

History of Auroville during Mother's Lifetime Series

Food Production & Preparation

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(Gilles is always happy to receive feedback and to add/correct any information.)

Summary of the principles upon which these activities should be based:

Food is one of man's absolutely essential needs. Mother's intentions were:

Auroville to be responsible for feeding all its citizens¹ – provided they contribute in some way towards it. Auroville shouldn't provide for its citizens greed for food. Note that, in India, traditionally, disciples are keen to eat the food that is prepared in their guru's kitchen or, by extension, in the kitchen(s) of his Ashram. This is because, for them, there is more than just food in these meals. Hence, our collective food chain should ensure a very high quality and the Aurovilians should value food prepared in Auroville's collective kitchens.

Food supply and quality² should be ensured by controlling as much as possible the entire food chain. To this effect:

- Auroville should own enough good agricultural land suitable for farms, orchards, dairies, poultries, etc.
- In these places, air and water should not be polluted by neighbours using unhealthy pesticides and fertilisers or other noxious substances. (To this effect, Auroville's land holdings should be as much as possible in one or several large pockets. Auroville should also try and own, or at least protect, ecologically sensitive areas such as the main water-recharge areas).
- These places should be managed organically.³
- The production of food ingredients and the preparation of meals should be done by people who do it as a yoga – that is by Aurovilians and not by paid employees.⁴ (Mother repeatedly stated that there should be no servants and other paid employees in Auroville.)
- Food preparation and cooking should be done in a very clean/hygienic/healthy manner and in an atmosphere of harmony and peace. Meals should be digestible, nutritive and dietetically balanced. A variety of meals should be available to suit various diets, tastes and cultures. The Aurovilians should control their desires – in particular those pertaining to food.
- Meals should be served consciously⁵ and then eaten consciously in a peaceful atmosphere.

The Aurovilians should preferably eat food prepared in one of Auroville's collective kitchens.

There were several reasons for that: she wanted the Aurovilians to thus support all those who work in this food chain; she wanted all Aurovilians to enjoy the quality of the above-described food chain; she wanted them to direct their energy towards the welfare of all instead of towards their own self or family. Eating food prepared in a collective kitchen was seen by her as a first step towards no circulation of money.

Auroville should become self-supporting. As many food ingredients won't grow in the Auroville area, or not all year round, for self-supportiveness in terms of food to become possible, the Aurovilians would have to agree to adapt their diet to what can be locally grown. Auroville should at least aim at a high level of self-sustainability by producing as much as possible of what it consumes and by processing as much as it is worth all that it produces and sells outside.

All Aurovilians should get rid of the sense of possession. Hence, Auroville farms should be managed collectively and Auroville farmers should not refer to them as "MY place".

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¹ *Mother's Agenda*, 30th December 1967.

² The quality of some of the products sold on the Indian market would not meet the health standards of richer countries because they contain excessive doses of substances which are controlled or even banned there.

³ Note that Mother was also in favour of natural healing therapies – which, like organic agriculture are based on an intimate understanding of nature's processes which makes it possible to achieve what one wants in a natural way.

⁴ Note that the vibration of some of our village employees is far better than that of some 'Aurovilians'.

⁵ Note that, in the 1920's Mother herself was serving the soup to disciples (it is remembered as the "soup ceremony"). Eventually, she had to stop it after falling very sick because of the inability of too many disciples to receive properly the boon which was offered along with the soup.

Background of Mother's intentions regarding agriculture and food in Auroville:

1912 onwards: *Sri Aurobindo and Mother's write about the need to create an ideal or perfect society which would grow to the point of becoming a city – an ideal place – whenever humanity will have reached such a stage in its evolutionary process for this to become possible.*

Towards the end of 1920: *(that is prior to the creation of the Ashram, in 1926), while answering A.B. Purani's questions on the nature of a spiritual commune, to the question: "Will the collective organisation be economically self-sufficient?" Sri Aurobindo answers:*

No. It will have to produce more things because all its needs cannot be supplied by itself. It will have, therefore, to keep connection with the capitalist world. Agriculture is the mainstay. The community must try to stand on its own feet with regard to food.

1939, January 19th: *In another conversation with a few disciples, this time on Aldous Huxley's book 'Ends and Means', Sri Aurobindo explains what was his idea when, in the 1910's, he was helping from Pondicherry Motilal Roy establish in Chandernagore the "Prabartak Sangh":*

I did not call it a commune but a Sangha, based on spirituality and living its own economic life. It would develop its own small-scale industries, agriculture, etc. and have an interchange of products with other communes.

These two quotes explain why Mother was keen to produce as much as possible of the food ingredients required by the Ashram and, to this effect, established and developed a number of farms there. The first one (a garden and a paddy field) was Cazanove; then came Rizière, Highland, Le Faucheur, and several others. The largest ones are now Lake Estate & Gloria Land.

* * *

1938: *Mother makes a first attempt to create a new town in an area where there would be no other inhabitants and owners – and to move the Ashram there. Antonin Raymond, the (Czech) architect of Golconde, designs the future town at her request. A suitable site is found in the then princely state of Hyderabad but the conditions attached to its transfer are not acceptable to Mother and she drops the idea for the time being. On 23rd June 1965, while speaking to Satprem about this first attempt, she will say:*

And there was no money: within the [town's] walls, no money; [...]. And inside [the town], absolutely nothing, no one had any money – the tickets were only for visitors, who entered only with a permit. It was a fantastic organisation... No money, I didn't want money!

Outside the walls [of the town], in my first formation there was on one side the industrial estate, and on the other the fields, farms, etc., that were to supply the city.

* * *

Early 1950's: *Mother launches the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre, which she will merge with the Ashram School on 1.1.59, and rename Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (SAICE).*

Mid 1950's: *Mother is very busy developing many new activities for the Ashram. Some of them are to take place on the east side of the Ussudu (Usteri) Lake and, among these, some are to be part of a new township named "New Horizon"⁶, whose architect is also Antonin Raymond.*

August 1954: *Mother publishes "A Dream", in which she describes an ideal society but says:*

The earth is certainly not ready to realise such an ideal, for mankind does not yet possess sufficient knowledge to understand and adopt it nor the conscious force that is indispensable in order to execute it; that is why I call it a dream.

⁶ This name obviously refers to the first "Horizon": "Akhetaton" ("Horizon of Haton"). Why? Because Mother said that, in a previous life, some 33 centuries earlier, she had been the Egyptian Queen Tiy, who had a very strong influence on her son Amenhotep IV, who tried to change the religion of his country, changed his name into Akhenaton ('he who is faithful to Aton') and founded the new city of "Akhetaton".

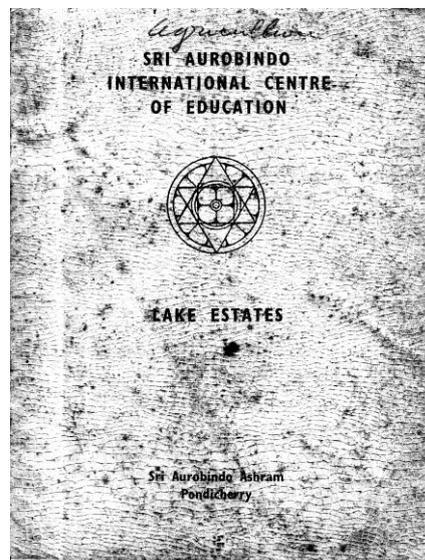
And yet this dream is in the course of becoming a reality; that is what we are striving for in Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, on a very small scale, in proportion to our limited means. The realisation is certainly far from perfect, but it is progressive; little by little we are advancing towards our goal which we hope we may one day be able to present to the world as a practical and effective way to emerge from the present chaos, to be born into a new life that is more harmonious and true.

1955: Louis Allen buys for the Ashram, close to Ussudu (formerly Usteri) Lake, a first plot of land which is now part of the Ashram farm Lake Estate. On 20th August 1960, Mother will explain to Satprem his intentions:

[Louis] is planning to have a school of agriculture, a modern dairy with grazing land – there's a lot of agriculture, really a lot – fruit orchards, large rice fields, many things.

SAICE publishes a brochure which depicts Louis Allen's project of a "School of Agriculture" at the "Lake Estates" which, it says, comprises of the (250 acres) "Main Lake Estate" (located in Madras State) and the 100 acres "Lake Estate Annexe (Gloria)". Among other things, it says:

"This may be considered under two distinct parts. The first part would consist of preliminary items like soil conservation, land reclamation, drainage, irrigation and provision of other facilities like roads and buildings, equipping laboratory and workshop, purchase of implements and machinery, etc., which are considered essential for the successful implementation of the developmental programmes envisaged under the present proposal. The second part would consist of the different developmental activities proposed to be undertaken on these estates. They would fall under the following main categories, namely (i) Cattle Breeding & Dairying including poultry rearing; (ii) Training in Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Agriculture and Horticulture; (iii) Research in different fields of agricultural science; (iv) Items of Agricultural Extension Work."



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Mother's words on food production and preparation in Auroville:

1964, August 14th: *During its first World Conference, the Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS, whose President is the Mother), passes among others a resolution to:*

“Develop a township near Pondicherry, with all the amenities and facilities for residence and work for those who want to prepare for a better life.”

* * *

1965, March: *Excerpt from the Bulletin's "Report on the [first] Quarter":*

Bulletin, April 1965, p. 80.

English & French

We publish in the issue some pictures of Auroville, our new project...

This township, ... will contain not only residential houses but also ... orchards, farms, flower gardens and all that goes to make up a complete town.

* * *

1965, March 28th: *Navajata writes to Mother about the purchase of agricultural land she will later name "Auro-Orchard" and of the Ganesh Temple adjacent to it:*⁷

Original given by Kusumben to AV Archives.

.English

We have purchased, under the Auroville project a sixty acre plot with well, pump, trees, a temple (Ganesh), a small house, etc. for Rs. 65,000/-. Out of this 20,000/- are to be paid now and 45,000/- after six months. The agreement is to be signed today. The sellers wants in writing an undertaking from us that though the temple will be The Mother's property, we will maintain it and furnish people to do puja. If The Mother approves, we will accept this.

Pranam.

(300 mango trees, about 1,000 palm trees, mango, cashew nut trees.)

* * *

1965, March 29th: *Amrita presents Navajata's letter to Mother and notes down that she said "all right" to the inclusion of the Ganesh Temple in this land deal.*⁸

* * *

1965: *Mrs. Anjani Dayanand who had visited the Ashram with her husband on 14th August 1964, the day the SAS took the decision to develop a new town [Auroville], will later remember:*

"Darshan", pp. 109-13.

English

Before the balcony Darshan we had spent a few minutes in the Society House. Dayanand was a member of the Society. There was a big crowd in the hall. Navajata saw me and came across the hall and asked me: "Where are you coming from? [Madras] What is your name?" I told him my name. "What are you doing?" I told him my designation [an IAS Officer in the Tamil Nadu cadre]. He said, "I think that we are going to work together for a long time". The Auroville project had just been announced.

So, after that it was a regular contact by phone every morning – every day – to do this work or that for Auroville. No point in going into all those things. But one major thing was: he said the Mother was keen that we should acquire all the land – at least the inner circle – straightaway.

⁷ As these lands are on the east side of the NH 66, it seems to confirm that the site for Auroville had already been shifted eastwards, to the "Promesse" area.

⁸ The fact that this temple was a that time in the centre area of the future township may have played a role in Mother's decision. At first somebody will be employed to perform regular pujas there. Soon, Mother will ask Kusumben to look after it which she will do faithfully till the end of her life (decades later). Mother's request amazed Kusumben because she was a Jain and Jains do not worship Ganesh.

I prepared a detailed note for acquisition of the required land and took it to the Chief Minister, M. Bhaktavatsalam,⁹ who was very understanding and approved the proposal. A Government Order was issued. The Collector of South Arcot District¹⁰ was directed to initiate action for land acquisition.

The Collector of Cuddalore sent a letter to the Society asking for an undertaking to pay the cost of the staff to be appointed for the work of land acquisition. The total cost for one Tahsildar, one Revenue Inspector, two Karnams (village officers), and two Talayaries (helpers), worked out to Rs.68, 000/- per annum. Navajata did not accept the proposal. When I informed the Mother about Navajata's decision She was very unhappy, "Why has he taken this decision?"¹¹ She asked. I told Her that Navajata felt that land acquisition through Government would take a long time; whereas direct purchase would be quicker.

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MMTL, p. 9.
English.

Years later, Huta too will remember that Mother had told her more than once that if people would not buy the land quickly at Auroville when the price was low, then surely they would have difficulty later on when the price would be much higher and many complications would arise.

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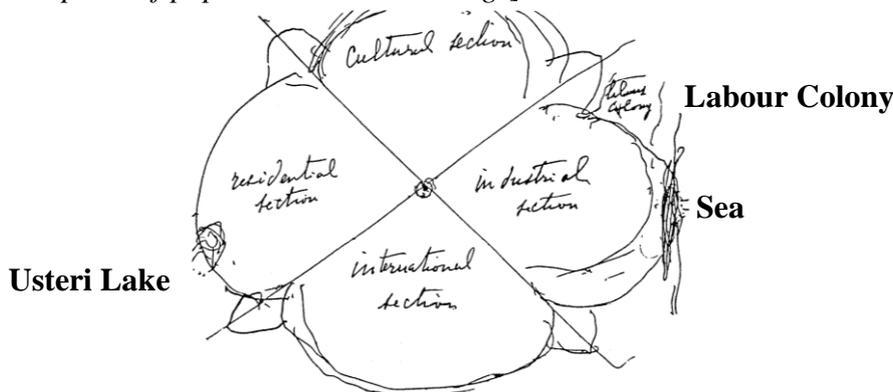
1965, June 23rd: *Excerpt from a conversation with Satprem during which Mother describes Her plan of Auroville to him:*

MI, Feb. 1967; AM, pp. 141-51; MA, pp. 139-148; MoA, p. 57; CWM, Vol. XIII, pp. 257-67; Gaz. Vol. 5, no 1, pp. 5-21; AVMW, pp. 37-46.
French. Conversation. Tape-recording available.

My plan is very simple.

It will be up there, on the way to Madras, on top of the hill.¹²

[Mother takes a piece of paper and starts drawing:]



Mother's sketch of the future town¹³

[..]

Between these blocks, these sections, there are Intermediary Zones, four intermediary zones:

- one [zone] for public services (the post, etc.);
- one zone for transportation (railway station and if possible an airfield);

⁹ M. Bhaktavatsalam was Chief Minister of the then Madras State from 2nd October 1963 to 6th March 1967. In April or May 1965 he visited the then site of Auroville (the "Promesse" area). It may not be in 1965 that Mr. Bhaktavatsalam signed this G.O. but in 1966, or in 1967 – prior to March (end of his tenure as CM).

¹⁰ Auroville used to be in South Arcot District which was later 'bifurcated' in two. It is now part of Villupuram District.

¹¹ If this was correctly reported, it would mean that, at times, some very important decisions were taken by Navajata (and maybe also by some other major player) without referring the matter to Mother. We will see that, years later, Navajata will again torpedo the project he had initiated.

¹² "Ça se passe là haut, en route pour Madras, sur le haut de la colline." Note that, opposite to "Promesse", there is an Ashram farm named "The Top" because this is how Mother referred to this area.

¹³ This particular version of Mother's town plan was included in Prof. Newcombe's report for the UNDP (dated 1970). It is very unlikely that Mother drew it for him because, at the time of his visit, the site had changed and Roger had already produced his 'Galaxy' plan. If this particular plan wasn't the one Mother drew in front of Satprem, the one she drew in front of him must have been very similar because this one corresponds exactly to her description.

- one zone for food supplies¹⁴ (that one would be near the [Usteri] lake and would include dairies, poultry farms, orchards, cultivation, etc. – it would spread to incorporate the Lake Estate¹⁵ [a large Ashram farm at the south end of Usteri Lake]: what they wanted to do separately will be done as part of Auroville.)¹⁶

Then a fourth zone (I've said: public services, transportation, food supplies)

- and the fourth zone: shops. We do not need many shops, but a few are necessary to get what we don't produce.

They are like neighbourhoods¹⁷, you see.

[..]

It's a town, so it is the whole contact with the outside. And an attempt to achieve on earth a slightly more ideal life.¹⁸

[..]

Outside the walls, in my first formation [in 1937-38] there was on one side the industrial estate, and on the other the fields, farms, etc., that were to supply the city. But that really meant a country – not a large one, but a country. Now it's much more limited; it's not my symbol anymore, there are only four zones, and no walls. And there will be money.

[..]

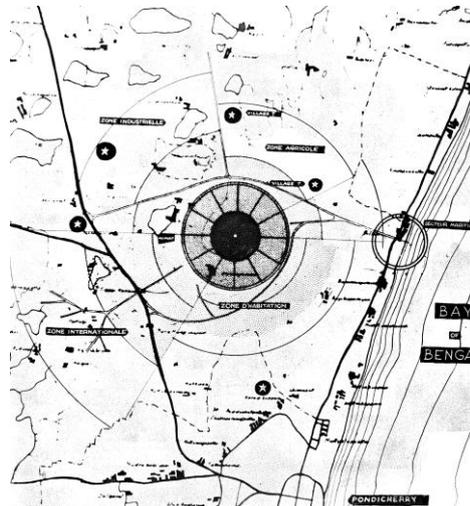
* * *

1965, December: *Excerpt from an article in "Mother India" – a first presentation of the Auroville project – most probably reproducing some document published by the SAS.*

Industry, Commerce, Agriculture: An industrial estate, orchards, agricultural farms, dairy, nursery, etc. will be there for those who wish to progress and serve in the field of commerce, industry and agriculture. A dairy farm is already run by the Ashram but needs to be expanded.

* * *

1966, March 8th: *Having arrived from Paris, Roger presents to Mother his first two concepts/models:*



On the location plan of the "Nebula" concept/model, a large agricultural zone is shown NE of the town

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¹⁴ In the original French: "Une zone pour l'alimentation."

¹⁵ This means that this "Intermediate Zone" for food supplies was the one in the South West.

¹⁶ Mother seems to mean that Louis's project (mentioned above) will now be an Auroville project.

¹⁷ In the original French: "comme des quartiers".

¹⁸ Underlining is by the editor.

1966, April 1st: *Answer to a question from Robert Lawlor (who would settle at “Forecomers”):*

AV Archives (Arindam’s file); CWM, Vol. XIII, p. 234; Gaz. Vol. 9, No 1, p. 23; AVMW, p. 62.

English

Q.: Dear Mother, Our vegetable crop has been attacked by insects. While we are studying non-poisonous means of control, and until we have enough information to handle this problem, we thought of carefully using some insecticides. May we have permission to do this and your protection in handling them?

A mild and harmless protector is often more effective than a poisonous one.

* * *

1967, March or April:¹⁹ *Roger visits again – this time to present Mother with the “Macrostructure” model of the future town.*



*On the location plan of this new concept/model,
a large agricultural zone is shown South of the town*

* * *

1967, November 11th: *Except from a talk on Auroville given by Navajata which he firsts reads to Mother before it is broadcast by All India Radio:*

Provision is made for 50,000 residents in the main town, 20,000 in the model villages in its green belt, and 30,000 in its subsidiary projects like World Trade Centre, etc.²⁰

[...]

The activities in the project cover a very wide range: industrial, agricultural, educational, artistic, and others.

[...]

A physical education department covering all games and sports, model agricultural villages revolutionising agricultural life by synthesising aptitudes of workers, suitability of land and technical assistance, for a better life and optimum production

¹⁹ There is no record at AV Archives of when exactly Roger visited to present his latest project to Mother. During this visit he was interviewed by the Auroville magazine “= 1” and it is also most probably at that time that the Banyan Tree became the geographical centre of the town and that, because this centre thus became closer to the villages of Kottakarai and Edayanchavadi, that de reduced the diameter of the town from 3km to 2.5km and thus increased its average density by 40%.

²⁰ Note that, in addition to the 50,000 Aurovilians, Nava speaks now of 20,000 inhabitants in model villages in the greenbelt and of 30,000 in subsidiary projects such as World Trade Centre. 100,000 persons in all...

And now it is on the way to fulfilment – the city of happiness, harmony and progress with no politics, no economic exploitation, no rich or poor,²¹ no employer or employee,²² but all sons of God.

* * *

1967, December 30th: *Excerpt from a conversation with Satprem in which Mother comments notes which another disciple had taken (in English) of what she had earlier said about Auroville's future economy. Satprem reads these notes and Mother comments them:*

Bulletin, Feb 68, p. 75; *AM*, p. 449-56; *MA*, p. 425-32; *MoA*, p. 20-25; *CWM Vol XIII*, p. 268-274; *Gaz. Vol. 3, No 1*, p. 15-23; *AVMW*, p. 101. Note in English. Conversation in French. Tape-recording available.

[*Satprem reads out the note*]

- **Auroville will be a self-supporting township.**²³
- **All who live there will participate in its life and development.**
- **This participation may be passive or active.**
- **There will be no taxes as such but each will contribute to the collective welfare in work, kind or money.**
- **Sections like Industries which participate actively will contribute part of their income towards the development of the township. Or if they produce something (like foodstuff) useful for the citizens, they will contribute in kind to the township which is responsible for the feeding of the citizens.**
- **No rules or laws are being framed. Things will get formulated as the underlying Truth of the township emerges and takes shape progressively. We do not anticipate.**

[...]

Some things are really interesting. For instance, I'd like ... To begin with, every country will have its pavilion, and in the pavilion, there will be a kitchen from that country, which means that the Japanese will be able to eat Japanese food if they want to (!), and so on, but in the township itself, there will be food for vegetarians, food for nonvegetarians, and also a sort of attempt to find "tomorrow's food." The idea is that all this work of assimilation which makes you so heavy (it takes up so much time and energy from the being) should be done BEFORE, that you should be able to immediately assimilate what you are given, as with things they now make; for instance, they have those vitamins that can be directly assimilated, and also (what do they call it?... [*Mother tries to remember*] I take them every day.... Words and I aren't on very good terms!) ... proteins. Nutritive principles that are found in one thing or another and aren't voluminous – you need to take a tremendous quantity of food to assimilate very little. So now that they are clever enough on the chemical level, that could be simplified. People don't like it, simply because ... they take an intense pleasure in eating (!), but when you no longer take pleasure in eating, you need to be nourished and not to waste your time with that. The amount of time lost is enormous: time for eating, time for digesting, and the rest. So I would like an experimental kitchen to be there, a sort of "culinary laboratory," for a try. And according to their tastes and tendencies, people would go here or there.

And you don't pay for your food, but you must give work, or ingredients: for example, those who had fields would give the produce of their fields; those who had factories would give their products; or else your own work in exchange for food.

That alone does away with much of the internal circulation of money.

²¹ In order to achieve the aim of "no rich no poor" within Auroville, one will have to implement the policy of "No private money, no circulation of money within Auroville" but it is only in 1969 that Mother will adopt this policy. Till 1969, money was to circulate and – even after, contributions from rich people wanting 1,000 m² plots were accepted, while others were to be content with whatever accommodation Auroville would be able to provide them with.

²² For "no employers, no employees" to be achieved, one would have to implement Mother's policy of "no servants and other employees within Auroville" but it has never been implemented and not even publicised.

²³ "Auroville subviendra à ses propres besoins." is a better translation from the original English than that provided by the Agenda: "Auroville subsistera par ses propres moyens".

And in every field things of that sort could be found.... Ultimately, it must be a town for studies – studies and research on how to live both in a simplified way and in a way such that the higher qualities have MORE TIME to develop. There.

It's only a small beginning.

(Then Mother goes over the text of the note, sentence by sentence)

“Auroville will be a self-supporting township.”

I want to insist on the fact that it will be an experiment: it's to make experiments – experiments, research, studies.

Satprem: An experimental city?

Yes... Auroville will be a city that will attempt to be, or strive or want to be, *self-supporting*, that is ...

Satprem: Autonomous?

“Autonomous” would be understood as a sort of independence that breaks off relations with the outside, and that's not what I mean.

For instance, those who produce food, a factory such as “Aurofood”²⁴ (naturally, when we are fifty thousand, it will be difficult to meet the needs, but for the moment we'll only be a few thousand at the most), well, a factory always produces far too much.... So it will sell outside and receive money. And “Aurofood,” for instance, wants to have a special relationship with workers, not at all the old system – something that would be an improvement on the Communist system, a more balanced organisation than Sovietism or Communism, that is, which doesn't too much lean either toward one side or the other.

The idea of Aurofood is good, and they are trying to make propaganda among industrialists.

And there is one thing I wanted to say. One's participation in the welfare and existence of the whole township isn't something worked out individually: such and such an individual must give so much. It's not like that. It's worked out according to one's means, activity, possibilities of production; it's not the democratic idea, which cuts everything into small equal bits – an absurd machinery. It's worked out according to one's means: one who has much gives much, one who has little gives little; one who is strong works a lot, one who isn't does something else. You understand, it's something truer, deeper. And that's why I am not trying to explain it right away, because people will start making all kinds of protests. It must come into being AUTOMATICALLY, so to say, with the growth of the township, in the true spirit. That's why this note is quite succinct.

This sentence, for instance:

“All who live there will participate in its life and development...”

... according to their capacities and means, not a mechanical “so much per unit.” That's the point. It must be something living and TRUE, not mechanical. And “according to their capacities,” that is, one who has material means such as those a factory gives will have to provide in proportion to his production – not so much per individual or per head.

“This participation may be passive or active.”

I don't understand what they mean by “passive” (because I spoke in French, then they put it into English). What can they mean by “passive”? ... It would rather be on different planes or levels of consciousness.

Satprem: You meant that those who basically are sages, who work within, won't have to ...

Yes, that's right. Those who have a higher knowledge won't have to work with their hands, that's what I mean.

²⁴ Note that Mother gives here as an example of an Auroville industrial unit a ‘Private Limited’ which is not owned by Auroville and is not even on Auroville-owned land. It shows that – at that time – she was open to non-Auroville-owned industries and possibly farms being part of Auroville. This would change in 1969.

“There will be no taxes as such but each will contribute to the collective welfare in work, kind or money.”

So that’s clear: there will be no taxes of any kind²⁵, but everyone will have to contribute to the collective welfare through his work, in kind or with money. Those who have nothing other than money will give money...

[...]

“Sections like Industries which participate actively will contribute part of their income towards the development of the township. Or if they produce something (like foodstuff) useful for the citizens, they will contribute in kind to the township which is responsible for the feeding of the citizens.”

That’s what we’ve said. The industries will participate actively, they will contribute. If they are industries producing articles that aren’t in constant need – and are therefore in amounts or numbers too great for the township’s own use, so that they will be sold outside – those industries must naturally participate through money. And I take the example of food: those who produce food will give the township what it needs (in proportion to what they produce, of course), and it is the township’s responsibility to feed everyone.²⁶ That means people won’t have to buy their food with money, but they will have to earn it.

It’s a kind of adaptation of the Communist system, but not in a spirit of levelling: according to everyone’s capacity, his position (not a psychological or intellectual one), his INNER position.

Satprem: In democracies and with the Communists, there’s a levelling down: everyone is pulled down to the same level.

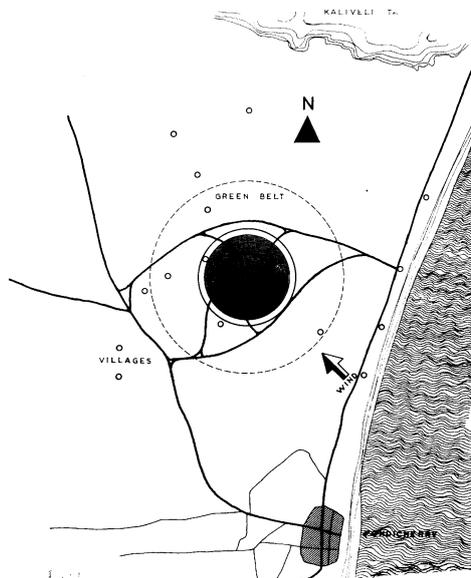
Yes, that’s just the point.

The true part is that every human being has the material right ... (but it’s not a “right” ...). The organization should be such, arranged in such a way, that everyone’s material need should be met, not according to notions of right and equality, but on the basis of the most elementary necessities; then, once that is established, everyone must be free to organize his life, not according to his monetary means, but according to his inner capacities...

* * *

1968, January 21st: Roger lands at Madras Airport.
He brings with him a model of the “Galaxy” concept of the future town as well as a model of its centre area.

The location plan of this new concept/model shows a greenbelt surrounding fully the town.



* * *

²⁵ This is often misunderstood. As Mother kept speaking of Auroville not being part of India, she meant that taxes and other duties won’t have to be paid to India and/or Tamil Nadu, but all individuals and units will have to contribute to Auroville in some way.

²⁶ Note that in India’s age-old ‘Gurukul’ system, disciples are very keen to live in their guru’s house (or at least in a house belonging to his/her Ashram) and to eat food prepared in his/her kitchen (or in that of his/her Ashram) – and that from the outset it had been made clear that all accommodations would belong to Auroville.

1968, December: *Answer to Gerard Cruz (Auro-Orchard) about the organisation of work:*

MoA, p.45; CWM, XIII, p.204; AMW, p.158; MI, XXI, 3, p. 166.

French

The important thing is the execution which is to be carried out without ever losing sight of the ideal we want to realise.

Blessings.

* * *

1968, December 28th: *Answer to a typed letter from Dayanand (dated 25.12.68) with Mother's answer written on it by someone else (SS):*

AV Archives (Shyam Sunder's file)

English

Mother,

In Bommaipalayam and Kulapalayam, Auroville has about fifty acres of Cashew in small bits of 1, 2, or 3 acres spread over roughly three square miles. Hence it will be difficult to organise the collection of Cashew seeds efficiently.

I feel that we may lease out the rights of collection of seed for this season alone to some party in this area only.

Is this approach correct?

Pranams

It would be better to find among the people of Auroville some who will be happy to do this work.

Blessings.

* * *

1969, January 7th: *Text drafted by Arindam and read by Udar to Mother who approved it:*

AV Archives (Arindam's file); Ashram Archives (Oscar's file). Marked: "Only for restricted distribution in the Ashram. Not for publication".

English

On the 1st January 1969 at 2 a.m. in the morning a Consciousness descended into the earth consciousness and materialised there. It was a most marvellous descent, full of consciousness, force, power, light, joy and peace and it suffused the whole earth's atmosphere.

This descending Consciousness was afterwards identified by the Mother as being the intermediate level between the present mental consciousness and the Supramental Consciousness. This descending Consciousness is that of the Superman which is still that of man but with a very enlarged range and power but not transformed into the Gnostic being. This consciousness of the Superman has not only descended into the earth's consciousness but has established there and is fully operative.

The descent of this new consciousness may be one of the reasons why Mother will make some major changes in her policies for Auroville by deciding that the Aurovilians would not have any money – money would not circulate within Auroville, and all industries, businesses and farms would belong to Auroville and that so would their benefits.

* * *

1969, February 11th: *Report written by Roger and approved by Mother:*

AV Archives; last 3 paras in Gaz VIII, 34, Dec 81

French

Hope is to become the administrative centre of the agricultural zone. The existing plans foresee a grouping there of 120 persons in its final stage. Hope's excellent geographic position (at the centre of Auroville's agricultural zone) will enable it to fulfil its other role which is to oversee all the model farms and the Lake Estate lands. The proximity of the road to Madras which divides this zone in two facilitates the access to 'Promesse' which is destined to become a boarding for the agricultural zone.

The ongoing programme is to complete the six huts already started, which can house about eight persons, and to provide some more things (a storage area to facilitate the work and to have in one place the implements).

After being relocated on site, those in-charge of agriculture will organise Hope's future expansion, taking into account the existing working methods and available financial resources.

It is also desirable at this stage to determine the site of the new model farms, which could be three and which in the light of the ongoing experiments, would create experimental poles. The latter would guide other farms in Auroville's agricultural belt.

Promesse:

Promesse is destined to become the Agricultural Zone's boarding. When freed, the existing buildings will house temporarily the administrative personnel responsible for lodging and guiding newcomers.

This arrangement is due to its access combined with a relative isolation, also the availability of its boarding once completed, its Maternity, Infirmary and Cafeteria. A campus accommodating 500 persons will have to be envisaged at a minimum temporary lodging cost. The role of 'Promesse' will be to receive, advise, direct and select, after a trial period, the candidates applying for Mother's permission to live in Auroville.

The immediate objective is to complete the Maternity and to build, once funds are available, a first phase to house some fifty persons.

* * *

1969, April 25th: *Excerpt from Roger's handwritten notes:*

Roger's personal archives, AV Archives, one of several quotes typed on a paper.
French

For the cows:

Cows are very sensitive and the kind of attachment they feel is something true. One must give them a house where they can be taken care of and loved.

* * *

1969, May 6th: *Answer to a question from Dayanand:*

Gaz, VIII, 2 p.17; AMW, p.195, MI, Feb. 2008, p. 122.
English

Q.: How can we know what the Truth is in case of difficulty? For example, one villager had agreed to collect and give us thirteen bags of cashew nuts from our plantation this season. Now due to drought he says he can give us only five bags.

The thing is false from the beginning. How can the man promise to give a fixed number of bags when he does not know how many he will get?

And how will you know that he gives exactly what he gets when there is no supervision of the harvesting?

So now, you have only to do for the best with justice and knowledge.

* * *

1969, May 31st: *Excerpt from a conversation with Satprem:*

MoA, p.14; CWM, XIII, p.281; MA, p. ; AMW, p.195.
French, taped conversation.

The night before last, I spent more than three hours with Sri Aurobindo and I was showing him all that was about to come down for Auroville. It was quite interesting. There were games, there was art, there was even cooking! But all that was very symbolic. And I was explaining to him as though on a table, in front of a vast landscape...

[...]

And then even the kitchen; it was so amusing! There were different ways of presenting the food; for instance, take fish, the different ways of preparing it, and each one came with his own

invention.... This went on for three hours (three hours of the night, it is a lot). I woke up just at four [o'clock] and I went to sleep at one: one to four makes three hours! I still know how to add!) Very interesting.

Satprem: Yet conditions upon earth seem to be very far from all that...

No... it was right there, it did not seem to be foreign to earth. It was a harmony: a conscious harmony behind things; a conscious harmony behind the physical exercises and the games; a conscious harmony behind the decoration, the art; a conscious harmony behind the food....

* * *

1970, March 15th: *First meeting of the Comité Administratif d'Auroville (CAA) whose 8 members (André, Navajata, Roger, Prem Mallik, Laljibhai Hindoch and his son Suresh, Dayanand and his wife, Anjani) are all appointed by Mother. Dayanand is the member in-charge of Agriculture. There is also a Committee for Agriculture. At first, Mother will sign the minutes of all CAA meetings.*

* * *

1970, March 22nd: *Excerpt from the minutes of the second meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives (CAA file)
English

Dayanand's questions: Land Utilisation:

To decide what has to be done with the 1,000 acres which are not yet under cultivation, will be the first task for the agricultural working committee, which will put some alternatives before the Administrative Committee. Dayanand things of the following members: Seshadry, Alain, Gérard, Mercier.

* * *

1970, March 28th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the third meeting of the CAA:*

AVA (CAA file)
English

Agriculture.

The recommendations of the Working Committee of Agriculture were taken up for consideration. The following suggestions were agreed upon:

- I. That the short-term programme already sent to the Ministry of Agriculture under the FFHC programme be proceeded with subject to:
 - a) Confiding ourselves to Lake Estate and Auro-Orchard, since the other farms are in Pondicherry State.
 - b) The budgetary aspects be gone into in greater detail, so that the services rendered by Auroville could be taken credit for.
- II. Regarding the programme for land utilisation the Working Committee's recommendations were considered at length. Finally, it was felt that taking into account the availability of men and materials the following course of action may be placed before the Mother, seeking her guidance and approval.
 - a) That we accept offers from individuals to take up specified area for development at their cost, subject to such conditions as may be approved in each individual case by The Mother.
 - b) The balance of the lands for which there are no offers from anybody will be attended to by Auroville, keeping in view the principle of minimum investment and maximum utilisation and maximum returns. The crops suggested being cashew – casuarina or coconut.

It was agreed that Dayanand should ~~take the above proposals to~~ The Mother for approval.

Mother corrected the previous sentence so that it reads:

"It was agreed that Dayanand should give any explanation if The Mother needs."

There was general agreement on all the above points except that Roger desired to have a clarification from The Mother as to why agriculture is not treated on par with industries for purpose of loan finance and sales of produces.

* * *

1970, April 5th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AVA (CAA file)
English

Report of the Committee for Agriculture

The report was read and approved, subject to the following remarks:

The suggestion for operating the agricultural account by 2 members of the working committee is not acceptable. A suitable solution to the anticipated difficulties will be found when the difficulties arise.

As regards the working Committee's suggestion of the land allotted to one person remaining unutilised beyond-one season being taken over by re-allotment to someone else, it was felt that the person to whom the land was originally allotted should be given a chance to explain and The Mother's specific approval obtained in each case before taking away the land for re-allotment.

Regarding the working committee's suggestion for cooperative farming, it was felt that this should be proceeded with cautiously and the legal aspects, etc. studied.

Our application for FFHC assistance was again considered against the background of the budget estimates and staffing pattern suggested by the working committee. It was felt that all the staff mentioned therein was not necessary and to begin with it would be sufficient if 3 technical assistants with B.Sc. (Agr.) qualification were appointed on a consolidated emolument of Rs.200/- and free accommodation on the farm. A final reply to the FFHC accepting to do the programme will have to be sent urgently.

* * *

1970, April 13th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AVA (CAA file)
English

Agriculture: The minutes of the working committee's meeting on April 9th were noted. Specific approval for 22 acres of double cropping at Rs.5.50 per acre, was given. As regard the working committee's recommendation for maintenance of agricultural machinery, it was felt it could be located at Auro-garage.

* * *

1970, April 25th: *Report on the constitution of the CAA in the preliminary issue of the "Auroville Bulletin":*

Auroville Bulletin, 25th April 1970
English

Administration Committee

A general committee has been started to which Mother gave the name: Administration Committee. The Committee is comprised for the moment of: André, Anjani, Dayanand, Laljibhai, Malik, Navajata, Roger, Suresh, with Wil acting as secretary. Shyam Sunder will be available for juridical matters. The committee will be extended as the need arises with those representing special other aspects of Auroville.

The committee started March 15th and meets every Sunday at 10.30 a.m. in the Auroville Office. The recommendations of the committee are by consensus of all members and are then approved or changed by The Mother. If the recommendation cannot be unanimous, the different solutions will be presented to The Mother and Her decision shall prevail. The minutes of each meeting are put before The Mother.

EXTRACTS OF THE MINUTES.

Working committees have started:

The Agricultural Committee is comprised of Dayanand, Gérard, Mercier, Allan, Seshadri, with Dayanand as secretary and meets every Thursday at 5 p.m. at the Auroville Office.

The Industrial Committee is comprised of: Suresh and Harish Hindocha, Bouma, Malik, Bhatt and Murty with Malik as secretary. This committee meets every Saturday at 10 a.m. in the Auroville-Office.

The Committee for Construction is comprised of Roger, Piero, Gloria, Ramanathan and Neeta with Roger as secretary and meets every Saturday at 4 p.m. in the Auroville-Office.

If necessary, notes and suggestions can be put before the Administration Committee addressed as follows: To the secretary Administration Committee, Wil, Auroville-Office.

* * *

1970, April 26th (Sunday): *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AVA (CAA file)
English

Agriculture

We should make a concrete proposal for Mr. Ganeriwal, who is willing to start cultivation of Auroville land.

* * *

1970, May 3rd: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AVA (CAA file)
English

Aurogarage will be released for starting agricultural service – cum maintenance workshop by 1-6-'70.

The transport problem arising out of the Agricultural Committee's minutes were also discussed and the following was agreed upon:

- a) That the Bedford vehicle be made available to Louis with Rs. 1,000/- for getting it repaired in view of Unimog²⁷ given by him to Auroville. If approved by Mother the Unimog to be transferred to the Agricultural Committee and Stephan to look after the agricultural service – cum maintenance workshop.
- b) The actual expenditure that will have to be incurred to get the two tractors repaired to be assessed by the Agricultural Committee and also to find out who was responsible for the breakdown of the vehicles earlier, since the commitment was that Gérard and Frederick, who were using them would themselves get them repaired. However, on Monday Vincenzo, Michel, Stephan and Anand will discuss the matter with Roger and Nava, so that their view would also be known.

Agriculture:

5 acres in Kalapet on the beach to be given to Indian Council for Agricultural Research for locating their laboratory for saline water irrigation research, for a period of three years.

* * *

1970, : *Announcement in the "Auroville Bulletin"*

Auroville Bulletin
English

Agricultural Committee

The scope of the Committee is Agriculture, Horticulture, Dairy, Animal Husbandry, plantation crops, soil conservation and erosion control. An Agricultural Fund has been started to which specific

²⁷ A very rugged all-terrain vehicle manufactured by Mercedes.

donations has been started to which specific donations are directly credited and from which funds can be drawn.

Those who desire to do agriculture or any given subject mentioned within the scope of the committee should inform the committee by 15th May 1970, for the new agricultural season in the prescribed proforma. For further details please contact Dayanand, secretary of this working committee.

Important conditions are that the land belongs to Auroville, that a part of the profits or produce should be given to Auroville, and that the area is open for assessment by the Agricultural Committee.

* * *

1970, May 10th (Sunday): *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Agriculture:

The minutes of the last meeting of the Agricultural Committee were read out. Regarding Allen's request for Rs. 6,000/- for the Unimog, the Committee did not feel like changing the offer made to Allen of the Bedford plus Rs. 1,000/-. This subject to Dr. Sen not needing the Bedford for transferring it into a mobile dispensary. But most probably one of the repaired vans could be used to this end. André will report after seeing Dr. Sen and Michel.

* * *

1970, June 7th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

Archives
English

Agriculture: Unutilised 1,000 acres. Once again it was stressed that the 1,000 acres must immediately be planted up with casuarinas before the end of July. The expected expenditure per acre is Rs 200 to Rs 250/-. After 4 years the profit will be Rs 4,000/- acre net.

Committee for Agriculture:

The minutes of this committee were taken up for consideration. The suggestion of the committee that a central fertiliser depot could be started with a central investment of Rs. 10,000/- for purchase of fertilisers and for internal sales and use, was agreed to. This would mean a netto saving of Rs. 60/- per ton. This business could be taken up by Auro-Trade.

* * *

1970, June 21st (Sunday): *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

Archives
English

Agriculture

In view of the fact that it would not be possible to make available out of Auroville funds 2 Lakhs for the purpose of planting up: 1,000 acres, a suggestion was made whether we could not take a loan from a Bank. For this Dayanand was asked to make a special scheme to be placed before Mother for consideration.

Rob and Frederick need Rs.12,000 for farming on 38 acres at a rate of Rs. 250 per acre. This was approved of by the Committee.

It was reported that Edward's proposal for getting developed 120 acres had been dropped, because he was not interested in investing so much money for two years. Laljibhai clarified saying that Edward had not discussed with him the details of the scheme and he had no objection at all to the lands being developed into a farm if Edward's scheme succeeded. In any case after about 2 or 3 years he would need 30 acres and a bore-well.

He wanted this to be told to Edward.

* * *

1970, July 5th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Present: 15 people from Aspiration.²⁸

Several measures were proposed to address the complains from the people in Aspiration. One of them being:

Productive work: As work and funds are needed for the community, it was proposed to start a vegetable garden, a dairy and a poultry. In the next meeting the CAA will be informed who will be in charge of these enterprises. The accounts side of all these activities will have to be attended to by the Aspiration Office.

After the Aspiration people left the following items were considered:

1. As watchmen have to be appointed immediately land purchase is made, Dayanand can appoint watchmen on a temporary daily wages basis, without having to come to CAA. He will keep the Accounts Department informed.
2. The people from "Silence"²⁹ asked Rs 1,000 in order to start some groundnut cultivation. It was suggested that they should try to collect the money among themselves and sell the yield themselves. Dayanand will inform them.

* * *

1970, July 12th (Sunday): *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

Archives
English

It was agreed to have a general meeting for all Aurovilians once a month on the first Sunday of the month at 5.00 p.m. in Aspiration.

Productive Work: There was general approval from the Aspiration people that the time has come when we should start considering what each one could do for Auroville instead of what each one can get from Auroville. The following offers were made:

Poultry: Louise, Josselin, Piet, Emeric are ready to take responsibility.

Dairy: John has offered to start a dairy.

*

Excerpt from the report of the same meeting in the "Auroville Bulletin":

Auroville Bulletin
English

A General Report on Committee Activities

At a meeting of the Administrative Committee of Auroville on Sunday morning, 12th July, it was generally agreed that the time had come for us to consider what each of us can do for Auroville rather than what Auroville can do for us. This idea was expressed with genuine confidence and general goodwill. In the course of the meeting problems of expenditure for food in Auroville and the question of representation at the meetings of the Adm. Com were discussed.

André said, "A community of 39 persons can live on a certain average. The difference with other communities in general is that this one has a younger age average than most communities. But in other terms the experience of other community lives in the country it can supplement its requirements and this is a possibility which everybody can undertake."

The establishment of a dairy, poultry, and vegetable farm was then discussed and several people volunteered to help carry this out. Since then [Cow] John has received the necessary funds and actually begun the work. Other people have offered their services in other areas, the Polyester Unit, the gardens at Peace, the Library at Aspiration, etc. and so the work is going on.

²⁸ "Big Piet" (Nico's brother) told this editor that they had come invited to voice their grievances.

²⁹ "Silence" was the name given by Mother to Jocelyn S. for her place. At that time it was where Bharat Nivas now is.

The Adm. Comm. Agreed to hold general meeting on the first Sunday of each month for all Aurovilians who care to attend. These would be at 5 p.m., in Aspiration. For meetings with the Adm. Comm. At other times when special issues arise, it was decided that representatives could be chosen by those who are concerned. The first general meeting in Auroville would therefore be held Sunday, 2nd August, 1970.

* * *

1970, July 19th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Mother has stated that Rs. 3,000/- received from France through Alain should be given to Aspiration for purchasing cows in consultation with Jalad. The Rs 3,000/- from Calcutta should also be used for the same purpose. Perhaps 3 cows could be purchased and the balance Rs 1,500/- used for construction of a shed to house the cattle.

* * *

1970, July 28th: *Excerpt from the twentieth "Aspiration talk".*

MoA, p.98; CWM, XIII, p.351; AMW, p.349
French. Taped conversation

No questions? Yes? What do you have to say?

[silence]

Christophe: The first thing is that [Cow] John is going to buy cows for Aspiration. He is going to Madras tomorrow and he would like to have your blessings. He would like to have three of them, one for each cow and one for himself.

[Mother laughs] What will they do with the blessings?

Where is he going to buy them?

Christophe: In Madras.

Madras is a city. Cows are not born in cities.

Christophe: But he is going with an expert.

Oh! I'm quite willing to give a blessings packet for him, but not for the cows! Is that all?

* * *

1970, August 2nd: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the C.A.A.:*

AV Archives
English

Agriculture:

At this stage the Agricultural committee joined the meeting. The guidelines for the working of the Agricultural Committee were read out and approved and will be published in the Auroville Bulletin for information of the Aurovilians.

The following projects were also considered:

- 1) Mr. Ganeriwal's offer to invest Rs. 30,000 of his own and Rs. 50,000 on loan to be paid by him out of the proceeds. It was felt that with this investment Mr. Ganeriwal wants to make, the Pulichapalayam plot behind Auro Food would be the best. Laljiibhai also specifically approved stating if this plot could be developed as a good farm, he has no objection to it. There is a well there which gives 12,000 gallons p. hour.
- 2) The Agricultural Committee has requested to highlight the research and educational aspects of the Agricultural Section so as to qualify for exemption and concessions.
- 3) The Agricultural Committee was requested to prepare a full report on the land utilisation, giving practical phasing of the project with minimum recurring costs maximum utilisation could be achieved. The report could be prepared within a fortnight and sent to the Committee.

* * *

1970, August 9th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Agriculture: The minutes of the Agricultural committee were noted. In connection with the approved scheme for 13 acres, it was stated by the Committee that the capital, including the profit, should be ploughed back into the land for development work.

Chicken Project: Pieter had sent estimates for this for Rs. 3,000/- which were approved, although Malik stated that poultry cannot be developed in this way as it is not scientific. But the Committee considered it to be more important to give the Aspiration people the opportunity to do something and to try out for themselves projects fitted to their aptitude.

* * *

1970, September 20th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Agriculture: André informed that Mother has agreed to open the Agriculture account, but the resolution must be taken. In this connection a number of points relating to agriculture were discussed as how best to get maximum utilisation and return on investment.

Dayanand informed that he had planted up about 75 acres with ground-nut, cumbu, ragi, vegetables, etc. After the season we will be able to assess properly the return on investment. We will have to try to bring as much land as possible under cultivation.

* * *

1970, September 27th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Agriculture: it was felt that Dayanand could sell from the crops, what is not needed by Prosperity, the money can be put in the recently opened Agricultural Account.

* * *

1970, October 18th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Agriculture: Dayanand mentioned that F.F.H.C has sanctioned a grant of Rs. 3,22,338 for farmers' training and education. He said that counterpart expenditure would be of the value of Rs 75,000 for 2 years at the rate of Rs. 3,000 per month. The amount may be put under F.F.H.C. account regularly.

Office accommodation was considered essential to start the work and Dayanand was asked to make a concrete proposal.

Only after placing the entire scheme before The Mother and obtaining Her specific approval, our consent letter may be sent.

* * *

1970 October end (?): *Excerpt from Auroville News in the Gazette Aurovilienne No 1*

Saline Water Project: The Saline Water Irrigation Research Project sanctioned by the Govt. of India has been set up at Kanakchetty-kulum. Experiments are in progress. The object is to find out the best dosage of sea water for the growth of plants and to study the exchange in their metabolism and their absorption spectra.

Freedom from hunger campaign: This scheme for training and education of farmers will start soon. Initially Auro-Orchard will be treated as a nucleus farm and extension work will be done in ten villages around the farm. This intensive programme includes selection of farmers from each village and raising crops for them under the best agricultural conditions, taking farmers on educational tours, arranging radio talks and conducting short, intensive courses of education in the nucleus farm.

* * *

1970, November 22nd: *Excerpt from the minutes of the Meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Dayanand will take charge of the organisation of the new farm to be located near Aspiration, which can be included in the F.F.H.C. Programme. John's cowshed will be rebuilt there and integrated families, who want to work in agriculture, could work there.

Agriculture: Dayanand brought to the notice of the committee that land disputes are increasing and that he needs a Vehicle urgently to be able to settle this disputes immediately. It was felt that the jeep to be purchased under the F.F.H.C. Programme would be available for his exclusive use in connection with agriculture, etc.

* * *

1970, November 29th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting of the CAA:*

AV Archives
English

Agriculture: A correction to the last time minutes was made that work on the Auromodel farm can be started only if the Rs. 20,000 promised for agriculture, was made available.

F.F.H.C Programme: It is absolutely essential that we make a success of this programme since this is a good way to establish contact with the people. Further even in the sanction letter there is a promise of big money coming for the development of Auroville farms for the second stage of the programme. As such we should see that our share of the expenditure is made available on our side on priority basis. The requirements of tire programme are about Rs. 900 p.m.

* * *

1970, December 6th: *Excerpt from the minutes of the meeting the CAA*

AV Archives
English

Agriculture: The Committee felt that it would be better if Dayanand would write to Ganeriwal about the unsatisfactory progress on his farm. Laljibhai informed about a gift of Rs. 20,000 worth of equipment for a cashew-processing industry and whether it could be accepted. The Committee agreed that this could be accepted.

* * *

1971, February early: *Mother calls for Shyam Sunder and asks him to become her secretary for Auroville affairs –telling him:*

I have no one else in view. You are my last chance for Auroville.³⁰

Mother then speaks of the hard and difficult work that is being assigned to him, in spite of his poor health of which she could take care.

Don't think I am giving you a big and comfortable chair to sit on. You will have lots of difficulties, but I will be with you. You will not give up saying that you are incapable.

And I will hold you morally responsible for all that happens at Auroville.

In the end she said that if he agreed to do the work, she would see him daily with his report and problems, and with her divine solicitude and humility, she adds:

I will try to help you.

Shyam Sunder: Yes Mother.

* * *

³⁰ M. P. Pandit asked Mother why she had chosen Shyam Sunder; her answer was: "André is too old for Auroville; Nava cannot understand Auroville; Roger is impossible; there is a defect in Shyam Sunder, but I can take care of it." (*Down Memory Lane* by Shyam Sunder, p. 17)

1971, February 17th: *After the suspension of the “Comité Administratif d’Auroville” (CAA), Shyam Sunder asks Mother, “Should Auroville have some more new committees?” He notes: Mother is not agreeing to new committees for Auroville; She says:*

MoA, p.84; CWM, XIII, p.215; AMW, p.369 Gaz 3
French

**No more committees,
No more useless talk.**

* * *

1971, February: *Most probably about Ashram farms, but Auroville farms were not different:*

AV Archives

With all the land in our possession and the money we spend for cultivating, we do not have enough vegetables to feed our people. We are obliged to buy from the market. Will you call this supramental efficiency?

* * *

1971, February end: *Excerpt from ‘Auroville News’ in the Gazette No 2:*

Agriculture: As part of the programme of research, exotic plants are being studied in the nursery at Peace. Fifteen species have successfully germinated.

* * *

1971, March: *Raoul Mercier, an Aurovilian working at Auro-orchard, wrote to the Mother about the use of inorganic fertilisers and pesticides at Auroville, asking whether Auroville should promote these methods, when they were being discarded in countries like the U. S. A. and in Europe because of the dangers they represented.*

Ashram Archives (Oscar’s file), MoA, p.81; CWM, XIII, p.240; AMW, p.372, Gaz Vol 1, No 3
French

NO, NO, NO.

Auroville should not fall back into old errors which belong to a past that is trying to revive.³¹

* * *

1971

CWM, XIII, p.240
French

Cultivation without chemical fertilisers and dangerous insecticides is advisable.

* * *

1971, May: *Excerpt from “Auroville News” in the Gazette No 3:*

Agriculture:

An institutional training course for farmers was conducted at Auro-Orchard from 15.3.71 to 21.3.71. Three farmers from each of the ten villages around Auro-Orchard were selected for the training. The course was split up as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------|
| 1. High yielding varieties | 3 days |
| 2. Plantation crop | 1 day |
| 3. Vegetable cultivation | 1 day |
| 4. Plant protection | 1 day |
| 5. Machinery and Maintenance | 1 day |

Twelve experts dealt with the subject. Practical demonstrations and film shows were conducted in the afternoons.

Bee keeping:

³¹ Read also the entry dated 9.6.71.

A short term course for the benefit of small farmers has been started. Besides they are being taught how to handle bees, catch queen bees and extract honey. In March, twenty candidates underwent this training and also received a stipend during their training period. As part of the bee-keeping programme whole colonies of bees are being shifted to the Javadi hills to tone up the strength of the colonies. The bees will spend the summer in the hills and later return to the plains.

The saline water irrigation research project:

This project was visited by the Chief Minister and Agriculture Minister of Pondicherry State.

* * *

1971, May 30th: Entry in Shyam Sunder's Notes:

AV Archives (SS file) has Howard's letter, Down Memory Lane, p. 116
English

Answer to a letter from Howard [later known as Amrit] about the disposal of fruits and vegetables grown at the Nursery. Should they be distributed freely to Aurovilians or should they be sold within the Auroville community, or outside of Auroville?

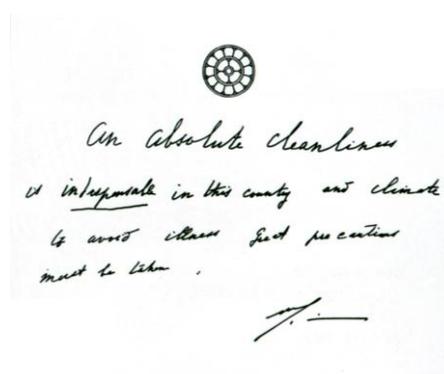
It depends on the quantity. One can distribute these if it is little, otherwise it can come to the kitchen and the kitchen can pay.

* * *

1971: Message for the Matrimandir Workers' Kitchen.

MoA, p.86; CWM, p.247, AMW, p.391.
English

An absolute cleanliness is indispensable in this country and climate to avoid illness. Great precautions must be taken.



* * *

1971, June 9th: Entry in Shyam Sunder's Notes:

AV Archives (SS file), Down Memory Lane, p. 116 Other sources for the statement: Gaz,14, p.19; AMW, p.391
English; Statement in French

- *The question of fertilisers arose on a reference from Dayanand. Mother said that she was against any chemical fertilisers.*

Gaz, I, 4p.19

It is poisonous. It gives some more yield in the beginning, but it is not good to take things produced by it. ("I hope they are not giving it to me!" [she exclaimed]. Other countries have tried it, but seen its effects and are rejecting it. What others are discarding, India is following!

Shyam Sunder mentioned that in India cow-dung manure had been regarded as the best and [Raoul] Mercier also thought so. Mother said that it was correct. She said that some years ago she was growing banana here and she did not use fertilisers but the result was good. She added:

What is needed is labour, care and attention. If you save labour, you lose health.

Shyam Sunder: According to my experience, plants and animals like cows respond to love and personal labour.

Yes, yes.

Mother wants [Raoul] Mercier engaged in agriculture, to be left undisturbed to do what he is doing and she issues the following statement:

I am in favour of cultivation without chemical fertilisers and dangerous insecticides.

I authorise that all Auro-Orchard land be reserved for biological cultivation.

Je suis pour la culture
 sans engrais chimiques
 et
 je recommande d'autoriser
 que toutes
 les terres d'Auro soient
 réservées à la culture
 biologique

Clémence



* * *

1971, September end: *Excerpt from 'Auroville News' in Gazette Aurovilienne No 4:*

Agriculture:

The Mother: "Cultivation without chemical fertilisers and dangerous insecticides is advisable. I authorise that all Auro-Orchard land be reserved for biological cultivation."

On 9-6-71 in reply to a question regarding the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides in agriculture, the Mother said that they are noxious. They help to yield more at first but it is unhealthy to eat agricultural products grown by these methods.

Some countries, that have tried them, having recognised their ill-effects, are rejecting them. Yet, in India, some people are following what others are discarding.

Mother tells of how, long ago, she raised banana trees with the help of organic fertilisers and obtained good results. What is needed is work, loving care and attention. With chemical fertilisers one saves labour but one damages the health.

On 16-9-71 the Mother was shown a rare flower, the one named "Transformation" by her, but with seven petals instead of the usual four. The Mother said, "It is transformation realised".

Micro-Climate:

By agriculture most people understand the production of plants. But one must also take into account the medium in which the plants are grown: the soil and its improvement by means of natural laws; the improvement of the climate by an intense and judicious reforestation; the improvement of plants by a careful selection. The soil has also to be used with wisdom and must not be exposed to influences which destroy it.

The future development of agriculture at Auroville is closely related to the creation of a more favourable micro-climate. This can be helped by the planting of all kinds of trees able to adopt to present conditions. But this reforestation has to be carefully studied and integrated into the general plan of Auroville.

According to specialists, at least 20% of the total surface of the land area should be planted with hedges, groves and woods. This is the only way to create a micro-climate, to eliminate risks of erosion by rain and wind, to favour the growth of birds, to conserve carbon (indispensable for the fertility of the soil), to produce oxygen, and what is most important, to regularise and increase the rains.

Training for Farmers:

The Institutional Training Course for Farmers conducted by Auroville, has organised discussion groups in 30 villages and presented radio sets to 14 villages to permit the farmers to hear regular broadcasts on agriculture.

Three courses as well as field demonstrations have been conducted under the Freedom From Hunger Campaign. A study tour of 54 farmers, women as well as men, toured Tamil Nadu accompanied by four experts.

Research:

Seed evaluation trials will soon be undertaken in collaboration with an Australian seed agency. Initially food crops will be evaluated at the Pulichapallam farm.

The saline water irrigation research needs assistance in spectrographic analysis of plant material. Those who can help in this direction are welcome to do so.

Service Farm:

Considerable development has taken place at this farm. Water storage tanks have been constructed and a sprinkler irrigation system installed. The land will produce bananas and vegetables for the residents of Auroville, as well as green fodder for the dairy. Groundnuts, bajra, cashew and fruit trees will also be planted.

Auro-Dairy:

For the present Auro-Dairy is housed in a temporary shed. There are 23 milch cows and 170 litres of milk are distributed daily to Auroville communities and the Auroville kitchen.

Financial arrangements have been finalised for the construction of a modern cow-shed and for increasing the herd strength to about 100 milch animals. Work on the construction of the cow-shed is expected to start soon.

* * *

1972, January early: *Excerpt from 'Auroville News' in the Gazette Aurovilienne Vol. 1, No 5-6:*

Agriculture:

The 5th Farmers Training Camp, of one week's duration, was conducted for farmers of Auro-Orchard area in October. Thirty farmers from the following villages attended the course: Moratandichavadi, Karuvadikuppam, Tiruchitrabalam, Periyamudaliarchavadi, Pattanur, Thattanchavadi, Alankuppam, Kulapalayam and Veemagoundanpalayam.

Prizes were distributed to farmers who had gone on a conducted tour of Research Stations, National Farms, Centres in Tamil Nadu, and had written the best essays on their impressions of the tour.

Field demonstrations on private farms are being conducted in thirty villages. For each crop five demonstrations are held and during each demonstration the farmers of the village are invited to witness, participate and discuss their problems. Over 45 demonstrations have been held till now.

A biogeographic seminar of one week's duration was conducted in Pondicherry. Scientists and forest officers who attended the seminar toured Auroville. A paper on sea water irrigation was read at the seminar.

In the seed farm at Pulichapallam, cotton, soyabeans and millets were sown during the rabi season.

The first harvest of groundnuts from the kharif season being over the area was planted with leguminous crops. Two crops are raised per year under "Dry Farming Techniques".

Bee Keeping:

Bee-keeping has been extended to the following centres in Pondicherry region: Krishnapuram, Kattukuppam, Sembianpalayam, Kalapet and Sedarapet.

About 2500 colonies have been set up benefitting about 120 villagers.

About 7500kg of honey was extracted from the boxes and given to the owners of the boxes.

* * *

1972, March 16th: *Notice written by Shyam Sunder and signed by Mother:*

Archives, AMW, p.424; Down Memory Lane, p.137

English

Hygiene in Auroville

Strict cleanliness is highly desirable in Auroville, in community kitchens and places of sanitation. The present state is far from satisfactory. For lasting improvement, the community as a whole should accept it as a need and some persons should take responsibility for looking after these matters.

The following persons have already offered their services for this purpose:

1. Kusum for Promesse.
2. Shanti for Health Centre Kitchen.

Volunteers are needed for Aspiration. Names may be submitted to Mother through Shyam Sunder.

Blessings

Other notes from Shyam Sunder:

- Then the question of cheese came up.

In Europe, cheese is made of unboiled milk. At Aspiration it is done the same way. But the conditions in Europe and India are different. Cheese made from boiled milk may not be so good, but it is safer to boil the milk for this purpose.

Apart from the question of cheese, Mother further advised boiling in general from the viewpoint of health.

In Auroville, you have to tell people persistently.

Next day, Shyam Sunder issued a notice containing Mother's advice about boiling milk.

- Regarding agriculture Shyam Sunder wanted to know whether more farms should be developed by giving charge to capable persons for each farm, to one or two for each farm.

Mother agreed and advised,

But it is necessary that the Europeans who do it should first know the Indian conditions.

Shyam Sunder: Should we have one Indian with one European?

Yes, yes.

After a pause Mother mentioned [Raoul] Mercier's name.

Shyam Sunder: But Mother, he may not be having time.

Yes, and he is old.

* * *

1972, April early: *Excerpt from 'Auroville News' in the Gazette Aurovillienne Vol. 1 No 7:*

Auro-Dairy: The construction of a modern dairy is proceeding rapidly. There are now 46 cows and one Red Dane bull. About 300 litres of milk are obtained daily which is for the moment sufficient for the needs of Auroville.

Service Farm: There was a very good crop of different types of vegetables and a good crop of bananas is also expected. Fodder grass for the dairy has been successfully planted.

Auro-Poultry: The poultry is situated behind Service Farm and was begun six months ago with one-day-old chicks. There are now 100 hens, which have started laying eggs.

Auro-Orchard: The Orchard lies in the agricultural zone of Auroville, near Promesse, and has an area of 36 hectares. The season for vegetables which need a cooler temperature is over (green bell peppers, lettuce, parsley, tomatoes, eggplant, etc.) At present the vegetables planted are those which can bear more heat and dry weather (cucumbers, melons, gourds).

The cultivation of bananas with the help of organic fertilisers is yielding very good results. An effort is to be made in the production of diverse plants and their treatment so as to obtain organic vegetal pesticides and thus eliminate the need for dangerous chemical insecticides.

Experiments in collaboration with the French Institute of Indology are under way to determine the minimal water requirements of "Sunflower". The Institute has undertaken the analysis of our surface soils and composts to determine their value.

Success: This is the name given by the Mother to the nursery situated 500 meters west of "Forecomers". A windmill pump offered by the Government is being installed. Between 200,000 and 300,000 casuarina and eucalyptus seedlings and many thousands of flowering tree seedlings are being grown, which will be transplanted during the monsoons. This nursery is the first part of the project in soil and water conservation.

Studies are in progress to retain the monsoon waters which at the moment are largely lost in the sea and cause considerable erosion. It is hoped that by terracing and reforestation of the slope between Auroville and the sea that this will become possible and there will be an improvement in the local climate. Preliminary studies have confirmed that this project can be realised.

Irrigation with Sea-water: Work on this project has slowed down due to the heat and the evaporation. Interesting results were obtained concerning the absorption of minerals contained in sea water. The Atomic Research Centre at Bombay has undertaken the spectrographic analysis of the plants.

* * *

1972, May 2nd: *Entry in Shyam Sunder's notes:*

Down Memory Lane, p.172

English

Auroville can contribute Rs 1,000 to the Farmers' Conference in an Auroville village and arrange to take the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu around. No party or function at Auroville.

* * *

1972, May 28th: *Entry in Shyam Sunder's notes:*

Down Memory Lane, p.182

English

The rinderpest at Aurodairy was reported to Mother. She put questions for more information. Five cows have already died. Eight more are infected.

* * *

1972, May 23rd: *Notice signed by Mother, but drafted by someone else – most probably Roger:*

SOME GUIDELINES FOR SETTING UP INDUSTRIES AT AUROVILLE

One of the objectives of Auroville is that economic activities of all kinds, whether industrial, artisanal, agricultural, etc, should be completely taken up by Aurovilians. Since the requirements of the Aurovilians are completely looked after by Auroville, the question of salary does not arise.

This objective, which should not in any case be forgotten nor delayed in its application, is the ideal to be attained.

An intermediary stage for practical reasons seems necessary before attaining this.

During this period, the industries which would come up in Auroville, can engage for a certain period, according to their needs some salaried specialists or technicians.

However, engagement of this paid personnel would be only for a limited period under a form of contract to be renewed annually. Their role will be to help start of industries and then help form a team of Aurovilians, as soon as possible, who would replace them.

More over any enterprise or project undertaken at Auroville should be in consonance with Auroville's ideals.

* * *

1972, June 1st: *Entry in Shyam Sunder's notes:*

Down Memory Lane, p.184

English

At Auro-dairy one cow and one calf died yesterday. Total number of death is ten cows and ten calves. Mother asked about the disinfection of the place. Shyam Sunder replied that disinfection, vaccination and segregation have been done.

* * *

1972, September 9th: *Message displayed at "Tout C'qu'il Faut", Pournas's restaurant that had replaced Roger's office at the State House in Pondicherry. It was approved for publication in the Gazette Aurovilienne.*

Gazette 2, 2

English



9. 9. 72.

Eat for living

but do not live for eating.

Shyam Sunder

Eat for living but do not live for eating.

* * *

1972, October: *Excerpt from 'Auroville News' in the Gazette Aurovilienne Vol. 2, No 2:*

Auro-Dairy: The new building for Auro-Dairy was inaugurated at 9 a.m. on the 9th of October. There was a brief meditation to the accompaniment of Mother's music. Then the cows were led inside the building, which consists of four units. When it is fully completed, it will be able to accommodate 100 animals.

* * *

1972, November 6th: *Entry in Shyam Sunder's notes:*

Down Memory Lane, p.243

English

Shyam Sunder: In accordance with our afforestation plans, we have planted eight hundred trees at Fertile.

Mother said with a smile:

Eight hundred!

Shyam Sunder: The work continues, Mother.

* * *

1973, December: *Excerpt from 'Auroville News' in the Gazette Aurovilienne Vol. 3, No 1:*

There is an awakening among the residents of Auroville to the necessity of making Auroville a 'self-supporting' community. Obviously, this will not be an easy task and will require a determined effort over a considerable period of time. We will also have to remember that the basis of this endeavour must always be an inner progress and transformation.

We have published in this issue of the Gazette a talk of the Mother which can be of great help in our pursuit of this goal.

A beginning has been made by various individuals and groups. Some have offered all their funds to the Central Pool. Small industrial units like Toujours Mieux, Auropolyester, Auropress, Hand Made Paper, and Fraternity and Auofuture etc. are endeavouring to meet the expenses of Aurovilians working with them through the orders and work they execute for persons from outside Auroville.

The Auroville Central Food Distribution Unit was set up on 15th September 1973. It has taken up the responsibility of purchasing, transporting and delivering its food requirements to each community. It collects agricultural products from Auroville farms and purchases the rest in bulk in Pondicherry, leading to a saving in costs. 'Utilité' has begun growing crops according to the suggestions of the Food Distribution Unit.

All around there is a new awareness, a new enthusiasm and dedication so that Auroville may take one more step forward towards its destiny.

* * *

1974, December: *Excerpt from 'Auroville News' in the Gazette Aurovilienne Vol. 3, No 2:*

Algae Cultivation: In several countries throughout the world, extensive research has been going on during the past twenty years in the cultivation of unicellular algae for its potential utilisation as protein food. In Auroville also, at Forecomers, research in this field is in progress.

The merits of algae both in terms of its food value and ease of cultivation are numerous:

1. The protein and vitamin content is richer than that of any other grain or vegetable. In the case of "Chlorella" only 50 grams per day supplies the daily requirements of protein, fats, vitamins and minerals. Only carbohydrates need be supplemented.
2. Protein yield is largely dependent on the photo-synthetic capacity of an organism. The algae cell is one of the most efficient utilisers of solar energy in its capacity of photo synthesis and the rapidity of its cell division.

Protein production per acre per year in Lbs.

Chlorella	14,000
Grass	600
Wheat	269
Milk	90
Meat	54

3. Through algae culture food production becomes to a large extent independent of weather conditions, seasonal restrictions and insect attack. It requires no soil or compost, relatively little water, no spraying or laborious cultivation and relatively little land area (under proper conditions one acre of land space provides the complete proteins, vitamins, minerals and fats for 300 to 500 people).
4. Algae requires only sunlight, water, carbon dioxide, a fixed nitrogen and small amounts of mineral nutrients. The nutritive value of the food can be controlled or varied by varying the nutrients.
5. The total substance of the algae is used for food. There is no growth of unusable stalks, stems, roots, leaves etc.
6. Controlled methods of algae cultivation allow for food production which is relatively protected from industrial and environmental pollution.
7. Continuous harvesting of algae is possible, thus eliminating many of the present complex problems of food storage, processing, preserving, packing and distribution.
8. Microbial food is highly concentrated, easily digestible and can be used in a variety of food preparations.

Auroville, seeking the life of the future will also attempt to find the food of tomorrow: something of which the body does not require a huge quantity in order to assimilate just a little, which does not make one heavy but is at once capable for being assimilated without waste of time and energy.

Algae food, which meets many of these requirements, has been thoroughly investigated in terms of laboratory experimentation and analysis but as yet there has been no opportunity to carry out extensive dietary studies in a total social context. Auroville, where the effects of past food habits, tastes, traditions, economics and politics would be less pronounced, could make a unique contribution to the food of tomorrow.

Algae cultivation could also help in solving the global problem of diminishing resources and food supplies and also free large land areas from the burden of cultivation allowing them to be transformed into beautiful parks and woodlands.

In the next issue we shall present a brief note on the initial experiment in Auroville.

Agriculture: A self sufficiency programme in food grains was started in October 1973 in the Auromodèle area. Thirty five acres were sown with blackgram and greengram under rain-fed conditions.

The Farmers' Education and Training Programme is completing its third year. During 1973 the work was extended to twenty new villages.

Field demonstrations were conducted for paddy and ground nuts. Over 1,500 farmers attended these demonstrations.

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