Solidaridad SOPA

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NEWSLETTER

NARVOS

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR REGENERATIVE VEG OIL SECTOR

Initiated Under

Promotion of Regenerative Agriculture Practices for a Food Secure & Climate Resilient Future in the EU-India Partnership Programme

Funded by the European Union

Solidaridad

EDITORIAL FORWARD

Welcome to another edition of NARVOS Newsletter.

This Kharif season, soybean will again dominate the headlines. But India's oilseed future cannot rest on one crop. Groundnut, sesame, sunflower, castor, safflower and niger each have a role in building a diversified, climate-resilient basket. Regeneration, then, is not a crop-specific fix it is a farming-systems approach, adapted to local ecology and lived farmer realities.

We see this principle at work across our programmes, in BBF and raised-bed sowing, in composting and bio-inputs, in integrated pest management, crop diversification and weather-based advisories.

Regeneration cannot stop at the farm gate. Platforms like the SEA–AICOSCA Cottonseed & Groundnut Conclave exist precisely because production must connect to processing, markets, technology, policy and consumer demand the full chain has to move together. NARVOS is committed to strengthening these connections, turning sustainability conversations into coordinated action.

Our district consultations and policy dialogues serve the same purpose, bringing farmers, FPOs, government institutions, researchers, civil society and industry to the same table, so that field evidence becomes policy recommendation, and policy recommendation becomes an enabling ecosystem one where regenerative practices are recognised, supported and rewarded across the value chain.

Ultimately, regeneration is a story told by farmers, not written for them. Ramesh Bharti diversified his farm to cut input costs and stabilise income. Gautam Malviya is betting on perennial crops and long-term carbon sequestration. Different paths, same foundation, a deeper understanding of the land, smarter resource use, timely knowledge, and a willingness to invest in the future.

NARVOS exists to build bridges between farmers and markets, science and practice, field evidence and policy, productivity and sustainability.

Our ambition is not simply more oilseed. It is more productive farms, healthier soils, stronger farmer incomes, resilient value chains, and a genuinely self-reliant vegetable oil sector.

This is the transition we must accelerate together from vision to mission, and from mission to action.

Dr. Suresh Motwani
National Coordinator, NARVOS

EXPERT THOUGHT

Though we have made good progress in Oil-Seed production, country's dependence on edible-oil imports is remaining a major concern. Today India's import dependence is more than 50% and our National Mission on Edible oils – oil seeds (NMEO-OS) aims to increase primary oil seed production from 39 m tonnes to about 69 m tonnes by 2030-31.

Such a transformation requires all out and well-planned efforts. The EU – India Partnership Programme on "Promotion of Regenerative Agriculture Practices" and the initiative like NARVOS is extremely laudable and timely. We all need to combine our efforts to convert this Vision into Mission and Actions.

Already the Solidaridad with the support of organisations like ICAR-IISS, Gujarat Life Sciences (GLS) and a large number of farmers & FPOS have successfully demonstrated the 20-20 Model for all oil seed crops. Such a model to give 20% higher production with 20% lower input costs is sustainable and being increasingly taken up all over. This can be doubled & tripled in the following years. This the way to transfer to Regen– Eco Agri Farming in Profitable & Sustainable Way. The need is now for large scale application for all oil seed crops to meet the goal of National Mission on Edible Oils.

In short, it will be – More Oil Seeds - More Edible Oil – More Nutritious Oil Cake – Better Soil and Microbial Health – Use of Crop Residues instead of burning – Benefit from Carbon Markets – Higher Farmers Income and a Sustainable Future.

Padmashri Dr. M.H. Mehta

Member of the Board – Solidaridad Asia.

Chairman – National Working Group on Eco/Organic Agriculture – ICFA, New Delhi

Chairman – The Science Ashram/Gujarat Life Sciences.

Ex Vice Chancellor – Gujarat Agricultural University

His famous 20 – 20 Mehta Model is being increasingly adopted for Sustainable Regenerative Farming.

Role of KVK Agar Malwa and Solidaridad in promotion of Regenerative agriculture practices in district Agar Malwa.

Penned by Dr RPS Sakhtawat, Sr Scientist,
Agronomy, KVK, Agar Malwa

Krishi Vigyan Kendra , Agar Malwa is consistently working for transfer of technology on sustainable and climate resilient production technology among the farmers in the district of Agar malwa. The Centre has collaborated with Solidaridad and working closely in this direction. The district is known for its Soy wheat cropping system along with Orange cultivation.

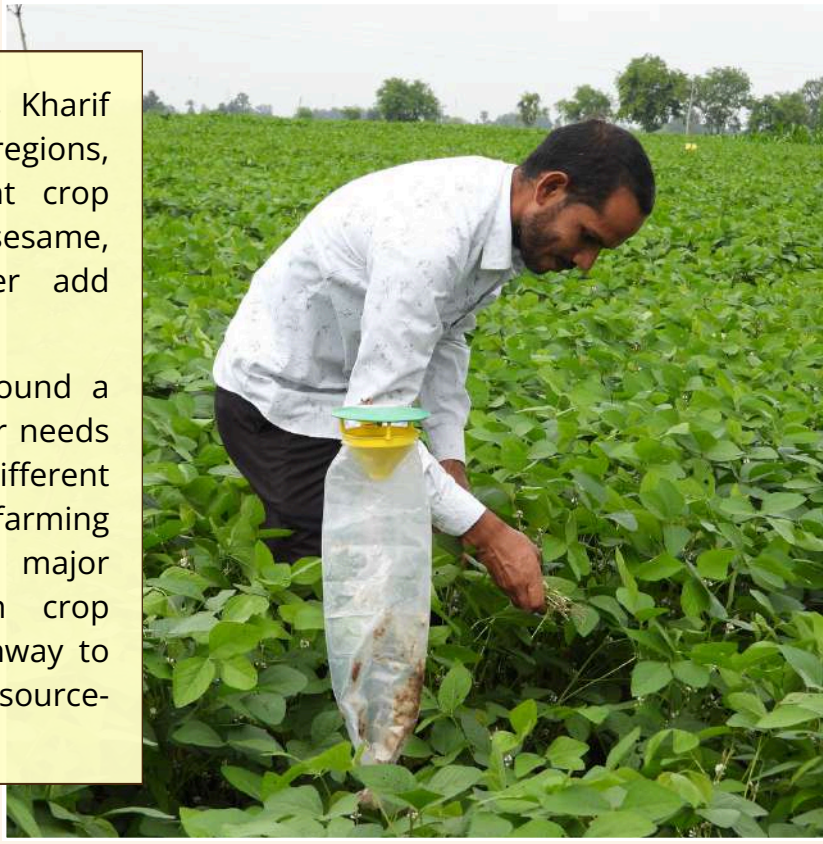
In order to get higher yield and productivity farmers in the district adopt HYVs of seed, Fertilizers and Synthetic pesticide. Farm mechanization has also gained with use of Tractor mounted ferti-cum seed drill, combine harvester, tractor mounted sprayer etc. This has led to soil compaction, erosion, depletion of organic carbon which is core indicator of soil health. Rapid depletion of ground water due to over extraction, and lowering of organic carbon are other concerns which is required to be addressed through conservation farming and regenerative practices. BBF planter machine provided by Solidaridad at KVK Agar is being used for technology demonstration among farmers. Besides KVK in partnership with Solidaridad has promoted enriched composting through distribution of HDPE Portable vermibags with a capacity of generating 10 q of Vermicompost in one cycle. Both Institutions are working hand in hand in promotion of GAPs by organizing field day, farmer fair, exhibitions and in house training programme. KVK and Solidaridad is working together in the district to promote such production technology which conserve and enrich soil, develop skill of farmers on climate resilience and diversified cropping system. selection of quality seed, Integrated pest management, composting, insitu crop residue, sowing with BBF /raised bed inter alia are some of the technologies being promoted with joint collaboration. Besides farmers are also being trained on ITK based bio inputs and localized units such as Bio Resource Centre has been set up which is crucial for its wide dissemination. The IoT based weather station having been set by Solidaridad in the district is also new innovation to make farmers and farming climate resilient. Such devices is helpful in providing weather-based crop advisory to the farmers to schedule the farm operation and reduce the risk emerging from extreme weather and climate change.

We wish to continue this collaboration with Solidaridad and work closely in transfer of technology and make our farmers future ready with new and innovative approach which is need of the hour.

FIELD INSIGHTS

Kharif Oilseeds: Regenerating the fields that feed India

Soybean leads the season. But the opportunity goes beyond one crop.



August marks a critical phase in India's Kharif oilseed season. Across soybean-growing regions, farmers are moving through important crop development stages, while groundnut, sesame, sunflower, castor, safflower and niger add diversity to India's oilseed landscape.

India's oilseed story cannot be built around a single crop. A resilient vegetable oil sector needs a diversified oilseed basket adapted to different soils, climates, water conditions and farming systems. ICAR research highlights nine major annual oilseed crops in India, with crop diversification offering an important pathway to reduce production risks and improve resource-use efficiency.

This Kharif, look beyond soybean.

Crop	Why it matters for regenerative oilseed systems
Soybean	A major Kharif oilseed and an important crop for improving domestic oilseed availability
Groundnut	A valuable oil and protein crop with strong potential across diverse Kharif regions
Sesame	A short-duration oilseed with opportunities in suitable low-water and diversified systems
Sunflower	Adaptable and useful as a contingency crop where sowing conditions change
Castor	An important oilseed with potential for diversified and region-specific production

ICAR notes that soybean, groundnut and rapeseed-mustard together account for the majority of India's oilseed production, while crops such as sesame, sunflower, safflower and niger provide valuable diversification opportunities.

SOYBEAN

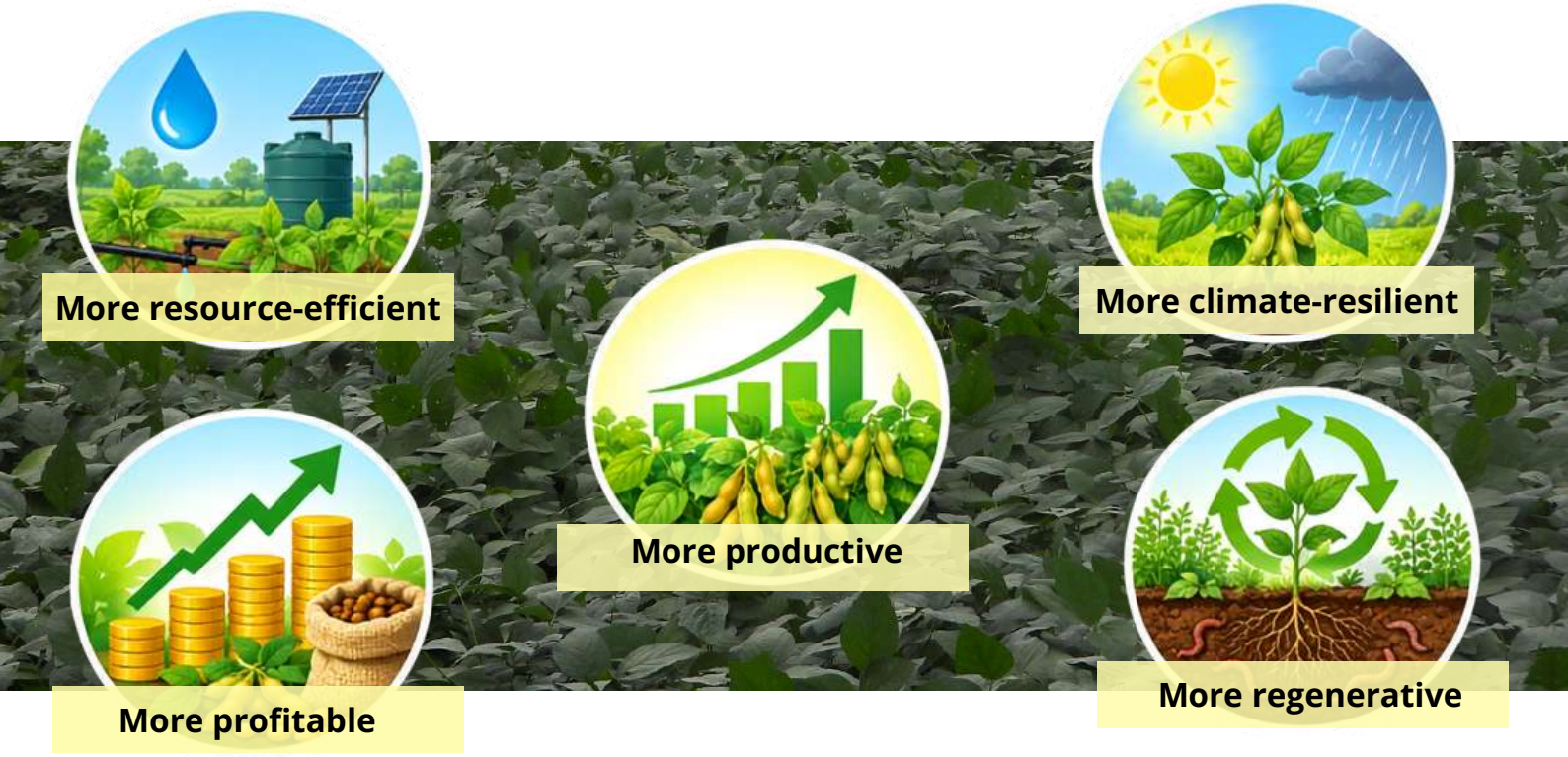
The August Spotlight

From Soybean fields to a stronger oilseed system

Soybean is one of India's most important oilseed crops and a major component of the Kharif oilseed landscape.

But higher production alone is not enough.

The opportunity is to make soybean farming:



For farmers, this means looking at the whole production system soil health, balanced nutrition, water management, weed and pest management, crop residues, weather information and post-harvest value.

And the August message is particularly relevant this year, India is entering a period of potentially below-normal September rainfall, with soybean among the Kharif crops at critical developmental stages.

The regenerative soybean question

How can we produce more soybean without asking more from the soil?

That is where regenerative practices can make a difference.

BEYOND SOYBEAN

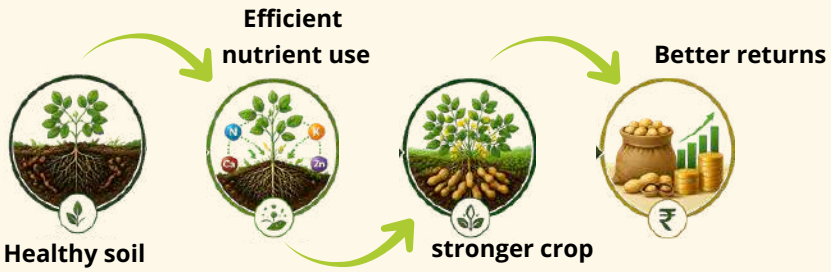
One Oilseed Basket.

Many Possibilities

GROUNDNUT

Groundnut is an important Kharif oilseed and offers opportunities for improved productivity, soil-cover management, balanced nutrition and biological inputs. ICAR identifies groundnut as a key Kharif crop across several major producing states.

Regenerative focus:



SESAME

Small in area compared with major oilseeds, but significant in a diversified oilseed strategy.

Its relatively short duration and adaptability in suitable environments make sesame an interesting crop for diversification and risk management. ICAR research also highlights its potential in specific rice-fallow and limited-water systems.

Regenerative focus:

SUNFLOWER

Sunflower has a special role in contingency planning because of its adaptability and suitability for

Regenerative focus:

CASTOR, NIGER & SAFFLOWER

These crops may not dominate India's oilseed landscape, but they should not be overlooked.

A resilient oilseed system needs crop diversity, particularly in rainfed and climate-vulnerable regions.

Regenerative focus:

Right crop + **Right ecology** + **Right farming practice**

THE FIELD LESSONS

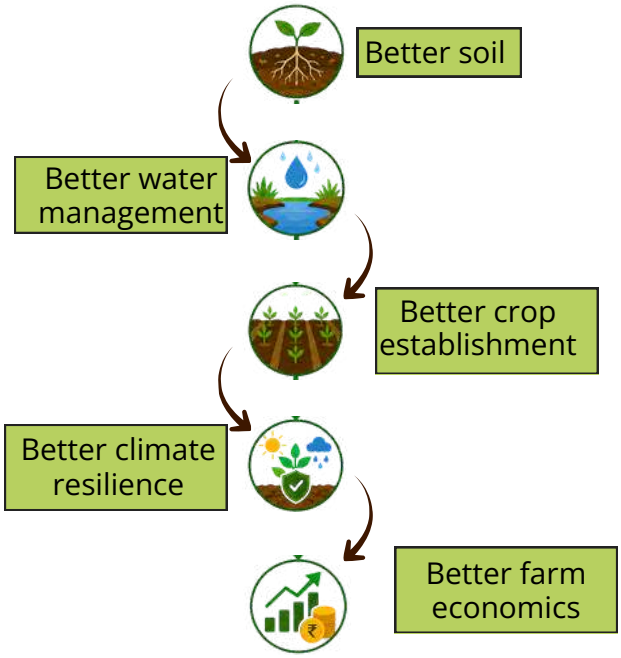
Regeneration is not one crop. It is a farming system.

The experience from KVK Agar Malwa and Solidaridad demonstrates this principle.

The collaboration is promoting a package of practices including BBF/raised-bed sowing, composting, crop-residue management, integrated pest management, diversified cropping, bio-inputs and weather-based advisories.

These practices are not limited to soybean.

They represent a broader approach to Kharif oilseed farming:



NARVOS FIELD MESSAGE

This Kharif, let us think beyond yield

For India to strengthen its vegetable oil sector, the question should move from:

"How much oilseed can we produce?"

to:

"How much oilseed can we produce while regenerating the resources that produce it?"

Soybean may be the August spotlight, but the larger story is the Kharif oilseed ecosystem.

Soybean. Groundnut. Sesame. Sunflower. Castor. Niger. Safflower.

- Different crops.
- Different landscapes.
- Different farmer needs.

One shared opportunity:
Build a more productive, profitable, resilient and regenerative oilseed sector.

EVENTS

7th SEA–AICOSCA Cottonseed & Groundnut Conclave 2026

"Strengthening Oilseed Value Chains: Cottonseed & Groundnut Driving Growth, Innovation & Global Competitiveness"

Rajkot, Gujarat **22–23 August2026**

The 7th SEA–AICOSCA Cottonseed & Groundnut Conclave 2026 provided an important platform to discuss how two significant Kharif oilseed crops cottonseed and groundnut can contribute to stronger, more sustainable and globally competitive vegetable oil value chains. Organised by The Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) in association with the All-India Cottonseed Crushers Association (AICOSCA), the two-day conclave participated by 350+ stakeholders from across the ecosystem, including industry leaders, policymakers, researchers, processors, traders, farmers and technology providers. NARVOS participated as the Sustainability Associate, supporting the focus on sustainability across the oilseed value chain.

Why this conversation matters during Kharif

Kharif is a critical production window for India's oilseed sector. Decisions and practices adopted during the crop season from seed selection and farm management to productivity, resource efficiency and crop quality have a direct bearing on the performance of the downstream value chain.

For crops such as groundnut and cotton, strengthening the connection between farm-level practices, processing, value addition, markets and sustainability is therefore essential.

Alignment with NARVOS

The discussions at the conclave strongly resonate with the objectives of NARVOS- National Alliance for Regenerative Vegetable Oil Sector, which seeks to bring stakeholders together to advance vegetable oil value chains that are productive, resilient and regenerative.

Key areas discussed at the conclave included:

Enhancing Productivity – Promoting improved varieties and modern farming practices to increase yield and quality.

Resource-Efficient & Sustainable Production – Encouraging farming approaches that strengthen soil health, resilience and efficient use of natural resources.

Modern Processing & Value Addition – Advancing technology to improve processing efficiency, oil recovery and profitability.

Quality & Global Competitiveness – Strengthening quality standards, aflatoxin management and export readiness.

Innovation & AI – Exploring technology, AI and entrepreneurship to transform different stages of the oilseed value chain.

Stronger Market Linkages – Building consumer awareness, branding and market opportunities for cottonseed and groundnut oils.

Collaboration Across the Value Chain – Connecting farmers, FPOs, processors, industry, researchers and policymakers to enable coordinated action.

The conclave featured panel discussions, technical sessions, special presentations and Innovation Award presentations, covering the complete value chain from production and processing to marketing, trade, exports and consumer demand.

For NARVOS, platforms such as this are important spaces to turn conversations around sustainability into collective action. By connecting Kharif crop production with processing, markets, technology and policy, we can work towards a vegetable oil sector that is not only economically competitive, but also more resilient and regenerative.

The Dhar Capacity-Building Workshop and the NARVOS Mandate

Capacity Building of CSOs for Policy-Level Dialogue on Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agriculture cannot be scaled through farm-level practice alone. Soil health, water conservation and biodiversity restoration take root when the institutions and policies around farmers actively recognise, incentivise and sustain them. The Capacity Building Workshop held at Dhar on 12 August 2026 was designed around this conviction, bringing together Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) not as passive recipients of information but as co-architects of the policy environment that regenerative agriculture needs in order to endure.

CSOs as the Bridge Between Field and Policy: CSOs occupy a distinctive position in the regenerative agriculture ecosystem. They carry the lived experience of farming communities, the successes, the constraints, the trade-offs into spaces where policy is deliberated, and they carry policy signals back to the communities they work with. Strengthening this intermediary function is itself a strategic objective of NARVOS, without it, regenerative practices risk remaining isolated field-level interventions rather than becoming part of an institutionalised, self-sustaining transition.

Building the Regenerative Value Chain

What the Mandsaur, Ratlam and Dewas Consultations Reveal About the NARVOS Mandate

Regenerative agriculture is not merely a set of farming techniques, but a transformation of the entire vegetable oil value chain from soil to farmer to FPO to processor to market. A farmer who adopts regenerative practices in isolation, without institutions willing to recognise, procure and reward those practices, cannot sustain that transition alone. The district-level Stakeholder Consultations held through August 2026 in Mandsaur, Ratlam and Dewas were designed to operationalise this premise, convening farmers, FPOs, industry, government institutions, KVKs and CSOs at the same table a structural embodiment of the ecosystem NARVOS is working to build.

Reading the Three Consultations Together

Taken individually, each consultation addressed a distinct dimension of the transition institutional convergence in Mandsaur, inclusion and decent work in Ratlam, and value-chain diagnostics in Dewas.

Taken together, they represent the district-level infrastructure through which NARVOS's larger mandate is being built, connecting farm-level regenerative practice to markets, institutions and policy,

, so that the transition to regenerative agriculture in the vegetable oil sector is not dependent on individual farmer initiative but embedded in a value chain designed to sustain it. The consultations do not conclude NARVOS's work in these districts; they establish the relationships, evidence and shared priorities on which the next phase of implementation will be built.

SUCCESS STORY

Different Paths, One Goal: The Farming Journeys of Ramesh Bharti and Gautam Malviya

Every farmer's field tells a different story, shaped by the soil beneath it, the water available to it, and the choices a family makes season after season. Yet across these different stories, a common thread runs through the work of farmers who are moving toward regenerative agriculture, the pursuit of healthier crops, more sustainable farming systems, and stronger, more resilient livelihoods. The journeys of Ramesh Bharti and Gautam Malviya show two very different paths toward this same destination, one built on diversifying what grows season to season, the other on planting trees that will stand for years to come.

Ramesh Bharti: From One Crop to Many Opportunities

For years, Ramesh Bharti, a small farmer, grew only soybean and wheat on his land. Despite his hard work, returns stayed low, and about three years ago a poor soybean harvest so thin that the harvester operator refused to cut it forced him to rethink his approach to farming altogether.

He began by understanding his land rather than simply working it. A soil test revealed the nutrients his fields already held and what his crops actually needed, allowing him to make far more informed decisions about fertilizers, manure and other inputs. With reliable irrigation on his 1.20 acres, Ramesh diversified away from a single annual crop and now grows okra, tomato, chaulai, gilki, bottle gourd, spinach, coriander and other seasonal vegetables.

The shift transformed his income pattern. Rather than waiting months for one harvest, Ramesh now sells fresh vegetables regularly, earning roughly Rs. 400–500 a day, with individual crops bringing in Rs. 10,000 or more when market prices are favourable. Alongside diversification, he adopted vermicompost, char chutney (bio-input) and other bio-inputs, cutting his annual spend on chemical fertilizers from about Rs. 12,000 to around Rs. 5,000, while reduced tillage using a power tiller and manual methods instead of repeated tractor passes has lightened the disturbance to his soil.

His farm now feeds his family as well as his income, fruit-bearing plants grow around the field, and he plans to re-establish a Nutrition Garden to keep fresh vegetables within easy reach at home. The scale of his own confidence has grown alongside his fields where he once sowed 200 grams of okra seed, he now plants 500 grams and other farmers now visit to learn from his experience with diversification.

> ***"I didn't have this knowledge before, but now I am receiving information through the organization. It helps small farmers like me a great deal in moving forward."***

Ramesh's story shows that transforming a farm does not always require more land it can begin with understanding the soil, diversifying crops, using resources wisely and staying open to learning.

Gautam Malviya: From Young Guava Plants to Long-Term Carbon Sequestration

Gautam Malviya farms 3.5 acres of his own land and 3 acres of government land in Nipania, Sehore, Madhya Pradesh, growing soybean, maize, tomato and groundnut for a family of eight. Alongside his seasonal crops, he prepares and applies farmyard manure from cow dung, making use of resources already available on his own farm to support healthier soil.

Where Ramesh chose to diversify his seasonal crops, Gautam chose to plant for the future. He has recently established 150 Taiwan-variety guava plants, now about a year old and already flowering and fruiting though he deliberately removes these early flowers and fruits so the young trees can put their energy into stronger roots, stems and canopy first.

For Gautam, the guava trees are more than a future income source. As perennial plants, they remain on the farm for years, steadily building biomass and storing carbon in their trunks, branches, roots and the surrounding soil a form of long-term environmental investment that seasonal crops cannot offer.

Combined with farmyard manure and other regenerative practices, this perennial planting is helping him build a farm where productivity and environmental benefit reinforce one another.

> ***I want to protect the environment so that we and our children can live healthy lives.***

Better practices have also strengthened his seasonal crops. When a serious insect problem struck his soybean, an advisory to apply neem oil spray brought the pressure under control, and his field now stands out lush and green next to his neighbour's. Timely information has protected his income too: a weather station alert ahead of soybean harvest last year warned him of rain within two to three days, prompting him to harvest early and save a crop worth around Rs. 50,000.

For Gautam, planting guava is therefore not only about growing fruit it is about growing carbon-storing assets for the future, alongside the healthier, better-informed seasonal farming that already sustains his family.

Two Paths, One Direction

Ramesh Bharti and Gautam Malviya farm in different ways. Ramesh has turned a single crop into many, spreading risk and income across a calendar of vegetables harvested week after week. Gautam has planted trees that will take years to mature but will keep storing carbon and building value long after this year's soybean is sold. One path works within the season, the other works across seasons and years.

Yet both journeys are built on the same foundations, understanding the land before acting on it, replacing costly chemical inputs with bio-inputs and farmyard manure, reducing unnecessary disturbance to the soil, and relying on timely advisories to protect what they have grown. Both farmers describe the same shift from working the land out of habit to working it with knowledge and both credit outside guidance and information for making that shift possible.

Whether through the quick returns of a diversified vegetable plot or the slow, compounding value of a young guava orchard, Ramesh and Gautam are proof that regenerative agriculture is not one fixed method but a set of principles that farmers can apply to their own land, in their own way in pursuit of the same goal, better crops, more sustainable farming, and stronger, more resilient farmers.

Global Signals for Agriculture

Global Land & Drought: A Growing Risk for Agriculture

At the recent UN desertification talks in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, nearly 200 countries highlighted the growing threat of drought and land degradation. Up to 40% of the world's land is estimated to be degraded, while droughts are becoming more frequent, intense and prolonged.

For agriculture, the message is clear, healthy soil is a critical line of defence against drought. Soils with better structure and organic matter can absorb and retain more water, helping crops withstand periods of erratic rainfall. Land degradation, on the other hand, reduces water-holding capacity and agricultural productivity.

The discussions also highlighted the need to move from drought response to drought resilience through better water management, land restoration and sustainable agricultural practices. New initiatives announced in Mongolia include $1.2 billion for rangeland restoration and a facility targeting up to $400 million for drought-resilience investments.

For India's oilseed sector, this reinforces an important priority, building resilient production systems begins with healthy soils, efficient water management and regenerative practices at farm level.

NARVOS Perspective: Resilient vegetable-oil value chains cannot be built on resilient markets alone. They depend on resilient soils, water systems and farming communities.

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