

# The Madras Agricultural Journal

(ORGAN OF THE M. A. S. UNION)

Vol. XXXVI

May 1949

No. 5

## Editorial

**Organic manure:** In the January Issue of 'Indian Farming' the Chief Bio-chemist Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi, has dwelt at length on the need for building up an effective organisation for the conservation and proper utilisation of the organic matter available in our villages. According to him the chief defects in manure preparation in our villages at present are, "(a) The failure to conserve as much of cattle urine as possible in manure preparation; (b) insufficient methods of storage of manure adopted at present; (c) the failure to collect available refuse from the farm and village surroundings and to utilise the same in the cattle shed for absorption of urine; (d) the present habit of burning cowdung for fuel and (e) absence of any arrangements for conservation of human excreta and urine in villages". There is no doubt that if the above defects are remedied the possibilities of increasing our national resources of organic manures are enormous. But the problem has been how to achieve practical results in our present state of village economy. In our Province, the Agricultural Department has been making sincere and strenuous efforts during the past three decades, to effect improvements in the conservation of manure in our villages and a perusal of the earlier administration reports of the department would show that one of the main activities of the propaganda wing has been the attempt to make the villagers realise the importance of conserving organic matter.

Judging from the results achieved so far, it is evident that mere propaganda is not enough. There are certain practical difficulties which should be first overcome before implementing a full fledged programme of conservation of organic manure in the villages. To shut our eyes to the difficulties or brush aside obstacles as of no consequence is not the way to progress. Take the case of cowdung being burnt as fuel, for example. It is a wasteful practice and if in spite of years of propaganda the villager persists in this practice, it is not out of sheer cussedness, or the failure on his part to



realise that it is a valuable manure, but because no other cheap fuel is available in the villages. To provide him with substitute fuel, tree planting is suggested. This requires organised effort. What with depredation by cattle, long periods of drought and risk of theft of planted material, the task of raising trees in and around villages is not an easy one. We are of opinion that if this work is entrusted to the villagers themselves the scheme will be a failure. We suggest that the State forest departments should enlarge the scope of their activities and by raising large scale plantations of quick growing trees in suitable areas and by encouraging private enterprise the State should ensure an adequate supply of cheap fuel to the villages. This will result in cowdung being released for manure.

With regard to conservation of night soil in the villages, we have our own doubts if the efforts to conserve it will be entirely successful. For in most of our villages the collection of night soil is not feasible, since it is deposited indiscriminately in the fields and *topes* adjoining the villages and a change in the sanitary habits of the village people is necessary before anything could be done in this direction.

Finally much spade work has to be done before our villagers could be induced to take an active interest in their own welfare and accustom themselves to work for a common cause with a co-ordinated effort and a will to succeed in spite of obstacles. In the new set up with sustained interest on the part of the State and the people much could be done and we have no doubt that the difficulties which are not insurmountable will be overcome.

In this connection we are glad that the Government of Madras have taken up this matter seriously on hand and the appointment has been made of a Bio-chemist for the specific purpose of augmenting our organic manure supply.

We appeal to all Municipalities, Unions, Village panchayats and individual cultivators to avail themselves of the technical help offered by this branch of the Agricultural Department in order to increase the supply of organic manure the lack of which in sufficient quantities has seriously affected our food production so far.

agricult  
agricult  
is still i  
food pro  
the case  
product  
centred

50 lakh  
56½ lak  
due to  
World  
increas  
by the  
Agricu  
the ric  
output

vigoro  
conces  
increa  
manu  
manu  
under  
from  
obtain  
were  
so mu  
provis

the  
produ