

**Press Information Bureau
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Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister today briefed the press about the achievements of the Ministry during past two years

The first priority of the central government was to take up effective initiatives to fight the challenges prevailing in agricultural sector. These challenges have been bifurcated in two parts so as to work on them in mission mode. The government has chalked out a plan to reduce the input cost in the agriculture sector and to provide farmers better return for their produce. Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has taken the resolve to double the income of farmers. The government is also giving priority to the enterprises linked to agricultural sector so as to achieve this target. Mr Singh was addressing the Press Conference organized here today.

Government is taking a number of initiatives to minimize the cost of agricultural production. With this goal in mind, 14 crore farmers in the country are being given Soil Health Cards. Apart from this, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana has been launched to promote organic farming. Neem Coated Urea, improved varieties of seeds and planting material, schemes like Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana have been introduced. Farmers are also being provided agricultural loans on concessional rate. The norms related to disaster relief have been altered to help the farmers affected by natural calamities so that they are compensated for the losses appropriately. The discrepancies existing in crop insurance schemes have been removed and a new scheme called Pradhan Mantri Fasal Beema Yojana has been launched.

The Government has taken a historical initiative to provide farmers better return of their produce. The concept of one nation and one mandi – has been taken ahead. Hon'ble Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister said that long pending mandi/ marketing reforms process has been accelerated. The pilot project related to e-mandi has been launched in this financial year. Under this, 21 mandis of 8 states have been linked so far. The government is continuously making efforts to bring uniformity in the rules and regulations pertaining to various mandis in various states. Most of the states have expressed willingness to participate in this project. As of now, proposals of 365 mandis in 12 states have been sanctioned. Ministry of Agriculture has set a target of establishing unified e-trading platform in 585 mandis throughout the country by 2018.

The Minister has said that states are expected to rectify three rules and regulation related to mandis. One is to impart permission to e-trade, second is to implement mandi tariff on single window and third is to implement single licence across the state to carry out the trade. So far, 17 states have started working in this direction. The amendment of mandi related rules and regulations will pave way for achieving appropriate price of agricultural produce.

To promote agricultural sector the government has enhanced the allocation to this field from Rs. 15809 crore to Rs. 35984 crore which is more than as double. The government has made an allocation of Rs. 9 lakh crore to provide farmers cheap and concessional loan while accelerating the inflow of agricultural credit. The government has made provision for farmer credit cards as well as relaxation in payment of interests at the time of calamities.

Shri Singh said that Hon'ble Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi has chalked out a target to double farmers incomes by 2022. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is making focused efforts in this direction. The government is also imparting priority to the ancillary areas of agricultural sector. Under this, horticulture, livestock, dairy, beekeeping as well as poultry have been promoted. A new scheme called National AgroForestry has been initiated for planting trees over the meadows. The dairy and fisheries sectors have made greater strides in terms of growth and development. The government has accelerated second green revolution in the North Eastern region to achieve food security in the country which will lead to enhancement in the agriculture productivity on the one hand and on the other will result in improvement of the farmers' economy in North Eastern region. A number of schemes have been launched to promote the production of pulses and oilseeds so that dependence on imports can be reduced.

Initiative taken by Ministry of Agriculture to increase farmer incomes have begun to show results on ground. A number of important measures have been taken to preserve the agriculture and farmers from the adverse affect of climate change. A number of gao palan schemes have been commenced for for maintaining milk productivity. 35 projects have been approved in 29 states for this purpose. Approvals have also been given to establish 14 Gokul Villages in the states.

To remove the scarcity of manpower in agricultural sector, the government has opened two central agriculture universities, 14 agriculture colleges and various agriculture research institutes. Recruitment of scientists has been increased.

All agriculture science centers established in nearly all rural districts are being equipped with sophisticated and scientific facilities throughout the country.

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