

## Bringing back smiles on faces of farmers

P. Samuel Jonathan | Guntur, December 4, 2019



### Tobacco Board's green drive aims at efficient production of quality tobacco

**Vijayawada:** The smile on the faces of farmers tells the story! The sight of long and elliptical green leaves fluttering to a gentle breeze on the sun baked fields fill the farmers' heart with joy. The bountiful production of Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) Tobacco over the years and the expectations of better remunerative prices have brought back smiles on the faces of farmers. Natural farming has come as a ray of hope for farmers reeling under high cost of production. With almost minimum cost of cultivation, farmers are raising tobacco crop using natural resources.

The demand for producing more has pushed farmers across the world to use chemical fertilizers, and India is no exception. Excessive use of chemical fertilizers has been reducing the soil fertility, degrading the soil carbon levels and soil microbes' population. The insatiable demand for water has resulted in depletion of groundwater levels, rendering the aquifers dry.

Even as the world is staring at climate emergency, the global tobacco industry had embraced the concept of Sustainable Tobacco Production (STP) in a big way.

### Socio-economic conditions

"Sustainable Tobacco Production (STP) ensures efficient production of quality tobacco, under conditions that neutralises the negative impact on the environment, in a manner that improves the socio-economic conditions of people and their communities in the tobacco production areas," says Executive Director, Tobacco Board, K. Sunitha.

The Tobacco Board has adapted Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), a unique farming practice using natural manure and plant minerals, which has revolutionised the way farming is done. Green Drive is an initiative launched to create a green and sustainable future in tobacco growing areas of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Green Drive encapsulates improving the soil health through green manuring, adapting natural farming in tobacco cultivation for production of organic tobacco, 365 days green cover in tobacco cultivation, promotion of GreenTech nurseries, good agricultural practices in tobacco cultivation and residue-free tobacco production.

**Source:** <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Vijayawada/bringing-back-smiles-on-faces-of-farmers/article30153384.ece>