

# Akshayakalpa & FAIRTSA



## Community Development

2022-2023

*Small farmers and workers are at the heart of FairTSA Fair Trade certification. Through community development projects and capacity building we are facilitating a direct impact on the agricultural communities that grow and process our food.*

Akshayakalpa Organic is India's first certified organic Fair Trade dairy enterprise. Together with their farmers they are part of an on-going journey to create sustainable farms which nurture nature, preserve heritage practices and utilize scientific expertise. Additional goals are to increase the profitability of the farms, to improve animal welfare, to educate and support the dairy farmers in India on sustainable practices, technology, and new methods of production, and to create a platform for the sharing of information and resources between dairy farmers.

## Bringing Our Farmers Home

At the heart of Akshayakalpa Organic is their community of rural farmers, a farmer-first organization with a vision to improve the quality of livelihood of farmer families through consistent purposeful steps. One of their biggest goals is to create a stream of stable and regular income for farmer families. 68% of the revenue generated through dairy production is paid back to the farmers. Akshayakalpa Organic initiatives have inspired a reverse migration of farmers from cities back to villages and to agriculture as a profession.

Akshayakalpa has established several specific program elements that foster sustainable dairy farming:

- One model farm per village
- A program to target women farmers
- A program to target young farmers.

The model farm serves to demonstrate the viability of the program and inspires other villagers to either take up farming or improve their existing farms and join the cooperative.

The program for women farmers targets all women who wish to engage in farming, with special emphasis on especially single mothers. The goal is to empower women farmers by helping them generate independent incomes.

The young farmers program encourages and teaches folks who wish to learn the craft and make a decent living from farming.

## Waste Not, Want Not

The practices at Akshayakalpa farms are based largely on the principles of circular economy and co-existence farming to reduce their ecological footprint. We encourage localization of all resources – wherein the day-to-day requirement of the organic farm is met by the farm itself. A product that has served its purpose should be a part of a new cycle of use. The cow-dung produced by the cows is put through a bio-digester to produce methane gas. This gas is used by the farmers to run machinery and equipment or within the kitchen. The residue sludge is converted to slurry, which adds to the fertility of the soil at the farms and prepares the soil to sustain biodiversity. Likewise, coconut husks are used as mulch and find their way back to the soil. They have set up a zero-discharge facility at their farms through a combined effluent treatment plant (CETP) where both domestic and industrial wastes are treated and used on the farms itself.

Their first steps towards the goal to be 'Plastic-free by 2030' has been regular collection of dairy packaging for recycling. They are also in the process of launching 100% recyclable milk board packaging which will reduce plastic consumption by 96%

## 2022-2023

Each of the farms are home to an assorted range of crops to increase the bio-diversity and the family's food is grown on their very land.

In addition to producing excellent products, Akshyakalpa has several initiatives going that are at the vanguard of creating sustainable food chains. They are currently in the process of diversifying agricultural production and specifically including vegetables and legumes in the crop rotation. The goal is both to improve food security and food variety for the farmers themselves, but also to create a surplus of vegetables to sell commercially and thereby expand their sources of income. Akshyakalpa also has an education trip program where they invite people from nearby cities to spend a night with the farming families. That way the customers have the opportunity to learn about the life of the farmers and the importance of healthy farming practices. The farm operation also has a program to train women in management positions. The organization continues to train farmers on sustainable dairy development and are creating a green school program for the future.