

## Today's Paper » NATIONAL » TAMIL NADU

### Madurai ryot hits bumper harvest

S. Poorvaja

***Ingenuity, scientific techniques help him harvest 24 tonnes of paddy per hectare***



S. Sethumadhavan receives a token of appreciation from Joint Director of Agriculture Jaisingh Gnanadurai on Thursday.— Photo: G. Moorthy

Amidst sob stories of crop failure from farmers and signs of an impending drought, a Madurai farmer has blended ingenuity with scientific techniques to produce a bumper harvest.

While the yield per hectare in the past in Madurai's rural areas was not more than 10 tonnes, S. Sethumadhavan, a farmer in Alanganallur near here, has harvested a record yield of 24 tonnes of paddy per hectare – highest in the State.

Taking to farming 15 years ago, Sethumadhavan, from what he says, has mastered the techniques that have come with the introduction of System of Rice Intensification (SRI) over the past few years.

Here is his secret: as a part of the SRI, he used the CR 1009 variety of paddy seeds. First, he got the soil in his land tested and adopted the best-suited practices to maximise yield. The planting of 'Daincha' as a green manure crop, before sowing seeds, added to the [soil quality](#).

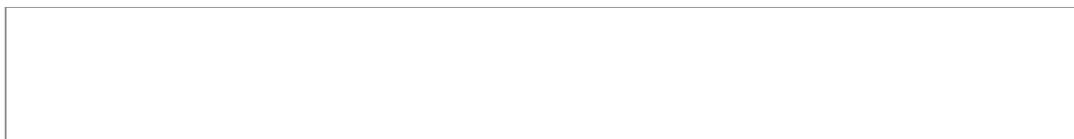
"Instead of limiting to one type of fertilizer, a mix of [organic](#) and [chemical fertilizers](#) was used. Then, the use of simple machinery such as the kono-weeder helped me increase the yield three fold," Mr. Sethumadhavan says.

When he told the Agriculture Department officials that he wanted to participate in the competition for [high yield](#), they guided him about the use of technology, type of seeds and techniques to be followed.

"Selection and testing of soil are extremely important if farmers want to maximise their yield," says R. Sridhar, an agriculture officer who guided the farmer. "Though the region has a lot of wells and the farmer had copious water supply, it was effective [water management](#) that contributed to the high yield," the officer says.

"The yield is the highest in the State," Jaisingh Gnanadurai, Joint Director, Agriculture, announced on Thursday. Proper handling of the over 10 techniques that encompass SRI proved highly beneficial, said R.M. Lakshmanan, [assistant director](#), Agriculture, Alanganallur.

It can be recalled that Periasamy Solaimalai, a farmer from Madurai, bagged the "Krishi Karman" award in 2013 for a yield of more than 20 tonnes of paddy per hectare. Knowing well that his was a [success story](#), Mr. Sethumadhavan says, "I'm confident of winning a national award."



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