

January at Annapurna means the beginning of the harvest; first paddy harvest and waragu as well.



We are in the process of installing a new submersible pump (15HP) since the old one broke down, and hope to get it going soon because with the failing monsoon water is becoming very short. For the first time since 15 years (the time when we dug the rain water catchment ponds) the ponds did not fill up and we irrigated the paddy predominantly with deep water from our borewells.



Left: Water catchment pond after 2015 monsoon. Right: Water level now.



Some weeks ago, Meena and Wellima calved and that was really needed because demand for milk products, such as cheese and curd, in Auroville are peaking in this month.

We have a volunteer, Wolfgang, who will be here until April and is working on the Annapurna website and is interested in any public relations related activity. He also feeds the cows in the evening. Later this month we have Oskar from Germany joining us for a few months; Oskar will be our youngest volunteer ever, being only 14 years young and full of good intentions.



What about the rices and millets grown in Annapurna?

What are the millets, rice and grain grown in Annapurna?

Tomas: We grow varagu, kudravalli, and ragi. Four varieties of rice are cultivated. Then we grow sesame, mustard and at times some pulses like green or black gram.

Are you growing some crops without irrigation, relying on monsoon rain?

Tomas: Yes, those crops are varagu, kudravalli, mustard and sesame.

We find in the Auroville shop shelves: raw, boiled, red and complete rice. Is it the same grain?

Tomas: It's all rice, but they are different varieties; the complete is a rice we baptized "Annapurna" since we picked it out in the middle of another variety; it's a kind of farmers selection. The red rice is poovan samba, the parboiled and raw rice are pooni rices.

Are you doing the processing at the farm? If so, why?

Tomas: Yes, we process at

the farm to make sure no adulteration takes place (food gets polluted/adulterated during processing).

We are handling a very diverse grain need in Auroville and work with small amounts. All this is impossible to get done anywhere else.

Local organic farmers often come with a request to process their millet at Annapurna since they have nowhere to go.

How long can you stock rice and millet? What is the best way to stock without having loss?

Tomas: Stocking millets in raw form (in the husk) is no problem. All millets can be stored for a year, and some like waragu for many years. Paddy (is rice in husk) loss starts to increase substantially when it gets older than one year. Sun-drying it regularly will help but this is not easy with large quantities of stock. Processed grain we store in plastic cans and are flushed with CO₂, after which it has a good shelf life (one year plus) but this is costly to do. for bigger amounts.



Paddy crop, Ambika and Sengani hand cleaning polished varagu

Annapurna Support Fund

Account for contribution 251367. More about this in the e-version of our newsletter. Write to annapurnafarm@auroville.org.in for a copy.