

# Sylhet Farmers busy in Early winter vegetable cultivation

S A Shofiee- Sylhet Farmers are busy cultivating winter vegetables in advance. Meanwhile, the work of preparing the land with seedlings is going on in full swing. They are spending busy time considering that it is possible to earn more money by cultivating vegetables in advance. And many farmers are becoming more interested in cultivating these vegetables.

It is known that the cultivation of early winter vegetables has increased in Sylhet region since last few years. And it is possible to earn extra money by farming these. Moreover, if the weather is favorable, it is possible to plant more than the target. If the weather is like last year, this year too, more than the target will be achieved, said agriculture officials.

Meanwhile, the farmers of this region have been greatly affected by the floods this season. To overcome that, the farmers of Goainghat, Kanaighat, Companyganj, Golapganj, Jaintapur and other areas of the district have started working to cultivate vegetables in advance. Farmers are tending these lands every day.

On the surface, I went to Nandirgao area of Goainghat upazila of the district and talked to some farmers. They said that if the weather is favorable, the production of early varieties of vegetables will be good. These lands are being prepared for planting winter vegetables including tomatoes, cauliflower, cabbage. If these vegetables can be cultivated before winter, then the market price is higher. Farmers are working with that thought in mind.

Farmer Hasnat Islam of Nandirgao area of Goainghat upazila

said, last year I cultivated tomatoes on four bigha land. A profit of 70 to 80 thousand taka has been made by selling vegetables per bigha of land. So this year I will cultivate two more bighas of land. 40,000 to 50,000 rupees are spent on each bigha of tomato till the crop is harvested. He said that it costs a little more to cultivate vegetables in advance.

Another farmer, Jamal Ahmed, said that if vegetables are cultivated in advance, good prices can be obtained in the market. That's why the farmers of this region are constantly tending to early vegetable cultivation since last few years. Many are benefiting from it. A lot of care has to be taken in the cultivation of these vegetables. Moreover, these vegetable seedlings and trees are affected by various diseases, at that time, different pesticides have to be applied to the vegetables. In that case, the local agriculture officer gives them various suggestions, he said.

Additional Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Directorate, Sylhet Mohammad Anichuzzaman said, the target of vegetable production has not been set this year, the target will be set within this week. But the target is likely to be set as last year. Last year the target of vegetable production was 41 thousand 520 hectares and 54 thousand 273 hectares were cultivated.

When asked if any incentive has been given to the farmers of Sylhet who have suffered greatly due to three rounds of floods, he said that 4 thousand 800 farmers of seasonal crops have been brought under the incentive.

Sylhet Deputy Director of Agriculture Extension Department Mohammad Khair Uddin Molla said, Sylhet farmers are interested in early vegetable cultivation. Last year many people have benefited by cultivating winter vegetables including tomato, cauliflower, potatoes, as a result farmers are leaning towards these cultivations. We are also working directly in the field with the farmers full-time at the field level. All our upazila

field level officials have been instructed to monitor these cultivations. To see their pros and cons. No vegetable should be diseased. We district officials are also regularly supervising these activities.

He said, unless there is a major natural disaster like flood. Farmers will benefit from early vegetable cultivation if the weather conditions are favourable. We hope to achieve our target this year as well as last year.