

NO Tobacco, grow organic food for a healthy living

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Situation of tobacco growing in Bangladesh

- Over 100,006 acres of land are used for growing over 90,000 MT of tobacco in Bangladesh, per year [Agricultural Wing of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)].
- Three varieties of tobacco leaves are grown Virginia, Motihari and Jati. Virginia (or FCV) is the major tobacco leaf variety (80%) followed by Motihari and Jati variety. Motihari is used for making smokeless tobacco products.
- British American Tobacco Company (BATC), Japan Tobacco International (JTI) are major sponsors, Philip Moris International (PMI) sponsors national tobacco companies to provide the leaves.



WNTD, 2023 Theme: We need food, not tobacco

- Yes, very true. Tobacco kills and food saves lives. So we need food
- Tobacco kills 161,000 people per year who use tobacco.
- Tobacco is grown in the fertile land suitable for food production
- So it replaces major food crops including rice, pulses, potato, mustard, wheat.
- It also prevents rearing of livestock and poultry, fish production is also hampered.
- Farmers face food insecurity in tobacco growing areas.



One tobacco crop prevents cultivation of at least 6 different major food crops

crops	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tobacco	→								→			
Aman Rice						→						
Boro Rice	→											
Oil seeds	→										→	
Pulses	→										→	
Spices	→											
Vegetables	→									→		

Farmers' rationale for tobacco is profit, but.....

- Farmers were made to believe 'Tobacco brings cash income, one can buy food with cash', but that is a myth
- Actual situation is
 - ❑ Labour cost 21% higher in tobacco than food crop
 - ❑ Cost per hectare 119% higher in tobacco than food crops
- Is it profitable? No

It also creates

- Soil degradation
- Water contamination
- Over use of pesticides
- Deforestation
- Use of family labour, children
- Company control over farmers
- Health effects due to exposure to agro-chemicals & nicotine

Shifting to food crops is possible, but which way?

- It can happen in two different ways:
 - ❑ Tobacco to modern agro-chemical based food crops – monoculture
 - ❑ Tobacco to organic food farming – mixed cropping – biodiversity
- Industrial and chemical-based agriculture does not help farmers reduce cost and face health problems except nicotine

We do not have to move from one toxic to another. We must remain healthy.



In chemical-based agriculture:
Consumption of pesticides and fertilizers is high

Yearly consumption of Pesticides
45172.43 metric kilo litre (2009)
Source: Agricultural Year Book/BBS

Yearly sales of chemical
Fertilizers 3682670 metric tons
(source: AYB/ MOA)



UBINIG strategy was to shift in an organic production - Nayakrishi

- Nayakrishi, meaning new agriculture is a biodiversity-based farming practice with no use of pesticides, fertilizers, no laboratory seeds
- An ecological farming system presupposes Availability of a farmer seed system: Farmers must know about various crops, the right time to seed and steering through the seasonal and climatic variance.



No Hybrids
No GMOs

Local variety seeds

Transition and Substitute crops: Tobacco & food crops

The transition period: June to November, Substitution to Tobacco: Nov- April

Oct/ Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	FARMERS
Tobacco in the field					Tobacco Marketing		Other crops, mostly rice, or no crops					The Tobacco farmers
Expenditure					Cash Income at a time		Indebtedness with tobacco companies					
Substitute crops, mostly mixed & diversified crops, harvested at different times						Transition crops: rice, jute, vegetables						The General farmers and those going out of tobacco
Less expenditure, less hard work, continuous income						Less expenditure, continuous income Other cash income as well						

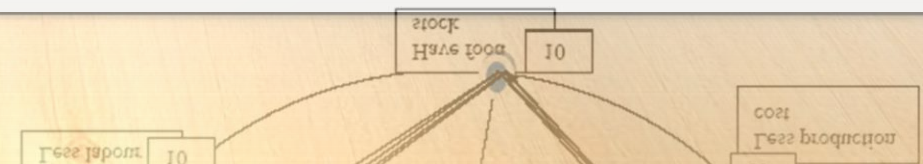
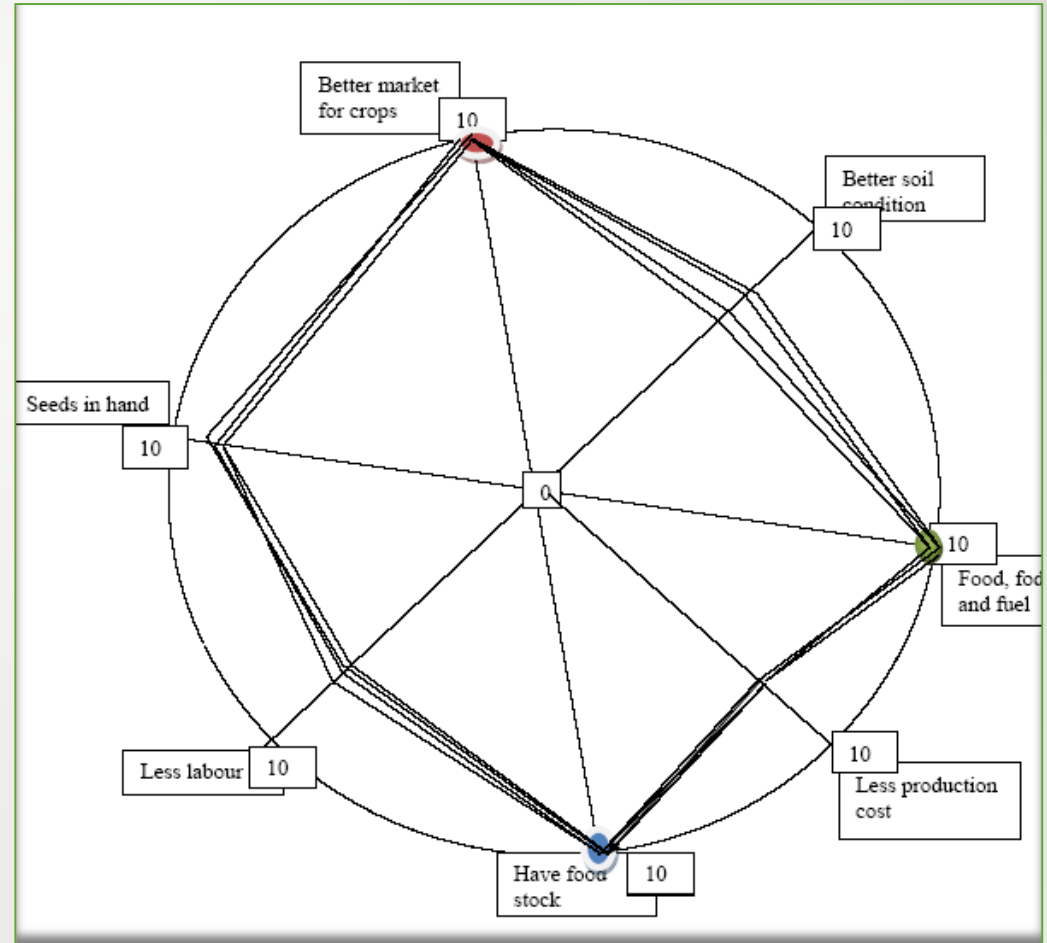
Substitute Crop Combination in year 1 and year 2

During the tobacco growing season – An example of farmers in three areas

Areas	Mixed Crop Combination Year 1	Mixed Crop Combination Year 2
Cox'sbazar	Potato + French Bean	Potato + French Bean (Rangima Shim)
	Potato + French Bean + Felon	Potato + French Bean + Sweet gourd
	Potato + Tomato + Felon + Coriander	Potato + French Bean + Felon + Tomato
Bandarban	Potato + French Bean	Potato + French Bean + Felon
	Potato + French Bean + Felon	Potato + French Bean + Sweet gourd
	Potato + Tomato + Felon + Coriander	Potato + French Bean + Sweet gourd + Coriander
Kushtia	Potato + Maize + Lentil	Potato + Maize
	Potato + Wheat + Coriander	Potato + Wheat + Coriander
	Potato + Garlic + Coriander	Potato + Maize + Garlic + Coriander

Farmers wanted to change to

- ▶ 1. Better soil condition
- ▶ 2. Availability of Food, Fodder and Fuel
- ▶ 3. Incur Less labour cost
- ▶ 4. Have own food stock
- ▶ 5. Better market for crops
- ▶ 6. Can keep seeds in hand
- ▶ 7. Less production cost



Farmers say 'goodbye to tobacco' and go back to their own food crops - to mixed crops





Follow mixed cropping
of vegetables (eggplant, okra,) red
amaranth, stem amaranth, Jute, black
cumin, Corn and cattle fodder

- Maximum utilization of small piece of land
- Diverse crops helps increase soil fertility
- Lesser pest attack
- Food tastes better
- Get uncultivated partner crops as food and fodder

It is not harmful to anybody but brings more life & joy for all life forms



Good bye tobacco, We need healthy food

