

Impact of urban areas on agriculture

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Many water channels like rivers are loaded with domestic sewage and industrial pollutants are the main source of irritation for irrigation. Polluted water pollutes the crops grown. Especially in the periurban areas and those close to urban areas high intensive agriculture of leafy vegetables, vegetables, grass as fodder for milch animals, etc. becomes a big problem.

In recent years, small rivers or sewages have become perennial and the total flow of pollutants has tremendously increased.

Leafy vegetables

Farmers in the periurban areas are cultivating throughout the year i.e., harvesting three to four crops a year. The heavy metal contaminants from these polluted waters are reaching the consumers through the food chain. Especially in the leafy vegetables the heavy metal contaminants and biological pathogens are finding their way into them.

As the domestic sewage systems have heavy loads of phosphates and nitrogen apart from other nutrients the farmers need to invest very little on the fertilizer inputs. The overall yield of some of the crops grown is very high. Some grasses are highly adapted to these pol-

luted waters, but loaded with pollutants affecting the quality of milk and other products.

Also the demand for water in the urban areas is very high. The farmers dependent on the groundwater are having great difficulty. The ground water, as they go deeper, is saline and when applied to the fields over a period increases the alkalinity of the soil.

Recent times

The leachates from the solid waste dumpyard sites pollute ground water. In recent times people are producing compost from city waste. The city waste compost has highest number of the pollutants including plastics which are carcinogenic.

Some farmers buy these materials for soil amendment / growth regulator for getting high yield of the crops. But these pollutants find their way into the food chain and finally in the products consumed by people. There are no regulatory mechanisms.

There is an urgent need to explore the possibilities of how urban areas could also support the farmers than instead of seeing urban areas affecting agriculture.

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