

Sorry for not updating you for quite some time about the support fund.

Between October 2016 and February 2018 we received Rs. 1,51,000 (rupees one lakh and fifty-one thousand) in cash donations to be used in the farm

directly for ongoing investments. Besides that, the corpus fund had build up to Rs. 13,03,972 (rupees thirteen lakhs, three thousand, nine hundred and seventy-two) over a period of 5 months on which we received interest of Rs. 31,345 in April 2017.

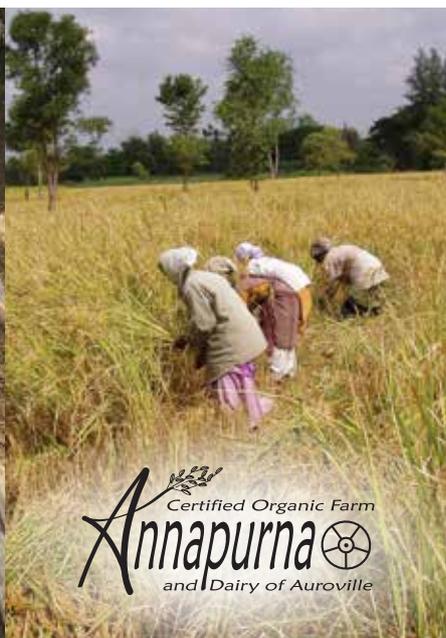
Right now the fund contains Rs. 15,13,972 (rupees fifteen lakhs, thirteen thousand, nine hundred and seventy-two) and we will receive the interest of 1 year in April. The total amount of Rs. 1,82,345 (income of support fund from October 2016 to April 2017) was planned to be used to help build another cow house since we want to extend our dairy herd by 25% and we need more space for the young cattle which are our pool to renew and improve the herd. However after the failing monsoon of last year we had to change our mind and divert the money towards improving our irrigation system.

We worked on improving the water distribution and

salvaging our deep borewell. We invested into an additional single phase electric connection and booster-pump with rain-gun to improve our post monsoon irrigation of crops. Then we bought a smaller submersible pump to replace our existing big pump

and hope to be able to still use our big bore hole as a back-up system when needed. Right now we are final testing the booster pump and rain-gun and will use it after the paddy crop is harvested to irrigate and establish a green manure crop in the rice fields. The big pump in the new bore is still stuck and we will resume work on

ANNAPURNA FARM SUPPORT FUND UPDATE



this project when we get the time to attend to it. We did not spend all the money because we were busy with too many projects this year and we want to spend the left over on the new cow house or banana plantation which are both planned for this year, if finance permits.

People who want more details about how we use the support fund, please email us so we can give you more information.

Thank you all for your support :-)

Tomas and Andre.

February is Rosella season

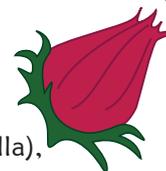
Re-discover this fascinating monsoon crop with beautiful, sweet-sour tasty fruits.



Probably the plant comes originally from West Africa (wikipedia). At Annapurna we have been growing rosella since many years on field scale. The crop is very hardy and with a bit of a decent monsoon it will thrive with rain only. Cows and wildlife do not eat it since the leaves are very sour. Besides at Solar Kitchen there is no great interest in rosella in Auroville, which is a pity. We think the crop has more potential and we will give more attention to it in the years to come. For many years we are preparing big amounts of dry rosella for Solar Kitchen. This is a lot more work than it seems. Of the harvested amount of calyxes (incl seedballs) approx 5-6% of dry material only is left over. To harvest, clean and dry the crop is a big job which our workers do after their working time: the people are rushing into the field at 5pm, harvesting, taking the crop home and removing the seeds with their family in the night. Next morning the cleaned product is brought back to the farm, we check the results and they get paid per kg of cleaned rosella.

This year we produced 120 kg dry rosella which Solar Kitchen will use over the year. We had to harvest and clean more than 2000 kg of rosella calyxes to do this. All this is done by hand and we have a few hundred drying trays to dry all that in a very short time in the shade.

This year we have been experimenting with fresh rosella products as well: banana/rosella compotes, rosella syrup (on rice pudding) and rosella jam. We also tried a different variety of rosella (Andaman rosella), which is more fruity and needs less sugar. We will try to grow this variety on a larger scale next season and start to produce some interesting products with this as well.



short news and updates



More pond digging

Then there is the wonderful news that we got a very generous donation from an organization which prefers to stay anonymous to be able to do more pond digging this summer. We plan to double our water harvesting capacity from the current 25000 m³ to 50000 m³. We are very thank full for this and hopefully we will dedicate most of our next newsletter to this major operation.

New second hand tractor

In September we took out a personal loan to add one more tractor to the fleet of machines at Annapurna.

To be able to function smoothly in the busy season we felt already since some years that we needed one more working horse to get work done properly and in time. Our newest beauty is a Massey Ferguson tractor of 50HP.

Rice harvest and wildlife

We harvested our first rice in January which was disappointing because some fields were totally ravaged by invading wild life. We installed a simple electric fence around the rest of the paddy crop on very short notice and for now the deer and wild pigs respect our rice fields again. Peacocks are still quite challenging though... as they have no regard and fly over the electric fence.

At the same time we are experimenting with sprinkling human hair around some sesame fields to scare wild animals away because of the scent of humans.

The support group is looking for more hands and brains who could help with bringing awareness in sustainable farming and with the growing of a community supported agriculture.

We are happy to hear from you :-)