

MINUTES OF KHARIF CAMPAIGN-2017

The National Conference on Agriculture for Kharif Campaign-2017 was held on 25th and 26th April, 2017 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The Conference was inaugurated by Shri Radha Mohan Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in the presence of Shri Pashottam Rupala & Shri Sudarshan Bhagat, Hon'ble Ministers of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare chaired the conference. The Conference was attended by Agriculture Production Commissioners and Principal Secretaries/Secretaries/Directors of Agriculture, Horticulture and Agriculture Marketing from State/UT Governments, senior scientists from ICAR and officials from Ministries and agencies. List of participants are at **Annexure-I**.

2. Shri Utpal Kumar Singh, Additional Secretary, DAC&FW welcomed all participants and informed them of the outline of conference.

3. In his inaugural address, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare applauded efforts of the Central and State Governments in attaining an estimated record production of about 272 million metric tons in foodgrains and 33.6 million tons in oilseeds. The Minister made a special reference particularly referred to the quantum jump in pulses production, estimated at a record breaking 22.14 million metric tons as per the second Advance Estimates. The Minister pointed out to the encouraging first stage forecast of the South West monsoon during Kharif 2017 and exhorted the States to make all necessary arrangements for our farmers. The Minister further stressed the commitment of the Central Government to double the income of farmers by the year 2022 and the initiatives taken by the Central Government towards this end in particular the roadmap to scale up pulses production to 24 MMTs by 2021. The Minister complimented states that have been successful in the delivery of soil health cards to all farmers and exhorted the others to complete the first phase in the next 2-3 months. He announced that the second cycle of the Soil Health Card scheme will commence in May 2017. He referred to growing popularity of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and hoped that the States will expand the coverage to 40% this year. The Minister encouraged States to implement the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana in a

mission mode to promote organic farming, particularly in the rainfed and hilly areas. He reiterated the need to introduce marketing reforms in agriculture sector to enable a better price realization for the farmers.

4. In his address, Shri Parshottam Rupala, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare highlighted various achievements under flagship schemes of the Department and made a particular reference to the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana launched in Kharif, 2016. MoS Shri Rupala exhorted the States to leverage technology in the implementation of the scheme and achieve the targets for insurance coverage of 40% and 50% of the total cropped area during 2017-18 and 2018-19 respectively.

5. In his address, Shri Sudarshan Bhagat, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture stated that it was absolutely imperative that all flagship schemes of the Governments are given the highest priority in bringing about material improvements in the lives of our farmers.

6. Union Agriculture Secretary in his address pointed out the multipronged strategy needed to double farmers' income by 2022. He requested all the states to complete SHC distribution process as early as possible and hoped that the first cycle will be completed by June this year. The second cycle of the scheme will commence in May 2017. He exhorted the states to study the trends of urea consumption in the country since the introduction of Neem Coated Urea. He advised states to promote the custom hiring centers and use of solar technology, whenever feasible. He laid down a road map by which states with lowest productivity should try and attain the national average, and those with higher than average strive to bridge the yield gap of the best performing states in the country. Much emphasis was given to integrated farmers and diversifications not only raise income but reduce the risk arising out of calamity, disease or price volatility. He urged the officers of the Department to work in close coordination with state agriculture marketing departments to help facilitate marketing reforms. He also urged state government officers to distribute mini kits of seeds to farmers well before forthcoming Kharif season. The secretary urged the states to expand coverage of PMFBY among non-loanee farmers. States also need to use modern technology in crop yield assessments to improve transparency & timely processing of compensation claims. He requested all the states to promote Farmers Producers Organisations in enabling transfer of technology, aggregation, value addition and marketing of produce. He pointed out that

reduction of post harvest losses in quality and quantity can have a favourable impact on farmers' incomes. He also stressed on the need for digitalization of agriculture for greater efficiency. Secretary requested states/UTs to pay special attention to the quality of implementation of Flagship schemes/programmes of the department.

7. Agriculture Commissioner made a detailed presentation on the Rabi 2016-17 and prospects for Kharif 2017-18.

8. Presentations were made by Joint Secretaries in charge of flagship schemes of this Department viz., E-National Agriculture Market, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, National Horticulture Mission, Soil Health Card, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana.

9. To facilitate focused deliberations, following eight focused Groups were constituted with the help of the States on pre-identified topics on the first day:

- I. Market reforms – introduction of contract farming, effective role of e-NAM and inter-market trading on e-NAM platform.
- II. Sustainability of pulses production in the coming season.
- III. Best Mechanization practices to avoid burning of straw.
- IV. Utilization of Corpus fund under PMKSY.
- V. Doubling of farmers' income based on paper circulated by Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog.
- VI. Making North-East and the Himalayan States a power houses of horticultural development – Organic Farming.
- VII. Issues related to Horticulture
- VIII. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

10. On the second day of the Campaign, recommendations of each of the 8 groups were presented in the plenary, presided by the Secretary (AC&FW). These recommendations were discussed in detail by the participants in the open house session. The group recommendations are detailed at **Annexure-II**.

11. The conference ended with a concluding address by the Hon'ble Minister of State who advised the States to firm up their Kharif strategies based on integrated farming approach. He advised different Departments dealing with agriculture and allied sectors in the states to work in a planned and concerted manner since the portents for monsoons were favourable. He once again urged the states to ensure timely implementation of agricultural marketing reforms with the objective of doubling the income of farmers.

The Conference ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair by Joint Secretary(GC).

Recommendations made by groups in the National Conference
on Agriculture for Kharif Campaign, 2017.

Group -1: **National Agriculture Market**

- Commission charges should be remitted to buyers and Mobile infrastructure be setup for farmer-consumer market.
- Stake holder's capacity building needs to be augmented.
- e-NAM should be linked with PPPIAD.
- Standard protocol for export should be formed and schemes of States/UTs regarding contract farmers need to be considered.
- In case of excess production of perishable commodity; Government should declare/purchase commodity under Excessive Production Support Price like MSP. Processing unit be allowed to sell all the commodity and APMC should also be allowed to purchase such commodity.
- Separate market framework/policy is required in States considering the Geography, Local Acts, Perishable nature etc.
- Payments to small and marginal farmers be ensured.
- A joint action plan be prepared by appointing a Nodal Officer in each State to identify the commodities traded across other States and to identify traders and helping them for participating in inter-state trade.
- A national level regulatory body may be formed for issuing and sorting any type of dispute related to trade or services in e-NAM to ensure Dispute Redressal Mechanism, assured delivery and assured payment.
- There is need to free the markets and warehouses should be declared as market.
- Potato chips model in Punjab should be adopted.
- Horticulture markets could be linked to e-NAM.

Group-2: Strategy for sustainability of pulses production during Kharif 2017.

- Assured procurement of pulses should be ensured by State Governments at MSP.
- Mapping of major pulse growing areas and integration with PMKSY water resources for life saving irrigation should be ensured.
- Use of quality bio-fertilizer and bio-agents (MoU with ICAR/SAU) should be ensured.
- Soil test based nutrient applications including quality micro nutrients should be adopted.
- Adopting of line sowing BBF, raised-bed & ridge-furrow planting techniques should be ensured.
- Cultivation should be made under new niches-sole, catch crop, relay crop & inter cropping.
- Utilization of rice fallows and promotion of spring/summer pulse cultivation should be ensured.
- Adoption of short duration of paddy varieties should be encouraged to accommodate the pulses.
- Availability of Gypsum/promotion as nutrient supplement, effective pest-surveillance and community approach management methods/techniques should be ensured as practiced in Maharashtra.
- Moisture conservation technique, contingent drainage in the event of high rainfall through promotion of ridge planter, raised bed planter and sprinklers should be adopted.
- There is a need to promote Zero-tillage to reduce cost of cultivation/timely sowing.
- Custom Hiring for farm mechanization should be promoted.
- Convergence of fallow lands into pulse cultivation should be explored.
- Transplanting and dibbling method of Tur planting under SCSP/TSP with SMF should be adopted.
- PHM/Value Addition Promotion (spiral graders, clearer, mini dal-mill) as adopted in Assam should be encouraged.
- Screening and identification of potential local cultivars of Rajmash and Ricebean for NEH region should be promoted.
- Area under Cluster demonstration of NFSM may be reduced from 100 ha to 25 ha per cluster in case area under crop is less.
- Introduction of Bee-keeping as adopted in Assam may be replicated.

- Fencing/solar fencing project for wild animal/stray cattle menace as adopted in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh should be replicated.
- MSP for Moth bean may be considered.
- Hoeing/weeding in major pulse districts of Rajasthan may be dove-tailed with MGNREGA.
- Large scale FTD for seed should be conducted in Seed Hubs and variety should be taken into chain.
- Short duration summer Moong seeds of 45 days should be procured by States in advance.
- Short duration of seeds of pigeon pea available in Punjab and Haryana should be indented on priority.
- States should take pro-active steps to procure pulses under PSS.
- Ponds under MGNREGA and nearby sources may be utilized for life saving irrigation.
- State should take steps for increasing pulses production through inter-cropping and carry on market reforms and also set up procurement centers.

Group-3: Best mechanization practices to avoid burning of straw

- Small size implements should be developed to overcome sub-soil erosion due to machinery.
- Smaller size tractors should be developed and machinery manufacturing should be promoted outside Punjab.
- Paddy straw should be enriched with minerals by mulching for their supply to Milk Federations and straw may be converted into bio-mass for power generation.
- Straw disposal may be made effective by converting it into feed.
- A cell for straw management may be set up in Agriculture Engineering Division of States as done in Madhya Pradesh.

Group-4: Utilization of Corpus Fund under PMKSY

- Eligible activities such as interest subvention for farmers, energisation for MI system, top up subsidy, additional coverage beyond CSS, meeting out state share and any other activities to be finalized after consultation with States should be covered under the Corpus Fund.
- State Government should prepare a road map for utilization of Corpus Fund.

Group-5: Doubling Farmers Income in five years (2016-17 to 2020-21)

- Income of farmers may be doubled in five years by way of distribution of Soil Health Card, Zero per cent interest on crop loan, availing CM Farmers Cooperative Loan Assistance Programme, use of recommended seed rate, promotion of bio-fertilizer/compost/NADEP, promoting agriculture mechanization, zero tillage and organic mulching, expansion of irrigated area through canal and renovation of lining of irrigation canals, ensuring micro irrigation in command area, construction of wells and farm ponds through MNREGA , effective implementation of PMKSY, simplifying the procedures of leasing agriculture lands, fertility mapping of all villages, extension of new agriculture techniques like SRI(paddy), Dharwad system (tuar), raised bed planting (Soybean), high density plantation (cotton), effective implementation of water shed development, enhancing seed certification capacity, release of new seed varieties and ensuring their availability through seed rolling plans, promotion of use of hybrid seeds, supporting seed producers cooperative societies, soil testing labs in each block and free of cost soil health card distribution to all farmers, extension of green houses/poly houses/shade nets through provision of appropriate subsidies, establishment of custom hiring centers, promotion of solar agriculture pumps, establishment of tissue culture labs, creation of new farmers producer companies, breed improvement through artificial insemination, cattle infertility treatment programme, cattle vaccination at doorsteps of the farmers, promotion of scientific cattle feed management, green fodder production programme, fisheries development in water harvesting structures in farm ponds.
- Diversification in agriculture may be encouraged through conversion is single cropped to double crop and double cropped to triple crop area, increasing area under inter-cropping, extension of agro forestry,

expression of area under commercial and other profitable crops, crop rotation, promotion of bee-keeping, production programme on field bunds (like castor seed, tuar, bamboo etc.), enhancing area under horticulture and increasing their productivity, promotion of sericulture and lac production, promotion of goat rearing and backyard poultry and creation of model agriculture farms of one/two/three/five acres throughout State.

- States should prepare road map for formulating strategies for doubling the income of farmers.

Group-6: Making North East & Himalayan States as Power Houses of Horticulture Development – Organic Farming.

- Availability of quality planting material should be ensured through area expansion and accredited nurseries and establishment of modern nurseries mother blocks/rootstock blocks with hi-tech nurseries & tissue culture units.
- Rejuvenation of old/senile orchards is required.
- Comprehensive perspective plan may be prepared for horticulture infrastructure development.
- Mechanization in horticulture should be promoted.
- Farm level infrastructure may be developed for cold chain sorting, grading pre-cooling, handling and storage.
- Branding of organic products and marketing infrastructure should be ensured.
- Convergence with schemes like MOFPI, APEDA, RKVY etc. should be explored.
- Capacity building may be made through training & demonstration of improved technologies, certification etc.

Group-7: Issues in Horticulture

- In order to ensure availability of quality planting material there is a need for long term demand assessment for suitable variety with institutional linkage for propagation, field demonstration and

capacity building. Emphasis may be made on clonal root stock. Faster multiplication/replication of root stocks may be done by ICAR Institutes/SAUs. Focus may be made on exportable, processable varieties. Optimum utilization and commercialization of tissue culture lab/nurseries need to be established with public funding in ICAR institutes/SAUs. Accreditation of nurseries needs to be scaled up. Prioritization of proper labeling/tagging, and traceability of planting material with relevant information with bar coding and QR.

- In order to increase production and productivity improvement convergence of innovative technologies and dissemination of crop specific best practices may be made by ICAR institutes. Continued focus may be made on protected cultivation for high value off season crops. Use of hybrid seed/planting material should be promoted. Focus may be made on precision farming. Replanting & rejuvenation may be emphasized for productivity improvement. High density and ultra high density plantation, trellies system, hydroponics etc. should be promoted. Productivity enhancement and quality improvement should be ensured by cross pollination through beekeeping. Need to promote horti-preneurship among educated youth.
- Post harvest management may be strengthened by formulating strategy to develop cold chain infrastructure rapidly keeping in mind existing gap. Crop and cluster specific value chain enhancement project need to be approved. Farmers/farmer groups participation at each stage of value chain/sorting, grading primary processing and packing should be enable. Producer may be linked with the market and electronic trading should be promoted. 35% of MIDH budget may be utilized for development of cold-chain and PHM infrastructure. Aggregation of farmers into farmer groups and linking them to the markets-FPO model with longer period of handholding and financial support may be made. Alternate source of energy like solar, thermal and other non conventional and hybrid energy systems for cold chain projects especially pack houses, ripening chambers and stand alone cold storages should be promoted. Crop specific PHM technology/protocol development and extension should be encouraged. Dedicated multi mode horti-route from production hubs to market should be ensured.
- Quality issues in horticulture may be ensured by adherence to best production practices to harvest the genetic potential. Mechanized harvesting practice and post harvest handling should be supported. Maturity standard enabled harvesting of crops (physiological maturity) should be promoted. Ripening

chambers for healthy and hygienic ripening should be promoted. Intensive training and awareness for farmers and consumers on health and hygienic practices of horticulture produce should be imparted. Effective implementation of food safety norms should be ensured. Adherence to international quality standards/benchmarks with regard to pesticides, residues, contaminants/artificial coloring agents and microbial etc. should be ensured.

- For capacity building and skill development focus may be given on green house technician, green house cultivator, canopy management, high density planting, nursery manager (nursery management), tissue culture technician, mushroom cultivation beekeeping and gardener. Skill gap need to be addressed using ICAR/KVKs/SAUs & State trading institutions.
- In order to sustain horticultural development optimum water use through precision farming, integrated water harvesting structure, micro-irrigation/fertigation, and mulching should be ensured. Promotion of bio control agents/bio pesticides, bio nutrient for soil fertility should be ensured. Development of dry land horticulture may be made. Development of crop specific inter-season sustainability model should be adopted by ICAR (crop intensity, crop rotation, inter-cropping). Sustainability may be ensured through integrated farming, multi tier farming, beekeeping, poultry, fisheries, livestock farming along with horticulture. Organic farming should be scaled up and good agricultural practices may be promoted.

Group-8: Implementation of PMFBY

- Minimum area under crops insurance units to be clearly defined.
- Optimisation of numbers of CCE needs to be conducted.
- Clustering of districts to be done by an expert agency.
- The insurance companies must engage qualified man-power in districts.
- Insurance companies should be given targets for coverage of non-loanee farmers with penal provision for defaulting companies.
- There should be capping on actuarial premiums quoted by insurance companies- an off-set price to be fixed up by an expert committee.

- Capacity building or training of Bankers to be taken up in right earnest.
- The reporting period for Natural calamities & post Harvest losses to be enhanced to 5 days.
- The reporting can also be done by PRI Members/banks/Insurance Agents/Govt. Officer.
- An uniform “Mobile App” for reporting such cases needs to be developed.
- Provision of taking up additional crops & area after tender at approved rate may be made.
- There should be well defined exit clause & penal provision for all sorts of violation by insurance companies.
- Grievance redressal mechanism at district & other levels needs to be incorporated in operational guideline.
- Insurance companies should themselves verify the area before accepting the proposal.
- The area certified by the Government should be binding on insurance companies.
- Release of State subsidy after due verification preferably at the end of the season should be ensured.
- Firming up “CCE Agri App” with provision of yield”& “claim” calculation in crop insurance portal.
- States should have discretion in deciding seasonality discipline.
- The possibility of using registered input dealers as insurance contact points may be considered.
- Make implementation of UPIS optional.
- Need to strengthen state remote sensing agencies.