An International Multidisciplinary e-Magazine
www.sabujeema.com
Volume 2 | Issue 5 | MAY, 2022

SABUJEEMA

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Sabujeema Sabujeema
editorsabujeema@gmail.com
sabujeema-international multidisciplinary-e-magazine

MIXED FARMING: AN ALLIDE BRANCH IN AGRICULTURE

[Article ID: SIMM0139]

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INTRODUCTION

Mixed farming is a system where the farmer can grow two or more different types of crops in the same piece of land at same time to minimize the space and to get maximum profit from that single piece of land. Mixed cropping is also referring as co-cultivation or polyculture due to the involvement of different crops at a time in a piece of land. Increasing human population which is a world-wide major problem that also results in decreasing area all over the world, but in mixed farming a farmer can save more than one space at a time for which this is very demanding in current situation. In mixed farming crops ripen during different season, planting more than one crop, provides a wealth of environmental benefits including maintain a balance of input and output of soil nutrients, insect pest suppression, resistance to climate (extreme cold or wet or dry or hot) and increase in overall productivity, so it has a maximum potential. In mixed farming system the largest category of livestock system in the world covers about 2.5 billion hectares of land from which 1.1 billion hectares are arable rainfed crop land, 0.2 billion hectares are irrigated crop land and 1.2 billion hectares are grassland. Mixed farming contributes 92%of the world′s milk supply and 70% of the sheep or goat meat.

SUITABLE CONDITIONS FOR MIXED FARMING

- Soil should be fertile so that there would be a good nutrient to meet the requirement of different crops.
- All plants should get proper amount of sunlight that means there should be no overshadowing of different crops.
- Good availability of water for better development of crops.
- The fertilizer which grows in the farm should have better compatibility with different crops.
- Preheritance of machines or vehicles in the mixed farm.
- Less use of fertilizer due to exchange of fertilizers among the plants.

ADVANTAGES OF MIXED FARMING

- Reduces the risk of crop failure.
- Increases soil fertility.
- Pest infestation of crops is greatly reduced.

- In mixed farming all products are utilized.
- Farmer can harvest more crops which fulfil the requirement of family needs as well the agricultural market.
- In comparison to input output is more.
- There is a crop livestock mutual relationship where both plants and animal help each other.
- In this type of farming land will not bare at all. We can get products at same or different time.

DISADVANTAGES OF MIXED FARMING

- Application of fertilizer and pesticide to the individual plant is difficult.
- Harvesting and threshing of crops separately are not possible.
- More resources are required in caring for your crops and raising your animals.
- Farm animals may feed on crops before harvest stage thus resulting in loss of yield and reduction in market value.
- There is also a change that mistake in one crop will affect the other one.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES FACE DUE TO MIXED FARMING

- Maintain soil biodiversity, minimize soil erosion, help to conserve water and provide a good habitat for birds.
- Allow intensified farming, with less dependent on natural resources and preserving more biodiversity than would be the case if food demands were to be met by crops and livestock activities undertaken in isolation.
- Make the best use of crop residue, when they are not used as feed, stalks may be incorporated directly into the soil where for sometimes they act as nitrogen trap, exacerbating deficiency.
- Maintain soil fertility by recycling the soil nutrients and allowing the introduction and use of rotation between various crops or for land to remain fallow and grasses, shrubs become re-established.

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