

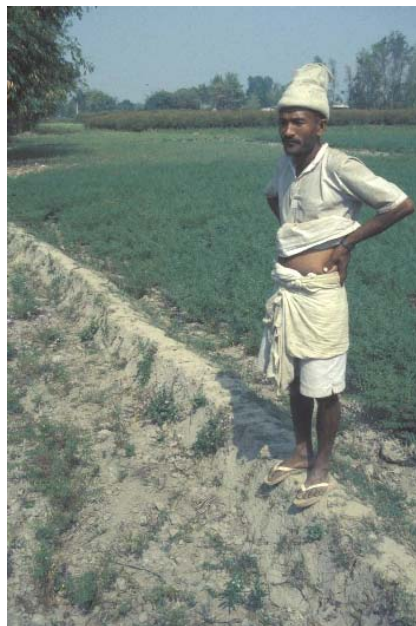
Chickpea Profits not Chicken Feed

Until recently the chickpea harvests in Nepal were in decline. However, smallholder production is now being rejuvenated through addressing environmental constraints and promoting them in a participatory manner. A basket of options for the improved integrated crop management (ICM) of chickpea was developed. It includes use of an improved cultivar Avarodhi (good yield and resistant/tolerant to *Fusarium* wilt and *Botrytis* Grey Mould), seed priming, judicious fungal and insect control methods using easily available pesticides, application of boron and Rhizobium in deficient areas, and management of fertiliser inputs and water. In addition, the value of the biological pesticide *Helicoverpa armigera* nucleopolyhedrovirus (*HearNPV*) was validated. In several areas, the NPV was more effective than Thiodan, the insecticide recommended to farmers to control the insect.

Since 2000 project R7885, led by NRI, with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, has provided this ICM information to more than 3500 farmers. Overall, the chickpea yields of participating farmers have more than doubled to over 2100 kg/ha, and with decreased net production costs farmer profits have more than doubled. Farmers have seen their annual wealth increase by more than US\$200 by growing chickpea using the technologies promoted by this project – an increase for all 3500 farmers of approximately US\$730,000. The majority of farmers described subsequent improvements in all aspects of domestic life, with many moving from mud houses to brick houses or even building from scratch. Farmers also



Monitoring shows project R7885 is boosting chickpea production



Seeing is believing! In front of farmer, chickpea is grown under traditional practices – in field behind, the chickpea is grown with ICM

reported paying off debts, and dramatic increases in expenditure on children's education, clothes and healthcare. Domestic expenditure increased by about 45% over the course of the project, reflecting farmers' increase in wealth.

Estimates of farmer-to-farmer spread of these improved methodologies indicate that up to 7500 farmers have assimilated some or all of the ICM components from project farmers. The NGO FORWARD (Forum for Welfare, Agricultural Research and Development) is buying seed from the project's farmers to distribute to farmers and the private sector in other areas. In Lalbandi and Bardibas, dealers have given farmers guarantees to buy 7000 kg of seed (enough to sow 233 ha).

R7885: Promoting the adoption of integrated crop management in chickpea by poor farmers in Nepal
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