SRI for Sugar Cane, Millet, Cotton

One of the most exciting developments is to see SRI concepts and practices being applied or extended by farmers to other crops.

An India SRI farmer, Sudarkhar Reddy, has extrapolated SRI thinking to his sugar cane crop. He has reduced his seed (set) rate from 10 t/ha to 1.5 t/ha, growing initially small sets in plastic bags with compost to obtain good root growth and tillering before trans-planting. His first use of these adapted methods gave a yield of 100 t/acre compared with his more usual 30 t/acre. ANGRAU faculty are following this experiment carefully, and other farmers are also applying SRI concepts to sugar cane, also a gramineae species like rice.

The Green Foundation in Bangalore, an NGO working with tribal and other marginalized women in Karnataka state of India, is promoting the Guli Vidhana system for producing finger millet (ragi). This system is similar to SRI, with 45x45 cm spacing of single plants, and a low seeding rate of 1.25 kg/ha only, plus active soil aeration as well as addition of organic matter. Yields of 18-20 quintals/acre are being obtained, compared with 4-5 quintals/acre using usual methods. ANGRAU researchers have documented the

advantages of transplanting very young ragi seedlings (10 or 15 days) compared to older ones. Another NGO is working to apply these methods to pearl millet (bajra).

A farmer in Tamil Nadu, Gopal Swaminathan, who has made some important innovations to SRI in the Cauvery Delta, such as the Kadiramangalam system of double-transplanting that strengthens young seedlings against intense heat and breeze, has recently reported getting good results with SRI ideas applied to cotton, though we have no data on results.