



Latest news from the farm

The New Cow House

(see pictures above) We are working on the new cow house; the roof is on and we hope to put in the floor, feeding troughs and gutters soon. Andre, the person who is basically the technical man on the farm, was out for most of the summer and we could do only so much. Now he is back and brimming with energy to get going, so will get back on the job.

Paddy field preparation

We had again a pretty long and dry summer (even when other parts of India were flooding). We could sow our green manure seeds in the paddy fields only very late in the season. But even then rains were very scanty and most of the green manure is overgrown by weeds. This will give us less nutrients in the soil for the rice than what's required. Right now we are looking into how to remedy this with the use of cow urine. Another challenge is the water; we

have of course wonderful rainwater catchments now but the rain has still to fill them. We have some water in the old pond from the last season and one functioning bore well and we hope with more rain coming we can get by until the North East monsoon arrives. Organic farming is very much dancing with the elements which is every year again something new and incredible challenging but if lived well also very rewarding; it really keeps us on our toes....

Borewell follow up

This story is long and arduous; but we are not giving up. As you might remember this bore well got dry and we were planning to put in a smaller pump deeper to still use it as a water back up source for the rain water harvesting when rain is late or fails completely. After lots of acid dosing we got the big pump out. Then we wanted to clean the well walls with a bailer but this did

not work; the crust of accumulated salts is simply too hard.

Next step is probably to go down with a special camera to look in the well and understand the situation better to be able to prepare a next plan of action.

This project also got partly stalled because of the absence of Andre and will be followed up soon.

Wildlife

After hiding in the wilderness in the hot season, the deer and pigs are back. We are working hard on the electric fences around the paddy fields because they like to eat the little green manure plants which are there.

On his return, Andre got a few more electric fence apparatus and so we are well prepared. Hope the animals still respect those wires.

Animals are smart and we have to keep outwitting them; a real cat and mouse game. Not sure who is the cat here, and who the mouse though.

Rain harvesting water pond work accomplished!

We started the excavation in March and the work was completed in July. What we achieved:

- We excavated 11520 tipper trucks of soil.
- This gives us 2500 cubic meter more water storage.
- This brings total water storage capacity of Annapurna to 50000 cubic meter.
- In a normal year this will support 25 acres of paddy cultivation and cover a good part of the year needs to irrigate plantation crops like fodder, bananas and guavas.

What are the next steps:

- We have to line the upper gravity irrigation ponds. This will enable us to use the irregular electricity to fill the ponds so we can irrigate crops when needed.
- The filling of the top pond could be done with solar pumps, for a fully ecologically sustainable operation.
- We are looking into a smarter irrigation system to optimize water use with Auroville consultants; especially the plantation crops during the dry season.

Starting the digging to enlarge the first pond.



The excavator dug 688 hours to complete the job.



Trucks on the move, 11520 trips full of excavated soil.



On top of each hill, we created a basin which we hope to use for gravity irrigation.



Laying water pipes and electricity lines.



Rainy weather stopped the operation several times. The slopes became too slippery for the trucks.



The second pond had a few surprises; one of them was a solid layer of lime stone which was quite a challenge for the excavator.



After all, the big stones came in handy to create a solid water inflow.



An even bigger challenge was a thick layer of very fluid sticky mud on the bottom of the old pond which took a lot of time to remove.



After removing the sticky mud we were rewarded with clean water which seeped in the pond.



Annapurna Support Fund

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For more info: annapurnafarm@auroville.org.in