Food sustainability is a basic need for Auroville and your donations have enabled the purchase of significant acres of new farmland since A4A began. Siddhartha Farm is one of the important recipients. It is one of Auroville’s oldest farms, started by Herbert in 1995, located on the fertile plain near Irumbai Lake. In 2017, Auroville’s Land Board negotiated the purchase of several Irumbai acres adjacent to Siddhartha Farm, enabling its expansion. Here’s a visit to Siddhartha Farm – its goals, practices, and results – and what has happened on this new plot that your donations have purchased for Auroville!

Using experimental, organic & traditional methods, Siddhartha grows paddy rice, bananas, pulses, grams, nuts and sugar cane, and has food-processing units for making cashew butter, groundnut butter, and organic jaggery (raw sugar syrup). Siddhartha focuses on healthy ecosystems. With its combination of organic, traditional, and innovative practices Herbert reports that Siddhartha’s yields “are comparable to those of non-organic agriculture.” See our film made in association with AuroImage Irumbai, a bridge between the past and the future https://vimeo.com/154672005
One of Siddhartha’s major goals is helping Auroville achieve self-sufficiency in its need for rice, with 2 harvests a year possible due to the availability of water. Herbert explains the importance of this area for Auroville’s rice production need, explaining that large parts of other Auroville land are arid:

“Here in the West Greenbelt we can grow food on a large scale organically. The traditional lake irrigation systems are excellent for the cultivation of rice, together with the good soil we have here in this area. Rainwater harvesting with catchment ponds is the traditional system in Tamil Nadu. Here the catchment system fills up in 2 months starting in October and we can use the water till the beginning of May. With this water storage system Siddhartha has 90 of the water needed for our paddy cultivation.”

For the new donations-funded plot, the first step was digging and laying in water pipes, along with building a temporary thorny fence and creating access to the main road, and then they started planting:
Here’s a small clip sharing some of the action!  VID-20190703-WA0006

Groundnuts (peanuts) are one of the staple crops for the rich groundnut butter they produce. Here are the young plants growing on the new donations-purchased plot:
The groundnut plants can grow symbiotically alongside the Casuarina Pines:

The first groundnut crop on the new plot was ready after 90 days, and yielded a good and abundant harvest! Here’s the clip: VID-20191117-WA0016

In its more than two decades, Siddhartha Farm has grown and developed step by step – through the intensive work, ingenuity and dedication of Herbert, his family and Siddhartha’s workers. This enormous commitment for Auroville includes many costs of infrastructure, irrigation systems, and equipment that were personally provided by Herbert, his children, and friends over the years.

Herbert wrote to the A4A team:

I remember 3 years ago when we met at the farm with Sigrid and had a collective dream to integrate this land for Auroville.

Thank you all for your support and help!

It feels unrealistic that this dream has come true …

I invite you to have more unrealistic collective dreams for a better future!

A4A is extremely happy to have brought the funds for new land that supports Siddhartha’s work … and in this way, help Auroville to better meet its food challenge.

Acres for Auroville is dedicated to working for this goal - with YOUR solidarity!