

**Press Information Bureau  
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**Government is Considering a Viable Insurance Scheme for the Farmers-Shri Radha Mohan Singh**

Recently launched Government programme of Pradhan Mantri Krishi SinchaiYojana, Soil Health Card Scheme, Prampragat Krishi VikasYojana, proposed National Agricultural market scheme will revolutionarise agriculture in years to come. The government is also seriously debating on bringing out a viable insurance scheme for the farmers. This was stated by Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare on the occasion of National Dialogue on "Innovative Extension System for Farmers Empowerment and Welfare" held here today. He said that the government is strengthening the extension infrastructure to new develop from lab to marginal farmer. Agriculture is a State subject and as per the state requirements respective Governments are initiating their programmes but Government of India has always been supporting the States with relevant schemes and other strategic information and advisory for success of agriculture sector, he said.

Full text of Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare speech:

I am extremely happy to be here on the occasion of this important National Dialogue which is being organized at a very important juncture when the Indian Agriculture is facing a lot of challenges at recurrent droughts, floods and other weather related vagaries. I am sure the areas on which farmers are concerned much, will be deliberated at length in coming three days and way out may be drawn which may indicate the path for the future for inclusive growth with the participation of all stakeholders, safeguarding the interests of the farmers.

India is having a pluralistic extension system which is dominated by the public extension system which has two approaches: field extension pursued by the development departments and frontline extension pursued by the ICAR and Agricultural Universities through Krishi Vigyan Kendras. Our focus is on strengthening of both these arms of extension. Of late, the Krishi Vigyan Kendras have demonstrated their visibility by fastening the process of Lab to Land process and their special contribution in creating awareness on soil health in the entire country. In pockets, private extension have also displayed their role in extending commodity specific knowledge and advisory to the farmers but we expect that the corporate houses will come in a bigger way to serve the society especially marginal, poor and landless farmers. Agriculture is a State subject and as per the state requirements respective Governments are initiating their programmes but Government of India has always been supporting the States with relevant schemes and other strategic information and advisory for success of agriculture sector. The Government policies of Pradhan Mantri Krishi SinchaiYojana, Soil Health Card Scheme, Prampragat Krishi VikasYojana, proposed National Agricultural market scheme will revolutionarise agriculture in years to come. The government is also seriously debating on bringing out a viable insurance scheme for the farmers.

The extension is lacking infrastructure to reach the individual farmers (14 crore farmer families) and thus, looking into it, long awaited demand of the farmers have been fulfilled by starting a 24 hours Kisan Channel by Hon'ble Prime Minister. The extension is expected to provide information for production, protection, post-harvest, value addition, marketing, insurance, credit and other information related to the farmers regarding availability of inputs, weather, etc.

Besides food security, nutritional security has been a concern and this has to be appropriately dealt. Currently, one third of global production is lost or wasted annually which is enough to feed two billion people for a year. Most food loss takes place in post-production, harvesting, transportation and storage. This is a huge loss on account of economy, environmental and societal significance. Around 800 million people in the world suffer from hunger, under nutrition remains wide spread with some two billion people lacking essential nutrients like iron, zinc and vitamin A.

FAO estimates that world food production must rise 60% to keep pace with demographic change. Whereas IPCC (International Panel on Climate Change) predicts that crop yields may decline by 10-20% by 2050.

Rising temperature are predicted to reduce catches of the world main fish species by 40%. Live-stock contributes nearly 2/3

of agriculture's green house and 70% of its methane gas emissions.

The soils are getting endangered by different ways which include imbalanced fertilizer, growing of exhaustive crops, non-inclusion of leguminous crops in the cropping systems and reducing organic carbon in the soil.

As the holdings are getting smaller, the farmers need models which could ensure food security as well as regular flow of income from their land.

All these issues which I have highlighted are the main concerns of extension for future. I am sure, that the intellectuals who are sitting here including learned farmers who have established their own models of profitable farming, will bring certain suggestions which will be useful for developing future strategy.

NCJ/CP