

IISR scientists instrumental in popularising modern irrigation techniques

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Scientists of Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research (IISR) are playing an instrumental role in popularising modern techniques of irrigation for sugarcane to save water wastage.

Sugarcane is a water intensive crop. However due to use of traditional irrigation method, much water is wasted.

Senior scientist, IISR, AK Shah said water as a resource requires special attention because of its multiple benefits and the problems created by its excesses, shortages and quality deterioration.

“With the help of scientific intervention, farmers can both save water and also increase the yield of the crop,” he said.

In traditional flood irrigation methods, irrigation efficiency at farmer’s fields seldom exceeds 35-45 per cent, leading to water wastage.

There are two seasons for sugarcane planting, namely, during October and March.

“For the plants of October, the need for irrigation will start in about a month’s time and therefore we want to educate farmers about new methods of irrigation,” Shah said.

Shah added that the challenge was to provide practical and useful advice to farmers using state-of-the-art technology and to convince them about benefits of irrigation by on-farm demonstrations.

Under Farmers Participation Action Research Programme (FPARP) with the help of Ministry of Water Resources, the institute laid out demonstrations of water-saving



sugarcane technologies at the farmers’ fields in Sitapur and Barabanki districts of Uttar Pradesh.

A total of 100 demonstrations of one hectare each on four selected technologies, namely, skip furrow method of irrigation, irrigation at critical growth stages, ring-pit method of planting and trash mulching were conducted at the select farmers’ fields.

In comparison with conventional method/farmers’ practice of irrigation, there was 38.8 per cent increase in cane yield and 21.7 per cent saving in irrigation water in the skip furrow method of irrigation.

Likewise, the cane yield increase in ring pit method and trash mulching methods was 96.4 per cent and 25.7 per cent respectively.

“We want more and more farmers to adopt to new techniques and get the benefits. For this, the institute is carrying out field demonstration on regular basis,” he said.