



New Pond Created

Inside this issue:

Dog News 2

Who Are "We" Producing Food For? 2

New Bulls 2

Threshing Floor Extended 3

Ecological Accounting Update 3

Profile: Ediyen 3

Supporter acknowledgements 4



Andre (left) discussing the pond's progress with the farm's supervisor, Krishnamoorthy

In June a new pond was created near the farm's entrance to capture rainwater runoff from 15 acres of Annapurna land, and 75 acres of neighboring land. The pond's water will be used to irrigate rice and cowfodder. Equipment for the job was hired from Auroville's Water Harvest project. In six days an excavator removed 1,735 lorry loads, or 5,200m³ of soil from the site.

Mission Statement

- Within the context of producing food for the experimental, international township of Auroville, the stewards of Annapurna aim to discover, develop, demonstrate and document methods of food production that are organic, regenerative, healthy and humane. We emphasize the utilization of traditional techniques and the conservation of indigenous biodiversity.

Irrigation Pipeline Extended and Deepened

This summer the farm hired Hare Krishna and his team of diggers from neighboring Ottai village to dig up the irrigation pipeline so that it could be repaired and re-laid deeper.

The pipeline had suffered frequent breakage due to soil expansion and contraction throughout the year. We expect that we will have less trouble with the pipe located deeper in the ground.

Hare Krishna at work



Dog Developments



Lucy dozing in the green manure



Coromandel posing with the rosella crop



Minar (front) with Tara (right side) and Tabbu (rear left)



Tabbu after her arrival

A new puppy joined the pack at Annapurna earlier this year. We named her Tabbu. She was purchased from a kennel in Pondicherry. We are teaching her all the important do's and don't's (eg, do stay on the property, and don't eat the chickens) and she is being trained to take up the usual farm dog responsibilities. In her free time she plays with the other dogs on the farm; Tara, Lucy, Minar and Coromandel. In December 2001, Indu, a resident of Annapurna for 9 years, died of pyometra. In May 2002, Kosha, age 13, expired.

Who Are "We" Producing Food For?

Editorial

Starting with the economies of food and farming, we should promote at home, and encourage abroad, the ideal of local self-sufficiency. We should recognize that this is the surest, the safest, and the cheapest way for the world to live. We should not countenance the loss or destruction of any local capacity to produce necessary goods.

- Wendell Berry
Thoughts in the Presence of Fear

George W. Bush, while signing the environmentally and fiscally disastrous 2002 U.S. Farm Bill remarked, "Let me put it as plainly as I can: we want to be selling our beef and our corn and our beans to people around the world who need to eat."

The President's remark begs a number of questions. One such question is; does the qualifier "who need to eat" indicate that George Bush believes that some people do not need to eat?

Did he not actually mean to say; "to people around the world who *can afford* to eat"?

On whose behalf is President Bush speaking when he says "we" and "our"?

Do "we" also want to sell "our" topsoil and groundwater to people around the world who need to eat?

Does President Bush understand that beef and corn and beans are products of topsoil and groundwater and, in most cases, fossil fuel?

Has President Bush thoroughly considered the social, economic and ecological consequences of subsidized food exports?

The Bush Administration, by its policy of forcing heavily subsidi-

dized American food into foreign marketplaces, not only discounts the longterm health of American farmland, but also denies foreign farmers their rightful economic opportunity and traditional livelihood.

In an era of rapidly dwindling natural resources everyone will be better served if American agriculture feeds Americans, and if American politicians allow the rest of the world to feed itself.

New Bulls; Madhu and Taro



Madhu

Poor results with artificial insemination (A.I.) in our dairy herd lead us to acquire two young bulls this summer. We got both bulls from nearby farms belonging to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. First we got Madhu, a cross between Holstein, Tarpakar and Gir. Later we got the younger bull, Taro, a cross between Israeli Holstein and Gir.

After some months of service, Madhu will return to work at the Ashram's farms, and Taro will pick up Madhu's duties here.

Preliminary results indicate that Madhu performs better than A.I.



Taro

New Threshing Floor



The hole for a new threshing floor in front of the godown

While the excavator was here to dig the new pond, it also excavated an area of 400 m² which will become a new threshing floor.

The farm needed more threshing space because we have gradually increased the area under production for several years. Such space was essential particularly because the farm produces many varieties of crops as a part of a program to conserve endangered traditional germplasm. For example, every year we grow over thirty varieties of rice. Each of these varieties has to be kept separated during drying and threshing.

More space was also needed because of the increasing amount of research being done of the farm.

The hole will be filled and covered with cement flooring before the growing season starts in September.

Ecological Accounting Project

Brooks is presently structuring the database for the research project, *Setting Up the Books for On-farm Ecological Accounting*. He is using biophysical benchmarks identified during his literature review, empirical measurements taken on the farm, and data collected and summarized from our previous cropping season.

Such references will be used to inform look-up tables in the database program. We hope to have a *beta* version of the database functioning in time to enter data from the

next monsoon season, starting this September.

In connection with his research, Brooks has been invited to participate in a workshop entitled, *Valuation Indicators for Evaluating Soil Science Research*, organized by Dr. Rajeswari Raina at the National Institute for Science, Technology and Development Studies (NISTADS) in New Delhi in September.

Dr. Raina is also collaborating with us on trials of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). SRI was developed in Mada-

gascar and shows potential for increasing rice yields dramatically.

Results of the trials will be reported in our next newsletter.

Brooks continues to receive considerable help from a group of advisors. At this stage he is receiving valuable guidance from Professor P.S. Ramakrishnan, an ecologist at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, and Dr. Martin Bender, director of the Sunshine Farm Project at the Land Institute in Kansas.

We should reconsider and renew and extend our efforts to protect the natural foundations of the human economy: soil, water, and air. We should protect every intact ecosystem and watershed that we have left, and begin restoration of those that have been damaged.

-Wendell Berry
Thoughts in the Presence of Fear

Employee Profile: Ediyam



Ediyam, a resident of Vanur village, joined Annapurna's workforce in May 2000. Previously he had worked for companies in the Pondicherry industrial estate as a general machine operator, maintaining motors and other equipment.

He generally works on the farm seven days a week, irrigating crops, driving the tractors and also functioning as a watchman in the forested areas.

Ediyam measuring irrigation water



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A velvet bean (green manure) seed sits on the soil surface after the field has been disced

Organic Matters!

Supporter Acknowledgements

It was a fabulous surprise to receive an email message last December from an old schoolmate of Brooks whom he had not seen in nearly fifteen years. She wrote that she had learned about Annapurna through the Auroville website and that she wanted to support our work. She asked if there were any specific projects which needed a sponsor.

Brooks told her about our dream of digging a rainwater catchment pond in the front area of the farm. He explained that captured rainwater provides an excellent and relatively inexpensive source of water for irrigating our crops.

She was excited about this possibility and she responded by sponsoring this summer's entire digging. Her only condition was that she should remain anonymous.

The generosity of such friends transforms our lives and this land in beautiful and productive ways. We consider such friends our partners in this longterm project. We deeply thank our sponsors for the support that they have so generously contributed in the past year: Shawn and Diane Johnson, Luciano Gemo, Dr. Dale and Mrs. Katherine Bruner, Mark and Rosie Deats, Lynn Autry, the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of New Haven, Connecticut, Dutch friends, Maroma, Stichting de Zaaier, and The Leighty Foundation.



Tomas and Usha watch the excavator remove the black soil layer from the pond site



Field surface after a green manure has been incorporated into the soil