

The Farm That Learned to Wait

An Individual Farmer's Journey from Same-Day Sales to Better Price Realisation



From Selling in Hours to Choosing the Day

Every harvest on Milind Madhukar Rakibe's farm in Nashik had to be sold within hours. Milind grows high-value horticultural crops, including broad beans, capsicum, and dragon fruit, and sells at the Nashik APMC. With no on-farm storage, he could not wait out a price dip or hold produce for a better window. Capsicum sold at around INR 35–40 per kg and dragon fruit at around INR 60, both to middlemen, at margins of around 26% and 35%.

The constraint was time, not quality. The urgency to sell left little room to negotiate with traders at the APMC, and favourable price windows passed him by. A cold room on the farm would close that gap, but it had to be right-sized for a single farmer's volumes. Adoption was the harder obstacle. As a first-time user of the technology, Milind needed the investment de-risked before it made sense.

SUGAM-CSS started with the market, not the machine. The project team evaluated Milind's crop mix and market



By storing high-value crops and selling when market prices improve, even a small cold storage can multiply value for farmers

Milind Madhukar Rakibe, on what a small on-farm cold room can do

patterns to identify a viable cold-storage use case, then recommended a right-sized, solar-powered micro cold room suited to on-farm use. Access to finance and viability gap funding de-risked first-time adoption, while market linkage support connected the new storage capacity to real market timing opportunities.

The same-day sale disappeared. Produce is now held at 12°C for 6 to 14 days, depending on each crop's shelf life, and released at the Nashik APMC only when prices are favourable. Capsicum now sells at INR 45–65 per kg, and its margin reached 57% in the best-performing cycle. Dragon fruit moved from INR 60 to INR 70 per kg, lifting its margin to 39%. Across five documented storage cycles, the cold room generated a total profit of INR 2,33,706.





By the Numbers: What Timing Is Worth

Particulars	Broad Beans April–May (3,000 kg 14 days)	Capsicum June (2,000 kg 6 days)	Capsicum June (1,500 kg 7 days)	Capsicum June–July (996 kg 12 days)	Dragon Fruit July (3,006 kg 11 days)
Expenses (INR)					
Procurement	2,70,000	50,000	37,500	24,900	1,05,210
Labour	5,600	2,400	2,800	4,800	4,400
Transport	6,000	4,000	3,000	1,992	6,012
Total Cost (INR)	2,81,600	56,400	43,300	31,692	1,15,622
Revenue (INR)	3,30,000	1,30,000	67,500	44,820	1,90,000
Profit (INR)	48,400 (15%)	73,600 (57%)	24,200 (36%)	13,128 (29%)	74,378 (39%)

Percentages represent profit margin on revenue

Learning from Operations: Capsicum and dragon fruit delivered the strongest returns, while broad beans held a thinner 15% margin on the largest volume handled. Capsicum margins also fell across its three cycles, from 57% to 29%, as the realised price dropped from around INR 65 to INR 45 per kg. Storage pays best when release is timed to price peaks.



Impact on Ground

**INR 35–40 →
INR 45–65/kg**

Higher selling price for capsicum through improved market timing

**INR 60 → INR
70/kg**

Higher price realised for dragon fruit after cold storage

Up to 57%

Profit margin achieved during the best-performing capsicum cycle

INR 2.33 lakh+

Total profit generated across five documented storage cycles

6–14 days

Additional storage period enabling flexible marketing and reduced distress sale



What Made It Work

Holding power

On-farm cold storage eliminated the need for immediate distress sales

Market timing

Short-term storage enabled sales during favourable market conditions

Crop fit

High-value horticultural crops responded well to temperature-controlled storage, with quality and freshness maintained

Financing

End-to-end SUGAM-CSS support facilitated first-time adoption of micro cold room technology