

Fairtrade: a World of Difference

Producer Stories: Sansar Chand

Agrocel, India, Rice



Sansar Chand

Sansar has five children – four daughters and a son aged between 3 and 18. He is one of 11 members of Agrocel's premium committee.

"I have been farming rice since 1985. In 2001 I began working with Agrocel. I get 25% more when I sell my organic rice to Agrocel. Because of this I can educate my children and look after my family better. My eldest daughter is married, my other children are still at school. If they want to study I have no problems with that and I will educate my children - the girls and my son - equally."

"I have four brothers and during the harvesting time we all work together. We co-operate to get the job done. We call it Sanjha. All four of us are members of Agrocel."

"But I don't want my children to go to the government school because it is not good teaching. If you want to educate your children you need to send them to a private school and this is expensive."

Word list:

Premium committee	the group which discusses how the Fairtrade 'premium' will be spent
Fairtrade premium	the money paid to the community in addition to the Fairtrade price of the product, to be spent on community development.
Sanjha	the traditional Indian concept of co-operating with community spirit to get a job done

Education in India

In the UK, there is a good system of education funded by the government. That is not the case in India where government schools are often very poorly funded. They often have very large classes and may not have many books or other resources, making it difficult to learn. Many parents will therefore try to send their children to private schools if at all possible.

Photos: Traidcraft/Shailan Parker
Agrocel supplies rice to Traidcraft.
Information taken from interviews in 2006

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Producer Stories: Dharam Pal

Agrocel, India, Rice

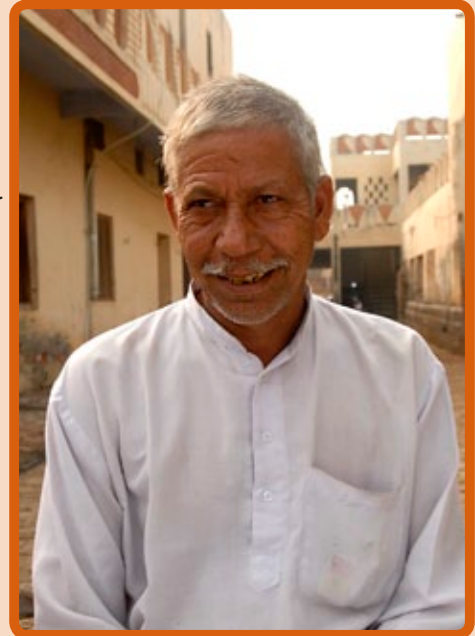


Dharam Pal

Member of the Fairtrade premium committee.

"I have been farming for 40 years. My forefathers were also farmers. For 25 years I've been growing rice, the last eight years organic. I also grow wheat. I changed because the price was good. Also, whatever gets created on the farm is also organic. So when the buffalo eats you also get milk that is without chemicals.

"My wife and I have two sons aged 21 and 17 and both of them work on the farm. The elder one is married with one son. Our daughter is 24. She is married with one child. The extra money from Agrocel paid for the education of the children so I could send them to a better school. I now have a better house and can eat better food.



"Because my sons are farming with me, they get their share of the organic premium, so that helps to educate my grandson."

"On the premium committee we have prepared a list of long-term and short-term things that we would like. For short-term things we want to help the community. For instance, we have thought of giving a sewing machine to a widow.

"As well as the rotovators that we have bought, we know of a machine that cuts the wheat and makes it into bundles. When we want to harvest the wheat, the number of people in our families cannot do the job in one go. It is very important that we cut the crop in time – if it stays standing for two or three days time it goes to waste. But with basmati the very important thing is that it must be cut by hand. By using machines where we can, we hope that farming can continue to the next generation, otherwise our sons might leave the industry."

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Producer Stories: Dalbir Singh

Agrocel, India, Rice



Dalbir Singh

Farmer Dalbir Singh is vice-president of the association and also one of 11 members of Agrocel's premium committee which administers the Fairtrade premium.

"I've been farming since 1990 and from then I've been growing rice and wheat in rotation. I have been farming organically since 2000. I have five acres.

"I produce very good quality rice and I spend the money from the organic premium on my family."



"I produce very good quality rice and I spend the money from the organic premium on my family. I produce good quality in the paddy and we also eat very healthy foods. Definitely it is a healthy way of living when I can look after my family and provide better things for them. Whether it is medicines or education, I can provide.

"Before selling to Agrocel I was selling to a middleman and there were a lot of problems. I would get less money. Now selling to Agrocel I can avoid these problems and get better money. The middleman gave the minimum price. Today I am getting a better price and I am also getting the organic premium.

"The help that we need in farming – all the inputs – are provided by Agrocel including interest-free credit. Sometimes I need to spend money on my farming and it could be three or four months until I can sell my harvest. Agrocel provide things interest-free.

"Earlier when I went to the agent who bought the things from me, he would provide me with the money which meant I was tied to him and from the day I got the money he would be charging me an interest rate.

"With Agrocel they monitor our crop and will make suggestions if there are pests or diseases. That visit costs nothing.

"My wife and I have two sons, Pardeep (12) and Gurdeep (8). My hope for them is that if they study they should get a job."

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Producer Stories: Bhahdur Singh

Agrocel, India, Rice



“We will guarantee that it is organic and we provide a better quality product. The more you buy the better we will be able to produce and provide you with the very best.”

Bhahdur Singh

“I’ve been farming for 15 years and had paddy fields for that length of time. For six years I’ve been attached to Agrocel and been farming organically.

“My wife and I have two sons, Somnath (11) and Sukhdev (8). They are going to the private school. It is five times more expensive to go to the private school than the government school. Because I am with Agrocel I can do this for my children, otherwise I would not have been able to send them to private school.

“All parents think that their children should be educated and they should get a job or open up their own business. Farming is a 24-hour job and very hard work.”

What are the benefits of selling to Agrocel?

“Firstly, my land will stay in good shape because I am doing organic farming. Secondly, I am getting more money. And whatever food I eat is healthier because it is organic.

“I feel more secure working with Agrocel. I definitely feel more secure about the future because earlier I did not know what I would get for my rice, but now I know the price I am getting and I am also getting the organic premium.”

Education in India

In the UK, there is a good system of education funded by the government. That is not the case in India where government schools are often very poorly funded. They often have very large classes and may not have many books or other resources, making it difficult to learn. Many parents will therefore try to send their children to private schools if at all possible.

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Producer Stories: Subash Chand

Agrocel, India, Rice



“My children definitely will have a better future because I don’t want to stop their studies. I want them to continue. Even if they want to go into farming, why should they not be educated? Even an educated person can be a farmer.”

Subash Chand

“I have been farming for 11 years and with Agrocel for six. I have been growing rice since I started farming and organic for six. Working with Agrocel means that it is less expensive because it is organic farming and we get the organic premium above the price. We are producing healthy and safe food.

“I have a daughter and two sons. My 10-year-old daughter and my son, who is seven, go to school. They are at a private school. My other son is four. I studied to 10th grade in the government school. My father did not let me study beyond 10th grade but I would have preferred to get a good education.”

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