

Drip irrigation is getting popular

A Staff Reporter

BOMBAY 22 July

THE joint effort by Jain Irrigation Systems and Vasant Lift Irrigation Scheme at Ankalkhop in Sangli district of Maharashtra, has started bearing fruit. The former is a pioneer in micro/drip irrigation method in agriculture in the country and the latter, launched by Vasantdada Shetkari Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana, a co-operative society of small farmers. The 232 farmers of the co-operative are happy with the progress achieved so far. In drip irrigation, water is applied at a low flow rate over a long period of time at frequent intervals. Besides, the water is applied directly into the plant's root zone via low pressure delivery system. The command area of the Ankalkhop project is 443 acres. A comparative study of the cost of cultivation of micro irrigation system and conventional system shows that the new method is cost effective. The cost of labour, fertilisers, plantation, pesticides etc has come down drastically. The study shows

that with the installation of micro irrigation system, the cost of cultivation is reduced by Rs 2,765 per acre from Rs 7,650.

The company registered a turnover of Rs 20 crores in 1990-91 and is expected to achieve a turnover of Rs 40 crore in 91-'92, of which it expects Rs 10 crore from exports to the US, Europe, Middle East, Malaysia and Sri Lanka, said Mr V. V. Kasarekar, marketing manager of the company.

The company has set up a 100 per cent export-oriented unit in Jalgaon at a cost of Rs 10 crore. It plans to expand the unit with an additional cost of Rs 15 crores, he said.

Among the many projects taken up by the company are the Tata Tea plantations in the eastern India; Indo-Bulgarian apple project in Kashmir and the A. V. Thomas plantations in south India. Another project covering 22000 acres under drip irrigation that is coming up near Aurangabad will be the largest in the country.