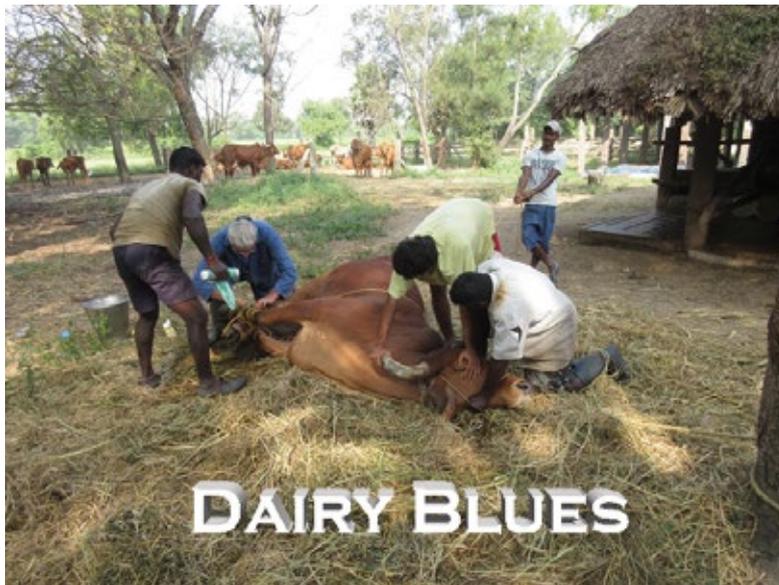


We had a bit of a rude start of the year. Our dairy herd got infected with foot and mouth disease. Most animals got affected, some severely, milk production came down and the after effects will be there for quite some time. Annapurna's dairy has had foot and mouth disease in 1999 and so we knew what was happening and could react fast to minimize the losses.

When animals get the disease they stop eating because of the ulcers in mouth and intestines and their feet get wounds which get infested by flies and easily get maggots. Andre, Tarun and the dairy crew were administering several rounds of homeopathic medication throughout the day. The foot treatments were a lot of work where cows had to be put on the ground to be able to clean and treat the hoofs.



The cow Lakshmi, which was far along in her pregnancy when it hit her, had a very hard time. She did have a normal calving after all but produces much less milk than what she normally does. Cows are easily aborting when getting foot and mouth disease during pregnancy. Another effect of the ailment is the difficulty in getting animals pregnant again which we are experiencing right now. We will try some homeopathic treatment to address this problem.

You might have noticed that the Annapurna cheese supply has been low for a while now and we are afraid it will take more time to recover. Besides the foot and mouth disease we have had some other issues which have decreased milk production.

Contributions and New Investment

In the last financial year 2018-19 we have received generous donations to invest in different aspects of the farm. The corpus fund which stood at Rs. 15,13,972 generated Rs. 81,800 of interest by April 2018. Then we received support to help build our new heifer shed from a company through

its CSR fund (Corporate Social Responsibility fund). Indian companies put part of their profit into social responsible projects and Annapurna benefitted from this because our dairy is used as a learning place for local people where we share our practices.



Then we received a generous combination of donations totaling Rs. 5,72,306 from various individuals (mostly Aurovilians) who appreciate the work being done on the farm. Since we were very busy expanding our water harvesting capacity last summer, we utilized only part of these funds so far. Annapurna is also busy with seasonal agricultural work between August and March; making improvements to the infrastructure is done mainly in the summer months. Our main cow house which has a thatched roof and was built in the beginning of the nineties needs urgently to be overhauled. The plan is to change the thatch into metal sheets. Then we are working on a new banana plantation of 1.25 acres; this means

installation of a perimeter electric fence and proper irrigation system.

If time and finances permit, we are planning to start establishing a real fence around the farm. Since its inception the farm has mostly functioned with a live fence of thorny bushes. However, in the world today with increasing outside pressures and rising labor costs, such a fence is too costly to maintain and is not effective anymore.

We want to do a pilot project to assess what it means to fence with durable materials. Once the picture is clear we can start to look for funds to do this extensive and costly job in the near to medium future..

Latest news from the farm

Annapurna Support Group Visit

All this and more were communicated to the members of the support group who visited the farm at the end of March. We had a pleasant few hours together where we shared our farm reality, including financial status and plans for growth. The support group has been functioning in a very unstructured way since October 2016 and besides helping to create financial means to invest and improve infrastructure, it surely helps the farm to feel more connected to the community and serves as a feedback group when crucial management decisions have to be made.

Right now, the group consists of Bindu, Isabelle, Lucas, Amy, Anandi, Otto and in the last visit Carel joined the discussions. Everybody has his/her own way to relate to the farm, committing according to their capacity and possibilities. People who are concerned about Annapurna and farming in general in Auroville are welcome to join in and help to make the farm more community connected.

This is a good moment to shout out a big thank you for all those who support us in any way; you see, if we want to develop farming in Auroville, we really need all the help we can get.

The support group is looking for more hands and brains to help us with communication and other projects. Any skills and goodwill are welcome. We are happy to hear from you :-)
contact Tomas and Isabelle -
annapurnafarm@auroville.org.in

Nidhin our new volunteer introduces himself

I spent the last four years in Auroville volunteering for different projects. I came to Annapurna because I wanted to focus on sharing the richness of organic food with the community and the world.

Although native to tropical Kerala, I spent my childhood in the desert country of Saudi Arabia. With the contrasting external environment, my fondness and appreciation of the natural world grew. At the moment I am assisting with the food processing activities of Annapurna, marketing the farm products and exploring new ideas to make healthy food trendier and more accessible. My aspiration: a society where cultivation, processing and commerce of natural products is more joyful, valuable, sustainable & dignified.



Tamarind

Annapurna has some tamarind trees in its forest areas which is harvested in April and May. It is a minor forest crop which takes lots of labor to harvest and clean but is a very traditional ingredient in South Indian cuisine.

We have also developed a new tamarind jam which will be at PTDC (our collective grocery supply) soon.

Paddy Harvest News



Annapurna paddy harvest 2019 is in again. We harvested 18,271 kg of paddy which translates approximately to 12,000 kg of eatable rice.

Also, paddy from other Auroville farms has been dried, cleaned and stored into the Foodlink granary at Annapurna. The harvest we got from various Auroville farms was 7,404 kg which becomes approximately 4,900 kg of consumable rice. Generally, however paddy yields were very low this year. The rains started late, green manure had not developed sufficiently for the early plantings, and there was a heavy infestation of stemborer in January/February.

The paddy will be processed slowly over the coming year which will then be supplied to the various Auroville outlets.

Paddy Straw

Besides paddy, we harvest the paddy straw which is being used as a summer supplement for the cows.

For now we put it in big piles under a plastic cover but from next year we hope to press most of it into bales and store it in the cow house lofts.