

Vision and mission of the farm

Annapurna is deeply committed to meeting Auroville's needs by providing organic food (grains and dairy) that is sustainably produced. To ensure the quality of its products, Annapurna has been registered as an IMO certified farm since 2005 and maintains its certification by opening itself to annual reviews by IMO.

Annapurna serves as Auroville's grain basket as it is the only farm where field crops can be grown on a large scale. Its main crops are rice and millets. It is also Auroville's granary, for it procures, processes and stores grain from other farms.

The soil type is a heavy black cotton soil. The farm meets its energy needs through grid electricity, diesel and biogas with solar energy as back-up. The stewards have created a series of water catchment ponds that they use for irrigation without tapping into groundwater reserves. Deep wells are only used when rain is not sufficient.

Annapurna is also Auroville's largest dairy and the only certified organic dairy in South India. Integrated ecological sustainability is a fundamental

management principle of the farm, where the two main activities of the farm, that is grain cultivation and milk production, are harmoniously integrated to ensure sustainability in the long run. In other words, the field crops provide fodder for the cows, and the cows provide compost for the fields. The size of the herd is determined by the acreage of land needed by a healthy cow; the cattle is selectively bred for producing organic milk. Ecological sustainability is also ensured by the farm's commitment to use only non-hybridized local seeds and by the sustainable use of water.

Integrity and joy in work are core values of Annapurna.

S N A P S H O T

Land purchased in 1960s

Systematic farming started in 1980s

Current stewards: Tomas, Andre

Total acreage: 135

Total cultivated area: 55 acres is intensely cultivated but all the land serves a purpose



A dedicated team of 19 employees keeps the farm going



There are 25 cross-bred cows (a mix of Gir, Sindhi and Jersey)



A small poultry of country hens, 4 dogs and a cat have a home here

An interview with Tomas, the steward of Annapurna Farm

Where are you from, when did you join Auroville, and why did you feel called to join Auroville?

I come from the Netherlands, joined Auroville in 1983, just cycled in on a Saturday morning, not planned or called, but felt I can breathe here, and that is very important for me.

How long have you been farming? Why do you feel called to do this work?

I come from a rural area, always been on the land, did horticulture school, worked for a few years in a seed breeding company in the Netherlands, volunteered in a vegetable project near Calcutta for 6 months, was in Kottakarai Farm (which was still one big farm at that time) in the first years in Auroville and moved to Annapurna in Nov 1986 (ah that's 30 years now ;) I farm because it resonates with me, and I think I have something to offer to Auroville in that field (no pun intended!).

Why did you feel the need to start the Support Group/Fund?

I started this initiative because I think farming should not be determined by farmers alone. I hope with a Support Group the future of the farm



will be taking shape more according to the needs of the community. This also entails that the responsibility will be more carried by the community and less on the farmer thereby connecting farming to the community.

And yes, we need more involvement on the practical level, but even on the less direct level, people can very effectively support in fund raising, label design, web work, PR, marketing, processing and much more.

Also the feeling that there is a group of people around the farm who really care is very nurturing and stimulating for the farmers. In general farms are too isolated because of the nature of the work.

Another important reason to get a support group is the need for succession. This will not happen overnight, but we should slowly groom a new team of farmers in the years to come to make this farm continue to grow more and better food for the community.

I am deeply grateful to all the contributors who felt called by the cause to support this initiative. And people who feel to get involved, please contact us.

The Annapurna Support Fund is launched!

Account for contribution 251367. More about this in the e-version of our newsletter. Write to annapurnafarm@auroville.org.in for a copy.



Crops are grown on 30 acres out of which 14 acres are under rice cultivation.



A small guava orchard, which will be increased in the coming years is a recent activity



20-25 acres is under firewood crops and regeneration fodder. Cows graze free-range in the fodder fields