answer: Passion for their job must be there and salesperson should understand that the next few days are more important. 22nd March to mid-May most of us were keeping in the house, post which they started going out and started attending the farmers. So, I'd say it's a level of commitment and a level of understanding that is going to be the strength of VNR Team.

Message to Distributor & Retailer

Answer: VNR has a commitment of good seed better yield, we're farmer at heart and we'll continue to endure so.





Mr. Hitendra Singh,
General Manager Sales

We know Sales team must travel a lot; how did you meet this challenge during COVID-19 situation?

Answer: For the Sales team, staying was also one of the biggest challenges apart from traveling during lockdown. Sometimes team has to stay at their colleagues' places and worked from there with all precautions. We had to get permit from government officials as Seed is essential commodity.

By May, the seed business received all the required permission for transportation and that gave us some relaxation. By 1st week of June hotels and stays started, it helped us to start movement. However, food was still a challenge, our team arranged it either from home or at times from the known colleagues or distributors. You see, everyone was trying their best to cooperate with each other during this time of emergency.

What were the major observable changes you noticed during Coronavirus outbreak?

Answer: It all started with lot of hesitation during March. There was confusion about storage, about material movement, about company's operations and so many similar matters. It wasn't clear what was going to happen tomorrow, it was a big question for all.

One good thing about this period has been that the distributors and retailers sold their materials on cash and carry basis. So, they might have operated with minimum risk and quick realization might've kept them secured for the coming season. Also, those companies who supplied on the right time and took immediate action received the benefit. Quick action is also going to be the challenge of future.

But on the counter side, it might be dangerous because farmers did not get anticipated income. They're now confused about how they should plan for the coming season. As there's still some time for the next season to begin, we at our end are trying hard enough to look for various option that falls in favor of farmers. And I'm optimistic about it, we will find some options for the future course.



Dr. Ashok Kumar Gupta,
Brand Manager

What were VNR Seed's awareness programs this year?

Answer: Coronavirus awareness was mentioned in almost all the communication materials like brochure, flyers, etc. that we use every year. We circulated elaborated precautionary messages related to COVID-19 in the user group. Social distancing, using face mask, sterilization, and gestural etiquettes were the theme. This year, our Unnati brochure inner cover had a message from business head in which, he talked about the pandemic and urged business partners to be aware of their actions in the time of this pandemic.

What's the biggest challenge of Agri Industry now?

Answer: Marketing team could not communicate about product via print media. One of our major challenge was to plan for activities which can meet the loss of a traditional marketing channel like this. In the process, we created a digital mesh where we connected with the farmers using WhatsApp which is highly prevalent amongst farmer group. Additionally, we used SMS and Calling methods to business participants and that gave us a very good response.

Next big challenge was the logistics as time taken for a successful transfer was almost doubled. More so in March-April, when the pandemic first stepped in our country, almost everything was immobile. Later after 7 days GOI released a guideline allowing movement of essential products and situation started to settle. Freight rate was yet another challenge, but thanks to the business participants, it was handled just fine.

Even the farmers started buying in advance to avoid any lack of resources. Distributors and retailers shifted business at viable places to ease the trade.

I would say, it was a cumulative effort from everybody who's in the seed business and hence we were able to fight this situation off together. I'm happy and proud to be a part of this community and we played our role as per our organization's very motto – Always Work in the Interest of Farmers.



Mr. Pradeep Tiwari,
Group Product Manager

What was the impact of Coronavirus outbreak?

Answer: We generally push our orders by March end and the outbreak occurred at same time. Certain jobs were placed and certain were not. We had plans for meeting farmers, Jeep campaigns, appoint FAs. But all was on hold. So, we changed our approach reaching out. We started online training of MDOs, SMS campaigns, tele-marketing and multimedia campaigns etc. We designed templates for the farmers, created an audio-visual clip and then we pushed it across emails and WhatsApp.

What are the challenges of digital marketing? Do you see digital marketing having a bright future?

Answer: There is no tool that can analyse the impact. I believe face to face interaction develops the kind of relationship which we couldn't find happening with these mediums. When things reinstate to normal, we will go back to our marketing activities which demonstrate the performance and quality of our crops and produce. The flexibility we get in doing face to face interaction is at par other methods.

This year, The key was to spread our product all across as we had anticipated a panic amongst the farmers. Also, to our surprise, lot of pre-emptive sales happened as farmers feared non-availability of seeds.

What are your anticipation for the next two quarters?

Answer: I believe with passage of time things will complicate further this year. There were distributors who've got affected due to pandemic. So the fear does exist. We're avoiding possibilities for contacts and chances of getting infection by following all measures.

What is your message to distributors?

Answer: At this point, I think they should opt for door to door delivery instead of other way round. As this is a regulated commodity, farmers can make a payment via PayTM or PhonePay etc. This will do a lot good, avoiding congestion at the shop and reduce chances of spread.



Mr. Raj Kumar Kundu,
Lead Processing

How did you manage the transit during COVID-19?

Answer: At a processing plant there will be vehicles coming from across the country, it is a major challenge. We used to disinfect the whole vehicle, the driver and then rectify all the documents with utmost precautions. We created an isolation barrier beyond which nobody from other places could enter. This process was on strict notice, followed with zero error.

Please tell us about major challenges during lockdown?

Answer: Couriers were not allowed during lockdown, some of our packing material were stuck. Thanks to the network of our logistics, we identified the movement of large vehicles closest point from the collection center. We had to be in touch with transporters and vendors to create a map of movement and then opt for the one that's closest point from collection center.

Another situation was manpower. We had to meet sarpanch of the villages, show our protocols to authorities and only after that we use to get the required labor force. Managing our processing plant with such circumstances was cumbersome. Glad that with the help of a good team, we achieved it.

What measures were helpful in situation like this?

Answer: More you're dependent, higher are the chances of facing hurdles in completing a job. We therefore look for automations. With majority of our systems completely automated and a very clear-cut layout of people and process, we were able to manage the whole premise even during labor shortage. Systems that reduces our dependency and that worked like magic during this sudden outbreak.

What's the key for a consistently performing team?

Answer: We believe in advance planning. Our principal is to adhere to advance planning, and it is not only assessment of future requirements, but it is also about figuring out contingencies which might arise. Our plant had 90-95% of all available resources beforehand to make sure that we perform consistently. I am grateful for the team who had thought about it in advance, so we are always prepared.



Mr. Shekhar Chandra Sati,
Lead Quality Assurance

What were the major challenges you came across during this outbreak?

Answer: The good thing that happened to us was while the outbreak reached, our season was over. So, we got certain level of immunity from the kind of damage it would've otherwise done. But at the same time, ours is a department which cannot work from home so the challenges we had to face were quite practical in nature.

We had to arrange for masks, gloves, sanitizers over and above the usual safety measures of the plant. In addition, we had appointed a doctor who would visit every day at 4^oclock for examination. Every entry in the plant had to go through preliminary thermal scanning followed by sanitization procedure.

We assured to set up high standard protocol for the safety of our personnel and hence we very methodologically handled transportation going in and out of the premises. Our canteens were closed, and we encouraged everybody in the plant to get their food from home. Most importantly we had to face this as an ugly truth and learn how to live with this as a situation without worrying from it but also being aware of our responsibilities and duty towards not to let infection house our plant at any cost.



Mr. Nandkishore Sharma,
Asst General Manager Logistic

Q. Logistics must've been the most affected department during the onset of COVID-19?

Answer: We were the first department who shifted to work from home model on 17th March. We created a system for our work, rented 4-5 workstations for the team and met our targets during March. The next big challenge was transfer of goods on time. From 22nd March to 2nd of April, there was a total lockdown hence we could not move. But the day i.e. 3rd April, when government signaled that essential goods movement can start, we did not hold back after that. We began using 2MT small truck loads with 2-4 drivers. We had advance planning for April-May-June from Sales and Plant cooperated us with on-time processing. We had 30 days and our math would tell workload to double-up. What fell in our favor was availability of lorries as other industries like steel etc were shut. We had to plan for 250-300 MT dispatch everyday, so we negotiated keeping target days and quantity to be delivered on time.

Can you recall of a day or time-period which was really challenging?

Answer: Yes, prerequisites were not clear when Central Government was releasing responsibilities to the State Government. With some calculated risk we released two drivers for a dispatch. In Punjab-Haryana border, drivers could only move if they were found negative. Our solid paperwork came to the rescue. Then they were stuck in MP-CG border as the Centre & Collector had different views. We had to prepare documents immediately and forward it to Tehsildar. Also, there was a 4 hrs. unavoidable delay in Rajasthan-MP border where we were 50th in line behind the passenger buses as labor movements started recently. The lorry reached here within 18 hrs. of drive. So it became our used case, we were fully prepared for the consecutive dispatches.

What is your learning from these exercise?

Answer: You'll always have an opportunity in the face of a challenge. You need to perceive it properly. There's always a way, challenges teach you that.



Mr. Surendra Kumar,
General Manager Production

What was the major challenge during coronavirus outset?

Answer: We've to see the field output with our own eyes to anticipate seed's performance, it's mandatory. But traveling was a big challenge. Say, there's one police station in every 10 km and for inspections, we had to cross 6-7 of them, so it was not feasible. We gave supervisors, executives and field officers full charge. They were in touch with aids like videos and pictures with us and we coordinated it all from remote location. We had a tight schedule, field inspections in the morning and truck loading in the night. We had completed due diligence and formalities, assured the level of safety we were taking at the site and hence we were able to arrange sufficient workforce.

With sudden lockdown, how did you manage logistics?

Answer: Yes, when COVID-19 started, the transport was one of the biggest challenges. Trucks had to pass through many states, including states which are highly infected as well as highly secured. Transporters and drivers were scared, they had doubts about getting stuck and were not able to clearly anticipate the risk involved. We had to convince them with facilities we'll provide while they be on the go. Moral boost really worked this time because more than the facts, it was assumption which was keeping them low.

What is your anticipation for the coming quarters?

Answer: Panic is more in city, but we deal mostly in village. So, I see this as an advantage for our sector. It should not affect us much I believe. Additionally, we're working in six to seven states so we have got our back up plans ready to shift to other.

Your learnings from this Pandemic?

Answer: I think this is the time to go for mechanization which will be safe for future. Labourers and public, their interactions and their movements are going to be a good challenge in the coming years.



Dr. Hari Prasad,
General Manager FS

Did Coronavirus outbreak have effect on FS activities?

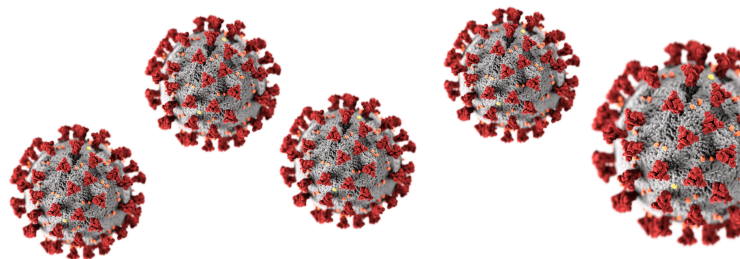
Answer: Largely, FS activities remained immune with this pandemic mostly owing to the fact that seed is an essential commodity. We did face some trouble at the beginning of the outbreak resulting in delays in harvesting plans and pollination, but we had sufficient backup to make up these losses.

What were some of the challenges that you had to face during the pandemic?

Answer: As the situation was unforeseen and lockdown came into effect immediately, we experienced shortage of labourers. Farmers and harvesters were in fear and Sarpanch of the village were very strict with the health of their people. So, we had to go to the sarpanch and explain him the measures we're taking like social distancing, sanitizers, soaps etc. which will check the spread of infection. Also, we were calling labors only during morning from 11 am to 1 pm which was fairly limited and then the labors could leave their houses. In addition, we had to arrange some e-passes for our employees so they could commute to the site.

What is your anticipation for the coming quarters?

Answer: I think we are going to do good as far as activities related to FS is concerned. We've leased land and we've already faced the heat. Things are relaxing on the other end with minor hesitation of the farmers towards vegetable seeds. I believe we'll be performing to our level. However, government should plan for the betterment of farmers as they've seen a very tough time. This is the time when we've to collectively boost their morals so they can perform at their usual strength.





Mr. Amit Upadhyay,
Zonal Technical Manager
Vegetable & Fruit Crop

What was the impact of lockdown announcement?

Answer: Product Development is an on-field activity and it demands a physical presence. But this year we had an exceptionally big challenge - immobility. Taking a deep dive into the fields was practically not a feasible solution. We anticipated it during Jan-Feb, had long discussion with management team about the strategies. We created a system where we could take 3rd party observation into account. We took farmer's help in understanding the crop's situation. They shared observations with the help of mobile videos, shared scores of diseases, scores on quality and other inputs. At times, our executives use to get the readings too. Farmers were developing a tendency to avoid picking as they felt it'll not be possible to cover the cost of labors for the same. We decided to pay for the labor cost to get the readings and they were able to recover their investment for this year.

Q. What are your views on low mandi rates?

Answer: I think we should not really associate the price dynamics with pandemic for long term because even in general there is a tendency of price shifting from one crop to other. Agriculture is necessity and not a luxury, hence the demand of vegetables will still be based on consumption. The price correction in the market for a commodity is a usual phenomenon, especially in case of essential commodity. In a counter view, one can always look at it as an opportunity because the demand of vegetables is to stay, in the present case when it'll be in short supply the prices will obviously increase giving good returns to farmers.

Q. What is your message for the farming community?

Answer: I believe we need to stay confident as situations come and go. We should try and analyze what's happening. We've a good monsoon season this year, we've about 20% low acreage for vegetable crops this season. In addition, the pandemic is at offset and movements has begun. This hints towards a good market over the coming days.



Mr. Rajendra Singh Rana,
Zonal Technical Manager -
Field Crop

What impact COVID-19 had on Product Development?

Answer: It did impact the activities if I speak of Seed industry. However, we were prepared for this beforehand since December when the rumors started from China. You might be knowing that the work of Product Development is all on field so, the restriction of movement was the biggest challenge we had to face. In my case, the team was not moving for the first 10 days, but we realised that our field assistants who are usually at the vicinity of the fields might just be the right help we needed. So, we shifted our complete focus on them and they started cooperating with us in no time. After that, there was no looking back. Our field assistants have been working with us for over 5 to 10 years now. Owing to a long experience, they know how to take data. In other places, we used online platforms for data observation and collection.

What was the net effect of this outbreak?

Answer: Not much I'd say. Generally, we've two seasons in India. During the dry season we had more than half of the readings and observations for mustard. We only faced some challenge where the sowing was delayed. In summer, we were having two crops Bajra and Maize and when the lockdown was imposed sowing activities were still ongoing. But for continuity we used bikes in some places or walked to the site. Basically, we were coming out with solutions as challenges came along. In the end, during wet season - it was a bit relaxed and Coronavirus effect was at its minimum to have any noticeable effect on our work.

Do you see a change in Farmer's Behaviour?

Answer: I think there is a bit change in their tendency i.e. they're shifting from vegetable to field crops owing to the mandi's response. But we should understand that our business deals with necessity. Maybe with immediate situation, every farmer will try to shift but they've to go either for vegetable or field. We should rather perceive it as a good opportunity instead of getting affected.



Mr. Parag Agrawal,
Lead R&D Vegetables

Our research work spreads across a wide geographical area. What were the major structural and strategic changes to meet the R&D demands during pandemic?

Answer: As far as R&D is concern, we haven't suffered a major loss, largely because it is a long-term activity. As our R&D activities are spread across geographies, we were able to achieve our important objectives for the season. Though, we might have missed some data points, scheduled harvesting, some multiplications, crossing and similar operations owing to non-availability of manpower but it will not affect our projects to any noticeable extent. As our research projects are usually of 3-5 years and even more duration, I don't see present pandemic creating much disturbance in our ongoing projects.

Will farmers be at major risk during this time? What can they do to efficiently and safely carrying out farming activity?

Answer: Farmers may not get a decent price in the mandi owing to the prevailing situation, and it might have resulted in some negative sentiments. But farming activity may not be of much problem as one can take all necessary precautions like social distancing and sanitization easily. However, visit to market and crowded places must be organized and given much attention. If farmers take care about preventive guidelines, then there is not a lot to worry about, everything will resume as it used to be.

It's being rumored that the damage due to pandemic might carry forward to next year, what would you like to say to participants in agriculture sector as response?

Answer: I'm looking forward to a good season and we need to be careful about our health.



Dr. Kislay Kumar Sinha,
Principal Scientist, Biotechnology

Was there an impact on R&D in this outbreak?

Answer: It did affect R&D however, with timely interventions and remedial steps, its effects have been minimized to a great level. There were challenges like unavailability of chemicals, reagents and other consumable items but we could share the resources with other teams and deal with the situation.

What is the way to go for 2020 second half?

Answer: I think the second half of 2020 will be easier to cope up with. Careful planning is the key in R&D and experience gained during the first half of the year will be of great help. A detailed projection of requirements of chemicals and consumables is important as different items have different time-lags in supply. Little surplus of consumables and reagents with longer shelf lives or expiry dates must be considered.

Strategies on lab-based studies should be preferred over field-based studies. For example, we have taken bold steps like shifting from field grow-out tests to Biotechnology based quality assessment of seed. Pathology team is making similar efforts and experiment is under trail for a disease screening method in tomato. This process is much faster, cheaper and doesn't require field trials.

In terms of manpower, it is important to make existing team members more versatile in terms of techniques by training them for as many activities are possible. This helps in situations where work needs to be completed within limited hours during lockdowns.

I've noticed that researchers and institutes across the globe have utilized this time as an opportunity to share research by using zoom and similar connectivity apps. I really admire the fact that even the remote universities were actively doing online webinars with their knowledge base.

We at VNR Seeds - R&D had arranged many online lectures. Personally, I took many lectures on things we're doing and beyond. So, I believe the best way for a research fraternity to grow during such troubled times is by creating an environment which incentivize knowledge building and knowledge sharing activities.



Mr. Ashok Kumar Patel,
Breeding Support Coordinator

R&D is a long term activity, however this pandemic has taken almost about a year out of it. Do you think this outbreak has an impact on R&D?

Personally I feel there is going to be an impact owing to COVID-19 outbreak as there was low manpower throughout the activities. As the offices were closed and labs were shut hence there must've been mortality rates which is going to show up sooner or later. However, with the long term vision that we hold, the damage might just limit to 5-10% of our planned activities.

Additionally, we found some workaround like getting up early at 6 pm to initiate the experiments, we also shifted some of our plants to other location where we can access them in isolation. So these measures had given us a buffer to some extent. I got a chance to move around the state with due permit by the government and at least I can project that field damages must've been low as compared to other Industrial sectors.

What is the way to go for 2020 second half?

I believe government guidelines must be followed because first we're to stop this pandemic. However with these, activities are bound to get slow.

Although being in an R&D Lab we've been using stringent precautions already so our specimens don't come across any cross contamination, but let's say if someone who's infected enters by chance, then anyone is to sure run out of any backup. So we've to be duly prepared for any scenarios which might have a chance of occurring. An interesting observation is although we have to cope in adverse condition but every department's difficulties are different hence solution are going to be unique and I propose the age old 'no key is fit for all' philosophy to fight this situation. Yes, we've to adapt as it comes.



Mr. Ashish Bajpai,
General Manager Finance

The outbreak was during the peak season, what were some key changes at workplace that resulted in smooth running of accounts?

Answer: One of the biggest challenges was to manage a functional department online. We faced some practical difficulties with the availability of manpower as the workplace was understaffed. But we balanced it by taking necessary work at home and completed it from there. On the outset, we were worried about the COVID situation as it was new. However, I'm glad to share that this pandemic did not damage Agriculture industry in India much. Additionally, VNR Seeds is one of the established players in the market so we were able to meet our quarterly targets. Perhaps the new players or the small agriculture business might have faced the heat owing to hindrances in timely transportation of materials owing to the lockdown.

What is your view about rest of this year?

Answer: We were relieved to find that the first two quarters we met the required target however I'm worrying about the next two quarters of the business in context to cashflow. If everything remains goes well, then fine but in case if things won't turned out as anticipated, then it's going be a tough challenge.

What kind of changes eased the business with farmers and business partners?

Answer: Interestingly this year, we decided to transfer all the money directly to the farmers' account, so they don't face any sort of delays or difficulties during such time. Nowadays farmers are well acquainted with online mediums, so it has really helped us to take the advantage of technology. Apart from some non-cooperative banks we were able to release every payment on time. Next year, we'll try to shift all our participating farmers' accounts to nationalized banks which will further strengthen our process.



Mr. K. Hemchand,
Manager - IT

Q. What is the major challenge during the outbreak?

Answer: My prime concern during the outbreak was Internet connectivity for staff who started working from home. Some of our processes are heavily dependent on internet speed, in office owing to our infrastructure, staff don't get to realize it. For first few weeks, the IT was busy into solving the connectivity issues like internet speed and providing solutions for accessibility to employee location which had weak connectivity.

Q. How the working style shifted during this time?

Answer: I have been acting as a bridge between our ERP's Development team and the implementation team for the ERP project for VNR. Due to work from home scenario at the development team end, the administration of the project has become more challenging. Another change I find is increased use of communication technologies for online meetings and trainings through online platforms. We are providing the IT support wherever needed to ensure the audio & video based online meetings are conducted without hassles. Due to the physical workplace/interactions being replaced by the virtual workplace/interactions our services are now available 24*7.

Q. What were some infrastructural changes in IT?

Answer: We recently purchased new server having elaborate features. We were glad that right at the time of integration, we worked on all the minute details in which we already had a module for 'work from home' built-in, along-with all other modules. We created VPN access for users to enhance the security of our network and we installed it on all the user laptops. We created user-wise restrictions in the new servers across department. Recently there were increased cyber-attacks and there was lot of attempts of breaking into our system as well, but our firewalls kept them away. We have created IT Support Service group in which the members can raise their concerns and it gets resolved as per the SLAs. We are continuously resolving the issues and supporting the staff during this unprecedented situation.



Dr. Parul Parmar,
General Manager HR

Q. What was the major strength of HR during outbreak?

Answer: Dealing with this situation was a team effort. It was due to the company's readiness and supportive infrastructure that we could tackle the situation smoothly. The HR team was on its toes all the time, providing all possible support in form of releasing permission letters for intra state movement, creating awareness related to COVID, ensuring safety and health of staff at office and providing online support. We ensured that the salary, increments and promotions were processed despite the odds. We transformed some of our processes to go online like recruitment, onboarding, training etc. Our focus has now shifted to employee welfare. As the things are moving ahead slowly, we are trying to make sure that our employees are getting best facilities and support from the company. Owing to the panic created by this situation, we just want to make sure that none at VNR falls a victim for it. The new normal is going to make a difference in the way we conduct the business.

Q. Is it true that the pandemic would lead to job crisis? Please guide an aspirant the way forward.

Answer: The Pandemic would have less impact in our sector as compared to others. The intake of new manpower will however slow down for next 2-3 quarters.

Q. What according to you are the new skills required by team members to cope with this change?

The new generation jobseeker will have to be well acquainted with online etiquettes and tools. To be productive and face this situation positively, there are new set of skills required, some of which were visible in our team members like resilience, patience, courage, flexibility, creativity, agility and technological competence. The newer skills required by the managerial/leadership team would be empathy, coaching, creating trust, nurturing creativity and engagement skills.

Stuck in the ckdown



Mr. Sachin Kumar



Mr. Manoj K. Sharda

We're bringing 2 inspiring stories of VNRites who have seen the pandemic very closely. They told us exactly how it was like getting stuck at a different city during lockdown, and what they did to reach back to the safety. They showed great resilience in handling the situation and can be named as the CORONA warriors of VNR!

Mr. Sachin Kumar, Regional Business Manager

"I was to shift from Gandhinagar to Jabalpur due to the sales restructuring and thought of shifting the family before the season started. We decided to take a halt at Indore. It was all planned, we started on 20th March with family from Gandhinagar and reached Indore on 21st of March. We halted at Mr. Dinesh Swami's house at Indore as my family bonded well with their family. We had a plan to go to Jabalpur on the coming day. But came 22nd March and a Janta Curfew was announced by hon'ble PM of India, we had to oblige to it. On 23rd March, occurred two major events, firstly a nationwide lockdown was announced putting a halt on all the activities and secondly, Jabalpur declared 5 Coronavirus patients and hence the city was sealed. That's how I was stuck at Indore along with my family.

We learned about e-pass which was mandatory for moving. I kept trying to get e-pass for the family. Meanwhile, we had to shift to a hotel owing to some circumstances. We moved to the hotel Lemon Tree, it was booked for mostly government workers and doctors. The hotel was trying to do everything it could for cost cutting and saving its scarce supplies. Air condition time was being restricted, limited food options were available, and so many other constraints had to be faced by me and my family but we stayed positive due to the seniors, colleagues and relatives who comforted us.

Our e-pass was getting rejected over and over again. I took help of our management team and we finally got the e-pass for 11th of May. We were on our toes to make the move. When we reached Jabalpur, it was still on lockdown, also they were terrified to know that we were coming from Indore – a red zone for Coronavirus. We were instructed to go to the hospital. Post the initial hiccups, we reached at our flat, where our colleagues from VNR arranged for the food, gas and the landlord arranged for the mattress. We didn't have all the daily needs and till 25th of May we had to stay like that with bare minimum supplies. I visited police station where they told me that I had to go

along with family. This was my worst fear as bringing the family out could be quite risky, especially my kids. We went to Victoria hospital, where we had to undergo the check-up procedures for the whole day. Finally, at 5 pm, we got the report that we all tested negative giving much relief. We were suggested to stay at home in isolation for next 14 days. On 24th May we completed our home isolation and I resumed field work from 25th of May". Going through this tough phase and staying strong was possible only because of the support provided by my seniors to ensure that we reach safely at Jabalpur at the earliest.

Mr. Manoj Kumar Sharda - Regional Business Manager

"I reached Indore on 19th March and had planned the return to Rajasthan, my hometown in Jaipur, on 24th March. It sounded all normal, I was supposed to reach the venue that was to be my home post shifting with family, then visit the office and go back to Jaipur. But it was nothing like it sounded before. Just a day before I was to return, lockdown was announced, it was 23rd of March when I was trapped. Initially I thought it'll get over within a few days and things will resume as usual, but it took sometime for me to realize that I'll now have to stay away from family and I was to be on my own. It was a sudden twist of plot where I found myself with just a water kettle, a bedsheet and just a regular travel bag with 3-4 days of generic resources. But now, this was my lifeline as I was stuck in the flat to which I was supposed to shift with family in few days.

It was not a furnished flat, so I had to sleep on the floor for all the time I was stuck, it being a whole new experience. My flat was slightly on the outskirts of Indore so resources was little out of my reach. Luckily, I found a kind old lady near my house who agreed to arrange for tiffin on a twice-a-day-plan. That was my only source of food towards the beginning. First 20 days I spent without tea, again a new experience for me.

I was in touch with my family on phone and there my small kids were making all the arrangements for daily needs for the family. I'm proud of them the way they took care of the family in my absence. I still remember, as the lockdown dates kept extending after every few days, it used to give a hard dent to my hope of going back home. Owing to this, there were days when I faced frustration or rather, I'd say I

had tantrums when I thought let's just go out in the night and then let's see whatever happens. But my family and seniors were there to support me and kept me going strong. Some of my colleagues and a few people I knew at the media, unanimously suggested to keep calm and not to leave until it's clear.

I had all the liberty from the company to take decision about my travel and my reporting manager, Business Head was always there to help me. They guided me to make sure

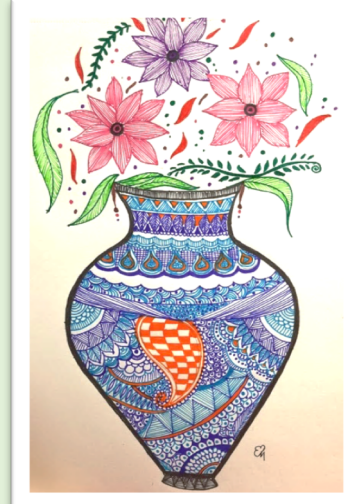
that I make an e-pass first and only then, think of leaving the town. It was an obvious trouble otherwise. I was stuck at Indore from 21st March to 4th May, finally getting the e-pass on 4th May to go to Jaipur and I finally met my family". My seniors were continuously in touch with me throughout this period and guided me to come out of this safe.

We hope these stories inspire all of us that no matter what adversities may come in life, one must face them with lot of courage and patience. The mantra is stay strong, stay positive!

Doodling as a Favorite Pastime



Art By Mrs. Neeti Sati, W/O
Mr. Shekhar Chandra Sati,
Lead QA



ये मजदूर है साहब

ये मजदूर है साहब,
और बहोत मजबुर भी।
अरे किसका दिल ना पसीजा होगा उन पैरों को देख
जो हमारे लिए सौ जख्म सह के भी उपफ ना किए,
जब जरूरत पड़ी उन्हें अपनी आषियाने कि
तो हम दूर से देख बस आह भर दिए,
लम्बी थी राह, दूर था घर
ना जाने क्या सोच ये ऐसे हि चल दिए।
मैं ताकता रहा रास्ते भर,
निगाहें भी बदयकिन थे,
देखता रहा निःशब्द हो कर,
हालात भी मेरे ग्ामगीन थे।
ये मजदूर है साहब,
और बहोत मजबुर भी।
कोई पहुंच गया तो ठीक कोई रह गया आधे हि रास्ते,
क्या गलती थी इनकी ये आए थे बस दो रोटी के हि वास्ते।

रुपए के बाजार ने लोगो को कैसे-कैसे हालातों में ला दिया,
कोई कहीं ठहरने चला था पर मुसीबतों ने वापस गांव ला
दिया।
दो पैसे कि लालच ने मजबुर किया था कभी घर से निकलने
को,
लेकर आए थे जो बड़े-बड़े सपने आज उन सपनों ने ही सड़को
पे ला दिया।
ये मजदूर है साहब,
और बहोत मजबुर भी।
हम सोते हैं ये जागते हैं,
हम थकते हैं ये खटते हैं,
हम हंसते हैं ये रोते हैं,
पर बिना रुके ये दुनिया को ढोते हैं।
ये मजदूर है साहब,
और बहोत मजबुर भी।

- Rahul Badjara, Foundation Seed Department



कब से घर से निकला है खानाबदोश है तू।

- Ajay Kumar Singh, Production



कब से घर से निकला है खानाबदोश है तू।
न अमीर है, ना गरीब है खामोश है तू ॥
कब से ...

खवाबो की पोटली बांधे खड़ा है,
नादान बहुत है तकदीर से लड़ा है।
मांगने की आदत नहीं कोने में पड़ा है,
गिनती नहीं कितना तमाचा जड़ा है ॥
अभावों में जीने का जोश है तू
कब से ...

इसी बरस बहन की शादी का वादा है,
गिरी हुयी दिवार को उठाने का इरादा है।
छेनुओं बकरिया को लेकर भागा है,
माँ का दर्द अभी आँखों में ताजा ॥
वादा खिलाफी का कोष है तू
कब से ...

कोई बोले यूपी वाला, कोई बोले बिहार वाला है।
तेरे हाथ में सांचे है, तू सबका रखवाला है ॥
तोड़ दे सांचे, लौट जा घर,
जनमानस का आक्रोश है तू
कब से घर...

सुखी रोटी खा लेंगे ठंडा पानी पी लेंगे।
देख के तेरा मुखड़ा कुछ और बरस जी लेंगे ॥
बेगैरत सरकारों का, अब न कर अफ़सोस तू
कब से घर से निकला है खानाबदोश है तू

Insaan Tum Muh Dikane Layak Nahi Raha

- Manjunath Paloti, Assistant Breeder, R&D

Insaan tum muh dikane layak nahi raha
Paap se bhari hath do rahe ho
Bartav tere jayaz nahi raha
Ek dusre se doori bana rahe ho



Pata bhul gye the jo, ghar ki yaad kar rhe hai
Niti niyat ko kar ke pyar ki baat kar rhe hai
Apne hit ke liye har wo khel khelte hai
Swarth aham me rishte ko dete hai

Pesha aur pyar me jaan ko rhe hai
Deshbhakti me balidan ho rhe hai
Seema me shatru ghare baite hai to
Apne hi kshamata pe tane dete hai

Pavitr ho rahi dharti insano ke atikraman se
Khud khaid hai janata apne hi paapo se
Shaant hui hai jeevan din raat ke ye bagdod se
Lag rahe lakshan naye shuruato ke

Jitne praan liye us se jyada bachaya hai
Insaan ko apni aukaat dikaya hai
Kuch nahi ho tum sammukh, prakriti vishal evam
adbhut hai
Uttam bano maanav, yahi ek avsar hai

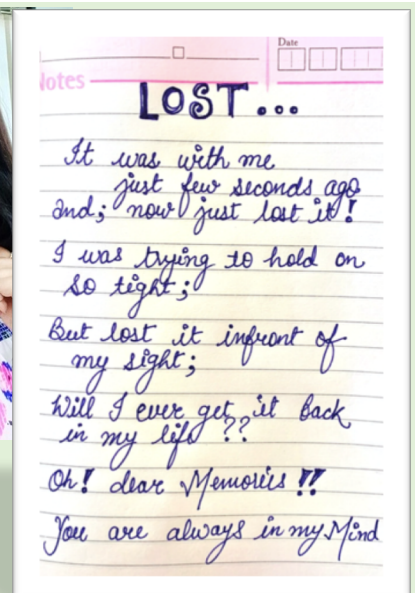
Kya ye bimari hi thi
Ya naye yug ki adrushya karan thi
Jo kuch bhi thi ek aashay se thi
Dharam se karm karna yahi is Kahavat ki tatpariya thi.

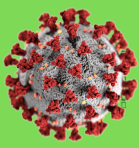


Mr. Pradeep Singh Tiwari,
Group Product Manager

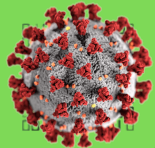


Ms. Ruchi Mandal,
Marketing





VNR CORONA CHRONICLES



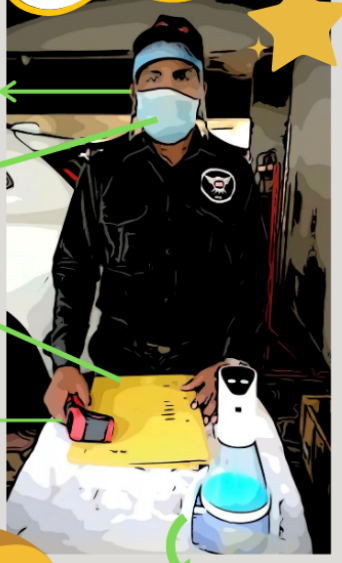
I AM SURE HE MUST BE THINKING WHY THEY DIDN'T THINK OF IT FIRST!

I wonder why we didn't think of it first?



YOU CANNOT PASS IF YOU'RE 96.5°F +

PROTECTIVE SHIELD
FACE MASK
RECORD KEEPING
FULLY LOADED THERMAL GUN



AUTOMATIC SANITIZER

DO YOU KNOW WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A TOOTHPICK WITH A FACE MASK ON?



USE IT TO PRESS LIFT BUTTON

THEN DISPOSE IT IN THE BIN

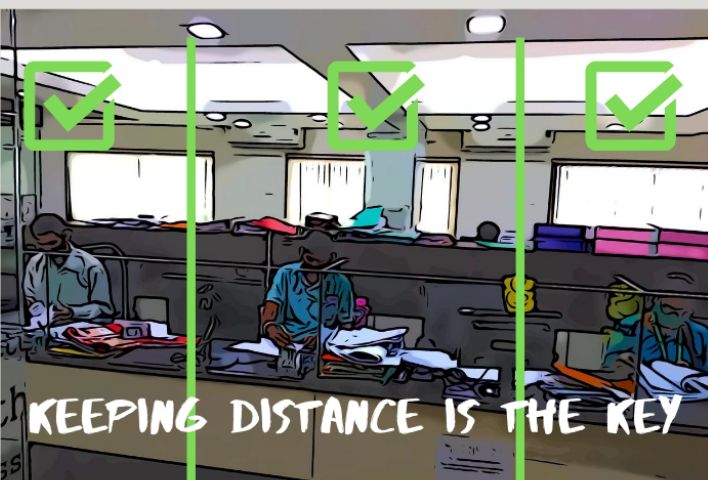
HERE PASS AROGYA SETU HAI

HERE PASS THERMAL GUN HAI, SHIELD HAI, MASK HAI, SANITIZER HAI... TUMHARE PASS KYA HAI?

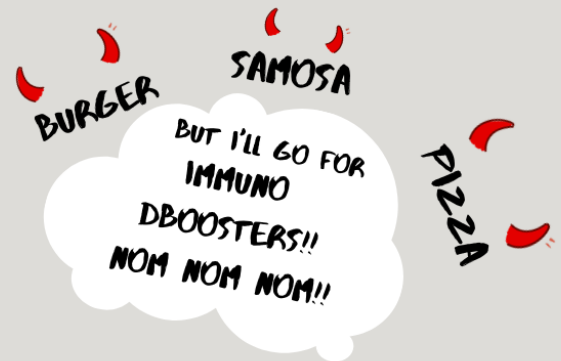


PEHCHAAN KAUN?

EMPLOYEE ID 007, I KNOW YOU



KEEPING DISTANCE IS THE KEY



RIGHT WAY TO USE ALCOHOL IN 2020



- 2020 MUST HAVE
- MASK
 - SANITIZER
 - SOAP
 - GLOVES
 - DISTANCE



I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO OF THIS IN 2020!

DON'T WORRY YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING



Promotions



Field day at Jalgaon (Ahmednagar, MH)



Field day at Taklimiya (Ahmednagar, MH)

Media

ग्राम दीप

बिजनेस न्यूज

अप्रैल 2020 17






वीएनआर-3348 टमाटर से किसान को मिला बेहतर उत्पादन और मुनाफा

बताया उन्होंने वीएनआर टमाटर 3348 अपने खेत में लगाया था। इस बार खरीफ में लंबे समय तक बारिश से जहाँ सभी वेरायटी के टमाटर का फलन दो माह तक विलंब से शुरू हुआ, लेकिन वीएनआर 3348 का उत्पादन नियत समय से 15 दिन ही लेट रहा। उस समय अच्छा उत्पादन व श्रेष्ठ पैकवार मिलने से मैंने जबर्दस्त लाभ कमाया। इसमें कीट-खोपि भी न्यूतन रही। कंपनी के अधिकारी श्री गिरजेश जी ने समय-समय पर मुझे फसल संबंधी जानकारी दी। जिससे संतुलित खाद व कीटनाशक के समुचित उपयोग से कम लागत में मैंने अच्छा उत्पादन प्राप्त कर लिया। मैं अब अन्य किसान भाइयों को भी यही सलाह दे रहा हूँ। टमाटर 3348 अच्छा वजनदार फल, कठोर



Vnr-3348

देवास। ग्राम बरोडा के कृषक गम्बर भाई धाकड़ इस वर्ष फूले नहीं समा रहे हैं। उन्होंने खेती में टमाटर फसल से अच्छा मुनाफा कमा लिया है। किसान गम्बर भाई सभी को बताते हैं टमाटर की खेती में अच्छे उत्पादन व श्रेष्ठ लाभ के लिए किसान भाई वीएनआर टमाटर-3348 ही लगाएँ। उनके कहने पर पास के गांव जामने में रामचंद्र आवार्य ने भी वीएनआर टमाटर 3348 वेरायटी लगायी है, जिसमें अच्छा उत्पादन उनकी मिल रहा है। उक्त जानकारी कंपनी के प्रवेश प्रभारी श्री दिनेश स्वामी ने ग्रामदीप को दी है। उनके सहायक गिरजेश पाटीदार ने बताया वीएनआर 3348 के फल एक समान वजनदार आते हैं। एक फल का वजन 250 से 300 ग्राम तक आ रहा है जो लंबी दूरी परिवहन व स्वाद में श्रेष्ठ है। कृषक गम्बर भाई ने

मोटा छिलका, स्वाद में खट्टापन लिए दूरस्थ परिवहन के लिए उत्तम होने पर देवास मंडी में सबसे पहले मेप ही माल बिकता उसके बाद अन्य माल विक्रय होता है। इसे ही सबसे अधिक भाव भी मिलता है। बारिश के बाद लगाने में यह वेरायटी सर्वश्रेष्ठ है। सभी किसान भाइयों को मैं वीएनआर 3348 टमाटर किस्म ही लगाने की सलाह देता हूँ।

Farmer's Success Story

Farmer Name: Jalindar Baburao Chavdhari
Address: Kanhegoan, Tal Shrirampur, Dist- Ahmednagar
Contact No:-9823537061
Variety Name: Chilly -145 & Krishna
D.O.S.-24 Jan 2020
Cultivation plant: Each 1500 Plants (10 Gunthe or 0.24 Acre)
Till date [19/6/20] Krishna yield: 6 MT and **VNR 145 yield** 7.5 MT
Expected further yield: 1 MT (Each Variety 500kg)
Expected total yield – 14.5 MT
Total revenue (On expected total yield) : 2.85 L
Total expenses: 0.85 L
Net profit: 2 L



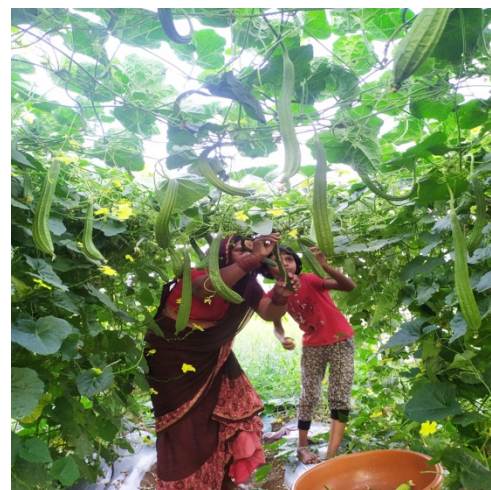
Farmer Name: Pappusheth Devram Kale
Address: Pimpri Khurd, Tal Rajgurunagar, Dist. Pune
Contact No: 9921511321
Variety Name: Bitter Guard Nandita
D.O.S. 2 Jan 2020
Cultivation area: 35 Gunthe (0.87 Acre)
Till date (19/6/20) harvested yield: 22 MT
Expected further additional yield: 2 MT
Expected total yield: 24 MT
Total revenue (On expected total yield) : 4.80 L
Total expenses: 1.10 L
Net profit: 3.70 L

Farmer Name: Mr. Namdevrao Darandale
Address: Sonai, Tal Newasa, Dist Ahmednagar
Contact No: 9960586364
Variety Name: Bitter Guard, Nisarg
D.O.S: 20 Jan 2020
Cultivation Area: 1 Acre
Till date (19/6/20) yield: 20 MT
Expected further yield: 2 MT
Expected total yield: 22 MT
Total revenue (On expected total yield) : 5 L
Total expenses : 1 L
Net profit : 4 L



Farmer's Success Story

Farmer Name: Santosh Subhash Katare
Address: Waghacha Aakhada, Tal. Rahuri, Dist. Ahmednagar
Contact No: 9921712263
Variety Name: Ridge Gourd Aarti
D.O.S: 20 Jan 2020
Cultivation Area: 15 Gunthe (0.37 Acre)
Till date (19/6/20) yield: 10 MT
Expected further yield: 2 MT
Expected total yield: 12 MT
Total revenue (On expected total yield) : 2 L
 Total expenses: 0.50 L
 Net profit: 1.5 L



Note: Due to Covid-19, APMC Market was closed therefore Mandi Prices were low and labour cost was high. In normal situation farmer expenses are usually low & net income is high.

Farmer name	Yakub Ali
Village	Beluguri
District	Nagaon, Assam
Crop	Hybrid Paddy
Variety	2233
Sowing Date	20-01-2020
Area	14,400 sq.ft.
Row to row distance	25 cm
Plant to plant distance	20 cm
Harvesting time (Months)	May
1st harvest picking	16 th May 2020
Total production	1140 kg
Total revenue	Rs. 14,820.00
Total expense	Rs. 4,800.00
Net Profit	Rs. 10,020.00
Mobile No.	7086154209



Farmer name	Hafiz Uddin
Village	Beluguri
District	Nagaon, Assam
Crop	Hybrid Chilli
Variety	Krishna
Sowing Date	01-03-2020
Area	20160 sq.ft.
Row to row distance	60 cm
Plant to plant distance	40 cm
Harvesting time (Months)	May - June
1st harvest picking	25 th May 2020
Total production	65 quintal
Total revenue	Rs. 3,25,000.00
Total expense	Rs. 30,000.00
Net Profit	Rs. 2,95,000
Mobile No.	9678230904



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VNR Impact

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Please share your suggestions and feedback
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