

Solar Food Dehydrator

A solar food dehydrator has been installed in Kodar to try out its application at this remote hilly village. The dehydrator has been designed by Mr. Saad Khan of Pak-Swiss Society based in Switzerland, and donated to us for trial purposes.

The dehydrator was fabricated through the help of Dr. Afzal of Kahuta Research Laboratories and brought to Kodar for installation. Four women in the community were asked to place sliced vegetables and fruit in trays allocated to them. The initial experiments have yielded extremely positive results. The dried vegetables and fruit have retained their flavor and have been much appreciated by the community.

However, since the dehydrator is rather expensive (Rs. 35,000), we had requested Saad Khan to design an inexpensive version in order that each family could have its own dehydrator in the vicinity of its home. He has performed a commendable task of designing one which would be extremely economical (under Rs. 4,000). A prototype was constructed at the Camp Office/ KaravanPakistan Research Institute in Chhattar under the guidance of designer. Due to heavy snow and a severe winter, the drying experiment will be carried out after the end of the 2008 winter season. The economy version of the dehydrator is envisaged as a do-it-yourself kit which can be easily assembled by the families themselves, and be useful as an alternative to the drying arrangement they had on their flat roofs before the disaster. This is no longer possible since galvanized iron sloping roofs have been popularized for earthquake mitigation.

The vegetables and fruit dried through the solar dehydrators are expected to supplement the family income in addition to vegetables and fruit being available for the family's own use. The dehydrators are part of women empowerment program.

