

Techies write new code for farming success

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Invest in farms of 98 farmers; get millets, other food items in return

*A Praveen, a 38-year-old IT professional, ordered groceries worth ₹1,200 online last week and was very happy to collect it from a designated outlet at Tellapur near here. Praveen's "joy" when he picked up his consignment was two-fold: One, he was able to buy something that is of high quality. And two, his "purchase" was more like a return that his wise investment has yielded. "At the beginning of the kharif season, I had invested ₹12,500 on an one-acre plot of a women millet farmer in Sangareddy district. What I received last week was the first consignment of the produce," he told **BusinessLine**. Praveen is not alone. He's part of a consumer-farmer network called Beyond Organic, which has decided to invest in farms directly. As many as 90 consumers, mostly IT professionals, have put in ₹15 lakh in the farms of 98 farmers in the two villages of Arjun Naik Thanda and Lachunaik Thanda. And, these farms have produced 18 quintals of grains in all. Of the 90 consumers, as many as 58 have received 12.5 quintals of grains and processed food, which include ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat items. Attracted by the health benefits of millets, these consumers have formed the group just ahead of the kharif season and decided to invest in the farms. [A win-win deal](#) For farmers, the investments by the IT professionals is like an interest-free loan. "We need not run from pillar to post seeking money at a high interest rate. Also, we have an assured market for our produce," a woman farmer belonging to the Deccan Development Society, said. "Frankly, I did not expect anything from them in return. I have been trying to do farming but I am not in a position to do that for want of time and knowledge. I am satiating that urge by investing in a farm," Praveen said. "The network has about 250 members. Of this, 98 have invested this year. We have devised two plans — ₹25,000 and ₹12,500, for consumers to invest. We give them a list of millets — both processed and not processed — that they will get at the end of the season," Satyanarayana Raju, who is part of the network, said. In a bad year, the members may not get the consignment worth their investments. But it is okay with most of them. "We get a list (raw, ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook items) every month. We can order till we recover the amount we have invested," he said.*

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