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WOMEN IN AGRI BUSINESS CONFERENCE & AWARD FUNCTION - A GRAND SUCCESS



The "Women in Agri Business" conference, held on August 22, 2024, at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC), was a monumental event, marking the 15th Anniversary of the India Foodex series alongside Agri Tech India. This significant occasion, part of India's largest agri-food business show, introduced a groundbreaking focus on the contributions of women in the agribusiness sector.

The event was graced by esteemed guests including Ms K Ratna Prabha, IAS

(Retd), Ex Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka, Founder-President, UBUNTU Consortium; Dr. Sridevi Annapurna Singh, Director-CFTRI, Sanjay Dave, Former Chairman, CODEX & Advisor FSSAI, Ewout de Wit, Consul General of the Kingdom of The Netherlands for South India in Bangalore and other prominent figures from the industry. Their presence underscored the importance of women's roles in shaping the future of agribusiness.

This first-of-its-kind conference in India, which at-

tracted over 350 exhibitors and more than 25,000 trade visitors from 25 countries, provided an unparalleled platform for knowledge exchange and networking. Industry leaders, experts, and entrepreneurs from various sectors came together to discuss the vital roles women play across the agribusiness value chain. The sessions covered key areas such as farming, post-harvest management, supply chain logistics, food manufacturing, and marketing.

Speakers highlighted the challenges women face, such

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15th Edition Agri Tech India 2024

AGRITech INDIA 2024 – POST EVENT REPORT



The 15th Edition of AgriTech India 2024 along with concurrent exhibitions i.e. 14th GrainTech India and 13th DairyTech India, held from the 22nd to 24th of August 2024 at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC), was a resounding success, reaffirming its position as a premier event in the field of agriculture, farm machinery, greenhouse technology, fertilizers, irrigation, seeds, dairy products, dairy processing, poultry, packaging, cold chain, grain milling, storage and the allied industry.

Exhibitors from Around the Globe:

With over 250 exhibitors representing 20+ countries, AgriTech India has become a

global stage where the latest advancements, products, and services in the agri& food industry were showcased. The impressive international participation highlighted the industry's global reach and the event's significance in the international agri& food trade. These exhibitions not only attracted a diverse range of exhibitors but also provided a comprehensive view of the latest developments in agriculture and technology on the international stage.

A Gathering of Industry Enthusiasts:

The event welcomed more than 25,000 visitors, including farmers, industry experts, entrepreneurs, and individuals passionate about the Agri&

Food sector. This diverse blend of attendees brought a unique vibrancy to the event, reflecting the extensive scope of the agricultural and food industry.

Innovation Hub:

The exhibition featured an Innovation Hub, where attendees could witness the latest technological breakthroughs in food processing and packaging machinery. Live demonstrations and interactive displays provided a hands-on experience of the industry's future.

Cutting-Edge Innovations:

The exhibition featured state-of-the-art farm machinery, greenhouse technologies,

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AUSTRALIA REACHES TRADE DEAL WITH UAE TO BOOST AGRICULTURE EXPORTS, INVESTMENT

Australia said it had reached a trade deal with the United Arab Emirates that would remove tariffs for about 99% of Australian products, and result in savings of A\$135 million (\$91 million) in the first year.

The UAE is Australia's largest trade and investment partner in the Middle East with bilateral trade worth A\$9.9 billion last year, while two-way investment totalled A\$20.6 billion.

"Under this trade agreement, Aussie exports are expected to increase by A\$678 million per year, but this deal means more for Australia than just numbers," Trade Minister Don Farrell said.

The deal includes



a framework to boost investment by Abu Dhabi in critical minerals, while the mining industry will benefit with tariff cuts on alumina exports, Farrell said in a statement.


UAE Minister of Foreign

Trade Thani Al Zeyoudi said in a post on X that both countries had agreed the terms of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement that "will secure a new era of cooperation and opportunity".

Australia's top exports to the UAE include meat, dairy, oil seeds, seafood, steel, nuts, honey, coal, chickpeas and lentils.

The deal is expected to become effective later this year.

The Australian Meat Industry Council welcomed the trade deal and said it would offer farmers greater access to a vital market for Australian beef, lamb, and goat meat.



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INSIDE STORIES

- From PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, more MSP to Reduced Export Duty: How 'Kisan Mitra' Modi Revolutionised Agriculture
- Adequate and Timely Funding Crucial for Achieving Sustainable Agriculture: RBI Deputy Governor
- Replacing Rice Crop might Help Replenish Groundwater Lost since 2000: Study
- Govt. aims to boost seafood exports to Rs. 1 lakh crore

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WOMEN IN AGRI BUSINESS CONFERENCE & AWARD . . .

as limited access to resources and gender biases, while also celebrating their resilience and innovative contributions. From farming to value addition and food manufacturing, women are driving sustainability and growth in the sector, utilizing technology and best practices to enhance productivity and create employment opportunities.

Prominent industry figures like Ft. Chinmaye Deulgaonkar (MD, Food Chain ID India and President AFST-Mumbai), Ms. Angele Heinsen (Germany), Ms. Sangeeta Bojappa (Chief-Farmeress, Founder of Farmington. in), Ms Uttara Deshpande (Director Quality - Foods Business, TATA Consimer Products Limited), Ms Neha (Gender Lead at Solidaridad Asia), Ms Rashmi Attavar (Joint MD, Indo-American Hybrid Seeds (India) Pvt Ltd), Dr. Suman-gala HP (Principal Scientist, ICAR- Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore), Azhar Tambuwala (Executive Director, Sahyadri FPO), Chef Vinod Bhati (Range & Supply Leader, IKEA India Pvt Ltd and Treasurer Indian Culinary Forum), Chef Shazia Khan (Founder of the Cooking Studio and Studio Café), Ms. Shubhi Mishra (Independent Agriculture and Food Business

Advisor), Hemendra Mathur (Founder, ThingAg) and Ms. Bhawna Shah (Deputy CEO, NK Proteins Ltd) shared their inspiring journeys, offering insights into overcoming barriers and excelling in agribusiness and food industry. Their experiences resonated deeply with attendees, emphasizing the transformative impact women have on the industry.

The event concluded with a networking summit and awards ceremony, recognizing outstanding women leaders for their contributions. As the conference closed, it left a powerful message: Women are not just participants but are catalysts for change in agribusiness, shaping the future of the industry with innovation, determination, and resilience.

The "Women in Agri Business" conference was a resounding success, setting a new benchmark for future editions of India Foodex and Agri Tech India, and paving the way for more inclusive and equitable growth in the sector.

We are excited to announce that a detailed report on this conference, featuring key insights and highlights, will be published in our next edition. Stay tuned for a comprehensive look at how women are driving the future of agribusiness.



FROM PM KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI, MORE MSP TO REDUCED EXPORT DUTY: HOW 'KISAN MITRA' MODI REVOLUTIONISED AGRICULTURE

The MSP (Minimum Support Price) for Kharif crops for 2024-25 has also been increased, benefitting 12 crore farmers by approximately Rs 2 lakh crore.

The PM-KISAN offers an annual benefit of Rs 6,000, distributed in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000 every four months, directly into the bank accounts of eligible farmers through the Direct Benefit Transfer system.

The Narendra Modi government's track record in empowering India's agricultural community is unparalleled, with the Centre launching a slew of initiatives to bolster the livelihoods of farmers.

With the release of the 17th installment of Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi, Rs 20,000 crore has been distributed to 9.3 crore farmers. So far, Rs 3 lakh crore has been distributed to a total of 12,33,00,000 farmers.

The PM-KISAN offers an annual benefit of Rs 6,000, distributed in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000 every four months, directly into the bank accounts of eligible farmers through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system.

The MSP (Minimum Support Price) for Kharif crops for 2024-25 has also been increased, benefitting 12 crore farmers by approximately Rs 2 lakh crore.

The prime minister also approved the Polavaram Irrigation Project in Andhra Pradesh with an allocation of Rs 12,100 crore.

The Union government, under Modi's leadership, approved seven major schemes with a total outlay of Rs 14,200 crore, including Digital Agriculture Mission to enhance efficiency and productivity in the agricultural sector;

Completion of the draft policy of the new National Cooperative Policy, prepared by a national-level committee; and MoU between the National

Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL) and the Uttarakhand Organic Commodity Board. NCOL will purchase organic produce from Uttarakhand's farmers at rates appropriate for farmers and an appropriate share of the profits will be directly deposited into the farmers' accounts.

Apart from these steps, the conversion of cooperative sugar mills' ethanol production units into multi-feed facilities will enable ethanol production from maize as well.

The government also took the crucial decision of removing Minimum Export Price (MEP) on onions and Basmati rice and reducing the export duty on onions from 40 per cent to 20 per cent. They also increased the duty on crude palm, soybean, and sunflower oils from 12.5 per cent to 32.5 per cent, while also increasing the duty on their refined oils from 13.75 per cent to 35.75 per cent.

The government also expanded the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme to strengthen agricultural infrastructure. In the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, several agricultural schemes and development projects were initiated worth Rs 3,300 crore.

During his first visit to Varanasi, PM Modi honoured 30,000 Krishi Sakhis from self-help groups for their role in agriculture. He also approved the Rs 2,000 crore 'Mission Mausam' to create a weather and climate-resilient India. Apart from this, a new fund named Agrisure was launched, aimed at revolutionising the agricultural sector and supporting start-ups and rural enterprises.

Earlier, addressing a press conference on the completion of 100 days of the Modi 3.0 regime, Home Minister Amit Shah said the Modi government had launched the agriculture fund to support startups and rural enterprises, driving agricultural innovation.

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POST EVENT REPORT . . .



and irrigation solutions, food processing machinery, packaging machinery, silos, grain milling machinery, grain processing machinery, dairy technology etc.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

❖ Exhibitors and Visitors:

- **Exhibitors:** Over 250 companies from diverse sectors showcased their innovations and solutions.
- **Global Participation:** Exhibitors from Turkey, China, Vietnam, USA, Spain, Germany, Canada, Holland, Thailand, Indonesia, Italy, Taiwan, France, Singapore and Russia.
- **Domestic Participation:** Key states included Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and North East States.

❖ Special Events:

- **'Women in Agri Business' Conference:** Held on August 22, 2024, this global conference featured exhibitions, networking summits, and awards focusing on the pivotal role of women across various sectors of the Agri & Food industry. Topics covered included farming, post-harvest, supply chain management, value addition, food manufacturing, sales and marketing, imports & exports, retail, culinary arts, consultancy, agri start-ups, banking, financial services, brand management, advertising, modeling, sustainable practices, and challenges faced by women.
- **Grains and Flour Milling Industry Networking Summit:** On August 23, 2024, this summit provided a platform for professionals in the grains and flour milling industry to network, share insights, and discuss industry trends.

AgriTech India 2024 and India Foodex 2024 along with other concurrent exhibitions was a hub for networking and collaboration, allowing industry leaders, suppliers, and buyers to connect and forge partnerships. The event created a conducive environment for fruitful interactions.

It was not only a showcase of products and services but also a platform for exchanging ideas, fostering collaborations, and exploring the future of the agri, food, dairy, poultry and grain sector. The event's success reinforces its importance as a cornerstone of the industry.

Support and Partners: The events were supported by various esteemed organizations, including:

- APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority)
- Indian Greenhouse Manufacturers Association (IGMA)
- Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers' Association (AMMA)
- Karaikudi Bakery Owners Association, Tamil Nadu
- Growers Flower Council of India (GFCI)
- Hosur Farmers' Association
- BhartiyaKrushakSamaj
- Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR)
- Indian Flowers and Ornamental Plants Welfare Association (i-Flora)
- Farmer organizations in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu

AgriTech India 2024 and India Foodex 2024 was not only an exhibition but also a platform for sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas, and exploring the future of agriculture. The event's resounding success highlights its significance as a catalyst for growth in the agricultural sector.

Event Background

Agriculture and Food is the main source of livelihood for about 58% of India's population. The Indian food industry is poised for hug growth, increasing its contribution to world food trade every year due to its immense potential for value addition, particularly within the food processing industry. The Indian food processing industry accounts for 32% of the country's total food market, one of the largest industries in India and is ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption, export and expected growth. With an aim to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture, the Government of India is introducing a new AGRI-UDAAN programme to mentor start-ups and to enable them to connect with potential investors.

Road Ahead

The agriculture sector in India expected to generate better momentum in the next few years due to increased investments in agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation facilities, warehousing and cold storage. Furthermore, the growing use of farm mechanization and new varieties, the likely improve the yield for Indian farmers. India expected to be self-sufficient in pulses, oilseeds, maize and other crops in the coming few years. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all exhibitors, visitors, speakers, partners, and the entire team behind AgriTech India 2024 exhibition series. Your enthusiasm and support made this event a spectacular success.



EDITION



DairyTech India 2025

01-02-03, AUGUST 2025
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PUNJAB AGRICULTURE POLICY 2023: BOLD PROPOSALS FOR AGRARIAN CRISIS, BUT IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING STILL UNCERTAIN

The Punjab Agriculture Policy 2023 recommends boosting crop diversity, guaranteeing the Minimum Support Price (MSP), granting one-time debt settlements, and implementing a pension scheme for small farmers and farm workers.



To promote crop diversification, comparative return patterns should be considered when setting prices for non-MSP crops.

The Punjab Agriculture Policy 2023 has effectively highlighted the state's long-standing agrarian problems. The state has not had an agriculture policy to date. The policy proposes several measures to address the crisis, but funding remains a major concern.

These recommendations include promoting crop diversification, providing a legal guarantee for the Minimum Support Price (MSP), offering one-time debt settlements for farmers, introducing a pension plan for small farmers and farm workers, implementing special debt waivers for small and marginal farmers, registering money lenders, and instituting crop insurance, among others.

Implementation challenges and past failures

However, the key question remains: how will these recommendations be implemented, especially when past proposals from various committees, including renowned agricultural scientist Dr MS Swaminathan's MSP recommendations and economist Sardara Singh Johl's "Johl Plan" for diversification and crop rotation, have failed to materialise despite numerous farmer protests? While the policy outlines a roadmap for some suggestions, it remains unclear how the necessary funds will be sourced.

Farmer suicide data and non-institutional debt

The policy records farmer suicide data only up to 2018, and that too from a study by Punjab Agriculture University (PAU), Ludhiana, leaving out the past six years as well as the government's own data on farmers' suicide. It also remains silent on the issue of non-institutional debt, even though it mentions that farmers in Punjab are burdened with Rs. 73,673 crore in institutional debt. Many farmers have also taken loans

from non-institutional sources such as finance companies, money lenders, and Arhtiyas. Until some years ago, farmers' debt used to be quoted at over Rs one lakh crore, which has increased manifold.

Crop diversification and MSP guarantee

The 200-page policy, formulated by the Agriculture Formulation Committee led by Dr Sukhpal Singh, chairman of the Punjab State Farmers' and Farm Workers' Commission, and 10 other committee members, proposes establishing a legal guarantee for the procurement of MSP crops cultivated within the state.

It says a State Agricultural Costs and Prices Commission should be set up to provide cost and return estimates for all non-MSP crops, dairy products, and eggs to ensure fair prices for farmers. These estimates can also guide compensation, credit limits, and other issues. A legal guarantee of procurement at MSP is essential for the betterment of the farm sector.

To promote crop diversification, comparative return patterns should be considered when setting prices for non-MSP crops. This will encourage farmers to shift from wheat-paddy cycles to alternative crops. The Punjab government should engage in dialogue with the Union government to secure a legal guarantee of MSP procurement for crops grown in the state. At a minimum, MSP should be fixed according to the National Commission on Farmers (C2 + 50 per cent) recommendations (GOI, 2006, Swaminathan Report), with additional costs outlined in the Ramesh Chand Committee Report (GOI, 2015). For instance, during 2020-21, the MSP for wheat should have been 45 per cent higher (Rs 2787/q) than the Rs 1925/q set by the Government of India.

Debt settlement, pensions, and waivers

A "One-time Debt Settlement Scheme" has been recommended to be initiated through the Punjab State

Cooperative Agricultural Development Bank (PADB) and other cooperative banks to provide relief to farmers. For pension coverage, the policy suggests that farm workers and small farmers (with up to 5 acres of land) receive pension benefits upon reaching the age of 60.

Additionally, a special debt waiver scheme should be crafted for small and marginal farmers, along with a Debt Swapping Scheme to assist borrowers with debt settlement. A separate one-time debt settlement scheme should be devised specifically for farm workers.

The registration of money lenders should be enforced to improve the functioning of the non-institutional credit system.

Crop insurance and land leasing

The policy suggests designing Punjab's own crop insurance scheme by creating a crop insurance fund to mitigate crop losses. One-third of Panchayati land and other common lands should be leased to farm workers, designated for the Integrated Farming System (IFS) under cooperative farming. A similar livestock insurance scheme should be initiated through Milkfed and the Dairy Development Department.

Expansion of MGNREGA and suicide compensation

The policy proposes increasing the mandatory 100 days of work under the MGNREGA scheme to 200 days by taking up the matter with Centre. It also suggests providing Rs. 10 lakh in compensation to the families of farmers, farm workers, and rural artisans who have died by suicide. Free healthcare should also be extended to these groups.

Natural growing areas, diversification and water management

The policy emphasises growing crops in their natural growing areas (NGA) to improve crop quality and reduce production costs. It proposes banning paddy

cultivation in 15 dark blocks, where water extraction exceeds the recharge rate by 300 per cent, and promoting alternative crops like cotton, maize, sugarcane, and vegetables in a phased manner.

Water-saving technologies, such as alternate wetting and drying, are recommended to improve paddy yield while using 30-40 per cent less water. But nothing new in it as PAU and Punjab Agriculture Department have already divided the state into six climate zones and recommended crops suitable for the climate of each zone, and several paddy growing techniques, including DSR, are there in place for less use of water for growing paddy.

Additionally, the policy focuses on micro-irrigation methods for several crops and advocates for already going on "PaniBachao, Paisa Kamao" (PBPCK) scheme.

Sugarcane, maize, cotton, crop-specific support and organic farming

The policy advocates immediate payment to sugarcane farmers by the sugar mills, strengthening cooperative sugar mills, and promoting ethanol production and Bio-CNG co-generation. For cotton, it calls for government intervention and support from the Cotton Corporation of India, while suggesting micro-irrigation methods and incentives for cotton-wheat rotation in designated zones.

It proposes providing maize dryers to farmers and suggests replacing paddy with basmati in certain areas. Markfed should intervene with a price stabilisation fund in cases of price distress for basmati and recommended banning long-duration paddy varieties. Farmers have long raised all these demands. The committee also stressed the importance of organic farming.

Centres of excellence, progressive farmers' societies, developing Punjab as a seed hub and strengthening

research

The policy proposes establishing 13 Centres of Excellence (CoE) for different crops and alternatives within their Natural Growing Areas (NGA) to serve as hubs of knowledge. These institutes would demonstrate the latest technologies and provide training for farmers and other stakeholders. Currently, Punjab has CoEs for vegetables, citrus, and other crops.

Additionally, the policy discusses the formation of Progressive Farmers' Societies (PFS), which would be linked to the respective crop CoEs. It also calls for the creation of an Agricultural Marketing Research and Intelligence Institute (AMRII) to balance demand and supply, and an Innovative Agricultural Marketing Society (IAMS), which would act as the apex marketing body for 18 crop-specific Progressive Farmers' Societies.

This organisation would market diverse, high-quality produce with advanced planning, keeping in view the demand-supply scenario. The policy emphasises that Punjab should be developed as a Seed Hub, with different crop seeds being cultivated in various districts according to climate and crop suitability. For example, potato seeds are being grown in the Doaba region.

It also highlights the need to ensure a timely canal water supply in the cotton belt, discourage paddy cultivation, and incentivise cotton in the designated cotton zones of the southwestern districts. Additionally, it advocates for promoting micro-irrigation for the cotton-wheat rotation, in conjunction with solar pumps and water storage structures on individual farms.

For horticultural crops like fruits, it recommends improving nurseries to provide high-quality planting material to farmers and upgrading kinnow value addition infrastructure, such as maintaining cold chains

within the state and for transportation.

Machinery hub and agricultural extension

The policy proposes building Punjab as a hub for innovative farm machinery manufacturers, catering to domestic and international markets. It also emphasises strengthening agricultural research and extension services by filling vacant posts (long pending demands in Punjab) and updating land tenancy laws.

Free power to farming sector

The policy has discussed the huge burden of free power subsidy, which is around Rs 8,000-9,000 crore annually, on the farming sector's state exchequer, and it should be reduced through different farming techniques, such as using less water to grow the crops. But experts said the policy could not elaborate the immediate measures like considering only small, marginal, and low-medium farmers under this scheme and charging some fixed minimum amount from the big farmers of the state to reduce this burden to some extent.

Farmer concerns and lack of implementation roadmap

Jagmohan Singh, general secretary of Bhartiya Kisan Union (Dakuanda), welcomed the pro-farmer recommendations but expressed concerns over the lack of an implementation roadmap.

"If the government provides some assurance on how these recommendations will be achieved, where the funds will come from, how farmers' debts will be settled through a one-time scheme, what the pension amount for farmers will be, and how compensation for crops sold at low prices will be ensured, only then can we call it a satisfactory policy; otherwise, it remains just a document," he said.

ADEQUATE AND TIMELY FUNDING CRUCIAL FOR ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE: RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR

The speech at the conference in Pune by the respected Deputy Governor Swaminathan J of the Reserve Bank of India emphasised the importance of promoting sustainable agriculture and ensuring adequate funding.

The Deputy Governor outlined five proposals to tackle the financing of sustainable agriculture and motivate active promotion. These proposals aim to address lending disparities in agriculture, improve credit accessibility, and incorporate value-chain financing.

The lending disparities in agriculture across different regions continue to be a cause for concern, even though institutional credit to the sector has reached its peak. The speech delivered by the central banker at the conference was published on the RBI's website.

Institutional credit to agriculture has surged to a record high of Rs 25.10 lakh crore from 2023-24 through approximately 7.4 crore active



Kisan Credit Cards, which are crucial for delivering short-term credit.

The speech highlighted the surge in institutional credit to agriculture and the significance of collectives such as Farmer-Producer Organisations (FPOs) in promoting sustainable farming technologies.

The Deputy Governor emphasised the significance of collectives such as Farmer-Producer Organisations, funding for value chains and warehouses, and technology adoption, among other aspects.

FPOs, have become vital for addressing the specific

challenges small and marginal farmers face. The Deputy Governor mentioned that their growth has been substantial, with over 24,000 Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) established since March 31, 2023.

Additionally, RBI regulations facilitate funding for FPOs engaged in agriculture and related activities, classifying their loans as priority sector lending. Sustainable agriculture involves adopting methods that safeguard the environment, reduce dependence on chemical inputs, and use water and land efficiently.

REPLACING RICE CROP MIGHT HELP REPLENISH GROUNDWATER LOST SINCE 2000: STUDY

The researchers advised reducing rice cultivation as a method to preserve the rapidly dwindling supply.



Replacing about 40 per cent of the area sown with rice with other crops could help recover 60-100 cubic kilometres of groundwater lost since 2000 in north India, a study has found. Current cropping patterns -- dominated by rice, which relies heavily on groundwater for irrigation -- could result in a loss of about 13-43 cubic kilometres of groundwater if warming of the planet continues, a team of researchers, including those from the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, Gujarat, said.

The researchers proposed shifting from existing cropping habits by cutting down on cultivating rice as a potential solution for sustaining the fast-depleting resource in a warmer world that threatens food and water security.

"Replacing 37 per cent area of rice with other crops can recover 61 to 108 cubic kilometres groundwater compared to 13 to 43 cubic kilometres with current cropping pattern under the 1.5-3 degrees Celsius global warming levels," the authors wrote in the study accepted for publication in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) Nexus.

Compared to current cropping trends, the benefits of switching crops in saving groundwater are more during the prolonged dry periods predicted under global warming, the researchers said.

According to the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius, if current trends continue, global warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees Celsius between 2030 and 2050 and could reach 3 degrees Celsius by 2100.

Changing crop patterns can be substantially beneficial -- particularly for the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh -- for ensuring groundwater sustainability and farmers' profitability, the authors said.

They also found that switching of crops did not substantially impact groundwater levels where recovery rates were low such as in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand.

The findings have policy implications for identifying optimal cropping patterns for sustaining groundwater in the irrigated regions of north India, along with ensuring farmers' profitability and income, they said.

Previous estimates have suggested that about 300 cubic kilometres of groundwater have been lost between 2002 and 2022 as a result of the cropping trends in north India, where 80 per cent of the cultivated area is sown with rice.

Parts of Punjab and the Ganga basin experienced the fastest rates of groundwater depletion in the world, the researchers said, and added that northern and northwestern regions of India are among the global groundwater hotspots.

Studies have shown crop switching to be beneficial for environmental sustainability and farmers' income in China, the US and India.

In this study, the researchers looked at current cropping patterns in regions that have seen considerable groundwater depletion. The team then used groundwater, well and satellite observations and models to estimate groundwater lost between 2002 and 2022. For estimating the effects of switching crops on groundwater, the team evaluated two scenarios -- in one, the rice-grown area is cut down by five per cent, while in the other, an additional 37 per cent of rice-area is replaced with cereals, pulses and oilseeds, resulting in a total of 42 per cent reduction of rice-grown area.

The authors found 45 cubic kilometres of groundwater could have been saved in the first scenario and 91 cubic kilometres of groundwater could have been saved in northern India during 2002-2022 in the second scenario, compared to the current cropping patterns.

They also found that in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, the groundwater saved over the last two decades could have been around one to four times the maximum holding capacity of the largest dam in India, the Indira Sagar, under the two scenarios.

Further, under scenario one, the researchers estimated a 13.5 per cent boost in farmers'

profits, whilst maintaining the same rice production.

However, under the second scenario, the authors estimated about 86 per cent increase in farmers' profits, but at the cost of a notable 45 per cent reduction in rice production.

Suggesting alternatives to cultivating rice, the researchers proposed cereals for Uttar Pradesh and oilseeds for West Bengal.

Source: www.business-standard.com

UTTAR PRADESH GOVT TO ACQUIRE PADDY WORTH RS 16,000 CR THIS KHARIF SEASON

The procurement is scheduled to commence from October 1 and continue till February 28, 2025, starting from Western UP and gradually covering the eastern part

The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government is targeting to procure 7 million tonnes (mt) of paddy worth Rs 16,000 crore under the minimum support price (MSP) mechanism during the 2024-25 kharif marketing season.

For the current season, the MSP of common and grade-A paddy is fixed at Rs 2,300 and Rs 2,320 per quintal, respectively, which is higher than last year's Rs 2,183 and Rs 2,203 per quintal.

The procurement is scheduled to commence from October 1 and continue till February 28, 2025, starting from Western UP and gradually covering the eastern part.

During the 2023-24 kharif marketing season, the state could procure 5.2 mt of paddy, which was about 75 per cent of the targeted procurement of 7 mt.

Since the open market prices of paddy have been higher in recent years, the state's farmers have more choices to supply their produce.

This year, the government is aiming to meet the procurement target by providing farmers with better facilities at the procurement centres.

Paddy farmers in the state



are required to register online to supply the cash crop at the procurement centres.

During the procurement process, the Yogi Adityanath government is prioritising small farmers whose harvest is less than 60 quintal, so that they do not resort to distress sale or face impediments at the designated purchase centres.

The government is also facilitating prompt payments against procurement to keep the farmers community in good humour and nurture a robust political economy.

The institutional procurement of paddy, wheat, and sugarcane provides much needed leeway to UP's rural sector with an annual composite direct economy of more than Rs 50,000 crore.

Last year, about 4,000 paddy procurement centres were set up in the state, of which 200 centres were operated by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) even as the bulk of the procurement was facilitated by the state government agencies.

Moreover, the paddy procurement centres, rice mills and FCI warehouses/depos were geo-tagged by the remote sensing application centre for transparency.

The state is also promoting cultivation of crops other than cereals, such as pulses, oilseeds, and nutri-cereals or 'shreeanna' by offering a remunerative MSP.

Source: www.business-standard.com

Dates & Venue:

01-02-03

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WOMEN TAKE CENTER STAGE IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AT LUDHIANA KISAN MELA

The Ludhiana Kisan Mela showcased new agricultural methods and highlighted the important role of women in sustainable farming.



Kisan Mela, or the farmers' fair, is a significant event aimed at promoting advanced agricultural practices and sustainable farming techniques. Held annually across various regions of India, these fairs are a platform for farmers, students, and professionals to exchange knowledge, learn about new technologies, and adopt better farming methods. The recent Kisan Mela in Ludhiana, Punjab, organized by the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), was a prime example of how such events can drive meaningful change in agriculture.

These events are particularly helpful for farmers as they provide hands-on demonstrations, expert talks, and exhibits showcasing the latest innovations in crop management, water conservation, and sustainable

farming. Kisan Mela plays a crucial role in informing farmers about ways to increase productivity while preserving natural resources like soil and water. Through the medium of interactive displays, games, and stalls, all the attendees get a chance to broaden their knowledge of crop residue management which can contribute to improved soil health and reduce pollution. Nonetheless, these fairs foster community engagement and help farmers create a network to share their experiences and challenges.

This year, Ludhiana's Kisan Mela brought into light one of the significant changes in the agricultural processes and that was encouraging women farmers for crop residue management. The fair witnessed thousands of farmers, students, and other farming professionals

interested in advanced agricultural practices.

One of the highlights of the fair was an informational stand promoting PRANA, an initiative of The Nature Conservancy (INC) implemented in partnership with Nature Conservancy India Solutions Pvt. Ltd. The messages in the stall were focused on celebrating women's voices since they are essential in the promotion of regenerative agriculture practices.

The PRANA stall had engaging elements such as games, murals, and banners on regenerative agriculture and Crop Residue Management (CRM). These gender-inclusive displays encouraged participation from both male and female farmers, offering key insights into best practices for sustainable farming.

Sudipta Chatterjee,

Director of Programs at NCIS, emphasized the importance of crop residue management "Crop residue contains essential nutrients that can improve soil health. PRANA promotes in-situ CRM practices that contribute to healthier soil and air while nourishing our natural resources."

Other engaging activities like 'Kheti de Sahi Dhang' (Right Ways of Farming) at the stall facilitated learning about crop residue management for farmers beyond Lalgotwa. Such fun-filled activities explained that following sustainable principles could help improve the fertility of soil, the availability of water, and the general well-being of Punjab.

Kulwinder Kaur, a visiting farmer, shared her experience - "Through the game, we learned that soil is like gold. If we protect it, we can reduce our agricultural input costs and avoid the harmful effects of smoke and pollution."

The stall also displayed literature materials on water

conservation techniques and methods of improving soil fertility. An Agri-calendar, designed to help farmers understand the benefits of Crop Residue Management for soil and water, was particularly popular among attendees.

Farmers like Malwinderpal Singh from Faridkot appreciated the PRANA team for their efforts in demystifying misconceptions about crop residues and enlightening society about the adverse impacts of crop burning. He pointed out that they were generally more environmentally conscious in their strategies such as water table protection and on-farm residue utilization.

Many of the exhibits at the PRANA stall were creative and the team interacted with more than 3000 farmers who were keen to know about the sustainable practices in agriculture. As of now PRANA project is active in 18 districts of Punjab for no-till and regenerative agriculture that has positive impacts on the soil structure and soil

carbon figures.

The Ludhiana Kisan Mela not only served as a platform for sharing innovative agricultural practices but also emphasized the pivotal role women play in promoting sustainable farming. By highlighting crop residue management through the PRANA initiative, the event successfully showcased the importance of women's voices in driving regenerative agriculture.

As farming communities face increasing challenges from climate change and environmental degradation, it is essential to adopt practices that not only improve productivity but also protect natural resources. The active participation of women in these efforts is a step towards building a more sustainable and inclusive agricultural future in Punjab. The Kisan Mela exemplifies the importance of mutual responsibility in making sure that there is a healthier, more productive ecosystem for everyone.

GOVT'S FOCUS ON INCREASING EXPORTS TO ENSURE FAIR PRICE TO FARMERS: HM SHAH

Shah emphasized that the government prioritizes farmers' interests by reducing the minimum export price (MEP) for onions and Basmati rice.

The Narendra Modi government is increasing exports to ensure fair price to the farmers for their crops so that they can get maximum price for their crops, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday.

Shah also said that keeping the interests of farmers paramount, the government has taken three important decisions, including removing the minimum export price (MEP) of onions and Basmati rice.

"The Modi government has decided to remove the minimum export price (MEP) on onions and reduce the export duty from 40 per cent to 20 per cent. This will increase onion exports, which will increase the income of the onion producing farmers," he wrote on 'X' in Hindi.

The home minister said the government has also decided to abolish the MEP on Basmati rice which will enable the farmers producing Basmati rice to earn more profits by

exporting it.

"Also, the Modi government has decided to increase the import duty on crude palm, soya and sunflower oils from 12.5 per cent to 32.5 per cent and the duty on their refined oils from 13.75 per cent to 35.75 per cent. This will help India's soyabean farmers get better prices for their crop and increase their income," he said.

Source: www.business-standard.com

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GOVT. AIMS TO BOOST SEAFOOD EXPORTS TO RS. 1 LAKH CRORE

- Naresh Biswani



In a significant push for the fisheries sector, Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh announced the government's goal to increase annual seafood exports to Rs 1 lakh crore from last fiscal year's Rs 60,000 crore. Speaking at the fourth anniversary of the Pradhan Mantri MatsyaSampadaYojna (PMMSY), Singh emphasised plans to strengthen the sector's foundation over the next five years.

The minister launched the PMMSY and released guidelines for production and processing clusters. He noted that under Prime Minister NarendraModi's leadership, the previously neglected fisheries sector, which supports over 3 crore livelihoods, has seen substantial growth. The PMSSY scheme, with aRs 20,000 crore outlay, has contributed to increasing fish production from 95.79 lakh tonnes in 2013-14 to 175.45 lakh tonnes in 2023-24.

The Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying (MoFAH&D), Government of India, celebrated the fourth anniversary in New Delhi on Wednesday.

The event marked four successful years of the flagship scheme, which has significantly advanced India's fisheries and aquaculture sectors towards holistic and inclusive growth.

The celebration was graced by Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying Ranjan Singh, along with Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, and Ministry of Minority Affairs, George Kurian. Senior officials from state/UT fisheries departments, delegations from the embassies of France, Russia, Australia, Norway, and Chile, along with representatives from the Department of Fisheries (GoI), National Fisheries Development Board, ICAR institutes, PMMSY beneficiaries, fishermen, fish farmers, and other key stakeholders, participated in the event, held in hybrid mode.

Sagar Mehra, joint secretary (IF), opened the event by highlighting the scheme's achievements, setting the context for a series of initiatives launched by Ranjan Singh. He unveiled the National Fisheries Development Programme (NFDP) portal, a digital hub

for fisheries stakeholders to access information, services and support related to the sector. The NFDP will also provide digital identities to stakeholders, offering benefits such as institutional credit, performance grants, and aquaculture insurance.

Ranjan Singh distributed registration certificates to beneficiaries registered on the NFDP from various states, including Maharashtra, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Kerala. Additionally, he released the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on production and processing clusters under the fisheries cluster development programme and announced the establishment of three specialised fisheries production and processing clusters dedicated to pearl cultivation, ornamental fisheries, and seaweed cultivation.

A notable highlight was the launch of the vessel communication and support system, inaugurated by PM NarendraModi on August 30 at Palghar, Maharashtra. This system includes the installation of 1 lakh transponders on fishing vessels, enabling two-way communication, real-time updates on fishing zones, and emergency alerts during cyclones, enhancing safety and efficiency for fishers.

The Union Minister also unveiled guidelines for developing 100 coastal villages into Climate Resilient Coastal Fishermen Villages (CRCFVs), with an allocation of Rs. 200 crore aimed at sustainable fishing, infrastructure improvement, and climate-smart livelihoods. A pilot project exploring the use of drone technology for fish transportation, led by the Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (CIFRI), was also introduced, signalling a move towards integrating advanced technology in fisheries management.

Further initiatives included the establishment of a Mandapam Regional Centre of ICAR-CMFRI as a Centre of Excellence for seaweed farming and research, the creation of Nucleus Breeding Centres for marine and inland species, and the launch of three Incubation Centres to promote fisheries start-ups, cooperatives, and FPOs.

Ranjan Singh also released

booklets on the 'Promotion of Indigenous Species' and 'Conservation of State Fish,' recognising the adoption of state-specific aquatic animals by various states and UTs. Priority projects with an outlay of Rs 721.63 crore were announced, including the development of Integrated Aquaparks, World-Class Fish Markets, and Smart and Integrated fishing harbours across several states and UTs.

Source: www.millenniumpost.in

TOMATO PRICES PLUMMET, FARMERS NOW GETTING RS 400 TO 600 PER CRATE

Over the past 15 days, wholesale prices have dropped by 40 percent. Where the average wholesale price for a crate of tomatoes (25 kg) was around Rs 900-1000 two weeks ago, it has now fallen to Rs 400-600 per crate. This decline is primarily due to the influx of new tomato crops from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Tomato prices, following a similar trend to onions, have begun to fall sharply. Over the past 15 days, wholesale prices have dropped by 40 percent. Where the average wholesale price for a crate of tomatoes (25 kg) was around Rs 900-1000 two weeks ago, it has now fallen to Rs 400-600 per crate. This decline is primarily due to the influx of new tomato crops from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

The impact of this price drop is also being felt in retail markets, where the price of tomatoes has decreased from Rs 100 per kg to Rs 60-70 per kg within the same period. As more tomatoes from southern states enter the market, prices are expected to fall further.

Shriram Gadhve, President of the Indian Vegetable Producers Association, confirmed this trend, stating that the arrival of fresh crops from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh is driving down prices. He anticipates a



further decline as the supply increases, with a significant drop in prices likely within the next month.

In Himachal Pradesh's Solan vegetable market, commission agent Satish echoed these sentiments. He noted that 15 days ago, the price of tomatoes was as high as Rs 1000 per crate, but has now dropped to Rs 400-600. He attributed the price fall not only to the new supply from southern India but also to the adverse effects of rain on the tomato crop in Himachal, which has impacted both quantity and quality.

For farmers, this sharp decline has been particularly challenging. A month ago, they were receiving Rs 30-35 per kilogram for their tomatoes, but now that

figure has dropped to Rs 20-25 per kilogram—barely covering the production cost, which is also around Rs 20-22 per kilogram. Farmers express frustration, noting that while prices do rise every year, their profits are often diminished by middlemen. Although price increases do offer some relief, it is limited to just a few months annually.

The initial surge in tomato prices was attributed to severe heat waves in April and May, which damaged crops and reduced the supply from key producing states. However, as fresh crops from southern states have started arriving, prices have begun to stabilize and even decline, impacting both farmers and consumers across the country.

Source: www.eng.ruralvoice.in

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FARM BODIES SCEPTICAL OF AGRICULTURE POLICY'S VIABILITY

Punjab farmers are skeptical about the new agriculture policy's implementation, seeking clarity on support prices and funding amid a debt crisis.

Farmers' bodies in Punjab expressed scepticism about implementation of the recommendations made by the agriculture policy formulation committee, including having state's own insurance policy and ensuring minimum support price leading to assured procurement of all crops. The draft of the agriculture policy was circulated to the stakeholders.

Joginder Singh Ugrahan-led Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan) has, though, welcomed the release of the draft policy as its victory, it sought to know the ways and means for an early implementation of the policy. "It is our victory because after our protest in Chandigarh in the first week of this month, the government has released the policy. Now, it is to be seen how all the proposals are implemented," said Sukhdev Singh Kokri Kalan, general secretary of the farm body that claims to have the largest support base in the state. The farm body would give detailed suggestions on the draft very soon, he added.

In the recommendations, submitted to the government

last year, the agriculture policy formulation committee recommended an immediate ban on cultivation of water-guzzling paddy in 15 blocks where subsoil water levels have fallen to drastic levels.

The policy has suggested a road map to cut down free power given to over 14 lakh agriculture tubewells in the state by using alternative irrigation methods, such as drip irrigation, and installing solar system to run tubewells. The policy suggested replacing paddy with crops such as maize, cotton, sugarcane, oilseeds, millets and vegetables and horticulture, which require less water for irrigation. It has also recommended focus on organic cultivation to add value to agriculture.

Raising concern on excessive usage of groundwater, the draft policy has asked the government to cut water on irrigation by one-third which currently is 66 billion cubic metre annually.

"The policy has made certain out-of-box recommendations, such as developing cooperative farming and evolving democratic system in these societies. The policy is silent on free power to the agriculture sector, causing a hole in



state's economy and also leading to excessive usage of groundwater," said economist RS Ghuman.

According to Ghuman, a cut on power subsidy should be on a condition that the funds saved be ploughed back into the farm/rural economy. He suggested wide discussion on the policy so that it is implemented in the best possible way. The draft also suggested progressive farmers' societies to lead farmers in distress who have failed to generate profits due to monotony in farm practices.

"We have spent one full year on preparing the draft and made the best possible recommendations for rejuvenation of the farm sector. The implementation part lies with the government," said Dr Sukhpal Singh, chairman of the Punjab farmers' commission that heads the policy formulation committee.

According to BKU (Dakaunda) general secretary Jagmohan Singh, the draft

is a detailed presentation to rejuvenate the agriculture sector in the state, which requires a huge supply of funds. "Where will the funds come from when the state is facing acute fiscal crunch?" he asked. If the government is able to implement the recommendations, it will change the face of agriculture in the state, which is in a crisis situation, the union stated.

Debts and suicides

The draft highlighted that over the years the agriculture has become non-profitable, leading to a vicious debt cycle and forcing farmers to commit suicide. The total institutional debt by 2022-23 was Rs. 73,673 crore which has grown from Rs. 32,250 crore (including non-institutional debt) in 2009-10. The number of suicides so far is 16,594, which include farm labourers (7,303). The policy also recommends an ex gratia payment of Rs. 10 lakh to the families of suicide victims and also launching a scheme for debt waiver.

GOVERNMENT MAY EASE THE EXPORT BAN ON NON-BASMATI WHITE RICE

The restriction, effective July 20, 2023, aims to maintain local stock levels and reduce prices.

— Dhirendra Kumar, Subhash Narayan



The Indian government is looking at relaxing its year-old export ban on non-basmati white rice amid surplus stock and a significant surge in paddy sowing, said union minister for consumer affairs, food and public distribution Pralhad Joshi. The ban, which took effect on 20 July 2023, was brought in to ensure the country had sufficient stock for domestic consumption and to cool prices.

A potential easing of the ban would benefit farmers, traders and exporters who have been seeking a relaxation to capitalise on the high global demand for Indian rice. The decision will also bring relief to rice-consuming nations that have been asking the Indian government to ease the ban.

Currently, basmati rice can be exported only above a floor price, while parboiled rice attracts a 20% export duty, and non-basmati and broken-rice exports are completely prohibited.

"We all know what happened due to El Niño last year. But in spite of that we were able to keep food inflation well under control," Joshi said. "Despite the expected negative impact of the weather phenomenon, our paddy/rice production was robust last year. There is now a demand to allow exports of non-basmati rice, where restrictions were put in place last year keeping the ill effects of El Niño in mind," the minister said.

"We are now thinking whether to allow such exports as the country has sufficient food grain stocks [and enough] to fulfill the needs of other countries as well," he added.

Non-basmati white rice exports plunge 78%

The export restrictions have affected India's trade arithmetic as well. Rice exports during April-June fell by nearly 34% to 3.2

million tonnes (mt) after the export of non-basmati white rice was restricted last July. According to commerce ministry data, exports of non-basmati white rice plunged 78% to about 300,000 tonnes, while broken rice exports fell by 8% to 300,000 tonnes and parboiled rice exports dropped 11% to 1.5 mt.

Vijay Setia, former president of the All India Rice Exporters Association, said, "By banning rice exports, the government has successfully controlled 'rice inflation', and now it's time to re-evaluate the policy in the changing scenario of comfortable rice availability."

According to the latest data from the agriculture ministry, the paddy sowing area increased by 16% to 39 million hectares, and pulses sowing area increased by 7% to 12 million hectares as of 23 August.

In an interview, NitiAayog member Ramesh Chand had said the increase in paddy sowing and comfortable buffer stock had eased concerns about rice shortages. "I feel the supply side of rice is not worrisome. It's a comfortable situation. So, even if the ban is removed at this time, I think excess quantities will not leave the country," Chand said, adding that rice prices have moderated in India and abroad.

In FY24, India exported a total of 15.7 mt of rice, including 2.36 mt of non-basmati white rice, 545,000 tonnes of broken rice and 7.57 mt of parboiled rice, against 21.8 mt in FY23. India is the second-largest producer of rice after China and the largest exporter globally, contributing at least 40% to the global trade before the export curbs were imposed.

Source: www.livemint.com

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AGROCHEMICALS EXPORTS MAY TOUCH RS. 80,000 CR IN 4 YRS: ACFI-EY REPORT



India's agrochemical exports could increase to over Rs 80,000 crore in the next four years provided the industry is facilitated with conducive environment, according to a report by ACFI and EY. A report by Industry body Agro Chem Federation of India (ACFI) and EY titled 'Indian Agrochemical Industry: The Story, the challenges and the aspirations' noted that the exports of agrochemicals stood at Rs 43,223 crore in the 2022-23 fiscal.

India's Agrochemical exports outweigh the domestic consumption of the same. The Indian exports by agrochemical industry have witnessed commendable growth in recent times," said the report which was released at the 7th AGM of ACFI held recently.

ACFI said that the government must focus on facilitating a conducive environment which includes streamlining licencing norms and improving infrastructure for storage and sale, incentivise

biopesticide production, streamline registration process for new molecules, enter trade agreements with countries with more relaxed MRL norms, introduce PLI-like scheme to attract investment from global players.

"The USP of India's agrochemical industry is their quality and affordable prices which makes their products the first choice of millions of farmers across 130 nations. If facilitated a conducive environment, the sector shows the potential of achieving exports of over Rs 80,000 crore in the next four years," the report said.

The industry body also pitched for reducing GST from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.

"The reliance on generic molecules, low agrochemical usage, the complex registration process for new molecules and heavy dependence on imports are some of the challenges that must be transformed into opportunities through the 'Make in India' initiatives," Parikshit Mundhra, Chairman, ACFI

said.

Given its role in enhancing agricultural productivity and export potential, he said the agrochemical industry will play a vital role in India's quest of becoming a global manufacturing hub ultimately resulting in a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025.

"India's agrochemical industry plays a pivotal role in its agricultural success, supporting increased crop yields and safeguarding food security. As the fourth-largest producer of agrochemicals globally, India faces a paradox: while it holds significant production capacity, it still imports significant amount of agrochemicals, primarily from China," ACFI Director General KalyanGoswami said.

The "Make in India" initiative provides a timely framework to transform these challenges into opportunities, enabling India to become a global manufacturing and export hub for agrochemicals, he added.

Agrochemical usage (kg/ha) is lower in the Indian market. "As per reports, India uses only 400 gram/ha of agrochemicals that is way below the global average of 2.6 Kg/ha," the report said.

Source: www.economicstimes.indiatimes.com

GOVERNMENT TO BEGIN FARMER REGISTRATION FOR AADHAAR-STYLE IDS FROM OCTOBER; TARGETS 5 CRORE BY MARCH

In a major push towards digitising the agriculture sector, the government will soon begin registration of farmers across the country to provide them with a unique ID similar to Aadhaar, Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi said. Chaturvedi, speaking on the sidelines of an Outlook Agri-Tech Summit and Swaraj Awards, said the guidelines for the registration process will be issued soon, with the implementation set to begin in the first week of October.

"Our target is to register five crore farmers by March next year," the secretary said, noting that the initiative is part of the government's Rs 2,817-crore Digital Agriculture Mission approved by the Cabinet recently.

A pilot project was earlier conducted in Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, and 19 states have already onboarded the project, he said.

Once the farmers' registry is created, an Aadhaar-like unique ID will be provided to each registered farmer.

Chaturvedi said the unique ID will help farmers access various agricultural schemes, including the



Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Kisan Credit Card programme, without much hassle.

The data gathered will also aid the government in policy planning and targeted extension services.

"Presently, farmers have to go through verification every time they apply for any agri schemes. It not only involves cost but some face harassment. To address this issue, we are going to create a farmers' registry," he said.

The secretary said the current government data is limited to farm land parcels and crop details provided by states, but lacks individual

farmer-wise information. The new registry aims to bridge this gap.

Chaturvedi urged progressive farmers, scientists and companies to spread awareness about the farmers' registration process and encourage participation. Camps will be organised across the country for the registration drive.

The government is also working on several other technological interventions, including a Kisan AI-based chatbox system, to improve services and support for farmers, the official added.

Source: www.economicstimes.indiatimes.com

ADANIAGRI FRESH RAISES APPLE PURCHASE PRICE IN HIMACHAL PRADESH



In Himachal Pradesh, AdaniAgri Fresh has increased the apple procurement price by Rs. 5 per kilogram, adjusting the rate for high-quality apples from Rs. 80 to Rs. 85 per kilogram. This adjustment is a response to the heightened market prices, where a box of premium apples now commands between Rs. 1,800 and Rs. 2,300.

Given these market dynamics, apple cultivators have been receiving Rs. 1,300 to Rs. 1,500 per box from entities like Adani, prompting a shift towards direct market sales for better profitability. To counteract this shift and draw cultivators, AdaniAgri Fresh has revised its purchasing rates upwards.

With the largest apple procurement infrastructure in the region, including a Controlled Atmosphere (CA) store with a 20,000 metric

tonnes capacity, the firm aims to secure a consistent supply of high-quality apples. This strategy not only addresses the issue of spoilage associated with the long-term storage of lower-quality apples but also aligns with Adani's market and storage strategy for premium produce.

Following an apple scarcity last year, which led to direct purchases from mandis to fulfill procurement goals, Adani is contemplating a similar approach this year to bridge any potential gaps in direct procurement.

This price increase is anticipated to offer relief to apple growers, ensuring more favorable returns for their produce, while supporting Adani's objective of maintaining a stable inventory of quality apples for future sales.

Source: The News Himachal

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CENTRE PERMITS MP, MAHARASHTRA AND KARNATAKA TO PURCHASE SOYBEAN AT MSP

Soybean rates in Madhya Pradesh and also in neighbouring Maharashtra had touched multi-year lows due to bumper supplies and unrestricted imports of cheap edible oils

— Sanjeeb Mukherjee

The Centre permitted Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka to procure soybeans at the fixed MSP of Rs 4,892 per quintal.

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan told reporters that a request was received from Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka for the purchase of soybeans at MSP and permission has been granted to all of them.

Regarding Madhya Pradesh, which is the home state of the agriculture minister and where farmers have been on a warpath due to falling soybean rates, Chouhan said that the Centre is in regular touch with the state government and would do all things possible to help farmers there.

"Centre has two schemes running for purchase as MSP and Madhya Pradesh government is free to choose any of them to start procurement, though as per our information, there is still time for the crop to hit the market," Chouhan said in a



statement.

Soybean rates in Madhya Pradesh and also in neighbouring Maharashtra had touched multi-year lows due to bumper supplies and unrestricted imports of cheap edible oils.

Till a few weeks back, soybean prices had dropped to just around Rs 3,500 per quintal as against the MSP of Rs 4,892 per quintal before recovering a bit in the last few days.

Recently, farmers in the state have started a relay protest demanding a purchase price equivalent to Rs 6,000 per quintal.

Nationally, soybeans have been sown in around 12.51 million hectares of land this kharif season, which is nearly two per cent higher than the

normal acreage under the crop. Normal acreage is the average acreage of the last five years.

The plummeting soybean rates just ahead of the harvest are also due to cheap imports of edible oils, which are now allowed at nil duty till March 2025.

This measure to control inflation has seen a flood of imported edible oils in the country negatively impacting farmers' earnings.

Latest data sourced from Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) showed that in July 2024, India imported around 1.84 million tonnes of edible oils, which is marginally less than the 1.85 million tonnes imported in June 2024.

Most notably, India imported a record 1.08 million tonnes of palm oil which is the highest level reached since November 2022.

Source:

www.business-standard.com

INDIA CANNOT BECOME DEVELOPED NATION WITH 'BACKWARD AGRICULTURE': BAYER SOUTH ASIA PREZ

"Many initiatives we hear from the new government are clearly focused on modernizing Indian agriculture," he said.

"India cannot become a developed nation by 2047 with 'backward agriculture', the head of German chemicals giant Bayer's South Asia operations said, as he praised the government's efforts to modernize the farm sector. You don't become a developed nation with backward agriculture, Simon Wiebusch, president of Bayer South Asia, told in an interview.

"Many initiatives we hear from the new government are clearly focused on modernizing Indian agriculture," he said.

Wiebusch said India was increasingly digitizing regulatory processes and prioritizing innovative compounds, though he noted this transformation "doesn't happen overnight".

On regulatory delays, he said: "We do see now a discussion around prioritizing and fast-tracking new innovative compounds. That's a clear sign that what we might have seen in the past is



not what we'll see in the future". Wiebusch, Country Divisional Head of Crop Science for Bayer South Asia, said the company is ramping up its focus on herbicides in India, responding to a growing labour shortage in agriculture that has become more acute since the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said investment in herbicides is currently outpacing insecticides in India right now.

"We're looking at a labour shortage in agriculture in India, which means we need more herbicides to deal with weeds you are talking about (like CyperusRotundus, CynodonDactylon and Phalaris Minor)," Wiebusch said.

He noted that while existing herbicides are still effective in India due to historically low usage, the company is preparing for future challenges as weeds develop resistance.

Bayer plans to develop herbicides targeting specific weeds in key crops like paddy, wheat, sugarcane, and maize. However, Wiebusch cautioned that some advanced herbicide-tolerant technologies used in other countries are not yet available or suitable for the Indian market.

The company is expanding its pipeline in corn herbicides and exploring solutions for direct-seeded rice (DSR) systems.

"We will be coming with pre-emergent corn herbicides as well as early post-emergent ones. With the move towards DSR systems, we need a better suite of herbicides to deal with potential rice weeds," Wiebusch explained.

Discussing the growing importance of DSR in India, Wiebusch emphasized that its adoption is driven by necessity rather than promotion.

"It's not a question of who promotes it. It's a question of who needs it," he said. "Rice transplanting is very labour-intensive. A farmer without access to affordable labour will be inclined to look at DSR."

Wiebusch highlighted that while DSR offers benefits in terms of water conservation and reduced greenhouse gas

emissions, farmer adoption hinges on clear economic advantages.

"The farmer needs to see the benefit," he said, noting that successful DSR implementation requires effective weed management, water management, and access to mechanization for correct planting.

He suggested that Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) could play a catalytic role in facilitating DSR adoption by providing access to necessary resources and knowledge.

On biostimulants, another growing segment in India, Wiebusch expressed surprise at their rapid uptake but emphasized the importance of ensuring a good return on investment for farmers. "We need to understand the whole system of what farmers really employ," he said.

Bayer has already registered one biostimulant product in India and plans to introduce more, particularly targeting the horticulture sector.

Wiebusch noted, "India is the second largest producer of horticulture in the world, and we will be the largest exporter of horticulture at one point in time. That will need a much more robust nutrition system."

He also said the company is exploring innovations in precision technology and digital technologies in optimising agro-chemicals and improving farm productivity in India through its global initiative 'ForwardFarms'.

Looking ahead, Wiebusch expressed optimism for the upcoming rabi and spring seasons, citing high water availability in dams across the country. Despite a patchy kharif season, he believes Indian agriculture stands to benefit from current conditions.

Source: www.economictimes.indiatimes.com

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PM MODI LAUDS CHANGE IN AGRICULTURE EXPORT POLICY, SAYS WILL BOOST FARMERS INCOME

Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded recent changes in agricultural export policies, stating that easing export norms on basmati rice and onions, and increasing import duties on some edible oils will boost farmers' incomes and create rural jobs.

The government scrapped a \$ 950 per tonne minimum export price (MEP) for basmati rice and removed a \$ 550 per tonne MEP on onions, according to government statements.

The government raised import duty on crude palm oil to 20 per cent and on refined sunflower oil to 32.5 per cent, aiming to support domestic oilseed farmers and processors.

In a post on X, Modi said the government is leaving no stone unturned to support farmers who work tirelessly for the country's food security.

"Whether it is reducing the export duty on onions or increasing the import duty on edible oils, many such decisions are going to greatly benefit our food producers. While these will increase their income, employment opportunities will also increase in rural areas," the prime minister said.

Modi's comments came in response to a post by Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who thanked



the prime minister for taking important decisions regarding onion, basmati rice and edible oils in the interest of farmers.

Stating that the Modi government is "sensitive" to farmers' welfare and committed to their "development" and "progress", Chouhan said the reduction of export duty on onions from 40 to 20 per cent would help onion farmers get better prices and boost exports.

The removal of basmati rice export duties aims to ensure fair prices for growers and increase demand for the premium rice variety, Chouhan added.

Regarding refined oils, the minister said the increase in basic duty on refined oil to 32.5 per cent "will increase the demand for mustard,

sunflower and groundnut crops for refinery oil".

Chouhan expressed optimism that farmers will get better prices for these crops and the increase in refineries in small and rural areas will create more employment opportunities.

(Only the headline and picture of this report may have been reworked by the Business Standard staff; the rest of the content is auto-generated from a syndicated feed.)

Source:
www.business-standard.com

ONION PRICES RISE IN LASALGAON WHOLESALE MARKET AFTER SCRAPPING OF MEP



Onion prices rose at the Lasalgaon Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) in the district following the Union government's decision to scrap the minimum export price (MEP) and halve the export duty, sources said.

The Lasalgaon APMC is one of the biggest onion wholesale markets in the country.

The prices of the kitchen staple in the APMC rose by average Rs 433 per quintal, sources said.

"The removal of MEP is certainly a good decision. The market has increased a bit. We think there should be no export ban. The imposition and removal of such things affects the market. Now MEP has been removed, but farmers' onion produce is running out," said Balasaheb Kshirsagar, Lasalgaon APMC chairman. "There is no clarification yet about whether export charges have been reduced by 20 per cent or 40 per cent," he told.

As many as 425 vehicles or 5,182 quintals of onion

arrived at the market. The prices ranged from Rs 3,700 to Rs 4,951 per quintal and Rs 4,700 per quintal average. Around 302 vehicles (3,736 quintals) of onion had arrived and the prices were Rs 2,800 per quintal minimum, Rs 4,411 per quintal maximum and Rs 4,267 per quintal average, APMC sources said.

The government has halved the export duty on onion to 20 percent from 40 per cent. The duty cut is effective from September 14. The 40 per cent export duty had been in place since May 4.

The decisions, including removal of MEP on both onion and basmati rice and cut in the export duty, came ahead of assembly elections in Maharashtra and Haryana.

(Only the headline and picture of this report may have been reworked by the Business Standard staff; the rest of the content is auto-generated from a syndicated feed.)

Source:
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THE REAL REASON WHY CHINESE GARLIC IS BANNED IN INDIA

The article discusses the ban on Chinese garlic in India due to concerns over excessive pesticide use, failing quality standards, and economic impact on local farmers. Emphasizing natural farming methods, Indian garlic is preferred for its strong flavor and distinct aroma, while Chinese garlic is seen as a potential health risk and threat to Indian farmers' livelihoods. Garlic, an essential ingredient in many global cuisines, holds a significant place in Indian, Chinese, and various other culinary traditions. Its versatility spans from simple seasoning to making pickles and complex vegetable dishes. While most people are familiar with Indian garlic, fewer know about Chinese garlic, which is currently banned in India.

What is Chinese garlic?

Chinese garlic, as the name suggests, is a type of garlic primarily grown in China and exported to numerous countries worldwide. It typically features smaller bulbs and can range in colour from light white to pink. In culinary applications, Chinese garlic is predominantly used in Chinese and other Asian cuisines, such as in noodles, stir-fries, and soups. Despite its widespread use, Chinese garlic has faced significant scrutiny and restrictions in India.

Why is Chinese garlic banned in India?

The ban on Chinese garlic in India stems from several critical concerns...

Excessive pesticide use: Chinese garlic is known for its high use of pesticides and chemicals during cultivation. These substances can pose serious health risks to consumers. In contrast, Indian garlic is grown with minimal use of pesticides and fertilizers, prioritizing natural farming methods.

Quality standards: Chinese garlic often fails to meet the quality standards set by Indian authorities. There have been instances where Chinese garlic contains chemicals or synthetic substances that are detrimental to health.

Economic impact:

The lower price of Chinese garlic compared to Indian garlic poses a significant threat to local farmers. The influx of cheaper Chinese garlic can lead to substantial financial losses for Indian garlic producers. To protect the interests of Indian farmers and ensure consumer safety, the government has imposed a ban on Chinese garlic.

Differences between Chinese and Indian garlic

The distinction between Chinese and Indian garlic goes beyond mere geography; it

extends to their sensory and cultivation characteristics...

Flavour and aroma:

Indian garlic is renowned for its strong, pungent smell and robust taste. This sharpness makes it a preferred choice in Indian cooking. On the other hand, Chinese garlic tends to have a milder aroma and taste, which might not be as desirable in certain culinary contexts.

Physical appearance:

Chinese garlic is typically smaller in size and can be light white or pink. Indian garlic, however, is larger and features a peel colour that ranges from white to pink and light brown. The size and colour variations reflect the different growing conditions and practices.

Cultivation practices:

Indian garlic is generally grown using traditional methods with a focus on natural farming practices and minimal chemical use. This approach ensures a more organic and health-conscious product. Conversely, Chinese garlic is often produced using modern agricultural techniques that rely heavily on pesticides and chemicals to boost yield, raising concerns about its safety and health impact.

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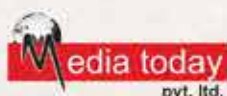
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