

# In the age of seed companies, free distribution aims to preserve native paddy

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[A home-grown initiative is making waves in an age where private players have the upper hand in terms of logistics and pricing.](#)



District Collector P Uma Maheswari inaugurated a warehouse of POFPC in Pudukkottai on Friday | M MUTHU KANNAN

**PUDUKKOTTAI :** A home-grown initiative is making waves in an age where private players have the upper hand in terms of logistics and pricing. The Pudukkottai Organic Farmer Producers Company Ltd (POFPCL), an initiative of farmers, has been distributing seeds free of cost as parts of its efforts to revive and preserve native paddy varieties.

Unlike other inputs for which farmers pay in cash, POFPC distributes seeds with a rider - farmers have to return double the quantity at the end of harvest. Fearing that increasing use of chemicals and fertilizers could make agriculture difficult to sustain in future, POFPC with support from Tamil Nadu Agri-marketing department, has been distributing free seeds for the past four years. The company has customer base of 1000 farmers in the district.

"Whenever we issue seeds, the only advice we give farmers is tell them not to use pesticides or fertilizers. Extensive use of hybrid seeds and chemicals have reduced the quality of grains. Growing crop without chemical use would help retain nutrient value of the rice", said A Adhappan, Managing Director of POFPC. "If a farmer collects 2 kg of Seeraga samba variety of paddy, he must repay with 4 kg of seeds after harvest. In this way we can sustain the business model and also can reach out to more farmers," said Adhappan.

The company currently provides 46 varieties of native paddy seeds including Mappala Samba, Seraga Samba, Mysore Malli, Thuiya Malli and Kichidi Samba.

The low investment needed for using native variety is encouraging many farmers approach the company. "The biggest problem we face is investment on fertilizers and pesticides. The cost comes down while using native seeds, and it has made farming a lot profitable", said, Selvan, a farmer in Pudukkottai.

Besides issuing seeds, the company operates procurement centres to buy harvested crop. " Compared to other farm markets, we provide higher price for the produce as rice is of native variety and grown organically. After procurement, we supply them to customers all over the country", Adhappan added.

District Collector, P Uma Maheswari said, " Last year the company reported turnover of ` 1.8 crore. The facilities and service they provide are extra-ordinary and I hope the company reaches a wider farmer base."

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