

# Promoting Nutrition-Sensitive Sustainable Integrated Farming Systems through Farmer-Managed Model Farms

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## RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE

The Nutrition Sensitive Sustainable Integrated Farming System (SIFS) is one of the noteworthy components of the Nutrition Smart Village Project. The program assists smallholder farmers to improve their access to diversified diets. The SIFS farm, often known as model farm, aims to promote various sub-systems like fruits, vegetables, animal husbandry, poultry, and aquaculture to provide diversified food to the family around the year. At the same time, the SIFS farm (Model farm) functions as a learning institution for the farmers where they can observe and learn good agriculture practices during the farmer field school (FFS) sessions and also demonstrate the practical sessions. On an average, a model farm covers an area of 3-4 Katha (1 Katha=338 sq meter).

## METHODS/ANALYSIS

Nutrition Sensitive Sustainable Integrated Farming System (SIFS) is one of the approaches implemented to ensure food and nutrition security around the year. There are farmers groups in the community who take part in the farmer field school (FFS) facilitated by the lead farmers also known as SIFS Champion (selected by farmers in the group themselves) following the Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methodology. The lead farmers maintain Model Farm, and they provide the institutional space for learning and demonstration to the other members of the farmers' group during the FFS sessions. The SIFS/ model farm consists of various sub-systems like fruit, vegetables, milk, meat, and fisheries along with organic fertilizers like bio manure and biopesticides (Jhol-Mal) to produce diversified food for good nutrition and well-being. The group members learn from the SIFS farm and replicate similar sub-systems in their production system to ensure the food and nutrition security of their families.

The monitoring of the SIFS/ model farm is done through regular follow-up visits by the Agriculture Officers and agriculture extension workers. They also follow up the logbook of the farm maintained by the farm owner to see the trend of the production, consumption, and income from the farm and guide them to record properly.

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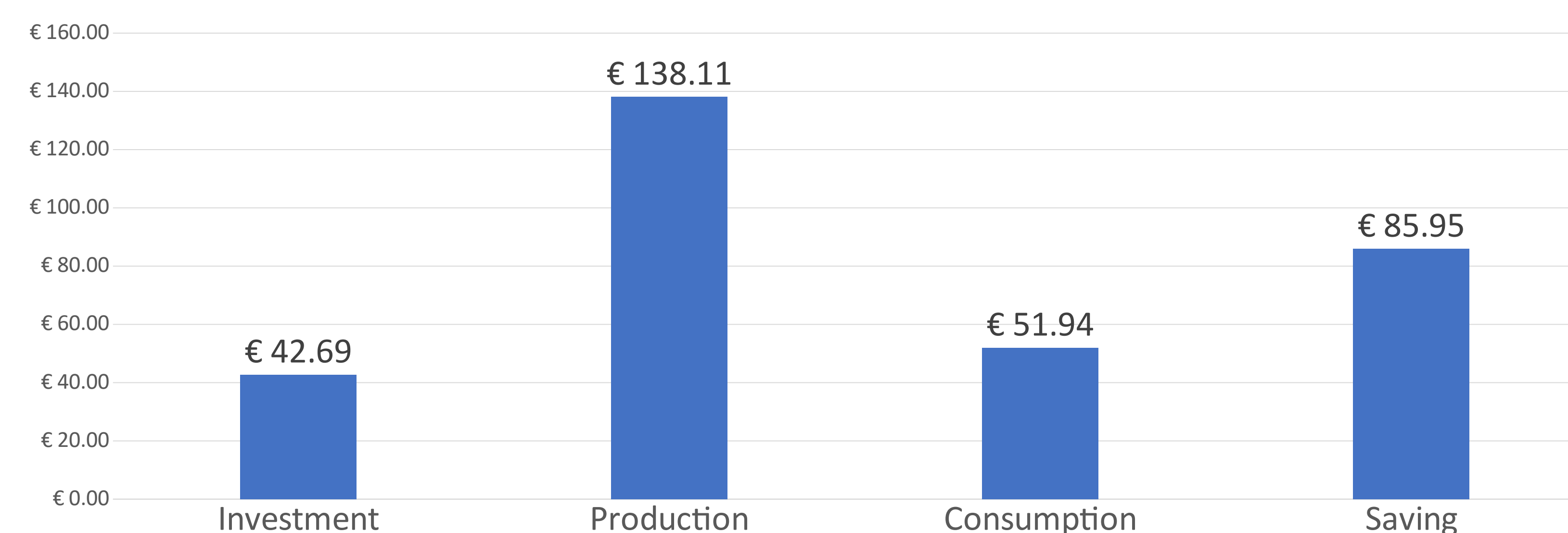


Farmer enriching their fields with nutrient-rich ash for improved crop growth and soil health.



Farmer cultivating a variety of crops to promote resilience and productivity in their farm.

Average Cost/Farm/ Month Euro



"Harek Bar Khana Char" is a phrase in Nepali which signifies the concept of including five or more food groups in one's daily diet to have a balanced nutrition. The idea of "Harek Bar Khana Char" encourages individuals to ensure that they incorporate diversified foods viz. at least 5 food groups out of 10 food groups into their daily meals. |

The 'lead farmer logbook' is an essential record-keeping tool in agriculture. It tracks monthly investments, consumption, production, and savings in farming. It aims in improving practices and promotes sustainable and efficient farming techniques. |



A farmer picking fresh and vibrant vegetables from her rooftop sack garden.

## RESULTS

The SIFS farm has helped farmers diversify their production and consumption within the family. The family's engagement in farming/ agriculture is a good sign in the community, as they have a good understanding of 'what we grow, we eat'. It has also reduced the family's dependency on the market for vegetables and fruits. They grow seasonal local fruits that are available in each season. They also cultivate vegetables and fruits by using bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides (Jhol-Mal), which has not only benefitted them by consuming healthier produce but also reduced their expenses on market-bought chemical fertilizers. Farmers reap an average monthly income of NPR 12,000 (85 euro) from a SIFS farm, in addition to the consumption of a healthy and diversified diet for the family worth NPR 7,000 (51 euro) from the SIFS/ Model farm.

“ WHAT WE GROW, WE EAT! ”

IMPLICATIONS  
The SIFS approach is widely accepted, and the model farms created through this approach have been replicated in the community. Some farmers have started rooftop gardening as a part of integrated farming to diversify their diets.

They have begun using bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides on their farms, which has helped them save more income than before. Due to the organic diets, there are fewer episodes of diseases among the family members. The consumption of fresh and organic vegetables, combined with diversified diets, is leading the community toward better nutrition and well-being.

