

A new-age collective for farmers, against adulteration

A SATISH @Palakkad

THE logo of Farmers Collective, which has a cow and its calf, a goat, duck and hen all silhouetted against the sun (or maybe a golden paddy field?), at once catches one's eye. It is as innovative as the ideas and approach of the agri-startup based out of

Kochi and operating in various locations in the state. It claims to be different.

"We've pooled 70 acres of land from 15 farmers at Parappana in Kinassery panchyat of Palakkad. Last year, we did farming on a small scale at Mankurissy as well as on the kole lands of Thrissur and produced around 30 tonnes.

We enter into agreements with farmers and provide them with finance to purchase seeds and other inputs," said Suresh Kunhu Pillai, a Collective director who had quit his job at Infosys.

"We pursue mixed farming and combine paddy cultivation, duck and fish rearing to opti-

mise gains. It's planned to rear 2,000 ducks here. They'll be kept in a netted enclosure in the fields itself. The ducklings will feed on insects there and swim between saplings stimulating growth," said Pillai.

Farmers like Ali Ahmed seem to be happy. "When they approached me saying they won't

use chemical fertilisers and pesticides and provide all bio-fertilisers including cow dung, goat and hen droppings, I was elated. I agreed to follow their directions in my 11 acres of land. The Collective will buy back the paddy from us at ₹25 per kg (₹1.70 more than what Supplyco offers)," said Ahmed.

• More on P6

