

'Fodder factory' ideal for Indian condition

By Prabhjot Singh
Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, Nov 30 — Growing fodder for your milch cattle in a factory. Sounds strange. But it is true.

The factory can produce 300 kg to 1000 kg of fresh, uncut nutritional fodder, free from sand, everyday of the year, regardless of the weather. It works independently of the outside environment. It has its own climates controller and requires somebody to physically empty and refill the trays each day, needing an hour for the entire operation. It works on an eight day cycle and feed comes out everyday.

Talking to The Tribune, Mr Michael Raj, Senior Manager, State and Regional Development of New South Wales government, says that this machine has been a major attraction for those trying to negotiate a joint venture with Australia during the Agro Tech '96.

"We have been received about 100-odd serious enquiries everybody. Enquiries are mainly about fodder factory and micro hydel units for turning water into electricity," says Mr Michael Raj.

He maintains that fodder factory is ideal for Indian conditions. It has been designed and developed to beat flooded pastures and save dairy farmers from bankruptcies during droughts and famines.

It needs a small area for the installation of the factory on a concrete slab. All it needs is 15 amperes of single phase supply and water. A unit producing 300 kg of green, chlorophyll rich, sand free fodder costs around Aus \$ 20,000. The cost may come down further, says Mr Raj.

The machine or factory has produced wonderful results in the past. It works on the model of green house and needs only supply of seed of fodder.

Mr Raj quotes a study conducted by Prof C.A. Arano of Argentina on hydroponic fodder which says that fodder so produced is nutritionally equivalent to 3 times of lucen. The milk production, too, witness increase. Evidence is that hydroponic fodder is produced at about half and the cost of the fodder produced conventionally. Further, expenses on storage, transportation and even larger fields for conventional production of fodder are cut this way. Costs of insecticides, fertilizers, machinery for cultivation and harvesting and the labour of field grown fodder are estimated to be at least 10 times greater than that of hydroponically grown grass.

He also talked about micro-hydro generators which may suit Indian requirements, especially areas where rivers and canals are abundant for production of power.

In this system, cost of production, including machinery, comes to about Aus \$ 1.4 per watt. The process is simply to harness the energy of continual running water with a turbine and convert this energy into either DC or AC electricity. The quantum of energy produced depends upon the water pressure and volume.

These mini micro hydro generators require minimal maintenance for 15 years and can produce upto 50 KW of reliable, cost effective power supply.

These mini hydro generators are environment friendly and produce no pollution and are useful for meeting domestic and small unit requirements, especially in remote and far flung riverine areas.

Another area of interest has been of highly sensitive instruments for surface and ground water level recording. This equipment is useful dams, irrigation systems and for us-



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ing water resources efficiently.

Mr Bill Barrat, Chief Executive Officer of Hydrological Services, a Sydney-based World leader in water level recording systems, that Escorts have been made their official representatives in India.

Since agroclimatic conditions of Australia are similar to those of India, such machinery would be highly useful in this country. This transfer of technology can revolutionise optimum use of ground level water.

The Sydney company has been exporting its instruments to Canada, USA, entire European parts of Southern Pacific, China, Botswana and a lot of other countries.

Mr Roger Singh, who originally hails from Amritsar in Punjab, but immigrated to Australia from Singapore 15 years ago, is hopeful for some joint ventures in food processing.

"My non-alcoholic beverage have impressed several executives and bureaucrats, including the Haryana Government. To beat prohibition, the Haryana government may introduce non-alcoholic fruit beverages," says Mr Roger Singh, whose wife hails from Chandigarh.



Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Minister, Mr S.S. Reddy, at New South Wales stall at Agro Tech '96 at the Sector 17 Parade Ground on Saturday.

— A Tribune photograph