

RAISE YOUR **BAJRA** YIELDS

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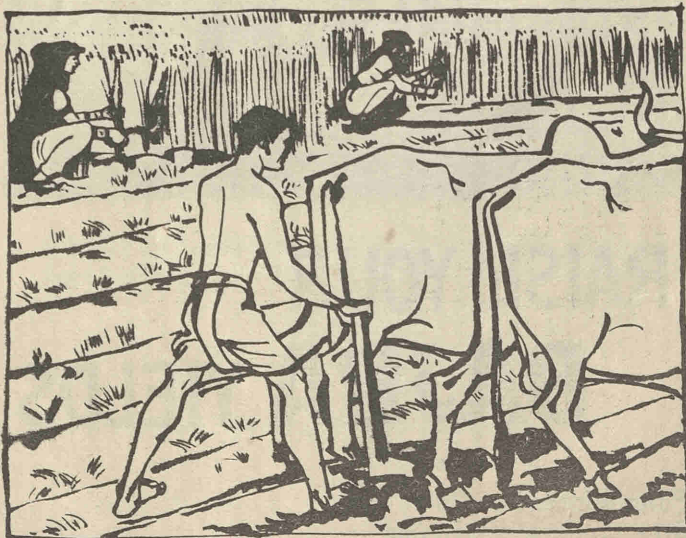
RAISE YOUR BAJRA YIELDS

Bajra, the pearl millet, is also known as *sajje*, *ganti* or *cambu* in the South. It is a dryland crop. It comes up well in light soils and areas of low rainfall. It is grown in a variety of soils - sandy loam, medium black, alluvial and poor gravelly soils. *Bajra*, however, comes up best when raised on a good deep soil.

Bajra is a rainfed crop but it also comes up well as an irrigated crop during the hot weather in some places. *Bajra* can grow with less moisture than that needed for *jowar*. You can raise it in areas receiving 17 to 20 inches of rainfall. It can be grown even with as little as nine inches of well-distributed rainfall.

PREPARE YOUR LAND WELL

Soon after you have harvested the previous crop, plough the land with an improved plough. If you are not able to do this, then plough the land with the first



showers. Work a blade-harrow if your soil is of a heavy type like the heavy black soil, where you cannot plough soon after the rains. Plough or harrow twice or thrice more to get a firm seed-bed.

SOW BETTER SEED

Grow improved *bajra* varieties to get higher yields. Your local Agricultural Officer or the Gram Sevak will help you select a variety, best suited to your area.

Here are some improved varieties of *bajra*, farmers are growing in different states.

Bombay

AF3, B-207, 32-C and 14.D

Punjab

T.55, A.1/3, S.350 and S.530

Rajasthan

T.5

Uttar Pradesh

Local selections

Andhra Pradesh

AKP.2

Madras

Nos. 1,2,3,4 and 5, K1, X1 and X2

Mysore

Local selections and *Transval Sajje*

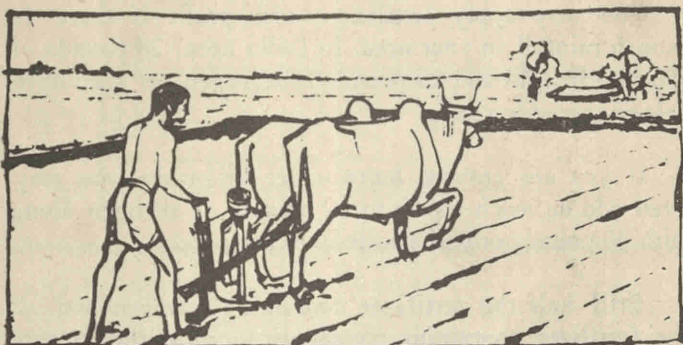
Delhi

T.55

SOW THE RIGHT WAY

Sow *bajra* in June or July with the break of the monsoon. This will give the crop a good start. In the South, however, it is best sown in February and March under irrigation.

Bajra is sown in many ways. It is broadcast, dibbled, transplanted or drilled in lines. In the South, transplanting has given good results. If you drill *bajra* in lines, you would require only half the amount of seed you use for broadcasting. The interculture with a bullock-hoe or a harrow is also easier and cheaper.



You need only three pounds of seed to sow an acre with a drill in black and heavy soils, and six pounds in light soils. In north India, you would need only five pounds if you give a spacing of 18 inches in-between the rows. A spacing of 18 to 24 inches, depending on the local conditions, is considered ideal.

PRACTISE MIXED CROPPING

Raise a mixed crop of *bajra* with a legume like groundnut, *tur*, *moong*, *urd* or *moth*. This will not only get you more profits but also increase the soil fertility.



MANURE WELL

Give the land five to ten cartloads of cattle manure or compost per acre, about a month before sowing. Mix it well with the soil, with the help of a *desi* plough or a harrow.

You may apply fertilizers with profit if there is enough rainfall in your area. In Delhi area, 20 pounds of phosphoric acid and 20 pounds of nitrogen per acre have helped increase yields.

If you are growing *bajra* under irrigation, you may even add as much as 40 to 60 pounds of nitrogen along with 30 pounds of phosphoric acid per acre.

Drill half the fertilizer containing nitrogen and all the fertilizer containing phosphoric acid at the time of sowing, and the rest as top-dressing at the mid-growth stage of the crop.

Consult your Gram Sevak or the District Agricultural Officer as to how much of these fertilizers you should apply.

KEEP PESTS AND DISEASES UNDER CONTROL

Take immediate control measures as soon as you find any pest or disease attacking your crop. Here are some of the control measures for a few of the important pests and diseases. Your local Agricultural Officer or Gram Sevak will be able to help you in controlling them.

Grasshoppers and the hairy caterpillar

There are two types of grasshoppers:

The Deccan wingless grasshopper and the surface grasshopper. Both attack the *bajra* crop

The caterpillar appears in the early stages of the crop, and feeds on the foliage during daytime.

Dust 10 per cent BHC at 20 pounds per acre or spray with 0.25 per cent BHC. Plough the field after the harvest of the previous crop as a precautionary measure.

Amyworms

The caterpillars grow to a length of 1 inch to 1½ inches. They are smooth, stout and dull greenish in colour with broad, light-coloured stripes running along either side of the body.

Collect and destroy the insects. Dust with 5 per cent BHC at 30 pounds per acre.

Green-ear disease

The ear given out by the affected plant gets transformed wholly or partially into a loose green head, composed of a mass of small, twisted leaves. As a result grains are not formed. Leaves also get affected. Such leaves later turn brown and dry up. In older plants, the leaves enclosing the ears are affected and get twisted and dry up. The affected plants remain stunted and occasionally give out tillers.

Remove and burn the affected plants.

Smut

The ovaries here and there or in patches in the panicle, are transformed into oval protruding structures, twice as big as the normal grains, blackish to chocolate brown in colour.

Remove the affected ears and burn them. Rotate *bajra* with other crops.