



Getting the most nutritional value out of the farm

Photo: Author

Laxmi's rice field

Raj Uprety and Rajendra Uprety

Farmers in Nepal are getting the most out of their farms, both in nutrition as well as in economic terms, by integrating a variety of crops on the farm.

Laxmi Acharya's farm is often mistaken for a mini botanical garden. This is no surprise given the diversity of plants and animals on her farm.

With helping hands from her husband and children, Laxmi owns and runs a small family farm in Belepur, Koshi-Harincha municipality, Morang district of Nepal. Her farm is a total of 2000 square meters and well managed diversity is the key to its productivity. Six hundred square metres are occupied by the house, fruits and vegetables. She keeps a pair of cows, a pair of goats, 10 pairs of pigeons and 10 chickens. She also has a fish pond that contains about 100 *Mungri* (Catfish). The rest of her land, about 1400 square metres, is covered with scented Basmati rice fields under System of Rice Intensification method.

Laxmi gets the most nutritional value out of her rotations and the complementarities between her crops and animals. For example,

during the rainy season she plants rice and after harvesting rice, she plants potato and mustard mixed with lentil and other vegetables. Mustard provides oil for the household while lentil and other vegetables provide food and extra income. In spring, she plants maize which is used for home consumption as well as for animal feed.

She raises a wide variety of fruit trees and vegetables. Mangoes, papayas, arecanuts, pomegranate and coconut, besides meeting household consumption needs also fetch additional income. The farm meets the vegetable needs of the family during all the seasons. Diverse vegetables are grown and consumed which provide all the necessary nutrition to the family (see Table 1). For example, brinjal, bitter-gourd, lady-finger, sponge-gourd and colacasia are

By combining crops, livestock and poultry, Laxmi's farm has provided both nutrition and extra income for her family. The family earns more than NRs. 158,000, by selling surplus harvest.

Table 1. Crops grown on the farm and source of nutrition

Vitamin A	Vitamin B	Vitamin C	Vitamin D	Vitamin E	Vitamin K	Iron
Mango, Guava	Corn, bean, Okra	Jackfruit, Mango	Mushroom	Guava, Mangos	Mangos	Spinach
Papaya	Potato, Peas, Squash	Guava	Yogurt	Papaya	Pomegranate	Peas
Amaranths,	Pumpkin, Asparagus	Amaranths	Milk	Pomegranate	Asparagus	Broccoli
Broccoli, Squash	Taro, Cabbage	Broccoli	Chicken	Pumpkin	Carrot	Eggs
Carrot, Peas	Mushroom	Green pepper		Taro	Cauliflower	Chicken
Pumpkin	Pomegranate	Yogurt		Potatoes	Cucumber	Beans
Spanish	Mango, Guava			Eggs	Okra, Peas	Lentils
Milk	Banana, Milk, Chicken				Broccoli, Cabbage	
Protein	Beans, Pea, Cowpea, Fish, Meat					
Calcium	Milk, Eggs, Yogurt, Cabbage, Okra, Cauliflower, Asparagus, Garlic, Onion, Bean					
Carbohydrate	Rice, Maize, Banana, Potatoes, Taro					

grown in the rainy season, when other vegetables grow less. In winter season, cauliflower, cabbage, tomato, carrot, spinach, radish, onion, garlic, potato, several leafy vegetables, mushroom and pea are grown and in spring season cucumber, pumpkin, squash, brinjal, bitter-gourd, asparagus, amaranths and beans cover her farm.

Her cows, goats and poultry not only provide food and nutrition but also provide the manure that has improved the structure and fertility of her soil. The livestock are also a source of income.

In this way, the combined management of crops, livestock and poultry has provided both nutrition and extra income for her family. In total, the family is easily earning an income of more than NRs. 158,000, by sales of household production, after personal consumption. With small effort, she has greatly magnified the

outcome. There are several such family farms in Nepal and Laxmi's family farm is a typical example of a well managed family farm.

Raj Uprety

Student of Tribhuvan University
c/o Anjali Beautiparlor, Traffic Chowk
Biratnagar, Morang, Nepal.
E-mail: ruprety001@gmail.com

Rajendra Uprety

Senior Agriculture Development Officer
District Agriculture Development Office
Biratnagar, Morang, Nepal.
E-mail: upretyr@yahoo.com

Laxmi with her family



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