

Organic Farmers and Farms in Gujarat

BHASKER SAVE'S KALPAVRUKSHA FARM

Po : Deheri, Taluka : Umbergaon, District : Valsad – 396 170, Gujarat. Phone No. 0260-2562126

‘Su-Swagatam’, proclaims a bright blue plaque with white lettering at the gate of Bhaskar Save’s verdant 14 acre farm, Kalpavruksha.

About twenty steps from the gate is another sign that says: ‘Co-operation is the fundamental law of Nature’. Further inside are numerous other sign-boards that attract attention with brief, thought-provoking ‘sutras’ or aphorisms. These pithy sayings contain all the distilled wisdom on nature, farming, health, culture and spirituality that Bhaskar bhai has gathered over the years, apart from his extraordinary harvest of food.

If you ask this warm humble farmer where he learnt his way of natural farming, he might tell you, ‘My university is my farm.’ And now, his farm has become a sacred university for many, as every Saturday afternoon brings a few dozen or more visitors. Included in the entourage are farmers, agricultural scientists, students, city folk, government officials, VIPs and the occasional foreigner who has read or heard of Bhaskar Save’s work.

Kalpavruksha compels attention. For, its high yield easily out-performs any modern farm using chemicals. This is readily visible. The number and quality of the coconuts per tree are among the highest in the country. Some of the palms yield over 500 coconuts each year, while the average is about 400. The crop of chikoo (sapota) is similarly abundant and of excellent flavour providing on average 300-350 kg premium quality fruit per tree each year. Much of the orchard—planted over thirty years ago – is under these two species.

Growing here and there in smaller numbers are banana, papaya, and a few trees of date palm, drumstick, areca nut, mango, jack, toddy palm, bamboo, custard apple, jambul, guava, kala jamun, pomegranate, lime, mahua, tamarind, neem, audumber and several others, apart from various under-storey shrubs and vines.

Native rice, pulses, wheat and some vegetables too are grown in seasonal rotation on about two acres of land. These provide enough for this self-sustained farmer’s immediate family consisting of six adults and three grandchildren. Acreage of rice-indigenous variety called Nawabi Kolam – is cultivated, this may be gifted to relatives or friends, who appreciate its superior flavour and health benefits.

The income of the farm however, comes mainly from the sale of chikoo fruit and coconut saplings, while the sale of banana, papaya, ripened coconut, curry leaves, and some fuel wood fetches most of the supplementary cash earnings. Expenses are minimal, and the net profit reaped is over rupees six lakhs per annum! And this, without succumbing to the temptation of much higher export prices offered by several western buyers of organic food.

The diverse plants on Bhaskar Save’s farm co-exist as a mixed community of dense vegetation. One rarely sees even a small patch of bare soil exposed directly to the sun, wind or rain. While the deeply shaded areas under large trees have spongy carpet of leaf litter covering the soil, a variety of weeds spring up wherever some sunlight penetrates through the vegetation.

The thick ground cover is an excellent moderator of the soil’s micro-climate, which Bhaskar bhai believes to be of utmost importance in agriculture. ‘On a hot summer day, the shade from the plants or the mulch (leaf litter) keeps the surface of the soil cool and slightly damp. During cold winter nights the ground cover is like a blanket conserving the warmth gained during the day. Humidity too is higher in the under-canopy of dense vegetation, and evaporation losses are greatly reduced. Consequently, irrigation needs are very low. Moreover, the little insect friends of the soil thrive under these conditions.’

Nature’s Tillers and Fertility Agents

It is not without reason that Charles Darwin declared a century ago, ‘it may be doubted whether there are many other animals that have played so important a part in world history as have the earthworms.’

Bhaskar Save confirms, ‘A farmer who aids the natural regeneration of the earthworms on his farm, is firmly on the road to prosperity.’

‘A dark, moist, aerated surrounding with an abundance of organic matter, and protected from extremes of heat and cold, is an ideal environment for the earthworm to flourish. It digests organic matter like leaf litter along with the soil, while churning out in every cycle of 24 hours 1 and a half times its weight of rich compost, high in all plant nutrients.’

Vermicompost is ‘black gold’. In relation to the surrounding parent soil, the intricately sculpted worm castings may contain twice as much magnesium, five times as much nitrogen, seven times as much phosphorus, and eleven times as much potash.

Save estimates that at least 6 tonnes of such nutrient-rich castings are added to the soil by the earthworms each year in every acre of his land. That is more fertiliser than most farmers can afford to dig in!

Various other soil-dwelling ants and termites similarly aid in the physical conditioning of the soil and in the recycling of nutrients. And there are innumerable such helpful creatures in every square metre of a natural farm.

Bhaskar Save, however, does not claim to have any special method for making the armies of insects toil for him. 'This is Nature's way', he says. "The most important step is to let it happen by not adopting short-sighted technological interventions, such as the use of chemical fertiliser or pesticide, excessive tillage or intensive irrigation.'

'Modern agricultural practices have proved disastrous to the organic life of the soil. Many of the burrowing creatures are directly killed by the toxic effect of the chemicals used. The consequent soil compaction has reduced soil aeration and the earth's capacity to absorb moisture. This is further aggravated by soil-surface salinisation caused by too much irrigation and poor drainage. By thus ruining the natural fertility of the soil, we actually create artificial "needs" for more and more external inputs and unnecessary labour for ourselves, while the results are inferior and more expensive in every way.'

Other wild friends, such as weeds

'In nature, the humblest of creatures and plants play a significant role in moderating the eco-system. Each is an inseparable part of the food chain. The excrement of one species is nutrition for another. And in death too, every organism or withered leaf leaves behind its contribution of fertility for the birth of new life.'

Consequently, pleads Bhaskar Save, 'if we truly seek to regain ecological harmony and sustainability, the very first principle we must learn to follow is, "Live and let live."

'...Since all plants are provided by Nature in her wisdom to fulfill certain functions in relation to the soil and the creatures of the soil, we must think most carefully before removing what we consider undesirable weeds. In particular, violent methods like spraying chemical weedicides and the use of heavy tractors should be totally given up.'

At Kalpavruksha, no labour is lost even in manually rooting out weeds, though sometimes wild creepers that are over-shading young saplings may be cut and mulched.

The manual uprooting of weeds disturbs the organic life of the soil less than mechanical tillage, but is still usually undesirable. On the other hand, the cutting of weed growth above the land surface – without disturbing the roots – and laying it on the earth as 'mulch', benefits the soil in numerous ways.

With mulching, there is less erosion of soil by wind or rain; less compaction, more aeration; more moisture absorption; more insulation from heat and cold; less evaporation, less need for irrigation; and more food for the earthworms and micro-organisms to provide nutrient-rich compost for the crops. Moreover, since the roots of the weeds are left in the earth, these continue to bind the soil, and aid its organic life in a similar manner as the mulch on the surface.

Most of the 'nutrients' of weeds are derived from elements present in the air and moisture. The minerals drawn from the soil constitute barely 5 per cent of their total weight. The problem of competition for these does not arise, for nature is never so foolish as to select such weed species, whose mineral needs are less than plentifully catered to in the soil where they are chosen to grow. And since weeds are shorter, have comparatively shallow roots and brief life spans, they do not hinder the taller, deeper-rooted, long-life trees in any way at all.

Some of the so-called weeds found in Kalpavruksha, like the 'koucha', 'dhaincha' (or 'ikkad') are leguminous. Along with other leguminous shrubs and trees, these are the fertiliser factories of nature. In their root nodules dwell billions of specialised rhizobium bacteria that 'fix' atmospheric nitrogen in the soil.

Multi-storey, multi-function

Above the ground cover of weeds that constitute the lowest storey of vegetation in the orchard area of Kalpavruksha, there are numerous shrubs like the 'kadipatta' (or curry leaves/sweet neem) and the homely crotons that line the pathways through the orchard. The latter plant, of various spotted and striped varieties, serves Bhaskar bhai as a 'water metre', indicating by the drooping of its leaves that the moisture level of the soil is falling.

The shrubs of curry leaves (sweet neem) – milder than their relative, the bitter neem – contribute to moderating the population of several species of crop-feeding insects, while also providing an important edible herb widely used in Indian cooking. From this minor crop alone, Bhaskar Save earns an income of at least Rs.2000 each month, at zero cost since the purchaser provides the labour for harvest.

Honey is another 'minor produce' of the farm, highly valued for its medicinal properties. The bees provide many kilograms of it each year, without any demand on labour or input of any kind. These little, busy creatures also take care of most of the pollination needs on the farm.

Here and there, one may see climbers like the pepper vine or betel leaf in a spiral garland around a supari (arecanut) palm, or perhaps a passion fruit vine arching across a clearing. These provide additional bonus yield on the side.

Excluding the two acres under coconut nursery, and another two acres of paddy field, the average food yield from the orchard is about 15,000 to 20,000 kg. per acre per annum. And in terms of nutritional value, this is many times superior to an equivalent weight of food grown with the intensive use of toxic chemicals, as in Punjab, Haryana and many other parts of India.

'In 1960,' writes Save, 'I realised that there is no substitute for organic farming. In this form of farming I give back something to Nature and enjoy Nature in its original form.'

'From my personal experience and experiments I would like to stress that without earthworms we cannot get or

achieve good and healthy production from the land.

‘Even though I have proved this to my friends and village colleagues, they refused to acknowledge or believe me. They went to the extent of calling me a “Mad Man.”

‘However, Mr. Ashok Sanghavi, who was my student when I was working as a teacher, has introduced on the waste land of his family farm, “Sanghavi Farm”, my system of farming with great success. This has evoked a change in the attitude of my old friends and local colleagues who have also started to change and shift to my system of farming and find what I say is very true.

‘I will be failing in my duty if I don’t thank Ashok Sanghavi’s for his efforts in popularising my method of farming. Due to his efforts I have won many awards and citations for my method of farming.’

He concludes by saying, ‘Farming is not a business, but religious work. An infant has the right to his Mother’s milk, not her blood. With the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides we are sucking blood along with milk from the Motherland. Therefore, our Motherland is sinking and production has decreased.’

Appreciations:

(1) The world-famous farmer, Masanobu Fukuoka (Japan), while visiting our farm said, ‘Mr. Save is a second Gandhi for India. I have not observed similar work in the whole world. My heartiest wishes are that people should get guidance and inspiration from his work.’

(2) ‘People of the Year Award’ by the Limca Book of Records as farmers who generate high yield and profits.

(3) Planning Commission (Delhi) has given an entry to organic farming in the Ninth Five Year Plan.

(4) ‘Paradise on Earth’ is the title given by visitors and the media to the farm.

(5) ‘Nisarga Bhooshan’ by Nisarga Pratihthan, Sangli, 1993.

(6) The Bajaj Award in Science and Technology for Rural Development in the year 2000.

(7) The Gujarat Government’s farming award for the year 2002 for organic farming.

For more details, Mr. Ashok Sanghavi has written a book on ‘Organic and Natural Farming with Mr. Save System’ based on his, as well as Mr. Save’s experiences. The English, Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati book comprises of 55 chapters which contain the answers to all your queries.

Bhasker Save’s farm is open to visitors every Saturday.

(Source: Bharat Mansata)

SANGHAVI FARMS

Farm: Sanghavi Farm, Sundarvan, Umargam, Dist: Valsad -396 171, Gujarat, Phone: 0260-2563277

Office: 23-A, Central Chowpatty building, Chowpatty, Mumbai – 400 007, Maharashtra.

In 1987, the place was a wasteland. Hence, right from the start, a variety of experiments were carried out to maximize use of water, space and sunlight in order to farm the land.

One of the experiments was spacing the trees. Normally coconut trees are planted 25 feet apart so that four trees occupy 625 square feet of land, or there are 70 trees to an acre. On this farm, two coconut trees are planted leaving 50 feet on one side and 25 feet on the other, so that the trees get sunlight as well as this method can accommodate 84 instead of 70 trees per acre. In the vacant space on either side, medium and short life trees and plants are grown, thereby adding to quality, quantity and variety of produce.

After the success of this experiment, another experiment called Surya Mandal was tried in which 12 coconut trees are planted in a circle. The purpose is to show that they can flourish with the use of only 15 to 20 litres of water per day. The distance between two Surya-mandals should be more than 100 feet to provide ample growth opportunities to the trees.

Similar experiments have been conducted on different plants. The results are impressive. Sapota trees which normally yield after seven years have yielded within a year and a half. Sugarcane is planted in such a way that it produces for a life time with very little water. Even alphonso mango gives impressive results.

Sanghavi Farm disseminates its knowledge widely hoping thereby to prevent farmers from financial ruin and misery. Ashok Sanghavi’s book ‘The Way of Health, Life & Wealth’ attempts to address the farmers and the general public on organic farming systems and why it is best to live in harmony with nature.

(Source: Communication with OIP)

YAGNESH DESAI

Treasurer, Nisarg Seva, Mohan Opticians, Azad Chowk, Valsad – 396 001, Gujarat. Cell: 09825125074

An optician with a naturopathy background, Desai has a mango orchard with 250 trees and also grows vegetables for home consumption. He uses earthworms and bio-pesticides and has nitrogen fixing trees to improve soil fertility. He has also started honeybee production.

Nisarg Seva was started to educate people about organic products. The organisation also markets products like unpolished rice, chemical free jaggery, unrefined sugar, vegetables etc. It has initiated a programme to provide

training in vermiculture to farmers. (Source: Communication with CSE, 1993)

RAMANBHAI KALIDAS DESAI

At Gorwada, P.O. Ghadoi, Taluka & District Valsad - 396 001, Gujarat. Ph.: 02632 329905, 02631 299583.

Desai started organic farming in 1996. His 3 acres farm is 90% organic. He grows mangoes. (Source of information: J=Jatan)

DR. ASHOK CHAMPAKLAL SHAH

3-Amar Apartment, Opp. Swarg Ashram, Tithal Road, Taluka & District Valsad - 396 001, Gujarat. Ph.: 02632 254070 (R), 237029, Cell: 09825123874, Email: draeshah13@yahoo.com.

Shah started organic farming in 1994. His 2.5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows mango, chickoo, orange, lemon, fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. (J)

MANOJBHAI NATWARBHAI NAYAK

At Vashiyar, Near Gram Panchayat Office, Taluka & District Valsad - 396 001, Gujarat. Ph.: 02632 251407 (R), 245576 (O), Cell: 09825670371.

Nayak started organic farming in 2001. His 7 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows mango. (J)

RAMANBHAI GULABBHAI NAYAK

A/5, Parijat Co. 1st Floor, Bh Swargashram Mandir, Tithal Road, Taluka & District Valsad - 396 001, Gujarat. (J)

BIPINCHANDRA LILACHANDRA SHAH

Bobby Farm, Dharampur Road, At Jujwa Pathri, P.O. Jujwa Pathri, Taluka & District Valsad - 396 007, Gujarat. Ph.: 02632 241815, Cell: 09979464979.

Shah started organic farming in 1990. His 16 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows paddy, green gram, mango, chickoo and vegetables. (J)

RAMUBHAI GOVANBHAI PATEL

At Ronvel, P.O. Ronvel, Taluka & District Valsad - 396 055, Gujarat. Ph.: 02632 266123.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. His 3 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows paddy, wheat, horse gram, mango and chickoo. (J)

LALLUBHAI B. PATEL

High School Faliya, At Ronvel, P.O. Ronvel, Taluka & District Valsad - 396 055, Gujarat. Ph.: 02632 267269, Cell: 09428160390.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. His 14 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows paddy, wheat, mango, chickoo and fodder. (J)

NANDIGRAM

Dharampur Road, Po : Vankal, District : Valsad – 396 007, Gujarat. Phone: 02632-267245, 267594

(Contact: Ms Kundnika Kapadia, Managing Trustee)

Nandigram grows rice, vegetables, wheat, groundnut, chickoo, mango etc. They use seaweed, pyramid water, herbal insecticides made from sitafal and tobacco leaves.

DHIRENDRA AND SMITA SONEJI

Village Sakawa, P.O. Samariya, Taluka: Rajpipla, Dist. Narmada, Gujarat. Phone: 02640-291173

Three decades ago, Dhirendra and Smita left their jobs as lecturers in an educational institute - the Government Polytechnic for Girls - and settled down in Sakawa, a village near the Satpura range in the tribal area of Bharuch in May 1986. They have been doing organic farming since.

VIRJIBHAI-SUSHILABEN VIRADIA

Saptada, Via Gora Colony, P.O. Indravarna, Taluka Rajpipla - 393 155, District Narmada, Gujarat. Ph.: 02640 291172, Cell: 09879537377, 09427873065.

Virjibhai and Sushilaben are organic farmers. Their 10 acre farm is 100% organic. They grow wheat, paddy, maize, sorghum, horse gram, green gram, mango, guava, sugarcane, vegetables and turmeric. They also produce chemical free jaggery & turmeric powder. (J)

JIGNESH BABUBHAI PATEL

At Nawa Rajuwadia, P.O. Nawa Rajuwadia, Taluka Rajpipla - 393 141, District Narmada, Gujarat. Ph.: 02640 249675, Cell: 09913048104.

Patel started organic farming in 2005. He has a 7 acre farm 30% of which is organic. He grows sugarcane. (J)

SATISHBHAI RAVJIBHAI PATEL

At Nawa Rajuwadia, P.O. Nawa Rajuwadia, Taluka Rajpipla - 393 141, District Narmada, Gujarat. Ph.: 02640 249677, Cell: 09825930112.

Patel started organic farming in 2003. His 50 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows wheat, banana and sugar cane. (J)

KANUGIRI NAGINGIRI GOSWAMI

At Nawa Rajuwadia, P.O. Nawa Rajuwadia, Taluka Rajpipla - 393 141, District Narmada, Gujarat. Cell: 09723828310.

Goswami started organic farming in 2003. His 10 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows sugar cane. (J)

JYOTSNABEN PATEL

Ishvarshyam Ashok Vitika, At & P.O. Gora, Taluka Rajpipla - 393 115, District Narmada, Gujarat. Ph.: 02640 291235, 291289, Cell: 09428721587.

Jyotsnaben is an organic farmer. Her 5.5 acre farm is 100% organic. She grows sorghum, pearl millet, maize, green gram, pigeon pea, black gram, groundnut, mango and fodder. (J)

BADRISHANKAR MOTIRAM JOSHI

At & Post : Tannachha, Taluka : Aamod, Distrist : Bharuch - 392025, Gujarat.

Phone: 02641-238426 (R), 238460 (O), M : 09427158275

Badrishankar's farm is 37 acres. He belongs to a farming family and has been farming for the past 50 years. He follows a mixed crop system and grows cotton, lentils, green gram, soyabean, mustard, wheat, lady finger etc.

Badrishankar says that he has been practising organic farming for the last 13 years. He faced no difficulty while switching to organic farming and did not notice any reduction in the yield. He uses traditional seeds and techniques like mulching, cow dung fertiliser, castor seeds and groundnut waste, green vegetable waste, cattle waste and vermicompost. He has some cattle - bullocks and cows.

Badrishankar sprinkles a concoction of margo, vasaca, dhatura, madar mixed with the urine of cattle to protect the farm from pests. He sells the produce in the market but is not satisfied with the returns.

His neighbours do not practice organic farming but are beginning to show interest.

Badrishankar says he explains to his farmer neighbours that when he was adding chemicals to his farm the productivity of the land was reducing and the farm land was turning hard. The expenses on the farm increased. But now his land has become productive, expenses have reduced and the produce is chemical free. The land now seems pleased and this makes him happy.

Badribhai was one of the first farmers in the region to take to chemical farming. Several years later the same man also came to be a pioneer in sustainable agriculture, having switched to organic farming in 1990. Badribhai's farm of three acres is adjacent to the village settlement. The soil is deep black cotton with a pH condition of around 8. The rainfall is from mid-June to middle/end of September during which they receive around 630 mm of rain. He has two bullocks for transport and farm work. His wife and himself, along with two hired help manage the farm.

The crop area is divided in two sections: the tilled area and non-tilled area. He practices agroforestry in both areas. In the non-tilled area there are jujube, pomegranate, jamun, sapota and other fruit trees. Between trees he plants cotton, castor bean and pulses like cow pea and pigeon pea. In the tilled area there are mostly jujube and some guava trees with the intercropping of cotton. Badribhai does not use any heavy machinery. He uses traditional instruments for ploughing, tilling, sowing and various operations on the farm.

As to why he changed over, he says: 'One was to maintain the fertility of soil, and two, to produce food which does not have poison.' He has realised that conventional farming has many draw backs including loss of soil fertility, depletion of ground water, reduction in living soil organisms and an ever increasing consumption of chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

In order to create an environment for natural predators, Badribhai has grown a live-fence around his field, and secondly, in one corner of his land he has a small water tank and a small plot covered with different weeds to enable insects and other small creatures – natural predators – to multiply on their own. He uses biocontrollers like buttermilk, ash, cow urine and neem water as pesticides. But for the most effective control of pests, he says it is essential to develop strong and healthy plants which thrive in a living soil. If the plants are mixed and/or intercropped, the spread of the pests is extensively controlled. Some fruit tree's saplings in his farm sprout by themselves. He does not remove

them, because they are bound to become very strong trees since they have come up on their own.

He controls weeds by cutting with a sickle only. The weed cuttings are spread on uncovered soil between the rows of crops as mulch. In this way the soil remains perennially covered by weed cuttings and other green foliage. This practice not only restricts the growth of weeds but also protects the soil against the vagaries of the weather. For manure he applies compost. When he started with his experiment in sustainable agriculture, the soil was hard and saline no micro-organisms were to be seen. The pH ratio is now much improved; the salinity is reduced and the soil has become porous.

About 600 metres away from the farm, rain water is collected in a well, which otherwise has saline water. The addition of rain water makes the well water less saline and suitable for farming. This enables him to irrigate his farm for a period of two months after the end of the rains. Thanks to mulching, the evaporation losses are substantially reduced and water requirements are cut down.

Badribhai is also involved with the local farmer's union. He runs a voluntary organisation named Shantigram Nirman Mandal in his village. This is one of the first organisations to promote organic farming as early as 1985 along with Manaviya Technology Forum.

(Sources: Prakruti, Mumbai, AME and Jatan)

KAUSHIK KUMAR BHIKHABHAI PATEL

At Bori, P.O. Nabipur, Taluka Bharuch - 392 210, District Bharuch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02642 283814, Cell: 09979419814. Patel is an organic farmer. Of his half-acre plot, 50% is farmed organically. He grows paddy. (J)

GEMALSINH MOHANSINH RANA

'Prerna Piyush', 'Manusmriti Charitable Trust', Near Primary School, At Valia, P.O. & Taluka Valia - 393 135, District Bharuch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02643 270048 (R), 270191 (O), Cell: 09427873279.

Rana is an organic farmer. His 10 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows sorghum, pigeon pea, green gram, gram, soyabean, mango and vegetables.

KANTILAL P. KALOLA

At Katindra, P.O. Pipdhara, Taluka Jaghadia - 393 115, District Bharuch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02645 247025.

Kalola started organic farming in 1996. His 1.75 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows paddy, wheat, sorghum, pigeon pea, green gram, methi, vegetable, cotton and sugarcane. (J)

MOZDA COLLECTIVE

At Juna Mozda, Taluka Dediapada, District Bharuch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02649 290249.

Contact: (Swati-Michael-Ishwar)

A number of tribals are associated with the Mozda Collective. They grow minor millets, pigeon pea, vegetables and tur dal. (J)

SHANTIGRAM NIRMAN MANDAL

At & Post : Tanchha, Taluka : Amod, District : Bharuch – 392 025, Gujarat. Phone: 02641-238460

Shantigram Nirman Mandal is an NGO which, along with Manviya Technology Forum, promote appropriate technologies in 18 villages of Amod Taluka through various means including Gandhi Mela in early days. Invigorating lectures are held during these melas. One such mela was based on the theme of organic farming, as a result of which several farmers volunteered land for on-field demonstration on different organic farming techniques such as Fukuoka's mulching method, Mazibuko's deep trench method, Save's platform and trench method, permaculture method and Shirin Gadhia's FARM method.

(Source: Communication with OIP)

MAHENDRA BHATT

Sarvangin Gram Vikas Mandal, At : Mangrol, Via : Rajpipla, District : Bharuch – 393 150, Gujarat. Phone:02640-250269

Shri. Mahendra Bhatt pioneered the organic movement in Gujarat in 1985 and coined the word 'Sajiv Kheti.'

(Source: Kapil Shah)

MINESH PARSOTAMDAS PATEL

Patel street, At Post: Shekhadi, Taluka : Petlad, District : Anand – 388 450, Gujarat. Cell: 9998117010

Minesh Patel's 6 acre farm is located in Shekhadi. He grows coconut, ambala, chikoo, wheat, rice, bajra and moong on the farm. He also keeps cattle. He comes from a farming family and earlier practiced chemical farming. He

changed to organic farming on the advice of Jatan Trust. Today the farm is completely converted to organic.

He uses vermicompost, panchgavya, amrut pani on the farm as manure and neem oil, cow urine, butter milk, etc., to control pests.

After retaining for family use, the surplus produce is sold in the local market. It fetches a good price. When he changed to organic farming initially the output was reduced and it took time to return to normal output. Thereafter there was a steady increase. He also finds that organic farming requires less water, gives good quality output and more production, and the costs are less.

(Source: Communication with OIP)

SARVADAMBHAI CHIMANBHAI PATEL

Bhaikaka Krushi Kendra, Ravipura, Anand-Sojitra Road, P.O. Ghuteli, Taluka Petlad - 388 440, District Anand, Gujarat. Ph.: 02692 281664, Cell: 09825045730.

Patel started organic farming in 1999. His 40 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows wheat, paddy, pearl millet, green gram, black gram, mustard, sesame, amla, lemon, orange and vegetables. He keeps a well maintained Gaushala. (J)

DEVANBHAI KANUBHAI VYAS

Shiv, Near Court, Tran Darwaja, Khambhat, Taluka Khambhat - 398 620, District Anand, Gujarat. Cell: 09426404195, Ph.: 02698 222640 (R), 285741(O), E-mail: devanbhai@hotmail.com.

Vyas is an organic farmer. 80% of his 15 acre farm is organic. He grows mustard and vegetables. (J)

DEVESHBHAI RAMESHBHAI PATEL

Subhash Chowk, At Boriavi, P.O. Boriavi, Taluka & District Anand - 387 310, Gujarat. Cell: 09426061878, 09824506878, Email: devboriavi@yahoo.co.uk.

Patel started organic farming in 1999. His 9 acre farm is fully organic. He grows soybean, vegetables, ginger, potato and turmeric. (J)

VINUBHAI RAMANBHAI PATEL

Subhash Chowk, At Boriavi, P.O. Boriavi, Taluka & District Anand - 387 310, Gujarat. Cell: 9904727659, Ph.: 02692 271364.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. He has a 5 acre farm. He grows pearl millet, vegetables, ginger, potato and turmeric. (J)

NARESHBHAI SOMABHAI SOLANKI

Subhash Chowk, At Boriavi, P.O. Boriavi, Taluka & District Anand - 387 310, Gujarat. Cell: 09979224410.

Solanki is an organic farmer with a 5 acre farm. He grows green gram, groundnut, vegetables, ginger, potato and turmeric. (J)

VINAYAK CHHOTUBHAI PATEL

At & Po : Budhan, Taluka : Mandvi, District : Surat – 394 140, Gujarat. Phone: 02623 251217, Cell: 09898355803
Vinayak's 31 acres farm is located 3 kilometers away from Baudhan. He belongs to a farming family and has been farming for the past 20 years. He grows banana, papaya, sugarcane, paddy, wheat and mangoes and keeps four cows.

Vinayak is practising organic farming for the last 7 years. Due to use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides his land became so degraded that he stopped chemical farming and started organic farming. His inputs are cow dung, cow urine and waste from sugarcane, papaya and banana leaves. He uses manure made from press mud. After extracting oil from cotton seeds and neem seeds the waste is also used as manure.

He produces vermicompost for use on the farm and has started producing 'Panchakavya' and 'Zapapat manure'. Following V. Mohanshankar Deshpande's Rishi Kheti he uses cowdung, honey, amrutpani and mud from under peepal trees.

He finds it difficult to practice organic farming in many areas of his sugarcane plots due to the number of canals and finds it difficult to control pests in paddy fields.

The sugarcane is sold directly to mills, papayas and bananas are sold to traders.

Vinayak says that the difficulties faced by him in organic farming were not many. When he changed to organic farming he felt he was going against the trend and was scared that the income level would drop. However over the years everything has settled satisfactorily.

Some of Vinayak's neighbours have started to explore organic farming as a viable possibility. (J)

MANHARLAL C PATEL

At & P.O. Umbhel, Taluka Kamrej, District Surat – 394 325, Gujarat. Cell: 09909593924

Manharlal C Patel converted to organic farming in 1990 when he realised that poor soil condition was responsible for poor setting of seed in groundnut although the vegetative growth for the same was vigorous.

He has since moved to growing sugarcane, with consistent efforts and organic inputs he has reclaimed soil health using F.Y.M, green manure (dhaincha – *Sesbania aculeata*), castor cake, neem cake, vermin compost, azotobacter, Phosphate culture and paddy straw mulch.

Sugarcane yield stands at a record 105 tonnes/ hectare. His innovative methods have won him many awards in Gujarat. Many farmers visit his farm for a first hand learning experience.

(Source: Communication with OIP)

GIRINBHAI SUBODCHANDRA SHAH

At Rupan, House no. 149, Near Canal, P.O. Rupan, Taluka Mandvi - 394 641, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02623 221712 (R), Cell: 09374991388.

Shah started organic farming in 1986. His 5 acre farm is fully organic. He grows paddy, pigeon pea, gram, kidney bean, mango, chickoo, coconut, vegetables, etc. (J)

DINESHBHAI KESHAVALAL PATEL

Gandhi Vidyapith, Vedachhi Taluka Valod - 394 641, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02625 222038 (O), 220725 (R), Cell: 09427894438.

Patel is an organic farmer. His 2 acre farm is fully organic. He grows sorghum, pearl millet, pigeon pea, green gram and castor. (J)

BIPINBHAI NATHUBHAI PATEL

At Umbhel, P.O. Umbhel, Taluka Kamrej - 394 325, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02622 271059.

Patel started organic farming in 1992. His 9 acre farm is fully organic. He grows sorghum, paddy, wheat, banana, ginger and sugarcane. (J)

RAJENDRA P. NEMANI

Nemani Farm, At Umara, P.O. Umara, Taluka Mahuva - 394 248, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02625 252251(R), Cell: 09824134159, 09825487159.

Nemani started organic farming in 2003. His 112 acre farm is fully organic. He grows sugarcane. (J)

MAHESHBHAI AMRUTLAL PAREKH

Jagdish Takies Compound, Khatriwad, At Mandvi, P.O. Mandvi, Taluka Mandvi - 394 160, District Surat, Gujarat. Cell: 09825372557.

Parekh started organic farming in 1996. 75% of his 10 acre farm is organic. He grows wheat, green gram and mango. (J)

DR. BHIKHUBHAI NARSIBHAI

Gujarat Rajya Sugar Producer Association, At Gangpur, P.O. Gangadhara, Taluka Palasana, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02622 263274 (O), Cell: 09879411331.

Narsibhai started organic farming in 1996. 50% of his 10 acre farm is organic. He grows sugarcane. (J)

KUSUMBEN R PATEL

Uttar Buniyadi Vidyalaya, Amalsadi, Taluka Palasana - 394 355, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02622 224151 (R), 254363 (O).

Patel is an organic farmer. His 10 acre farm is fully organic. He grows sorghum, vegetables and sugarcane. (J)

MINABEN CHAUDHARI

Uttar Buniyadi Vidyalaya, At Vaghecha, Taluka Bardoli - 394 350, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02622 255960 (O), Cell: 09979334333.

Chaudhari started organic farming in 2001. On his 12 acre farm he grows vegetables and sugarcane. (J)

MAVJIBHAI

Ahsram Shala, At Vaghecha Taluka Bardoli - 394 350, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02622 255960.

Mavjibhai started organic farming in 2001. He grows pigeon pea, banana and vegetables on his 3 acres. (J)

RAMKUMARSINH

Yantra Vidyalaya, Suruchi Vasahat, At Bardoli, P.O. & Taluka Bardoli, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02622 220095 (R), 220258 (O), Cell: 09377774764, Email: karegama2003@yahoo.co.in.

Ramkumarsinh started organic farming in 1988. His 6.5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows banana, vegetables and tissue plant. (J)

PRAGNESH G. PATEL

Ashram Shala, At Timba, P.O. Timba, Taluka Kamrej - 394 330, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02621 265015 (R), Cell: 09979460319.

Patel's 9 acre farm is 50% organic. He grows pigeon pea, banana and vegetables. (J)

BABUBHAI L. PATEL

Principal, Uttar Buniyadi Vidyalaya, At Timba, P.O. Timba, Taluka Kamrej - 394 330, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02621 265014, Cell: 09429092526.

Patel's 15 acre farm is 50% organic. He grows maize, pigeon pea, banana and vegetables. (J)

THAKORBHAI BECHARBHAI PATEL

At Nansad, P.O. Nansad, Taluka Kamrej - 394 185, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02621 251480, Cell: 09426859774.

Patel started organic farming in 2004. He grows vegetables and sugarcane on his 12 acre farm. (J)

MANOJBHAI SHIRISHCHANDRA SOLANKI

At Kamrej, P.O. Kamrej, Taluka Kamrej - 394 180, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02621 251080 (R), 251180 (O), Cell: 09426159252, Email:solanki_travel@rediffmail.com.

Solanki is an organic farmer. On his 12 acre farm he grows banana and sugarcane. (J)

TUSHAR RAMANBHAI PATEL

Near Police Station, At Kamrej, P.O. Kamrej, Taluka Kamrej - 394 180, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02621 251213 (R), Cell: 09377715658.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. He grows banana on his 100% organic 17 acre farm. (J)

RAMCHANDRA GHELABHAI PATEL

At Bhatgam, P.O. Bhatgam, Taluka Olpad - 394 540, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02621 222274, Cell: 09979946826

Patel started organic farming in 2003. His 3 acre farm is fully organic. He grows litchi and other fruits. (J)

HARIVADANBHAI PARSHOTTAMBHAI PATEL

At Bhatgam, P.O. Bhatgam, Taluka Olpad - 394 540, District Surat, Gujarat. Cell: 09979984603.

Patel started organic farming in 2003. He grows sugarcane on 3 acre farm. (J)

UMA-SURENDRA

Sampurna Kranti Vidyala, Gandhi Vidyapith, At Vedachhi 394 641, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02625 220074.

Uma & Surendra started organic farming in 1982. Their 2 acre farm is fully organic. They grow paddy, pigeon pea, banana, papaya and vegetables. (J)

GRAM SEVA SAMAJ

At & P.O. Vyara, Dhuliya Road - 394 650, District Surat, Gujarat. Ph.: 02626 220108, Cell: 09428201884.

Gram Seva Samaj's 5 acre farm is completely organic. They grow paddy and vegetables. (J)

GRAM SEWA SAMAJ

Madhyastha Bhandar, Dhulia Road, Vyara, District Surat – 394 650, Gujarat. Ph.: 02626 220108, 220703.

Gram Sewa Samaj is a Gandhian educational centre. They grow organic vegetables and sell it in the town on cycle rickshaw. Other organic produce is also available with them.

NU TECH FARM

Near Rayan village, Mandvi Taluka, Kutch District – 370 465, Gujarat. Telefax: 02834-288911 / 288361, Cell: 09825235811 E-mail: vijaykusum@nugroup.in; nutechfarm@yahoo.com

(Contact: Vijay and Manesh Shah)

Vijay Shah, bearded, with a quick smile, is one of the pioneers of organic farming in Gujarat. The family-owned 42-acre 'NuTech Farm' specialises in fresh dates and Aloe vera. Though he used modern fertilisers and pesticides for seven years, there is a commemorative piece of paper taped to his desk with the penciled note: '1 July 1996: Stopped using chemicals completely.' In the violent desert climate, Vijay Shah has created an oasis of peace – for himself, his extended family, and his land.

After spending five years of his childhood with his grandmother in the small village of Rayan, in southwestern Kutch, Shah spent most of his early years in Mumbai. He graduated from college with a degree in printing technology in 1977 and soon after started a printing business with his brother. Within a few years he began to feel restless. 'I could see that I wasn't a good businessman,' Shah admits. 'Deep in my heart I had the inkling that I must work with the soil, with Mother Nature.'

Looking for a more peaceful existence for him and his father – who had then recently suffered a heart attack – he and his wife moved to 4 acres of ancestral land in Rayan village in 1986. They lived with his father and mother, and began growing crops of sweet corn, melons, pomegranates, figs and dates. Vijay's grandfather used to do rain fed farming, over half a century ago, but consecutive draughts forced him to shift to Mumbai.

Vijay Shah started farming with chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Production was exceptional. He says, 'In the days of fertile soil and enough water, we grew beautiful dates and red shining pomegranates. We produced up to six times more than other farms.'

After seven years of synthetic inputs, however, Shah realised what other farmers in the region are now beginning to understand – that chemical farming in their harsh conditions cannot last. Because the chemical fertilizers he used provided nutrients only for the plant, his soil structure was weakened. He realised, chemical fertilisers had killed many of the beneficial organisms that make the soil porous and fertile so it can absorb moisture. The soil lost its finer particles, becoming dead and hardening when it rained. During the dry season, wind blew the cracked, dusty topsoil off his land. When the torrential rains came, they washed loose soil into flash-flood rivers.

To make matters worse, Shah's neighbors began growing cotton. Their reckless pesticide use drove insect pests to seek refuge at NuTech Farm. He was at a crossroads. 'I had to make a decision – whether to continue the vicious cycle of using more and more chemicals, or change my whole way of farming,' he says.

Seeking peace, he changed paths.

At Nu Tech Farm, the main crops are Aloe vera and fresh dates grown using innovative organic methods. Fresh cow dung & urine, plus shredded woody chips of different trees bushes and plants are generously added during initial soil preparation. Bone meal sprinkled with phosphetic culture (to ensure sustained release of P) and seaweed plus green algae sprinkled with sour butter milk solution (to unlock abundant supply of K and micro elements) are added before final soil preparation (raised bed making). As healthy food nourishes healthy people, healthy soil and wholesome feeding produce healthy, strong and vibrant plants.

For consistent and wholesome organic feeding, they intermittently plant selected cultivar of *Sesbania rostrata*. The nodulation (for nitrogen fixation) in this cultivar is so profuse (partly due to our well maintained drip irrigation), that organic nitrogen is available year round. These sesbanias also provide partial shade in summer when sunlight is too strong and mulch when we cut them down before and after monsoon.

Innovative concoctions of black brown seaweed, green algae, FYM slurry, sour buttermilk solution, *Caltropis* leaves, neem and castor cakes are fermented filtered and fed through drip. All this adds to complex and wholesome organic nutrition and also provides natural plant protection.

The brown black seaweed (*Saragasam wighti*) is harvested about one km off the coast of the Gulf of Kutch and brought back to the farm for processing. The harvested crop is dried in the hot sun, then run through a thresher which separates sand and other unwanted stuff and grinds the seaweed into coarse powder grade. The powder is then packed in poly bags (30 kg each) and stored. The powder provides additional nutrients to the dry soil. It can be used as a soak or as a spray. In a year, NuTech uses two tonnes of seaweed for 30 acres irrigated land; an additional 6 tonnes is sold to other farmers.

They allow the cattle to graze (rotationally) in all the aloe plots. Thus weeds remain at manageable height and cows, instead of getting a bland mono diet savour a wide range of natural grasses. Perhaps that makes their milk and even manure, so rich. They keep cows mainly for fresh dung and urine, which is used freely in the in-situ composting. They use lots of seaweed, green algae, neem kernels and also botanicals like castor, *caltropis*, *euphorbia*, whole aloe for all round nourishment. Bone meal, bacterial cultures, sour buttermilk, honey, ghee are also used by them.

Other essential factors of judicious agricultural production are termites, earthworms, frogs, lizards, bats, cows, bullocks and wide range of birds (from small sparrows to falcons and kites) who are all farmers' friends and work harmoniously on the farm.

Shah took other steps to protect his soil and shelter plant life. He mulched more and began leaving low-lying weeds around plants as living mulch. He planted more trees to lower soil temperature so it would be more conducive to micro-organic activity. He planted mixed varieties of specialty trees, such as neem, sesbania, drumstick (*Moringa oleifera*) and five-leaved chaste tree (*Vitex Negundo*) as wind breaks for his soil.

Fortunately both their main crops aloe & fresh dates are generally free from pest & diseases. To control soft rot in aloe, they use cow urine solution with caltropis & to control red palm weevils in dates they pour hot water with neem & vitex negundo. They also plant trap crops which attract pests (like safflower which attracts lots of aphids, so mustard is not attacked) Their live hedges of *adhatoda vasica*, vitex, fennel, mix flowers and neem provide natural habitat for predators and parasites, including birds, frogs, lizards and bats.

Shah's new attitude changed the way he looked at termites. He abandoned use of poisonous fumigants to kill pests that attacked trunks of his date trees. Once he stopped trying to kill them, he saw they were benefiting him by breaking down dead matter and providing good aeration to tree roots. 'They don't eat anything green,' he said, admiring their work in the trunk of a date tree. 'Now termites are my best friends.'

Except for the small kitchen garden plot of vegetables, all the produce is sold. Bajra, mungbean and sesame are sold locally (through Kutch sajiv kheti manch – forum of organic farmers of Kutch) while fresh dates are sold through select outlets in Mumbai, Baroda Rajkot and Mandvi. Health drinks are prepared from Aloe vera with selected herbs and are marketed by a sister concern: Nu Ayur Care Mumbai.

Generally five men and six women work on the farm permanently. The work involves, drip irrigation management and periodic overhauling, mulching, shredding, compost preparation, aloe harvesting and juice preparation (year round) fresh date harvesting (June-July), nursery management, tending the cows, etc. Accommodation is basic yet comfortable. All meals are vegetarian, no alcohol and no smoking is allowed. Nu Tech invites visitors to work for short or long stretches on this pollution free, sunny and serene environment.

'I'm not the boss here... maybe the conductor,' says Shah. 'The different players all contribute in their own peculiar way, from friendly bacteria and mycorrhizae to termites, earthworms, bats, frogs, lizards, birds, cattle, dogs and so on. When that kind of harmony develops there is a reverence for each other. Initially, I was always tense, worrying, killing – but now I have peace.'

Why Aloe vera?

Shah gleaned some agricultural wisdom indirectly from African-American educator Booker T. Washington, an idol of his. Washington tells the story of a ship that was caught in a hurricane off the coast of South America. When all the ship's water was gone the distraught captain radioed in for help from shore. He received the simple SOS: 'Drop your pail where you are.' At first disbelieving, the captain eventually discovered that the seawater there was sweet because it comes from the mighty Amazon River, which pours freshwater into the sea for miles at its mouth.

The story made Shah think about his own life. 'There I was bringing pomegranate plants from 2,000 kilometers away,' Shah realized. 'I was buying sweet corn and melon seeds from U.S. and Taiwan – everything from such distances. I wasn't dropping my pail where I was.'

The day after reading that story, Shah stopped at the gate in front of his farm and noticed a small patch of Aloe vera plants, growing happily with no human management. Though he had little knowledge of the potential market, and still less about how to process the aloe products, he decided to 'drop his pail there.' Shah had heard of its uses in ayurvedic healing and saw advantages in raising a crop that seemed be able to take care of itself.

He found little information existed for on-farm processing of the long succulent Aloe vera leaves. He and his wife began experimenting in their kitchen to learn how to extract the valued gel.

As he expanded production, he experienced new challenges. To counter plant-rot in low areas after the monsoon, Shah turned to a bed-and-furrow system that he extended to nearly his entire farm. He planted medicinal Malabar nut (*A. Vasica*) trees as a natural irrigation indicator. These help him restrict water to the minimum that keeps the gel value highest. He controlled weeds by letting the cattle graze rotationally. He controls diseases and pests by intercropping the Aloe vera with plants such as dates, amla (Indian gooseberry), melons, millet, castor, green gram, pigeon pea, vegetables and selected medicinal plants.

After four years of trial and error the couple perfected a suitable extraction and stabilization process. Shah's brothers converted a small building into an Aloe vera processing plant. They began marketing Aloe vera to cosmetic companies and continued to improve the quality of their Aloe gel.

Manish, Vijay's younger brother, worked to develop a health drink from their aloe gel. Manish joined 40 scientists from 26 countries in China to interact on aloe use. He returned with the confidence to prepare six specialty health beverages with selected medicinal herbs.

Mahendra, their elder brother, is using his marketing genius to expand production to the European Union next year. At times, all 17 members of Vijay's family, work together to keep the Aloe vera activities going.

Shah has expanded to 30 acres of Aloe vera. He continues to fine-tune production skills to maintain production even in dry years such as 2003, where plant color will be diminished but production remained constant. The date trees, which usually decline after a few years under chemical fertilizers, are producing so well that he has named many of them. 'They're like family members,' he says.

Vijay Shah also has a 14 acre plot under date cultivation. He has palms ranging from 3-16 years age. The early date palms in his farm were grown with seeds of unique heirloom fruits that his father relished. Except for monsoon season, the trees are irrigated around the year. Matured trees over 10 years of age require about 200 litre of water 2-3 times a week from April to end of June. The farm is under drip irrigation. According to Vijay Shah, from 8 years onwards a well managed tree can yield 100-150 kgs of fresh dates per season. 99.9% of Kutch dates are sold fresh in the market. Fresh dates have a shelf life of 3-5 days. He has not ventured into value addition and says, "When I'm able to sell fresh dates at Rs. 50-100 per kg and supply is always shorter than demand, there is no point in exploring value addition." Vijay Shah's farm yield is on an average 80 kgs of organic fresh dates per mature tree. The dates are harvested, graded, cleaned, packed and sent (sometimes flown as well!) to metropolitan cities like Mumbai where his own family marketing network handles sales and distribution. Vijay Shah's dates go to various places across India. About 70% to Mumbai, 15% to Baroda, 10% local market and 5% to Ahmedabad, Delhi Bangalore, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar etc. Date cultivation is labourious work. Since Vijay Shah grows organic dates there is no spraying, but other jobs like pollination, preparing for harvest etc. are labourious and labour intensive. However, he does not grudge the labour as all efforts he says are well rewarded. Red palm weevil is a pest problem on the farm. This is dealt with by pouring boiling hot water on egg and larval lodging sites. Other pest and disease damages are insignificant, so, generally ignored. Vijay Shah learnt his lessons of date farming first hand on his farm with careful observation and by persisting with organic methods. According to him, quality organic dates can be grown with maximum production output through right feeding (inputs) and regulation of irrigation. Says Vijay Shah, "we have trench system wherein we go on depositing various organic wastes, old leaves, palm trunks, twigs, weeds, sea weeds, green algae, neem kernels, botanical shreadings like caltropis, euphorbia and waste aloe etc. All these are topped up with a concoction of fresh cow dung, cow urine, honey, pure cow ghee, jaggery, soured butter-milk etc. These trenches are irrigated by drip system. Intense microbial action and work of local earthworms assists in providing nutrients of high value to the palms. As an indicator for irrigation *Adhatoda vasica* is planted intermittently.

Income from date farming depends on the quality (taste) of fruit which is directly dependent on the nourishment provided. Says Vijay Shah, "Lazy and lousy farmers hardly manage to generate Rs. 5000 per acre while my best managed plot gives me a net income of Rs. 1 lakh per acre per season." One needs to climb date palm for pollination and harvesting and other maintenance activities. For protecting from thorns, the outer whorl of leaves is sliced off in January each year. It is possible to master the techniques of dealing with thorns in about three seasons. Shah has a crew of 4 experienced climbers in the age range of 20-40. Dates ripen on his plots over a period of 45 days every season- late June to early august. This stretch of time allows for better marketing. Date fruit-bunches are generally covered in polythene sheets during the last phase of growing season to save the fruit from damage caused by early monsoon showers and cyclonic winds. Vijay Shah's Kharek (fresh date) plots sport high biodiversity. This he says is necessary for rich nutrients to the date palms and also for maintaining premium soil condition. Unnecessary green covers (over-grown weeds / branches) are shred using tractor mounted shredder from M/s. Bhide & Sons of Sangli, Maharashtra. Vijay Shah's dates are sold as "NuTech Farms' Selected Organic Dates". Premium quality products are sold at Rs. 100-120 per kg and medium range fetches Rs. 30-80 per kg.

The farm is certified by Indocert.

Products: Aloe vera products, whole Aloe vera dry powder, dates, Calotropis, seaweed, green algae.
(Source: Communication with OIP)

MULCHAND HARIA

Kutch Sanjivani Farm, At : Bidada, Taluka : Mandvi, District : Kutch – 370 435, Gujarat.

Phone: 02834 244269 / 244124

This organic farmer grows amla, mango, pulses wheat, bajara and fodder on his 60 acres farm. He makes medicines from cow's urine.

(Source: Vijay Shah, NU-TECH Farm)

MANOJBHAI PARSOTTAMBHAI SOLANKI

Village Madhapar, Taluka Bhuj, District Kutch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02832 241182, Cell: 09825428100

Solanki owns 80 acres of land of which 60 acres is irrigated and 20 acres is rain fed. He is practicing organic farming since 2002. He was inspired to take up organic farming after his meeting with Sarvadaman Patel, Bhaskar Save and Mahendra Bhatt. He maintains a gaushala with about 90 cattle. This is adequate for the farm's manure, compost and vermicompost requirements. He uses gaumutra, various cakes, mulching, crop rotation and mix cropping as techniques for good organic farming. Insects are controlled through maintaining biodiversity, using cow urine, neem oil, tobacco powder etc.

He cultivates potato, onion, tomato, mango, papaya, fig, guava, pomegranate, castor, isabgul, fenugreek, mung, sesame and wheat. The farm yield is about 20 % less as compared to his counterparts practising chemical farming. This he admits is because of his inability to pay enough attention to farming due to other engagements.

He runs a small eco-shop from his home and has arranged an excellent business tie up to export castor oil. (J)

MAGANBHAI AHIR

Village Ningal, Taluka Anjar, District Kutch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02836 276528, Cell: 09979319629

Maganbhai Ahir owns 29 acres of land, of which 19 acres are irrigated and 6 acres are rainfed. He is practicing organic farming since 2000. Maganbhai is associated with Swadhyay activity, which inspired him to follow organic farming. He has also reduced usage of chemicals in the area where he follows chemical farming.

He has used silt from the near by pond to improve farm soil. Dry cotton plants are used for making compost. This he claims has helped reduce irrigation requirements by 30%.

In the initial years, he had to try hard to sell his produce, but now consumers themselves are asking for Maganbhai's organic produce. There was an instance once, when another farmer was selling his produce, claiming it to be Maganbhai's. This has made him alert and cautious when dealing with the market.

He grows mung bean, groundnut, bajri, wheat, lucerne and cucumber organically. (J)

SATVIK

26, Banker's Colony, First Lane, Near Jubilee Ground, B/H Syndicate Bank, Bhuj – 370 001

Kachchh, Gujarat. Ph. 02832 651779, Fax: 02832 251914, Email: satvik.india@gmail.com

The root of 'Satvik' is the Sanskrit word 'Satva', meaning truth. And, only truth is sustainable. Satvik believes that the way forward for a sustainable future is adoption of farming practices that are ecologically sustainable. Its focus is on traditional seeds and rainfed farming. It aims to mainstream ecologically sound farming practices.

Self motivated farmers, who as a conscious decision opted for organic farming in the mid 1990s came together and formed the Kachchh Sajivkheti Manch (KSM) in 2000. Its aim was to develop organic farming and promote organic practices. Initially, the activities were carried out with the support of progressive organic farmers, aware consumers and like minded organizations like Sahjeevan etc. Its activities since then have grown many fold. KSM registered itself as a society in 2007 under the name Satvik. Satvik has farmers, academics, activists and people from the corporate sector on its board.

Satvik's vision is to become the centre of excellence in ecological farming for arid and semi-arid areas (across the range) from farming to post harvest handling and marketing. It supports farming families in rainfed areas by providing information and market support. Horticulture under irrigated conditions is also promoted in some areas.

At one end of its spectrum of engagements Satvik has developed partnerships in more than 300 villages of Kutch with grassroots organizations whose objectives are in line with theirs and at the other end it engages with agri scientists and agri-universities. It has also created links with certifying agencies and industry to maximize its marketing reach. Presently Satvik is working in the Kutch district where 80 % of agriculture is rain fed. Satvik has established a mandatory quality control system that carries out internal approval for the organicness of produce. It organises regular Farmers' Training and Exposure, Training of Para Professionals and Training of Trainers.

Satvik provides support to Akhail Gujarat Sajivkheti Samaj to carry out policy initiatives.

It is actively involved in promoting the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) for organic certification in India. Satvik is planning to take up advocacy on technical and financial support required for small holder certification, especially in rainfed areas.

Results of experiments conducted by Satvik and experiences are regularly disseminated using varied media. In collaboration with Sarvani (Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sangathan's Media Cell), Satvik has developed 16 episodes of radio programmes named 'Sajiv No Saad'. The programme targets technology transfer in agriculture and animal husbandry, case studies of success stories, information of various government schemes etc. 'Sajiv No Saad' is now available on CDs in MP3 formats at a cost of Rs. 200/- for the entire set of six. To communicate various organic practices, it has developed educational material in the form of commentary based slide shows to improve communication. These materials are available on CDs in VCD formats at Rs. 30.

Besides these, Satvik has published printed material on various themes of organic farming. These are available at very reasonable rates: Rs. 10 to 30. (Organic products from Satvik are listed in the Green Shops Section of this book.) (Source: Communication with OIP)

VELAJIBHAI MULAIBHAI BHUDIA

Village Madhapar, Taluka Bhuj, District Kutch, Gujarat. Cell: 09426991112

A local farmer leader Velajibhai owns 100 acres, of which 70 acres are under orchard and 30 acres are under seasonal crops. Says Bhudia, "I experienced that chemical farming used too much of energy and water making agriculture very expensive." In 2001, he came across an organic farm that was using gaumutra and drip irrigation and started organic farming. He has installed drip irrigation in his 70 acre mango and amla orchard.

To control insect pests, he makes use of neem and akada leaves. In mango, to control sucking pests, the trees are fumigated 3 times at weekly intervals with dry cow dung and vavding.

He has his own processing unit and cold storage for making pulp and juice of mango and amla. This is marketed locally and in Mumbai. (D)

SHAILESH GOR

B-497, RTO Relocation site, At Bhuj - 370 001, District Kutch, Gujarat. Cell: 09374353853

Gor started organic farming in 2007. His 2 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, wheat, sorghum, green gram, mango, guava, chickoo, papaya, vegetables and fodder. (J)

SHIVAJI DAMJI SHAH

Abadasa Gaushala Trust, At Rapar Gadhwal Taluka Abadasa - 370 645, District Kutch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02831 273256, Cell: 09979523997.

Shah started organic farming in 2001. His 35 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows fodder for a gaushala with 300 animals. (J)

KHUSHALBHAI JIVRAJ BHEDA

At Bhujpur, Taluka Mundra - 370 405, District Kutch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02838 240021, Cell: 09726681601.

Bheda started organic farming in 1990. His 50 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, wheat, green gram, sesame, kesar mango, dates, coconut, chickoo, bijora and also fodder for 15 animals. (J)

PRADIP MAKWANA

Makwana Krishi Tirth, At Sinogra, Taluka Anjar - 370 110, District Kutch, Gujarat. Cell: 09427211285

Makwana started organic farming in 2001. His 110 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, wheat, green gram, castor, kesar mango, dates, coconut, chickoo, bijora, amla, lemon, custard apple, mulberry, vegetables and also fodder for 25 animals, mainly cows. (J)

L.D.SHAH

Jalaram Bag, At Bidada, Taluka Mandvi - 370 435, District Kutch, Gujarat. Ph.: 02834 244177.

Shah started organic farming in 1995. His 14 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows chickoo, dates, amla and processes delicious dry chickoo chips. (J)

NARSIBHAI KHETABHAI PATEL

At : Anandpura kampa, Post : Modasa, Taluka : Modasa, District : Sabarkantha – 383 315, Gujarat. Phone: 02774-240811, Cell: 09427698492

Narsibhai's farm is located on the outskirts of Anandpura Kampa village. He belongs to a farming family and is practicing organic farming for the past 2 years on his 3 acres farm. Previously he was using chemicals. He grows pumpkin, guava, cucumber, wheat, corn, green gram, soyabean, castor, fennel and cumin seeds.

'We realised that in chemical farming there is nothing that we can give to our children in the future. Also the good insects will die. Our health will improve with organic farming, apart from improvement in the soil,' is how he explains his decision to switch to organic farming.

He uses bullocks for farming, sprays organic pesticides, and uses pheromone traps, neem oil, cow urine, cow's milk and herbs to protect his farm from pests. There is not much that he sells in the market but whatever is surplus is sold locally for a good price.

The first year he changed to organic farming he found it a little difficult to learn the new techniques. There was also a loss of 30% which next year reduced to 10%. Now the quantity is as before. However, the produce from organic farming is sweet and tasty. Pests and disease have also reduced.

KANCHRABHAI HARIBHAI PATEL

At & Post Umedgadh, Taluka : Idar, District : Sabarkantha – 383 230.

Kanchrabhai's farm is 12 acres. He grows grain, corn, wheat, cotton, castor, jira, variyali, pulses, udad, moong, soyabean, ashwagandha, kasiyatu, jampal, pomegranate, chickoo, drumsticks, amla and lemon.

A chemical farmer, he started practising organic farming from June 2001. Kanchrabhai says that he changed due the harm caused by chemical farming and the information he read about its disadvantages from local newspapers.

He uses organic manure, castor oil cake and phosphate on his farm. He maintains 1 buffalo and 2 bullocks. He feels that till now he was using, eating and cultivating poison but now he wants to consume good food and also to give others healthy food. He says organic farming is difficult to practice as the farmers do not work on sharing basis, hence the expenses increase and the prices they get for their produce is also less.

In case of pest attack he uses ratan jyot, aloe vera, tobacco, neem seed extract, cow urine, butter milk and castor oil. (J)

RAJNIKANT K PATEL

Jeevan Jyot Society, At & Post : Modasa, Taluka: Modasa, District : Sabarkantha -383315, Gujarat. Ph: 02774-243638, Cell: 09428484728

Rajnikant's 3 acres farm is located at Kishorepura Bayal Modasa. He belongs to a farming family and has been practising farming since 1982. In 1995 he became an organic farmer. He grows corn, wheat, varyali, castor seeds, pulses, mustard, chana, jeera, isab gool etc.

He uses organic manure, herbicide, vermicompost, bone powder, castor seeds on his farm. Herbs and organic pesticides are used to protect the farm from pests. He is also trying seed management to keep pests away.

It took him 5 years to attain the regular output which he attributes to deficiency of nitrogen in the soil. He does not regret the switch away from chemicals because by farming organically one gets pure food to eat, the soil is preserved and no harm is caused to the environment. (J)

DHANJIBHAI SURMABHAI DAMOR

At Rudral (Sarvodaya Yuvak Niketan), P.O. Dhambolia, Taluka Bhiloda - 383 355, District Sabarkantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02771 283496.

Damor started organic farming in 2001. His 4.5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows maize, wheat, pigeon pea, green gram, black gram, castor, sesame and vegetables. (J)

HIRALAL RAMJIBHAI PATEL

At Krishnapura, P.O. Kalodra, Taluka Talod - 383 305, District Sabarkantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02770 233436, Cell: 09426508676.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. Today 80% of his 11 acre farm is organic. He grows wheat, castor, groundnut, sesame and potato. (J)

TALSHIBHAI JAYCHANDBHAI PATEL

At Samalapur, Taluka Idar - 383 430, District Sabarkantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02778 247205.

Patel started organic farming in 1999. His 13 acre farm is fully organic. He grows maize, wheat, sorghum, black gram, green gram, pigeon pea and groundnut. (J)

GOVINDBHAI BABABHAI PATEL

At Sonasan, Taluka Prantij - 383 210, District Sabarkantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02770 240504.

Patel started organic farming in 1999. His 14 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows maize, wheat, sorghum, kidney bean, green gram, pigeon pea, castor and vegetables. (J)

ISHWAR SINGH

Mistiote Farm, Parthampura, Savli Taluka, Vadodara District – 391 780, Gujarat. Phone: 02667 244544, Cell: 09426975060, 9726139470 Email: misriote@gmail.com

The 30-acre (approx) farm is located on the banks of the Mahisagar river, 30 kms. from Baroda on the NH-8 Ahmedabad highway. Singh grows mango (kesar, langda), jamun (Eujinia jambolana) lime, awla, sitaphal (custard apple), ginger, onions, vegetables, pulses, oil seeds for oil extraction, etc. He also produces organic processed food on a small scale. His main occupation however is dairying. He produces, packs and delivers over 100 litres of cows milk to 80 homes in Baroda daily. The cows are kept at the farm and fed a variety of fodder, i.e. oats, lucern and maize apart from other grasses. The farm being located in a picturesque setting, is also let out for group parties. This apart, two cottages attract stayover guests. The income from such activities supports the running of the farm.

He belongs to an agrarian family and has been doing organic farming for the past nine years. Earlier he had tried using chemical fertilisers a few times but then stopped immediately on realizing its futility. He uses bio-dynamic compost, farmyard compost, vermiculture, gobar-gas slurry, mulch as fertiliser for his farm. He practices techniques such as crop rotation, moon-sun-star cycle, mixed cropping, planned watering to improve the production.

He has fifteen cows, three calves, chickens and a tortoise on the farm. The produce is sold in the local market and also in Baroda, Anand, Ahmedabad fetching a good price.

He enjoys farming and feels that organic is the best way to live, but laments that a slightly better price for the produce would have really made his day.

(Source: Communication with OIP)

DINESHBHAI BABUBHAI PATEL

Mahadev Faliya, At & Po : Sokhda, District: Vadodara -391745, Gujarat. Phone-0265-2886175

Dineshbhai has a 15 acres farm. He cultivates amla, vegetables, drumsticks, brinjal, cucumber, karela, flowers, grains,

soyabean, wheat, etc.

He is practicing organic farming for the last 9 years. It took some time for the produce to stabilise. Initially the produce decreased by 50% but after that it increased gradually.

He maintains cattle.

He sells his entire surplus in the local market at regular market rates. He is not satisfied with the income that he gets from organic produce.

He feels that organic farming is difficult only because there are plenty of pests and disease, there is no market for the surplus produce so the returns are less than he expects to get. (J)

BADRIBHAI SOMABHAI PATEL

At: Dharampuri, P.O: Valavav, Taluka: Savli, District: Vadodara – 391 774, Gujarat.

Phone: 02667 235368

Badribhai has been involved in farming since 1980. He has two farms, one of 11.19 acres and the other of 5.22 acres located in Dharampuri village. Cotton, soyabean, cumin, red gram, maize, etc., are grown on the farm.

In 1980, when he started farming he was using chemical fertilisers and pesticides. But, within 5 years he realized the costs of chemicals were high and its use was not good for the land in the long run. So he started reading books on Indian farming and also did some experiments to find alternatives. It took about 7 to 8 years for him to change to organic farming but since 1990 the farm is fully organic.

Less tilling, more mulching and bio-control are some of the techniques that he practices. He has planted tulsi, akdo, marigold, neem, etc., on the borders of the farm and also uses cow urine, panchagavya, herbal extract, etc., to protect the farm from pests.

Farm products are sold in the local market.

SUDHIRBHAI BHANJIBHAI GALA

301, Shrinath Terrace, 7-Vrajwadi, Jetalpur Road, District Vadodara - 390 007, Gujarat. Ph.: 0265 2313714 (R), 2561758 (O), Cell: 09825754617.

Gala started organic farming in 1993. His 5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, paddy, wheat, mango, chickoo, custard apple and amla. (J)

MANUBHAI MOTIBHAI PATEL

At Aajod, P.O. Aajod, Taluka & District Vadodara - 391 740, Gujarat. Ph.: 0265 2886151, Cell: 09925037998.

Patel started organic farming on his 2.5 acre farm in 2000. He grows pearl millet, wheat and vegetables. (J)

KANUBHAI KALIDAS PATEL

‘Jabak’, At Lamdapura, P.O. Lamdapura, Taluka Savli - 391 775, District Vadodara, Gujarat. Ph.: 02667 290547, Cell: 09725922605.

Patel started organic farming on his 1 acre farm in 2000. He grows wheat, horse gram, soybean, vegetables, cotton and mustard. (J)

ANUJBHAI N. PATEL

703, Sainath Heights, Near ISKCON Temple, Gotri Road, District Vadodara - 390 021, Gujarat. Ph.: 0265 2351628.

Patel started organic farming on his 54-acre farm in 2000. He grows wheat, pigeon pea, ground nut, vegetables and spices. (J)

YOGINI-SMITA HARISH

Patel Faliyu, At Koniya, Via Sadhli, P.O. Ranapur, Taluka Karjan - 391 250, District Vadodara, Gujarat. Ph.: 02666 261411 (R).

Yogini and Smita started organic farming in 2003. On their 5 acre farm they grow wheat, sorghum, green gram, math, pigeon pea, black gram, castor and cotton. (J)

KIRITBHAI SHAMBHUBHAI PATEL

1, Dwarika Soc., Near Narmada Guest House, Race Course - 390 007, District Vadodara, Gujarat. Cell: 09426074885.

Patel started organic farming in 1997. His 7 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows wheat, pigeon pea, green gram, amla, guava and vegetables. (J)

KIRITKUMAR NATWARBHAI PATEL

Kumbharwada Lane, Near Dairy, At Mobhagam, Taluka Padra - 391 430, District Vadodara, Gujarat. Ph.: 02662 242418, Cell: 09904075208.

Patel started organic farming in 2003. On his 60 acre farm he grows wheat, green gram, pigeon pea, black gram, horse gram, math, castor, sesame and cotton. (J)

NIRMALABEN MAHESHBHAI PATEL

Patel Farm, At Dharmपुरi, Taluka Dabhoi, District Vadodara, Gujarat. Cell: 09327905690.

Patel started organic farming in 1992. His 4 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows paddy, green gram, mango, chickoo, coconut, guava and vegetables. (J)

MEHULBHAI PANCHAL

318, Swaminarayan Nagar, Chhani Road, Nizampura - 390 002, District Vadodara, Gujarat. Ph.: 02663 290409, Cell: 09825326548.

Panchal started organic farming in 2003. His 7 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows fruits and vegetables. (J)

RAJESHBHAI ZAVERI

401, Payal Tower, Sayajigunj, District Vadodara - 390 005, Gujarat. Ph.: 0265 2226201, Cell: 09825040326.

Zaveri started organic farming in 2001. His 155 acre farm is fully organic. He grows paddy, wheat, green gram, black gram, horse gram, sesame, mango, chickoo, vegetables and sugarcane. Teak wood is cultivated on part of the farm. (J)

L.N. SHAH

Samiyala-Padra Road, Bh. Gujarati School, Taluka & District Vadodara, Gujarat. Cell: 09924483578.

Shah started organic farming in 2002. He grows mango, chickoo, gauva, coconut and vegetables on his 5 acres farm. (J)

DR. VIKRAMBHAI PATEL

Muni Sewa Ashram, At & P.O. Goraj, Taluka Waghodia, District Vadodara, Gujarat. Ph.: 02668 268064, 268010.

The Muni Seva Ashram farm's 900 acres are fully organic. Paddy, wheat, mango, lemon, vegetables and sugarcane are cultivated. (J)

ARUN P. SHETH

Darshan Farm, At : Chekla Rani, Post : Dolarana Vasna, District: Gandhi Nagar, Via :Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Phone: 079-23945553, 23945894, 26926231, 26400252 (Chiragbhai). Email:cpparekh@yahoo.co.in

Sheth's family-owned farm admeasures 44 hectares. He has been doing agriculture since 1960. As a USA-trained chemical engineer he followed modern farming practices for 30 years and used plenty of chemical fertiliser. However, he changed over to organic farming practices in 1992 and stopped buying chemical fertiliser. He has five men working full time on his farm.

The sandy loam soil has a pH of about 7.9. In this area, the average rainfall is 500 to 750 mm spread over mid-June to the end of September.

Sheth owns a tractor, a cultivator and a drill. These mechanised implements are employed in the cereal as well as the horticulture area.

Sheth does not own any livestock. However, the employees have cows and buffaloes. He grows a variety of elephant grass, which he gives free of cost to the employees as fodder for their cattle. In return, the employees give Sheth the animal dung, which he uses for producing vermicastings.

On 44 hectares he grows several fruit trees, like jujube, guava, lemon, Amla, mango, Oranges and coconut. Sheth has grown sun hemp to be used as green manure. Each variety is grown on separate plots of two to five hectares. Only mango and coconut are mixed, the reason being that if coconut, which is not native to the area, does not grow well, then he has at least the mango trees.

According to Sheth, the best way to get healthy crops and plants is to observe them carefully. At least once every week, he takes a round of his field to personally check each and every tree. When the plantation was young and he was practising modern farming, the mortality of his young saplings was around 60 per cent due to gamophyte and wild monkey invasion. Since he switched over to organic farming, the mortality has declined to five percent, which is mostly caused by monkey attacks.

Extract of neem, garlic and chili as well as cow urine are used as biocontrollers. They are all produced on the farm. To produce neem extract, neem leaf paste is soaked in water for 24 hours. These extracts are diluted with water in 1:100 ratio.

The garlic-chili extract is obtained by keeping equal quantities garlic and chili paste in kerosene for 24 hours. Fresh cow urine is used directly and does not need any special preparation. Cow urine is used as treatment only against different fungi and the garlic-chili extract against fruit flies.

Neem extract is used as a preventive treatment against sucking and biting pests. From the flowering season to the fruiting season, the trees are sprayed every 15 days with neem extract.

No special weed management plan is followed. Weeds and grass are cut once after monsoon with hand sickles and they are used as mulch. They cut and mulch the weeds around the trees twice a year. On the arable land, the weeding process is done by harrowing. The irrigation of the plantation in winter and summer is by porous pipe system, where porous pipe is laid under ground from which water circulates. It saves power and work. Thanks to the mulch cover, the evaporation rate is minimal. In addition to the mulch, 20 tonnes of vermicasting are applied on the 28 hectares of plantation area. Two kilos of neem and castor cake to each tree are used once in a year.

In 1960 the ground water level was about 21 metres below the surface. But poor rains and drawing out of ground water has led it to drop to 120 meters. To raise the ground water level, Sheth harvests the rainwater and diverts it to an open well.

In the arable land the irrigation is done by the flood system, while a drip irrigation system is installed in the cotton growing area.

Sheth purchased 500 Australian earthworms to start vermiculture. Now he has now his own vermicast production. In the winter and summer, he produces vermicasting in the open. But in the monsoon season, the motherbed is installed in the cowshed. From 80 tonnes of cow dung, he realises around 30 tonnes of vermicasts. He sells one third of the quantity of vermicasts while two thirds is used on the farm.

At harvest time, Sheth sells fruits through contracts for plucking on an individual tree basis. Normally he gets between Rs 37,000 to 52,000 per hectare. As the expenses are around Rs 10,000 per hectare, his profit is, at least, Rs 35,000 per hectare. If he followed chemical farming, he estimates that his expenses would be at least double for the same yield.

(Source: Jatan and Chiragbahi)

RAJENDRASINH ANDUSINH RATHOD

Parishram Farm, At Pimplaj, P.O. Pethapur, Taluka & District Gandhinagar - 382 610, Gujarat. Ph.: 079 23278263, Cell: 09426502197.

Rathod is an organic farmer. Of his 12 acre farm, 45% is organic. He grows wheat, paddy and amla. (J)

KRUSHI VIGYAN KENDRA

Gujarat Vidyapith, Randheja, P.O. & District Gandhinagar - 382 620, Gujarat. Ph.: 079 23232951 (R), 23975223 (O). Contact: Anilbhai

Krusha Vigyan Kendra is practicing organic farming since 1996. Half the 65 acre farm is now organic. They grow wheat, paddy, castor, chickoo, lemon, amla, custard apple and cotton. (J)

JAYANTIBHAI P. PATEL

Bahucharpura, At Ridrol, Via Lodra, P.O. Ridrol, Taluka Mansa - 382 835, District Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Ph.: 02663 273189.

Patel started organic farming in 2004. On his 5 acre farm he grows sorghum, castor, sesame, cotton and vegetable. (J)

POPATBHAI NANJIBHAI VAGHANI

Near old Kumarsala, At & Po: Pipardi, Taluka : Shihor, District: Bhavnagar -364230, Gujarat. Phone-02846-282269, M: 09426565837

Popatbhai's approximate 10 acre farm is located in Pipardi village. He is practising farming for the past 26 years. He inherited the farmland from his ancestors. He grows til, groundnut, bajra, moong, moth, udad, jawar, wheat, chili, bringal, onion, ajwain, varyali, dhaniya, jeera, etc.

Popatbhai is practicing organic farming since 1999. Earlier he used chemicals even though he found them very expensive. He found the soil getting degraded with chemical farming and he felt that he was eating poison that is when he switched to organic farming.

The inputs used on his farm are dung manure, mulch and vermicompost. These organic inputs help to make the soil soft. He maintains 3 cows and 3 bullocks. He uses all the waste from the fields as well as cow urine, cow dung, aloe-vera, neem leaves, etc., to prepare compost. He finds it difficult to grow cotton, bajra and wheat.

He protects his farm through traditional techniques. He uses buttermilk, lemon, aloe-vera, ankdo, cow urine, vermiwash and also gives wash of thor-milk to the seed while sowing.

He sells all the surplus produce to Jatan. Popatbhai says, to change to organic farming one needs to plan it properly

only then can s/he be assured of a good yield. For instance, if raw material is bought collectively it can bring down the costs significantly. (J)

PANCHAKUTI ORGANIC FARM - MAHENDRABHAI LALLUBHAI PATEL

Panchkuti Bio Organic Farm, Dehgam, N. H. No.8, Ranchhodpura, Near Dabhan Taluka Nadiad, District Kheda, Gujarat. Ph.: 0268 2560901, Cell: 09429032611.

Patel started organic farming in 2003. His 17 acre fully organic farm grows pearl millet, paddy, wheat, coconut, chickoo, custard apple, mango, falsa and vegetables. (J)

VIJAYSINH POPATSINH MAHIDA

At Kamla, Taluka Nadiad - 387 020, District Kheda, Gujarat. Ph.: 0268 2568958, Cell: 09998461556.

Mahida started organic farming in 2001. At the moment only half his 5 acre farm is organic. He grows fruits. (J)

PURVI VINOD VYAS

Vasudhani Wadi, Near Rohit Vas, Opp. Manav Pariwar, Matar, Taluka Matar, District Kheda, Gujarat. Ph.: 02694 291582, Cell: 09979358103.

Vyas started organic farming in 1997. His 5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows mango, chickoo, coconut, amla and custard apple. (J)

HARESHKUMAR KANAKRAI TRIVEDI

At Malataj, Taluka Mahemdabad, District Kheda, Gujarat. Ph.: 02694 76818.

Trivedi started organic farming in 2006 on his 26 acre farm. Fully organic today, he grows wheat, soyabean, vegetables and cotton. (J)

MAYANKBHAI MOHANBHAI SHAH

Mahudiapara, At Mahij, Taluka & District Kheda - 380 028, Gujarat. Cell: 09426525427.

Shah started organic farming in 2002. On his 4 acre farm he grows pearl millet, paddy, wheat, pigeon pea, sugarcane, mango, papaya and vegetables. (J)

BHALANI AMBAVIBHAI JAIRAMBHAI

Nava Talot, At Sondarda, Post Kevadra, Taluka Keshod, District Junagadh -362 227, Gujarat. Ph.: 02871 234449

Bhalani has a 6 acre farm. Herbs are grown on the border of his farm. On half an acre, he does mixed farming, on the rest, sitaphal and amla are cultivated. His farm is bordered with herbal plants.

He worked for Lok Bharti at Sanosara, Bhavnagar, a well known Gandhian educational institute. He was one of the researchers on a well known wheat variety: LOK-1. On retirement, he took to farming. His research into further improvement of wheat varieties continues.

He uses cow urine, vermicompost and natural pesticides such as neem, akdo, neem oil and kidamari. He prepares his own compost in a large open pit under a tree into which all the food waste, cow dung, cow urine etc. are dumped. The on farm generated organic manure is adequate for the farm.

Labour remains a problem because of the close vicinity of his farm to the industrial area. His produce is in great demand for its premium quality. (J)

SHREE GAURAKSHA PANJRAPOLE

Visavadar - 362 130, District Junagadh, Gujarat. Ph.: 02873 222144.

The Shree Gauraksha Panjrapole grows organic wheat, maize and rajko on its 32 acre farm. (J)

KIRAN J. SHETH

At Delwada, P.O. Delwada, Taluka Una - 362 510, District Junagadh, Gujarat. Ph.: 02875 252512, Cell: 09824283228, Email: skk21@sancharnet.in.

Only half of Sheth's 2 acre farm is organic. He grows wheat, maize, groundnut, sesame and mustard. (J)

KARSANBHAI NATHABHAI KARMATA

Sharda Soc., Near Gigabhai Sentringwala, At Veraval - 362 266, District Junagadh, Gujarat. Ph.: 02876 244288, Cell: 09427229603, 09426850957.

Karmata is an organic farmer. His 26 acre farm is fully organic. He grows wheat, pearl millet, groundnut, chickoo, mango, custard apple and vegetables. (J)

DHIRUBHAI GOVINDBHAI ZANKAR

At Delwada, P.O. Delwada, Taluka Una - 362 510, District Junagadh, Gujarat.

Zankar started organic farming in 2001. His 6 acre farm is 100% organic. (Source: Jatan)

KANTIBHAI RAMJIBHAI TAMALIA

At post. Surendranagar, Taluka Wadhawan, District Surendranagar – 363 001, Gujarat. Ph.:02752 230583, Cell: 09426373919

Kantibhai Ramjibhai Tamalia comes from a farming background and is practising farming for 13 years. On his 11 acre farm located at Khodu village he grows cotton, wheat, bajri, vegetables, etc.

He switched from chemical farming to organic practices seven years ago. The move has been rewarding to the land and has brought him personal peace.

He keeps cows and sells the surplus milk to relatives and friends. The dung is used for preparing compost. Farm pests are dealt with using 'gau-mutra', neem oil, pheromone traps and aromatic insect repellent plants.

He finds it difficult to practice organic farming because he cannot get good seeds. Further, there is no good price for organically grown food and people don't appreciate the farmer's effort. Still he does not regret his decision and is satisfied with the output of his farm.

(Source: Communication with OIP)

AJITSINGH JATUBHA ZALA

Undi Sheri, Nr. Kanyashala, At Limdi, Taluka Chuda, District Surendranagar – 363 421, Gujarat. Cell: 09328726979

Ajitsingh has a six acre farm. Five years ago he switched to organic farming after having farmed with synthetic inputs for five years as he was facing water shortage due to scarce rain. He grows til, bajra and cotton on his farm.

According to Ajitsingh, deep filling of sand and sowing at the correct time gives good results in organic farming. There are no pests on his farm and in case of necessity he uses neem seeds to deal with them. The surplus organic produce is sold to Botad Market Yard. The Government sometimes helps them to get good prices for their produce.

He did not take time to convert to traditional organic farming from chemical farming but he did find that the production reduced. Still, he is happy with his decision as organic farming does not harm the soil, reduces labour and the produce is healthy. Due to less production his neighbour farmers do not want to opt for organic farming, but they appreciate his work. (Source: Information Sheet)

GAURIBEN-SAMATBHAI JADA

At Dharei, Po Dharei, Taluka Chotila, District Surendranagar - 363 520, Gujarat. Cell: 09979976218

This is a couple practicing organic farming with very high level of commitment and vision since 2003. Both work on their farm for not less than 12 hours a day. Their farming is divided over 3 major pieces of land, totalling to 19 acres.

They grow cotton, ground nut, cumin, wheat, til, gram, mung. They also spare time for promotional activities. A couple of years ago they grew 13 varieties of non-Bt cotton to look for an alternative to Bt cotton. Finally they made a selection of two varieties to be grown over a large area. These varieties yielded more than the adjoining Bt cotton plots of their neighbour farmers.

The couple is very down to earth and lives a very simple hard working life. People like them are the real wealth of the organic movement of Gujarat. They have four children. (J)

ALKUBHAI DADABHAI KHACHAR

At Ninama, Via Sudamadi, Taluka Sayla - 363 440, District Surendranagar, Gujarat. Cell: 09925735110.

Khachar started organic farming in 2000. On his 22 acre farm he grows pearl millet, sorghum, green gram, sesame, castor, cumin, mustard and cotton. (J)

PATHUBHAI GANDUBHAI RATHOD

At Thoriyali, Taluka Sayla - 363 430, District Surendranagar, Gujarat. Ph.: 02755 295210, Cell: 09825621041.

Rathod is an organic farmer. On his 62 acre farm he grows pearl millet, sorghum, wheat, green gram, methi, sesame, groundnut, cumin and cotton. (J)

BHUPATBHAI BHAGABHAI KOLI

At Korda, Taluka Chuda - 363 410, District Surendranagar.

Koli started organic farming in 2001. On his 5 acre farm he grows pearl millet, sorghum, wheat, green gram, math, gram, sesame, cumin and cotton. (J)

SANGRAMBHAI RANHHODBHAI KOLI

At Korda, Taluka Chuda - 363 410, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Koli started organic farming in 2001. He grows pearl millet, wheat green gram, math, gram, sesame, groundnut, cumin and cotton on his 4 acre farm. (J)

GAGJIBHAI ZAVERBHAI LIMBADIA

At Korda, Taluka Chuda – 363 410, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Limbadia started organic farming in 2001. His 5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, sorghum, wheat, green gram, sesame, cumin and cotton. (J)

MANUBHAI KARSHANBHAI RABARI

At Korda, Taluka Chuda - 363 410, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Rabari started organic farming in 2001. His 2.5 acre farm is fully organic. He grows pearl millet, gram, sesame, cumin, cotton and chili. (J)

ITESHKUMAR RAVJIBHAI LAKUM

At Chuda, P.O. & Taluka Chuda - 363 410, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Lakum started organic farming in 2001. His 3 acre farm grows pearl millet, green gram, sesame, cumin, cotton and chili. (J)

HEMUBHAI BHANUBHAI DODIA

At Chuda, P.O. & Taluka Chuda - 363 410, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Dodia started organic farming in 2001. His 6 acre farm is totally organic. He grows pearl millet, wheat, green gram, sesame, cumin, cotton and chili. (J)

VINUBHAI NARAYANBHAI PATEL

Old Morvad, Taluka Chuda - 363 410, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. His 8 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, sorghum, wheat, green gram, gram, sesame, cumin, cotton and chili. (J)

GATORBHAI NANJIBHAI PATEL

Old Morvad, Taluka Chuda - 363 410, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. His 23 acre farm grows pearl millet, sorghum, wheat, green gram, math, gram, sesame, cumin and cotton. (J)

JAGATBHAI BHAVANSANG KATHIA

At Ramdevgad, Taluka Chuda, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Kathia started organic farming in 2001. He grows pearl millet, wheat, green gram, gram, sesame, cumin, cotton and chili on his 3 acre plot. (J)

BHAVANSANG AMARSANG KATHIA

At Ramdevgad, Taluka Chuda, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Kathia started organic farming in 1999. His 7 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, wheat, green gram, gram, sesame, cumin, cotton and chili. (J)

NATHUBHAI JETHABHAI PATEL

At Ramdevgad, Taluka Chuda, District Surendranagar, Gujarat.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. His 7 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, wheat, green gram, gram, sesame, cumin, cotton and chili. (J)

NARENDRABHAI RAVJIBHAI LAKUM

At Sayla, P.O. Sayla, Taluka Sayla, District Surendranagar, Gujarat. Cell: 09426233084, 09898738836.

Lakum started organic farming in 2001. His 12 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows pearl millet, wheat, green gram, sesame, papaya, cumin, cotton, vegetables and onion. (J)

CHINUBHAI KETSIBHAI PATEL

Parishram Garden & Nursery, Opp. Market Yard, Dhangadhra Road, At Halvad, P.O. & Taluka Halvad - 363 330, District Surendranagar, Gujarat. Ph.: 02758 272153, Cell: 09825224214.

Patel is an organic farmer. His 60 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows amla, ber and drumstick. (J)

SARDAR PATEL FARM

At Post Kathawada, Dist: Ahmedabad.

Contact: Chirag Patel, Cell: 09825293304, Email: cgpatel_13@yahoo.co.in E-mail:cgpatel_13@yahoo.co.in

The Sardar Patel Farm, admeasuring 125 acres is located on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. The entire farm is certified by Control Union (Netherlands). Shri. Patel has this to say regarding the farm:

‘We have been practicing organic farming supported by the biodynamic framework, in an effort to be an intrinsic link in Healthy Chain-> Healthy Soil -> Healthy Crops -> Healthy Food -> Healthy Life. We are committed to restore the natural relationship between the environment and living things, i.e., promote biodiversity to live and let live.

‘Biodynamic practices harness life giving cosmic forces and use the rythmic movements of the Sun, Moon and Earth as guidelines to plan the schedule for farming procedures. We follow the biodynamic calendar and use biodynamic preparations. This has resulted in very good improvement of soil structure, crop health and crop quality. We not only want to practice this to restore the last deteriorating environment and lack luster food, but we also want to make our farm a model to inspire all to respect mother nature. All interested in knowing more and gaining from our experience are welcome to visit the farm and learn how to create heaven on earth.

‘We retail our products under the brand name “ECOVITALS.” This has enabled us to access customers directly and also gives us the freedom to determine the price of our products. Our commitment to providing quality products has led us to install in-house cleaning, grading, sorting machines and Nitrogen flush packaging facilities. Beaten rice, puffed rice and spray dried fruit powders of our organically grown fruits (amla, chikoo, lemon) are some of our most popular products.

‘In our effort to make available good food to all, we inspire other farmers to grow the same. We procure organic certified produce from small farmers at source, providing a better price than current market rates. We have built up a good customer base in the city. Reliance Mart and More Mega Mart (Aditya Birla Group) are some of our better known clients. We have two loading rickshaws transporting our produce (including fresh and exotic vegetables) to the city twice a week. Slowly our market base is extending to other cities of India.

‘A plant nursery is part of our many activities. Our gardens are home to numerous plants from across the world, thriving and showing one and all that it is possible to create a paradise around you if you desire it.’ (J)

KAMLESH MAYURBHAI PATEL (AKSHARGRAM)

‘Saurabh’ Punam Palace, Bh. Hotel, City Gold Theater lane, Ashram Road, Navrangpura - 380 009, District Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Ph.: 079 55611521 (R), 55219806 (O), Cell: 09898463378.

Patel started organic farming in 2003. His 20 acre farm is fully organic. He grows paddy, wheat, maize, pearl millet, green gram, horse gram, pigeon pea, sesame, castor, mango, chickoo, banana, custard apple, vegetable and fennel. (J)

JAYANTBHAI SOMABHAI PATEL

C. Somabhai & Co., 1st Floor, “Akashganga”, Gujarat College Road 380 006, District Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Ph.: 079 26564508 (R), 26466815 (R), 26469694 (O), Cell: 09898597713, Email: jspsoma@yahoo.com.

Patel is an organic farmer. His 2 acre farm is wholly organic. He grows wheat, maize, pearl millet, green gram, kidney bean and vegetables. (J)

PARESHBHAI JAMNADAS PANDYA

7, Gayatri Soc., Jawahar Chawk, Maninagar, Ahmedabad - 380 008, District Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Ph.: 079 25450094 (O), Cell: 09426023151.

Pandya started organic farming in 2005. His 13 acre farm is fully organic. He grows sesame, castor, amla, lemon, mosambi, vegetables and fodder. (J)

PARUL-NIMISH ZAVERI

Kanineeka Foundation, Amrit-Leela Bungalow, Opp. Nagori Hospital & Chambers Hotel, Near Gujarat College, District Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Ph.: 079 26420622, 65249799 (O), 26608245 (R), Email: abhikram@abhikram.com.

Zaveri is an organic farmer. His 8 acre farm is wholly organic. He grows paddy, wheat, pearl millet, green gram, horse gram, amla, chickoo, guava, barley, spices and vegetables.

Products: From amla to puffed rice, flattened rice flakes and herbal products. (J)

SONAJI MAVJIBHAI CHAUHAN

At Diyodar P.O. & Taluka Diyodar - 385 330, District Banaskantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02735 244785, Cell: 09426320340. Chauhan started organic farming in 1998. His 30 acre farm is fully organic. He grows wheat, sorghum, pearl millet, green gram, kidney bean, math, sesame, castor, fennel, cotton and fodder. (J)

AMRUTBHAI DALABHAI TATOSANIA

At Kumbhalmer, Via Chandisar, Taluka Palanpur - 385 510, District Banaskantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02742 283510. Tatosania started organic farming on his 3.5 acre farm in 2002. Today he is fully organic. (J)

MEGHARAJBHAI KAMRAJBHAI PATEL

At Kabirpura, P.O. Sisrana, Taluka Vadgam - 385 421, District Banaskantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02739 288030, 297308. Cell: 09426349350.

Patel is an organic farmer. His 25 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows wheat, pearl millet, castor, groundnut, mustard and vegetables. (J)

LAXMANBHAI BHIKHABHAI CHAUHAN

At Aladar, P.O. Chaga, Taluka Bhajir - 385 320, District Banaskantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02735 227032, Cell: 09824042383.

Chauhan is an organic farmer. Only half his 14 acre farm is organic. He grows pearl millet, green gram, math, sesame, mustard, castor, lemon, ber, mango, amla and cotton. (J)

JABBARSINH LAKHJI VAGHELA

At Valam, P.O. Valam, Taluka Diyodar - 385 330, District Banaskantha, Gujarat. Ph.: 02735 263374, Cell: 09879780532.

Vaghela is an organic farmer. His 20 acre farm is 50% organic. He grows wheat, pearl millet green gram, math, sesame, mustard, castor, fennel and cotton. (J)

SHREE SAMI GAUSHALA SEWA MANDAL

At Sami, P.O. & Taluka Sami - 384 245, District Patan, Gujarat. Ph.: 02733 244384, Cell: 09925480338.

Shree Sami Gaushala Sewa Mandal's 16 acre farm is 100% organic and grow sorghum, gram sesame, castor and cotton. (J)

SHREE ANUPAM PRIMARY GIRLS' SCHOOL

At Sami, P.O. & Taluka Sami - 384 245, District Patan, Gujarat. Ph.: 02733 244038, Cell: 09925480338.

Shree Anupam Primary Girls' School is maintaining a fully organic farm since 2002. (J)

LABHSHANKAR GIRJASHANKAR RAJGOR

At Sami, P.O. & Taluka Sami - 384 245, District Patan, Gujarat. Ph.: 02733 384245, Cell: 09925480338.

Rajgor's 40 acre farm is completely organic. He grows sorghum, wheat, sesame, castor and cotton. (J)

RAMULAL CHIMANLAL PATEL

Sarvodya Ashram-Madhi, Gramodyog Wadi, At Vijapur, P.O. & Taluka Vijapur - 382 870, District Mahesana, Gujarat. Ph.: 02763 220104.

Patel started organic farming in 1998. He grows wheat, pearl millet, castor and mustard on his 6 acre fully organic farm. (J)

PRADYUMANSINH AJITSINH ATODARIA

Nisarg Farm, At Moti Bhamti, P.O. Moti Bhamti, Taluka Vansda - 396 580, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02630 222542 (R), 222257 (O), Cell: 09427054494.

Atodaria started organic farming in 1992 and has succeeded in converting 75% of his 25 acre farm. He grows mango, custard apple, sag and katho. (J)

SUDHABEN HARSHADBHAI PATEL

Moti Baug, Near Sarana Bridge, At Gandevi, P.O. Taluka Gandevi - 396 360, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 262458.

Sudhaben started organic farming in 1987. She has a 7 acre farm on which paddy, maize, green gram, gram, chickoo and coconut are cultivated. (J)

ADIVASI SANSKAR MANDAL

Gandevi, Ajarai, Taluka Gandevi - 396 364, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 262353 (O), 272531 (R), 2623515.

Contact: Bhagubhai Darji

Adivasi Sanskar Mandal started organic farming in 1990. On their 5 acre farm, they grow wheat, paddy, pulses, mango, chickoo and vegetables. (J)

K.C. MASHRUWALA

Aliporia Wadi, Somnath Road, Bilimora, Taluka Gandevi - 396 321, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 284320 (R), 262400 (O), Cell: 09824125776.

Mashruwala started organic farming in 2000. His 14 acre farm is fully organic. He grows mango, chickoo, amla and aloe vera.

KARSHANBHAI RAMBHAI PATEL

At Manekpur, P.O. Gadat, Taluka Gandevi - 396 350, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 266804.

Patel started organic farming in 2004. On his 10 acre farm he grows mango and chickoo. (J)

THAKORBHAI JEEVANJI NAYAK

Tak Faliyu, At Gandevi, P.O. & Taluka Gandevi - 396 360, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 262785.

Nayak started organic farming in 2003. His one acre farm grows organic chickoo. (J)

VIJAYKUMAR JASHWANTRAY DESAI

Opp. Post office, Parsi wad, At Gandevi, P.O. & Taluka Gandevi 396 360, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 262234, Cell: 09913639380.

Desai started organic farming in 2002. Only half of his 5 acre farm is organic. He grows mango and chickoo. (J)

RAJESHKUMAR DHIRUBHAI DESAI

Kapa Talav, Vachlu Faliyu, At Amalsad, P.O. Amalsad, Taluka Gandevi - 396 310, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 272135 (R), 272779 (O), Cell: 09427340818.

Desai is an organic farmer. He grows mango and chickoo on 2.6 acres. (J)

MAHESHBHAI BHANABHAI PATEL

At Nava Talav, P.O. Khadsuya, Taluka Navsari - 396 433, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02637 225636.

Patel started organic farming in 2004. Only half of his 2 acre farm is organic. He grows mango and vegetables. (J)

RAKESHBHAI HARISHBHAI PATEL

At Nava Talav, P.O. Khadsuya, Taluka & District Navsari - 396 433, Gujarat. Ph.: 02637 225926, Cell: 09824941910.

Patel started organic farming in 2004. Only half of his 4 acre farm is organic. He grows mango, chickoo and sugarcane. (J)

BHAVESHKUMAR BALUBHAI PATEL

At Nava Talav, P.O. Khadsuya, Taluka & District Navsari - 396 433, Gujarat. Ph.: 02637 225341, Cell: 09824159378.

Patel started organic farming in 2003. His 2 acre farm is fully organic. He grows mango, chickoo and flowers. (J)

GHANDHIGAR

At Kachholi, Taluka Gandevi - 396 370, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 270759 (R), 272259 (O).

Ghandigar started organic farming in 1990. The 30 acre farm grows mango, chickoo and fodder. (J)

MONGHABHAI BHIKHUBHAI NAYAK

At Vegam, Taluka Gandevi - 396 350, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 266315.

Nayak started organic farming in 2001. His 6 acre farm grows mango and chickoo. (J)

MAGANBHAI RANHHODJI PATEL

At Kalvach, P.O. Kalvach, Taluka Gandevi - 396 409, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 262524.

Patel started organic farming in 1993. He grows mangoes on his 5 acre farm. (J)

GOVALJI KHANDUBHAI

At Kalvach, P.O. Kalvach, Taluka Gandevi - 396 409, District Navsari, Gujarat.

Khandubhai started organic farming in 1995. On his 5 acre farm he grows organic mango and chickoo. (J)

DAHYABHAI KHANDUBHAI PATEL

At Kalvach, P.O. Kalvach, Taluka Gandevi - 396 409, District Navsari, Gujarat.

Patel started organic farming in 1996. His 5 acre farm is fully organic. He grows mango and chickoo. (J)

CHHOTUBHAI RANCHHODJI PATEL

At Kalvach, P.O. Kalvach, Taluka Gandevi - 396 409, District Navsari, Gujarat.

Patel started organic farming in 1993. His 5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows mango and chickoo. (J)

GANGABEN PATEL

At Kalvach, P.O. Kalvach, Taluka Gandevi - 396 409, District Navsari, Gujarat.

Patel started organic farming in 2000. He grows mangoes on his 5 acre farm. (J)

KARSHANJI KALIDAS PATEL

Above Bank of Baroda, Gouharbaug, At Bilimora, P.O. Bilimora, Taluka Gandevi - 396 329, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 284056.

Patel started organic farming in 2001. He grows mangoes on his 1.5 acre farm. (J)

MAHENDRAKUMAR DHIRUBHAI NAYAK

At Samrawadi, P.O. Gandevi, Taluka Gandevi - 396 360, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 263547.

Nayak started organic farming in 1990. He grows mango and chickoo on his 5 acre plot. (J)

HITESHKUMAR DHIRUBHAI PATEL

At Panaj, Via Khergam, P.O. Panaj, Taluka Chikli - 396 040, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 220782.

Patel started organic farming in 1999. He grows mangoes on his 20 acre farm. (J)

KIRANBHAI KHANDUBHAI NAYAK

At Siripurad, Via Amalsad, P.O. Lunawada, Taluka Gandevi - 396 310, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 272202.

Nayak started organic farming in 2003. His 1.5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows mango and chickoo. (J)

RAMESHBHAI DHIRUBHAI NAYAK

At Khakhwada, Via Gadat, P.O. Khakhwada, Taluka Gandevi - 396 350, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 266865, Cell: 09376666865.

Nayak is an organic farmer. His 10 acre farm is fully organic. He grows paddy, mango, chickoo, sugarcane, vegetables and flowers. (J)

ROHITKUMAR MEHTA

Laljibhavan, Desai Faliyu, Vasna, Taluka Gandevi, District Navsari, Gujarat. Ph.: 02634 272204 (O), 02637 272088 (R), Cell: 09898877428.

Mehta started organic farming in 1999. His 10 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows mango, chickoo, onion and aloe vera. (J)

HEMRAJBHAI JERAMBHAI VEGAD

At Vadla, Taluka Upleta - 360 490, District Rajkot, Gujarat.

Vegad started organic farming in 1998. On his 4.5 acre farm he grows pearl millet, kidney bean, pigeon pea, adad and black sesame. (J)

ARJANBHAI LIMBABHAI RAMANI

Gayatri Nagar, At Atkot - 360 040, District Rajkot, Gujarat. Ph.: 02821 288759, Cell: 09426961132.

Ramani started organic farming in 2003. His 18 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows castor. (J)

VELJIBHAI DESAI

92-Samarth Tower, Akshar Marg, Taluka & District Rajkot - 360 001, Gujarat. Ph.: 0281 2431086 (R) 2480166 (O), Cell: 09227606570, Fax: 2467552, Email: energy@tinytechindia.com.

Desai started organic farming in 1995. His 16 acre farm is fully organic and grows wheat, horse gram, groundnut and mango. (J)

SHITAL LOPA

Jasani T. B. Hospital, At Kothariya, Taluka & District Rajkot - 360 002, Gujarat. Ph.: 0281 2479406, Cell: 09428201884.

Lopa is an organic farmer. His 2.5 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows lemon, custard apple, amla, guava, vegetables and fodder. (J)

MANSUKHBHAI SUVAGIA

Jal Kranti Trust, 15, Anmol Apartment, 3-Vania Wadi, District Rajkot - 360 002, Gujarat. Ph.: 0281 2373995, Cell: 09426251301

Mansukhbai Suvagia is an ardent campaigner for the promotion of Gir cows. (J)

VALLABHBHAI N. BUTANI

At Sonvadia, Taluka Jamjodhpur, District Jamnagar, Gujarat. Ph.: 02898 272272.

Bhutani started organic farming in 2002. 50% of his 5 acre farm is organic. He grows wheat and vegetables. (J)

KARAMSINH CHHAGANBHAI JAVIA

At Sonvadia, Taluka Jamjodhpur, District Jamnagar, Gujarat. Ph.: 02898 272272.

Javia started organic farming in 1994. He grows groundnut on his 4 acre plot. (J)

VALLABHDAS M. PANCHANI

Khedut Hat, Main Bazar, At Dhasa Junction, P.O. Dhasa - 364 740, District Bhavnagar, Gujarat. Ph.: 02847 233195, Cell: 09426233945.

Panchani started organic farming in 1998. His 3.6 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows wheat, cotton, groundnut, sesame, methi, dhana and rai. (J)

JAYANTIBHAI NATWARLAL JOSHI

Pandurangam, Plot no. 33/34, Satya Sadan Soc., Near Ganeshji Temple, Taluka Mahuvabandar - 364 290, District Bhavnagar, Gujarat. Ph.: 02844 224547, 226547, Cell: 09824206547, 09824106547.

Joshi started organic farming in 2001. His 3.2 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows mango, chickoo, amla, lemon and kariyatu. (J)

LABHUBHAI B. GHORI

Gangeshwar Mahadev Road, Near Wadi, At Bhandaria, P.O. Bhandaria, Taluka & District Bhavnagar - 364 050, Gujarat. Cell: 09824869370.

Ghori started organic farming in 2005. His 4.8 acre farm is 100% organic. He grows groundnut, custard apple, lemon and vegetable. (J)

LALLUBHAI BHAWANBHAI PATEL

(Gram Dakshinamurti), At Manar, Taluka Talaja - 364 150, District Bhavnagar, Gujarat. Cell: 09427232953.

Patel is an organic farmer. Only half of his 10 acre farm is organic. He grows wheat, pearl millet, groundnut, coconut and cotton. (J)

DR. JIVRAJBHAI SUTARIA

Gautambaug, At Sagwadi, Taluka Shihor - 364 240, District Bhavnagar, Gujarat.

Sutaria started organic farming in 2002. Half of his 20 acre farm is organic on which he grows ber. (J)

MAHESHBHAI-MEHULBHAI BHATT

Gram Dakshina Murti, At & P.O. Amla, Taluka Shihor - 364 210, District Bhavnagar, Gujarat. Ph.: 02846 244607, Cell: 09427233464.

The Bhattas are organic farmers. Their 6 acre farm is 100% organic. They grow wheat, pearl millet, green gram, sesame, lemon, guava, custard apple, banana, vegetables and fodder. (J)

KIRITBHAI PREMJBHAI ASODARIA

At Monvel, Via Bhandar, Taluka Dhari - 364 656, District Amreli, Gujarat. Ph.: 02797 237825, Cell: 09925676022. Asodaria is an organic farmer. His 12 acre farm is fully organic. He grows wheat and spices. (J)

BHUPAT MANJI PARVADIA

At Bhurakhia, Via Damnagar, Taluka Lathi - 365 220, District Amreli, Gujarat. Ph.: 02793 222653, Cell: 09428468325.

Parvadia is an organic farmer. His 10 acre farm is fully organic. He grows wheat, pearl millet, gram, ground nut, sesame and cotton. (J)

JATAN

Vinoba Ashram, Gotri, Vadodara 390 021, Gujarat. Ph.: 0265 2371429, Cell: 09427054132, Email:jatantrust@gmail.com

‘JATAN’ meaning ‘to nurture’ and Kapil Shah are synonymous in Gujarat. Son of a dedicated Sarvodaya leader Jagdishbhai Shah, Kapil Shah is the founder director of Jatan. Kapil, a post graduate in agriculture with specialisation in plant breeding and genetics gave up his lectureship after a 5 year stint at Grambharati, a rural agriculture institute in Amrapur, near Gandhinagar to dedicate his full time to the organic farming movement in Gujarat.

In 1985, the Human Technology Forum had organised a seminar on organic farming. It was decided at this seminar that a booklet on the subject be published. So Mahendra Bhatt and Kapil Shah produced a booklet on organic farming in Gujarati and called it Sajiv Kheti. ‘Sajiv’ in Gujarati means ‘living’. The term was deliberately chosen because they felt that ‘organic farming’ was a term coined in the west and not everything that it stood for was acceptable in the philosophy of Sajiv Kheti. And, Jatan was born in 1986.

Jatan, based at the Vinobha Ashram at Gotri, Vadodara is a nature cure centre. A small one and a half acre plot on which trees, vegetables, fruits and fodder are grown. This has been set aside to farm along Sajiv Kheti principles and serves as a demonstration plot as well. Rain water is harvested and stored in the farm pond. This demonstrates an important technology in practice, especially for a region that has on average only 22 days of rain in a year. In Gujarat, 81% of villages have no local source of water and are increasingly forced to use ground water reserves from wells that are over 8,000 years old. Promoting rainwater harvesting techniques is a practical technology that can come in very handy for the farmers of these areas. Mixed cropping in small plots is another feature on the Sajiv Kheti farm at Vinobha Ashram.

Sajiv Kheti’s philosophy based on Gandhian principles emphasizes simplicity, self-respect and high regard for manual skills. Clarifies Kapilbhai, ‘Jatan believes that organic farming if it is merely business oriented does not necessarily mean Sajiv Kheti. To fit into its definition, farming must be followed as a divine faith where in a farmer after providing for his domestic consumption, sells the surplus in the market. Given this perspective, Sajiv Kheti is a lifestyle statement of a philosophy propounding ecologically sustainable practices.’

Although Jatan has been working for over two decades, Kapil says that it is only in the past 10 years that well informed farmers, activists and voluntary organization have taken up promoting non-chemical agriculture with a missionary zeal. In Gujarat today, it is spreading akin to a mass movement. This in spite of the Government’s reluctance to pitch in whole heartedly. The reason for the present spurt is the realisation on the part of the farmers themselves that green revolution techniques have failed to deliver.

Jatan’s Approach

Kapilbhai says, ‘In our experience, we have found that people don’t believe you or accept your suggestions unless they realize the problem themselves. It is only when they face blocks and difficulties that our work starts. Considering this reality, we have remained available to people when they come searching for alternatives.’ Jatan prefers to remain small, shunning the idea of putting up massive institutional structures. Adds Kapilbhai: ‘Ours is a small and personal initiative in search of work satisfaction through contributing to sustainability. Well wishers and friends support the families of some of the core group members of Jatan. Over time the trust activities have become self supportive.’

Jatan’s Activities at a Glance:

Development and publication of educational material

Jatan has published numerous titles on organic farming and organic food including exhibition posters in Hindi, English and Marathi. An audio cassette with songs on organic farming and video documentaries on successful organic farmers as well as a monthly newsletter by the same name (Jatan).

Resource Centre

Jatan has the best resource library stocking audio visual material, photograph collection and over 1,000 books and reference materials on organic farming and environment. It is the best resource centre for organic farming in Gujarat.

Farmer meetings

For the past decade, Jatan has been organising biannual state level farmer meetings. The event goes by the name Sajiv Kheti and almost every farmer in Gujarat is aware of this biannual gathering. Dozens of voluntary organizations pitch

in to make it a memorable event for farmers. Farmers can register for the event with 5 kgs of any grain.

Food festivals

Food festivals serving popular dishes made from organic produce are organized to give farmers an opportunity to show that organic produce is much more appealing to the palate than chemically grown foods. This has brought customers in direct contact with organic foods. It has served as an opportunity for direct marketing. Book exhibitions on organic farming, related films and cultural events are part of these food festivals.

Farm visits

Jatan organizes regular farm visits for interested farmers to grassroots organizations and other farms within and outside the state.

Organic shop

Jatan runs an organic shop where 80-90% of the retail price goes directly to the farmer. The shop also doubles as an educative space for consumers on sustainable practices and clean food (see organic food section for details).

Consumer tours

Jatan organizes field trips for consumers wanting to educate themselves on organic practices to organic farms and post production processing units.

Campaign opposing GM crops

Jatan has been consistently articulating its stiff opposition to GM and GMOs at all regional and national forums. It organizes campaigns against GM on the one hand and farmer/public meetings on the other to raise awareness on the hazards of permitting the entry of GM into the Indian agricultural scene.

Jatan's certification system

Jatan has developed its own unique certification process. This process is designed to evaluate and promote a low carbon foot-print. The process uses over 70 criteria to evaluate the farmer's social, ecological commitment within the farming process. Evaluations are displayed on a percentage basis. Jatan's certification process also doubles as an educational process. It is an opportunity for interaction amongst farmers, consumers and traders.

Jatan advocates the system of self certification by the organic farmer to develop confidence and respectability beginning with his own self. Jatan believes that an alternative marketing strategy that is farmer friendly, eco-friendly, consumer friendly and at the same time honest and transparent needs to be created and operationalised. Above all, it should be an open system and as local as possible.

Jatan today

Jatan today is a leading coordination body between consumers, farmers, government, academics, universities; playing an advocacy role in establishing a platform for coordinating the organic farming movement at the national level. Jatan is the state secretariat of OFAI for Gujarat and Kapilbhai is a member of the National Steering Committee as well as the Managing Committee of OFAI.

CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION

Thaltej Tekra, Ahmedabad – 380 054, Gujarat. Ph.: 079 26844748, Fax: 079 26858010

Web: www.ceeindia.org

Contact: Chandra Shekhar, Programme Officer, Rural Programme Group. Email: chandra.shekhar@ceeindia.org

Gram Nidhi is an organic farming outreach programme of the Centre of Environment Education, Ahmedabad. Under this programme, farmers were introduced to organic farming. Of them, 65 farmers took it up in 2004-2005. By 2008 the number of farmers who had adopted organic farming rose to 200. Of these, 50 farmers are completely organic, while the others are still in the process of conversion. Local farmers have been trained in all practices. Local seeds that require less water are preferred by these farmers. They have learnt quick composting techniques. Biopesticides, trichoderma, beuberia protect fungal and viral attacks. Castor cake is used for soil fertility and fungal control. Marigold on crop periphery serves as a trap crop for insects, cow urine and scum layer of butter milk is used for preparing good quality compost. Use of vermicompost, jeev amrit, coconut water etc. are part of organic processes on these farms.

AGA KHAN RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (I), SAYLA

Near Rajsobhag Ashram, National Highway No. 8, Sayla Surendranagar, Gujarat, Cell: 09925239321

Contact: Pankaj Dev, Area Manager

Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India) Sayla, is an outreach programme of the Aga Khan Trust. They started the organic farming programme in 2003 as a response to the failure of chemical farming in the drought prone areas of Surendranagar district in Gujarat. The farmers have been trained in all organic techniques and technical assistance has been provided through field facilitators. After a three year conversion period the farms are assisted with certification by any of the APEDA approved agency. The farmers grow certified cotton, bajri, sesame, cumin and coriander. 91 farms have export certification, 137 have reached the certification stage and about 500 farms are under conversion. A manch/group Gujarat Sustainable Organic Farming Association has been created to promote fair trade practices in

cotton.

The major kharif crops are cotton, ground nut, bajri, sesamum, castor, green gram, muth, kalthi etc. In the rabi season cumin and wheat are cultivated. The farmers have established a marketing linkage with one Mumbai based company. It paid the farmers a premium of 10% for the organic produce. The group is now exploring avenues for long term marketing linkages.

(Source: Mahesh Patel, Chotila. Cell: 09427156716)

SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH AND INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES-SRISTI

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SRISTI is an NGO engaged in education, research, policy, documentation etc. relating to farming. It produces a newsletter on people's innovations called The Honey Bee. It is also involved in documenting experiences in organic agriculture. It has a large database on indigenous innovations by farmers. SRISTI also networks global research on the subject.

SRISTI, which means creation, was born in 1993, essentially to support the activities of the Honey Bee Network. Its main objective is to respect, recognize and reward creativity at the grassroots. Based in Ahmedabad, SRISTI is a registered charitable organization that is devoted to empowering the knowledge rich economically poor people by adding value to their traditional knowledge. It has helped establish many initiatives like GIAN, NIF, MVIF and AASTIHK.

It is involved in systematically documenting and disseminating information about grassroots green innovations, protecting and providing venture support to grassroots innovators. The Honey Bee newsletter is published in three languages: English, Hindi and Gujarati.

Recently SRISTI has been focusing on women's knowledge systems, value addition through a natural product laboratory, and innovations in education.

(Source: Ramesh Patel)