

Faridkot farmer's formula: Innovation, daily earnings, zero debt, 120% happiness

Courtesy: Anju Agnihotri Chhaba



In Kothe Ramsar village of Kotkapura tehsil in Faridkot, 61-year-old Dalip Singh has redefined farming. At a time when many farmers struggle with debts and uncertainties around crop sales, Dalip is an example of self-sufficiency, innovation, and sustainable agriculture. Managing 9.5 acres — 8 acres of his own and 1.5 acres belonging to his brother — he has achieved a remarkable milestone. He is entirely debt-free, earning daily from his farm without relying on crop loans or bank limits. He also bypasses the six-month wait for mandi sales of his crops by doing multiple crop farming, employing innovative practices, including mulching, to convert paddy straw into a valuable resource. His journey showcases how sustainable farming can be both profitable and environmentally conscious. Dalip's farming philosophy challenges the conventional reliance on seasonal harvests. Unlike most farmers in Punjab who take two crops paddy and wheat and wait for five-six months to sell their crops in mandis, he has diversified his approach. By cultivating a combination of traditional crops such as wheat, high-value cash crops such as garlic, vegetables like cauliflower, turnips, and Jhaar Karela, which has medicinal value and good for the diabetics, beets and Basmati, he has unlocked the potential of his land to provide daily earnings. "I've never needed a bank loan or a crop limit. With hard work, I've managed to meet my expenses," says Dalip, adding that his motto is to sell the crop daily and earn daily. A stepping stone in Dalip's success is his adoption of stubble mulching. After harvesting Basmati, he uses a repeater to chop stubble

into small pieces, which he then spreads across his fields. Wheat seeds are either sprayed manually or planted using a seeder, with the stubble serving as a natural mulch. Mulch is the layer of a material applied to the surface of soil, which conserves soil moisture, improving fertility and health of soil, reducing weed growth, and enhancing soil organism such as earthworm. "The stubble keeps the soil moist, reduces the need for frequent irrigation, and suppresses weeds, saving me money on weedicides," says Dalip, adding that as the stubble decomposes, it enriches the soil, reducing the need for fertilizers. His wheat yields often reach 26 quintals per acre—significantly higher than the state average of 19–20 quintals but some times weather plays spoil spot. For garlic, Dalip employs a similar mulching technique but adapts it to the crop's needs. He removes the stubble first and dumps on the sides of field, sows garlic on raised beds, and then spreads the dumped stubble over the beds to conserve moisture and maintain soil health. "For garlic on one acre, I need the stubble of two acres to cover the crop. His meticulous approach to garlic farming is a key factor in his award-winning produce. This year alone, PAU gave him first award for producing one of the best qualities garlic in PAU Mela in September," he says. Dalip's strategy of cultivating vegetables has been another game-changer. By planting cauliflower twice a year—once from July to October and again from November to April—he ensures a steady income throughout the year. From his vegetable crops, he earns Rs 50,000 per acre and above after meeting expenses within four months, and in peak seasons, he has earned up to Rs 5-6 lakh per acre in just 90 days. "Dalip's journey is a testament to the transformative power of innovation, hard work, and sustainability in agriculture. His methods not only ensure financial stability but also contribute to healthier soil and a cleaner environment," said Amrik Singh, Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) in Faridkot who recently visited his fields to see his mulching technique. Dalip Singh's success has not gone unnoticed. His innovative practices have earned him accolades from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), and even a CM's award. This year, his garlic variety won first prize at the PAU mela held in September, further cementing his reputation as a progressive farmer. Today several experts and students doing agricultural degree courses are visiting his fields to learn about his innovative methods of farming and how he grows both long duration and short duration crops to earn daily from his fields. Dalip's message to fellow farmers is clear: "Don't wait for six months to earn. Think different, work hard, and aim for daily earnings. It's possible to be not only 100% but 120% happy with farming if you put your heart into it."
