

BANGLADESH



JAHEDUL OPENS THE DOOR FOR FARMERS

Married with two children, Jahedul Islam, a young man of Nilphamari district, strived to improve his life: he worked in a pharmaceutical company, he was involved in poultry rearing, and he was cultivating his 1.7 acres of land; but nothing could bring him economic security. In truth, his heart was in farming and he wanted to work for farmers.

THE CONTRACT FARMING MODEL

In 2012, Jahedul joined a farmers group organized by the Farmers' Hubs Project of the Syngenta Foundation Bangladesh (SFB). Syngenta Foundation trained the group in modern cultivation techniques and in developing links with medium and large buyers to improve market prices. Syngenta Foundation found that, on the one hand, farmers cultivating potato were frustrated by uncertain market prices and, on the other, processing and exporting companies were struggling to obtain potatoes of the right quality and variety at the right time. Syngenta Foundation introduced a contract farming model where the company would agree a prefixed price for a certain amount of a particular potato variety; farmers would then cultivate and supply the company through lead farmers. The lead farmer would sign an agreement with the company on behalf of farmers and ensure both quality and supply. Additionally, the lead farmer would manage the farmers group, monitor the fields, and provide technical support and training to farmers to improve production. In return, the lead farmer would get a commission of 500 Bangladeshi Taka for each metric ton of potato supply.

LEAD FARMER JAHEDUL

Jahedul's qualities of leadership among the group led him to be selected as lead farmer. In the past few years he has successfully supported small and marginal farmers and liaised with companies to supply potato varieties to certain specifications. He has developed skills as a lead farmer, and has, in turn, continuously supported farmers to improve their knowledge and to apply modern technologies to their cultivation methods. "As a lead farmer, I play a role like (a) bridge between the farmers and the company or exporter," says Jahedul.

The commission he receives has helped Jahedul to achieve economic security and, by 2016, more than 100 farmers have benefited from this contract farming model.

Syngenta Foundation developed 23 lead farmers. Jahedul is one of them. through this project.