

## **Pilferage-free Paddy Procurement**

National Agro Foundation (NAF), is implementing Water and Agriculture Development Project with the financial support of Oerlikon Friction Systems India Pvt Ltd in three villages namely Neikuppam, Kidiripettai and Poosivakkam in Walajabad block, Kancheepuram district of Tamilnadu. The major livelihood of these villages are agriculture and from time immemorial the villagers are doing farming. Since their lands are low-lying, they are cultivating paddy.

Amidst uncertain rains and threatening pest and diseases, the farmers faced major problem of marketing their produce, paddy. Before NAF intervention, the farmers sold paddy to the local vendors. The weighment was erratic and for 75 kg bag, they took 82 kg paddy grains, claiming moisture, chaffy grains and the weight of gunny bags. In addition, they took Rs. 5 per bag as commission. The price per kg was also very less when compared to market price. If they planned to sell through the DPC, Kancheepuram, they need to bear transportation cost, they need to wait for 3-4 days at DPC and there is no assured intake due to limited target for procurement. Knowing no other way, they were forced to distressed sale to the local vendors.

NAF guided the farmers to form Farmers Clubs in the three villages which was the first step to congregate the farmers under one roof at a single platform. This was the turning point for them to develop their villages.

They started to solve their problems with the guidance of NAF. Paddy sales being a major problem, they discussed in the farmers club forum to find alternate solution. NAF advised them to request the Government to establish a Direct Procurement Centre. Accordingly Neikuppam Farmers Club approached Kancheepuram District Collector on February 2020, and made a request to open a procurement centre in their village. Surprisingly, within a month, the collector gave approval for one DPC and "Direct Procurement Centre – Neikuppam – 0261" was established in their village on March 2020.

Now paddy procurement is ongoing from the centre. About 22 nearby village farmers are selling their produce in the centre. While the local vendors fixed the price of paddy per bag as Rs. 800 to 1200 depending on the market surplus, they sold paddy at DPC for Rs. 1450 per bag as a fixed price. By filtering all the pilferages of local vendors, now the farmers get an extra price of Rs. 300 to 400 per bag from the DPC. The weighment at DPC is accurate, they get the money without delay and local transport by means of bullock cart or tractor tipper is very easy for the farmers.. So far 2,100 tons of paddy has been procured by this centre.

With the guidance of NAF and efforts of Neikuppam Farmers Club, this facility was made possible. Now the farmers are very happy for solving the yearlong problem of paddy sales. They told that they are grateful to NAF and Oerlikon Friction Systems India Pvt Ltd for their great job on the benefit of farmers.



*Direct Procurement Centre established at Neikuppam village*



*DPC official along with members of Farmers club at Neikuppam*

