



Optimised usage of Chemical Fertilisers

by **Chandan Baruah**, A tea grower from Golaghat, Assam

A young and dynamic farmer, Mr. Chandan Baruah excels in tea cultivation and is a lead farmer in Golaghat, Assam. Besides rice fields, he possesses a tea garden of 8 bighas, started by his father way back in 1998. His tea garden is located around 12 kms from the town of Golaghat and 2 kms from the tea factory Singhal Industry Pvt. Ltd. From his tea garden, he sells around 14,000 kg of green leaves in a year.

In the neighbourhood, there are 5 other tea farmers with whom he collaborates on technical, commercial and marketing aspects, on a day to day basis. From these tea gardens combined, around 2,30,000 kgs of green leaves are collected and sold in a year.

A staunch supporter of safe usage of chemicals, Mr. Baruah opines that the trustea program has helped him and his peers in being responsible towards food safety, workers' safety, and environmental sustainability. Instead of chemical fertiliser, he prefers using organic

manures e.g. cow dung in the farm. Prior to joining trustea program, although he was aware of the adverse effects of chemicals on the human body however, he was not empowered to reduce their exposure practically.

As part of trustea program, Mr. Baruah received trainings and developed acumen on safety and environmental aspects pertaining to tea cultivation. With his learnings from the program, he is now enabled with a dedicated mixing plot (ensuring that it is far from natural water body), buffer zone in the garden (where only biopesticides are sprayed), PPE kit for workers (towards their safety), washing station and so on.

As Mr. Baruah mentions "Prior to joining the program, we were unorganized, even though we were aware of the things we should do". The trustea program has helped me and other farmers in becoming organised, using chemicals responsibly so that safety of workers, tea produced and environment could be ensured.