The concept of Agro-Processing Centre (APC) is to process the grains at village level to substantially enhance the income of the farmers. These complexes consist of two or more machines for processing at farm/village level. The machines are mini rice mill, baby oil expeller, small atta chakkies and large atta chakkies with scouring machine, masala grinder, penja, cleaner and feed mill along with construction and installation costing approximate Rs. 25-30 lakhs. A desired covered space of approx. 200-300 sq. yard is required for the installation of all these machines. These agro-processing complexes have been found to be technically feasible, economically viable and socially acceptable models. AICRP on PHE&T provides technical know-how and advisories for establishing APCs at village level.

Shri S. Randhir Singh Dhaliwal, 34, ex-serviceman came across with the concept of agro-processing complex after visiting an APC installed at village Lande, district Moga established by PAU centre of AICRP on PHE&T. He took training at this centre and visited the APC established by the centre at Vander Jatana and finally made up his mind for APC establishment at his own village.

The layout and design were planned in consultation with scientists of this Centre and after establishment of APC he was further motivated and guided for its proper working of the plant maintaining food safety through HACCP and marketing of the products. The machinery in the established APC includes a baby oil expeller with filtration system (60 kg/h), atta chakki, (dana chakki/dalia making machine of 150 kg/h capacity), flour mill (700 kg/h) and grinder (50 kg/h). It took six months for completing the installation work. Thus, with an investment of Rs.10.14/-lakh on a baby oil expeller with filter press, atta chakki, flour mill and masala grinder, a monthly profit of Rs 86,025/- was recorded along with employment of six persons. His processed products include wheat flour, filtered oil, dalia, grinded turmeric, besan and garam masala etc. He is running the plant quite successfully and had shown high degree of satisfaction. He is covering almost 15 villages for processing of agro-based commodities.
“Being an ex-serviceman, I did not have the knowledge and expertise to venture into the agro-processing industry. But, after getting the training from this Centre, I established the APC and within 3 years I cleared all the pending loan amounts with the profits emerged from the business. By this way, my social status was improved and people of the village elected me as Sarpanch of the village”, said Mr. Dhaliwal. He has set an example for others by installing agro-processing complex and keeping the quality of the processed produce. He has helped few other farmers in establishing similar plants. “The farmers should establish such industries to process their own produce rather to sell it in open market to get the better price for improving their economic and social status.” he added.

Farmers who have established these complexes have earned to such an extent that they have given up farming and associated their family members in the agro-processing activities. Around 273 agro-processing complexes have been installed till date under the guidance of this Centre.

Establishment of Agro-Processing Centre (APC) at the farm gate will help in getting quality products, reducing post-harvest losses, employment to rural youth and achieving diversification concept in agriculture besides improving the economic and social status of farmers.

(Source: All India Coordinated Research Project on Post-harvest Engineering & Technology, PAU Centre Ludhiana)