

# Siddhartha Farm

Siddhartha farm was established in 1996 by Herbert on the land next to Buddha Garden, on the western side of the Visitor Center. Herbert later moved to a land near Irumbai Lake where he began to intensively cultivate paddy, sugarcane and peanut while the land near visitor centre continues to be cultivated for growing some vegetables and fruits by his family.

The farm also extensively processes cashew nut (farm grown + sourced from other farms/lands in Auroville), peanuts, sugarcane and offers homemade sourdough bread.

## Philosophy

Herbert farms as his service to feed Auroville and help it be an example for the rest of the world. He thereby plays his part in the mission of Auroville which is the growth of consciousness in the world.

## Labour

**Herbert, Suhasini and Selvi** are the co-managers of the farms. In total **5 Aurovilians** work in Siddhartha farm.

**Regular Employees - 4** The farm employs 3 women and 1 milk man full time.

Wages : 320/day (Women)

700/day (Milkman)

Full time employees get Diwali and Pongal bonus as well as gifts during festivals. As well as a settlement/gratuity from an internal pot when they stop working.

### Seasonal Employees

Upto 20 people are hired seasonally depending on the crop and field preparations required.

Wages: ₹300-₹350/day (Women)

₹600/day (Men) and

## Land

Total Acres under management: **13.4**

Acres Utilised: **13.4**

Siddhartha farm totally has 13.4 acres split in **2 land parcels**.

**9.4 acres** by Irumbai lake side that produces field crops such as **paddy, peanuts, sugarcane and fodder** for the dairy herd along with the **processing facility** to make **peanut butter and jaggery**.

**0.8 acres** of this land is **leased** by Siddhartha.

**4 acre plot** near the Visitor's Centre Parking that produces **vegetables, fruits** and also has a **storage facility**.

**All of the land is irrigated and being used for farming activities.**

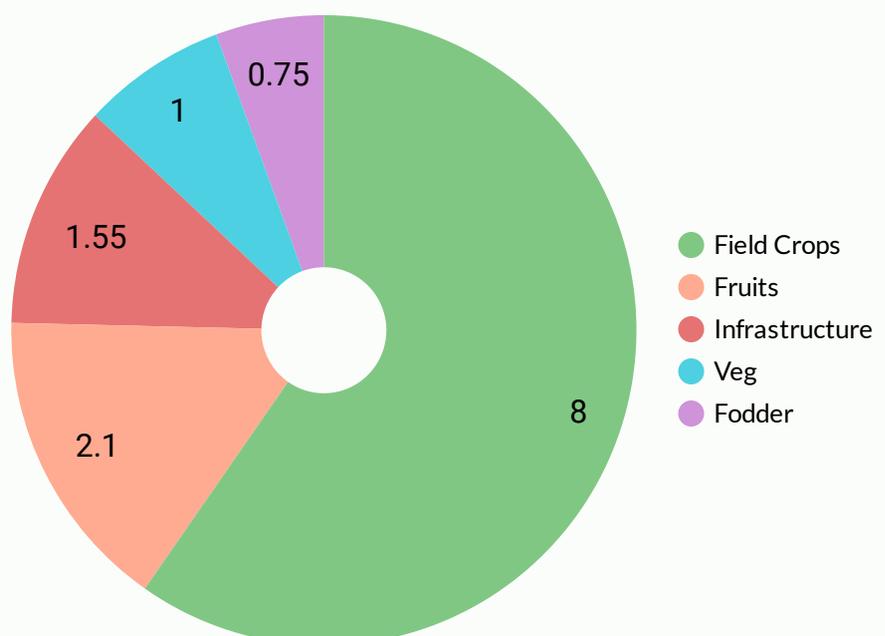


Chart 1: Land Use Breakup (acres)

## Production (Foodlink Sales)

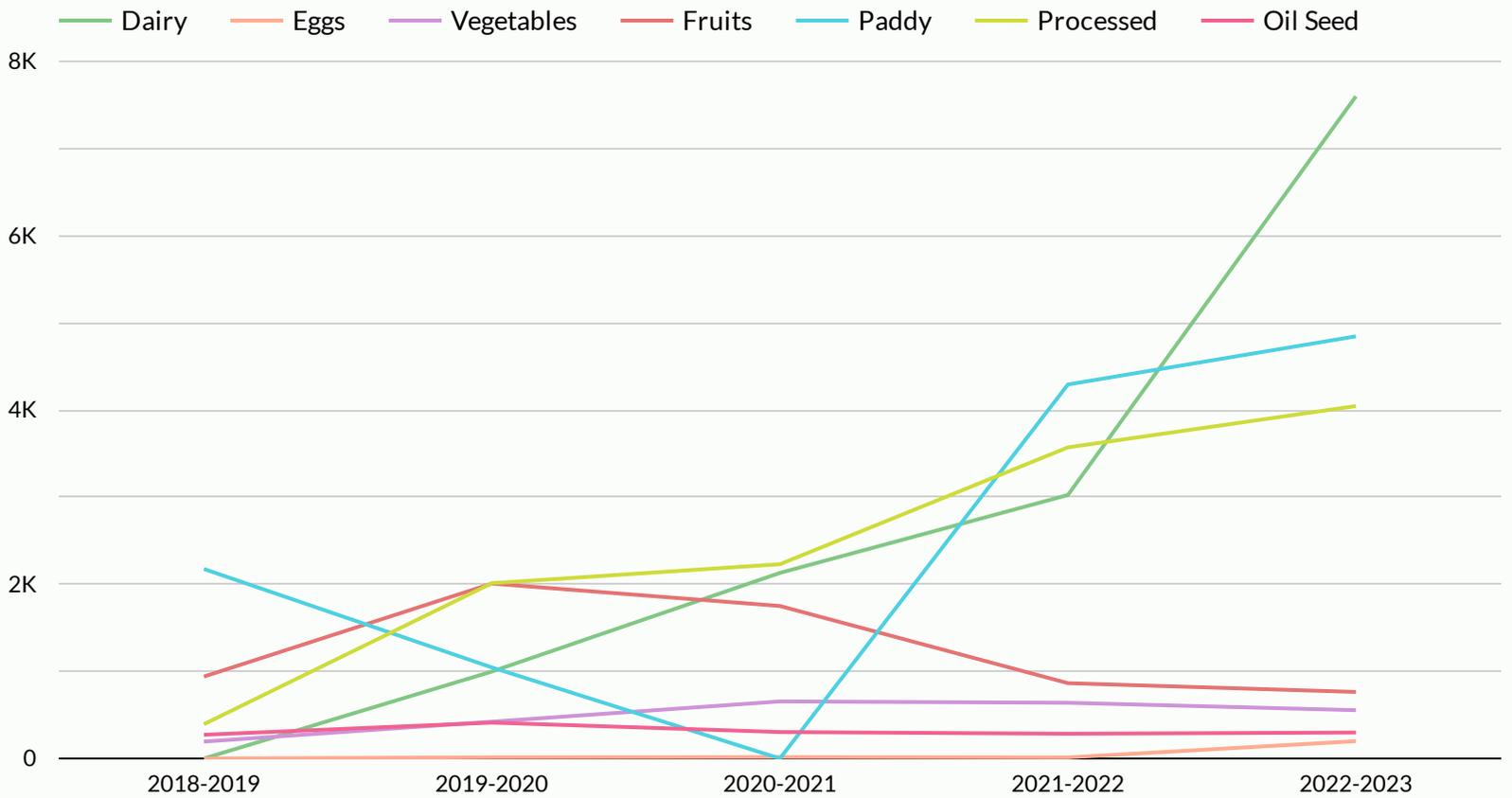


Chart 2: Sales in Kgs per category of food type across 5 years

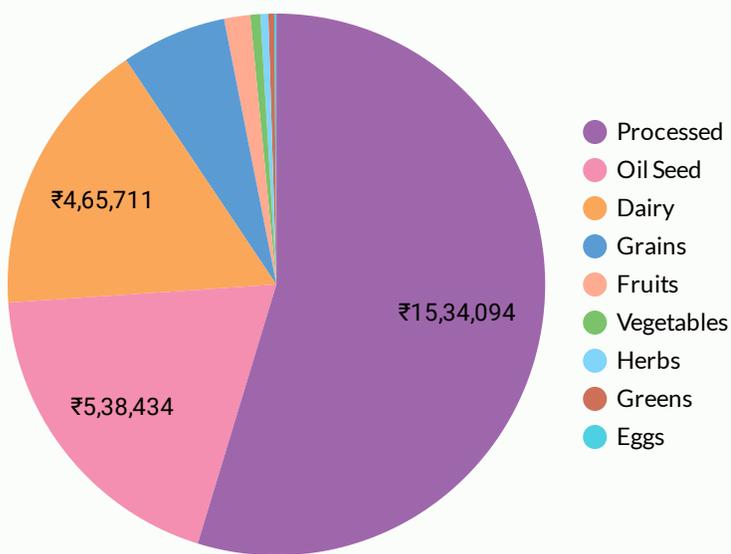


Chart 3: Breakup of Foodlink Sales for FY 22-23

Most of the production and farm income comes from the 9.4 acre land next to the Irumbai lake through milk, grains and processed items that include jaggery, peanut butter, roasted cashews, sourdough multi-grain bread. However, a **significant percentage of raw produce/material** for processing cashew nuts and bread is **procured from outside** and not grown at the farm.

Distribution of milk has been an upward trend moving from **1000Ltrs in the year 2019-20** to **7599 Ltrs in 2022-23** according to Foodlink sales data.

The farm's **paddy production** varies between **1 to 4 tons** depending on the monsoon and the water levels in the Irumbai tank. Every year, the farm produces a few hundred kgs of peanuts.

Siddhartha distributes a **significant amount** of its products **directly to consumers**. In FY21-22, Foodlink Sales accounted for **50% of Siddhartha's milk sales**, about **68% of its veg, herbs and greens sales** and only **35% of its fruit sales**

## FY22-23 Foodlink Sales

### Milk, Paddy and top processed products (Kgs)

Milk	7,599
Paddy, Sornamalli	3,967
Jaggery	1,732
Sprout Bread	870.5
Peanut Butter	597

### Top Vegetables (Kgs)

Pumpkin Big	163.8
Mango Green	42
Banana Cooking	38.8
Dill	34.6
Lady Finger	15.5

### Top Fruits (Kgs)

Banana Yellow	461.5
Papaya	66
Star Fruit Sour	64.3
Grape Fruit	42
Kumquat	26.6

About 8 acres of land near Irumbai lake is dedicated to growing field crops such as - **paddy, peanuts, sesame and occasionally millets**; along with **sugarcane** and **fodder grass** plantation. Paddy and peanuts are done in rotation. Paddy is flood irrigated, while peanut and sugarcane are irrigated using channel irrigation and fodder is irrigated using sprinklers. Acreage and sowing time of the paddy varies by rainfall and the water level of the Irumbai lake. The farmer grows paddy varieties suitable for par-boiling. Peanuts and sugarcane varieties are selected for higher processing output.

Field crops are grown using external compost. **Green manure** (*Sesbania Bispinosa*) is grown before paddy cultivation **adhering to one of the Auroville Grain Group standards**.

Vegetables are cultivated seasonally using farmyard manure made with cow dung, ash, greens, dry matter, crop and processing residue from sugarcane and jaggery. The farm also uses biomass collected from the trees to fertilise the vegetable plants.

## Dairy Practices and Culture

The Irumbai land also houses **9 milking cows** which also support the fertility needs of the land. The farmer mentions he would not want more animals as the land has reached its limit of resources to maintain a healthy dairy.

The **fodder grass** is grown on the land in about **0.75 acres** of area; corn (fodder) is grown seasonally; crop residue (peanuts and paddy straws) along with the grain concentrate are fed to the cows.

The **cows graze inside the farm** on the fallow fields (not under cultivation seasonally) and neighbouring grassland. In the past animals were purchased for better milk production but now **70% of the herd is farm-bred**. Male animals are sold as draught animals or to the butcher while female calves are kept for the farm.

Primary method for medication in the dairy is natural remedies, while antibiotics are used in serious cases (milk withdrawals are followed post treatment).

Siddhartha farm is part of the dairy group and tries to adhere to basic Auroville Dairy Group standards

# Finances

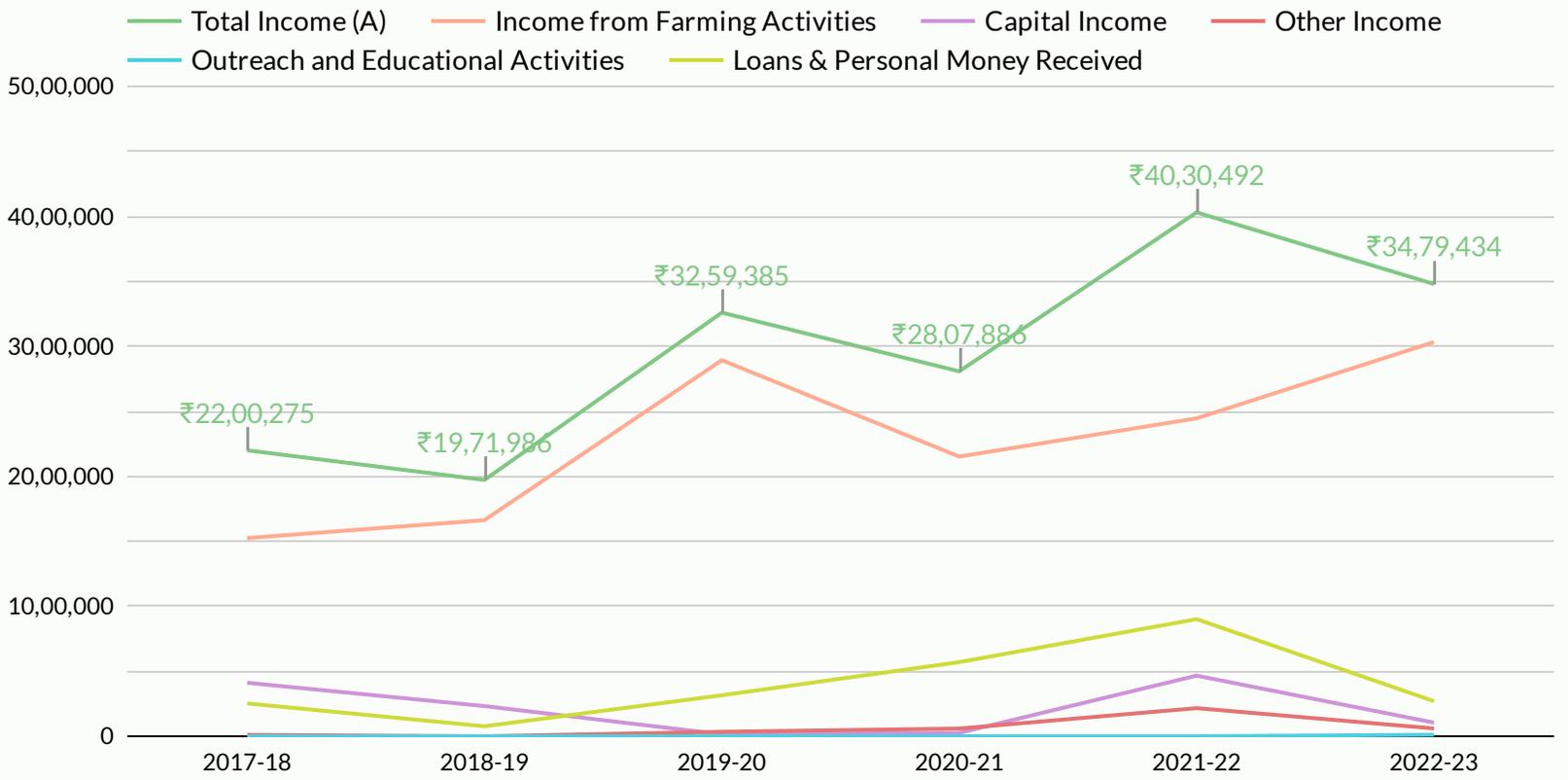


Chart 6: Break-up for farm income during 2017-23.

Income from farming activities comes from the sales of vegetables, fruits & field crops, dairy and food processing. **Food processing income** accounts for the **highest share** in overall income e.g. in 2019-20 food processing income was **70% of all the income total**.

In the chart below, the **farming expenses** have doubled between FY17-18 and FY21-22 (same as the income). The expenditure in farming activities such as crop, livestock and food processing has increased.

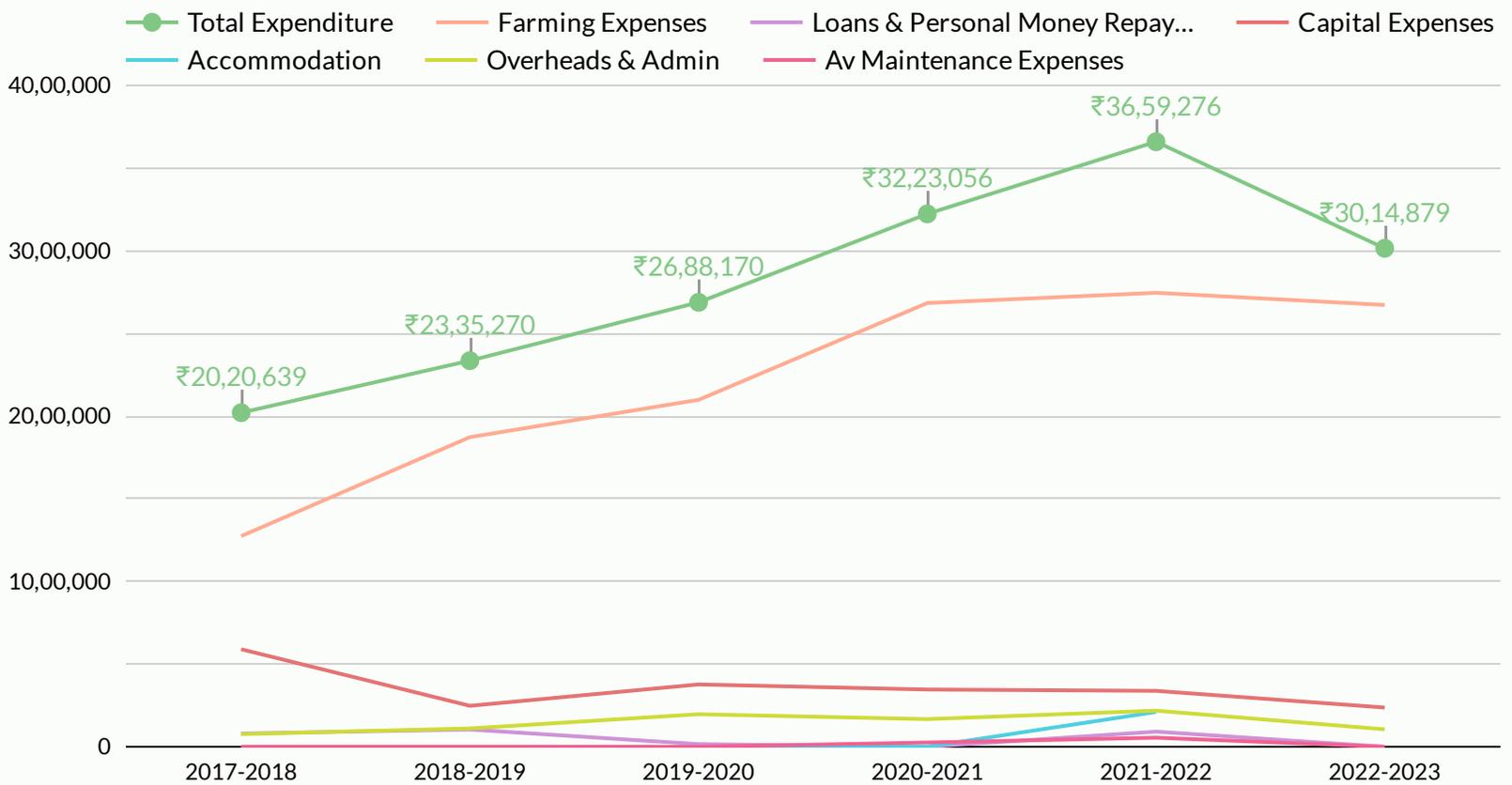
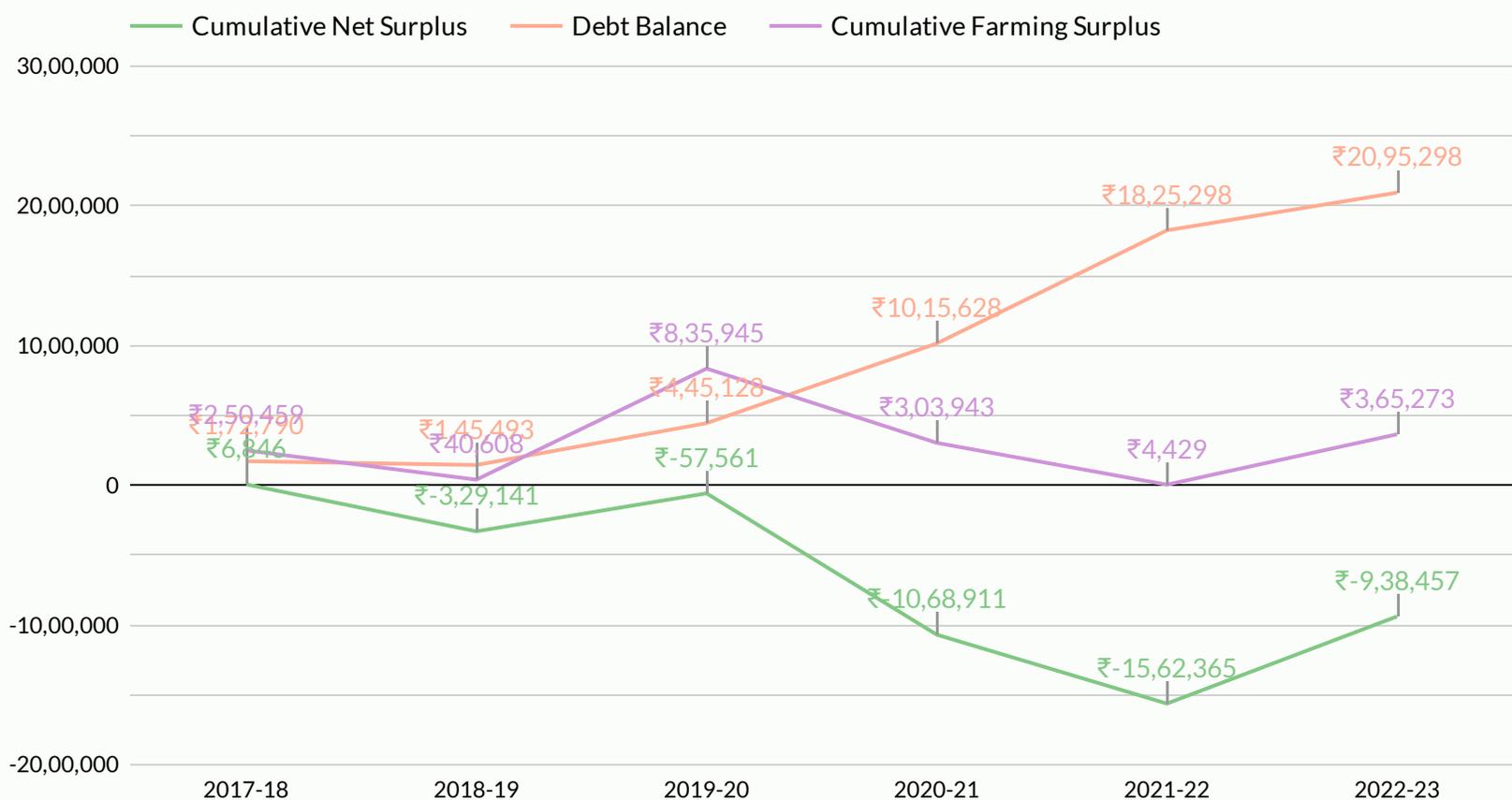


Chart 7: Expenses across years 2017 - 23



**Chart 8: Cumulative Net Surplus, Cumulative Farming surplus and Debt Balance**

The farming activities have seen losses in 3 of the last 6 years however remains cumulatively positive due to 3 strong years. However, the net surplus of the farm is still negative due to continuous capital investments into the farm which is supported by the farmer's personal funds. Of the debt seen above ₹20,07,305 is personal money of the farmer invested in the farm over the last 4 years.

**Net surplus** is the "total income" - "total expense" of a farm for a year. This does not include any debt. The chart shows this number cumulatively starting from 2017-18.

**Farming Surplus** is "farming Income" - "farming expenditure". This is the surplus a farm is able to generate from its activities alone. Chart is cumulative starting from 2017-18.

**Debt Balance** is the remaining debt that the farm owes. This "debt" can be in the form of external loans or personal investments by the farmer. Chart is cumulative starting from 2017-18.

## Challenges and Needs

The Irumbai farm is fenced partially with an old barbed wire and small part with chainlink mesh. Siddhartha also faces challenges from wildlife like wild boars, peacocks, village cows and goats invading the fields and damaging the crops.

The farmer mentions fencing, crop insurance and financial support from the community to help them repay loans for machinery and infrastructure are the essential needs.

## Conclusion

Herbert is committed to producing food for Auroville. He seems to be utilising the land intensively for multiple crops in rotations and yet from his farming activities he is not able to cover his infrastructure needs so he is hoping that the community can support these larger capital expenses which he now spends his own money to do so.

The largest part of the income and production comes from the land next to the Irumbai Lake while the vegetable production on the land close to Visitors' Center (about half of the land next to the lake) is very little. The Irumbai land is being fully utilised for field crops and dairy, however, the land next to the Visitors Center would need investment in fencing to protect its crops from wildlife, if production is to improve.