

## Crop diversification through Guava plantation: An alternative to Rice-Wheat Cropping

To promote sustainable agriculture practices, to raise the farmer's income, to boost the horticulture development under salt stressed agro-ecosystems; and to find out the alternative of Rice-Wheat cropping pattern a guava plantation was done on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 at Kathura village of Sonipat district of Haryana under the Farmer First Project. The establishment of a model guava plantation has been initiated to demonstrate best practices and techniques, training and technical guidance, enhancements in the income and livelihood of farmers and to strengthen the agricultural ecosystem in this village and surrounding areas.

During the month of June an interaction session was organized by Dr. Rajkumar, Senior Scientist (Horticulture) with the farmers to mobilize them for adoption of crop diversification through guava cultivation. A group of fascinated farmers were selected based on their interest in guava cultivation and their willingness to actively participate in the project activities. Afterwards site selection, land preparation and varietal selection (Guava cv. *Hisar Safeda*) was finalized.

Subsequently conducting soil tests and analyzing the suitability of the land, the necessary steps like land preparation such as ploughing, laser leveling, pit digging by using auger hole technique followed by organic compost application etc. were carried out on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2023 to ensure optimum growing conditions. Good quality saplings of Guava cv. *Hisar safeda* were procured from Centre of Excellence for Guava, Bhuna (Fatehabad). The saplings were then transplanted on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 after onset of monsoon in well-prepared pits, adhering to the recommended spacing and planting techniques.

Moreover the farmers were guided for implementing appropriate irrigation techniques, including drip irrigation and mulching, to ensure efficient water management and prevent water loss. The project team also guided farmers about weeding, fertilization, training & pruning, and pest control, to promote healthy growth and maximum yield.

The guava plantation project in this Village under the Farmer First Project may be a successful endeavor. This activity will have long-lasting benefits for the farmers in this region as a whole under salt stressed ecosystems.

