

21/03/01 Daily News An efficient implement for weed management in all upland crops

Sugarcane Research Institute (SRI) has introduced a tyne cultivator to help farmers to weed upland crops. Weeds in sugarcane could reduce its final yield between 10%-40% in a single year. In rupee terms this would amount to Rs. 20000 - Rs. 40000 per hectare per annum. Although weed control accounts for about 10% of the total cultivation cost farmers often tend to neglect this due to shortage of labour and lack of suitable implements to carry it out easily and in time.

The implement

Tyne cultivator consists of a steel frame and five adjustable tynes. A hitch unit in front of the frame mounts the implement to the two wheel tractor.

This implement brings diverse benefits to smallholders.

Simple and low cost fabrication

It can be made using locally available materials by small-scale agricultural implement makers. The cost of the unit at current price is Rs. 8000 only.

Reduces weeding costs

Generally, a single manual weeding using the mammoth costs around Rs. 3750 per hectare whilst the use of weedicides is only little cheaper costing around Rs. 3000. However, the tyne cultivator made by the SRI could do it for Rs. 1320, thus more than halving the cost of weeding.

Answers to labour shortages

Weeding is essential only in the first four months of the sugarcane crop. Unfortunately, this is the period when the labour shortages are acute in sugarcane-growing areas due to high demand for labour for both paddy and sugarcane. Therefore, weeding is often neglected by

the farmer resulting in large crop losses. This could amount to 50,000 tonnes of cane in a single year in a project like Sevenagala.

Allows timely control of weeds

Tyne cultivator made by SRI could not only reduce the cost of weeding but also would assist the farmer in timely control of weeds to handle his allotment by himself and making him independent of hired labour.

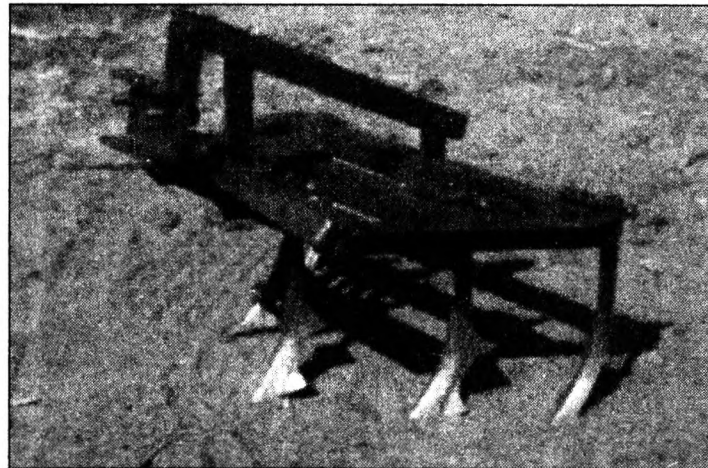
Has multiple uses

Extensive field tests in all sugarcane-growing areas have shown that the implement not only uproots weeds but also cultivates the soil to a depth of 4 - 6 inches. It can cultivate one hectare in 10 hours. It can also be

used to cover broadcasted seeds with the soil. Generally, shoes of the tynes need replacement only after cultivation of 25 hectares and it costs only Rs. 700 to replace them.



Tyne cultivator in operation in the field



Tyne Cultivator

This implement has proven its merits in all upland cultivations. It is popular with banana cultivators to smother weeds. At the current rates, this implement together with the two wheel tractor can be hired at about Rs. 1500 for a working day. Thus, a farmer who owns the implement and a two wheel tractor could earn about Rs. 25000 for a season.

Easy payment terms

SRI intends to popularise this implement.

It is looking for a suitable manufacturer who could commercialise this invention. Easy payment terms for genuine

farmers are under consideration. Further particulars could be had from Director, Sugarcane Research Institute, Uda Walawe, Telephone : 047 - 33233, 33281, 33285