Labour saving tool for sugarcane cultivation

G. Kathiresan

The device aids more tiller growth

Periodical pruning of branches in fruit trees is important for getting a good yield. In crops like cotton, castor, sesame, the practice of nipping is essential for enhancing the number of branches.

Similarly in sugarcane, pruning of the mother shoot is an important practice to be followed by farmers.

Scarce labour

Though this practice is being advocated, many farmers are not following this due to labour scarcity.

But some of them use a sickle or other available farm tools to prune the main shoot.

Existing tools available today are not much popular because the user needs to bend down and hold the stem to prune the sugarcane.

While doing so the probabilities of injuring the hands due to presence of sharp spines on the stem or the serrated margin of the leaves pose a problem.

Practical problem

These make labourers slow down the operation. To address these practical problems the Planning and Monitoring department, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore has fabricated a tool.

Named cane seedling pruner, the device has two parts, one a handle and another hook with an internal knife.

The upper portion of the hook has a two inch length pipe to hold the handle stick.

A labourer can handle the tool with the help of the handle and place the main shoot in the inner portion of the knife. With just one pull, the stem can be pruned. Using this tool a person can cover an entire sugarcane field without bending his body.
Advantages

According to Dr. G. Kathiresan, Director, Planning and Monitoring department the farmer can save the two thirds of money required for pruning, it is easy to use, aids growth of more tillers from the pruned cane seedlings, can be used to harvest fruits like papaya, drumstick, sapota and the like, by changing the length of the handle.

( G. Kathiresan is the Director, Planning & Monitoring, TNAU, Coimbatore. Email: directorplanning@tnau.ac.in, phone: 0422- 6611566 .)