

Cikananga's Sustainability Farming Program (PPBC)

Promoting animal welfare and aiding farmers transition from synthetics at our demonstration regenerative farm.



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Block A resizing completed. Planted with grain and greens.



Photo Credit: Fiona Wilkinson

News from the farm

By Scott Hartle

For the majority of May I have been in the UK. During my absence SuHendi, PPBC Assistant Farm Manager has been managing the team. The team has been focusing on planting out, harvesting and the completion of Block A. Block A was the last block remaining to complete Farm Three's bed resizing project. In addition to managing the farm(s), the team has been guiding our PPBC interns, aiding their projects, organizing farm tasks and educating them in regenerative practices used at PPBC.

Before I left, we planted cucumbers, tomatoes and pollinating strips. The farm team have been managing their growth, specifically, training the cucumbers and tomatoes along their vertical supports. To ensure adequate fertility, the team have been regularly applying manure tea, which we ferment onsite using goat/sheep manure.



Photo Credit: Anna Wilkinson

Mixed Cropping

Mixed cropping systems involve cultivating multiple crop species in the same space simultaneously. This practice fosters biodiversity and enhances ecosystem services, contributing to soil health, pest control, and nutrient cycling. The primary benefits include improved soil structure and fertility, reduced pest and disease pressures, and increased resilience to environmental stresses.

Mixed cropping leverages the symbiotic relationships between plants. For instance, legumes can fix atmospheric nitrogen, enriching the soil for other crops. Deep-rooted species can access nutrients from lower soil layers and bring them to the surface, making them available to shallow-rooted plants. This diversity in root architecture enhances nutrient uptake efficiency and improves soil microbial activity, which is essential for nutrient availability and plant health.

By mimicking natural ecosystems, mixed cropping systems build healthy, living soils, which are crucial for sustainable agriculture and the long-term productivity of farms.

Final block – corn, millet and greens.



Block A, our final block to be resized will be planted with corn and millet intercropped with low-growing leafy crops like lettuce, mustard greens, and pak choy, fostering a biodiverse and resilient farming ecosystem. Corn and millet, with their tall structures, will provide shade and wind protection for the leafy crops, while the leafy crops act as a living mulch, reducing soil erosion and retaining moisture.

The diverse root systems of these plants improve soil structure and nutrient cycling, enhancing overall soil fertility. Corn and millet roots access deeper soil layers for nutrients, while leafy crops optimize surface soil nutrient uptake. This synergy reduces pest and disease pressures through natural biological control mechanisms.

Once Block A is complete, Farm Three resizing will be complete. After which, production overall will steadily increase allowing the PPBC program to meet our first mission goal of 5,000 kg harvested per annum.