
CURRENT AFFAIRS DIGEST 2018-18 FOR NABARD GRADE A EXAM

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CABINET APPROVES CORPUS FOR MICRO IRRIGATION FUND WITH NABARD UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI KRISHI SINCHAYEE YOJANA

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime approved an initial Corpus of Rs.5,000 crore for setting up of a dedicated "Micro Irrigation Fund" (MIF) with NABARD under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).

DETAILS:

- The allocation of Rs. 2,000 crore and Rs. 3,000 crore will be utilised during 2018-19 and 2019-20 respectively. NABARD will extend the loan to State Governments during this period. **Borrowings from NABARD shall be paid back in 7 years including the grace period of two years.**
- **The lending rate under MIF has been proposed at 3% lower than the cost of raising the fund by NABARD.**
- This cost shall be met from the ongoing scheme of PMKSY-PDMC by amending the existing guidelines
- The total financial implication on interest subvention comes to about Rs 750 crore.

BENEFITS:

- The dedicated Micro Irrigation Fund would supplement the efforts of Per Drop More Crop Component (PDMC) of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana in an effective and timely manner.
- With the additional investment for micro irrigation accessing MIF, innovative composite/ commodity/ community/ cluster based micro irrigation projects/ proposals may bring about 10 lakh ha.
- The Fund will facilitate States to mobilise resources for their initiatives, including additional (top up subsidy) in implementation of PMKSY-PDMC to achieve the annual target of about 2 Million ha/year during the remaining period of 14th Finance Commission under Per Drop More Crop Component of PMKSY as recommended by the Group of Secretaries.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TARGETS:

- States may access MIF for innovative integrated projects, including projects in the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode and also for incentivizing micro irrigation through an additional (top up) subsidy over and above the one available under PMKSY-PDMC Guidelines and for covering additional areas. It should not be a substitute for State's share in PMKSY-PDMC.
- Farmers Producers Organization (FPO)/Cooperatives/State Level Agencies can also access the funds with State Government Guarantee or equivalent collateral. Farmers Co-operatives may access this fund for innovative cluster based Community Irrigation Projects
- An Advisory Committee to provide policy direction and ensure effective planning, coordination and monitoring along with a Steering Committee for examining and approving the Projects/proposals from State Governments (total cost, eligible loan amount to the State and phasing), coordination and monitoring to ensure time bound implementation of the assisted projects/proposals within approved cost and phasing is proposed to be constituted.

COVERAGE:

The approval shall have Pan India coverage. With the operation of MIF, it is expected that the States which are lagging behind in adoption of Micro Irrigation would also be encouraged to take advantage of the fund for incentivizing farmers as being done by the good performing States. Besides, community driven and innovative projects to be taken up by the States would bring additional coverage of Micro Irrigation.

RATIONALE:

The Task Force on Micro Irrigation had estimated a potential of 69.5 m ha under micro irrigation, whereas the area covered so far is only about 10 m. ha (14%). Further, the Group of Secretaries, 2017, emphasized on target of 10 million ha under micro irrigation over the next 5 years, which would require an additional annual coverage of about 1 million ha compared to the present pace of implementation. This can be accomplished by effective utilization of the resources of both PMKSY-PDMC and MIF in any or both of the following manner:

- To facilitate the States in mobilising the resources for expanding coverage of Micro Irrigation by taking up special and innovative projects
- To incentivise micro irrigation beyond the provisions available under PMKSY-PDMC to encourage farmers to install micro irrigation systems

MODEL AGRICULTURE PRODUCE AND LIVESTOCK CONTRACT FARMING AND SERVICES (PROMOTION & FACILITATION) ACT, 2018

With a view to integrate farmers with bulk purchasers including exporters, agro- industries etc. for better price realization through mitigation of market and price risks to the farmers and ensuring smooth agro raw material supply to the agro industries, Union Finance Minister in the budget for 2017-18 announced preparation of a **"Model Contract Farming Act"** and circulation of the same to the States for its adoption. Farmer's producer organizations (FPO's) have a major role in promoting Contract Farming and Services Contract. On behalf of famers they can enter into agreement with the sponsor.

SALIENT FEATURES OF MODEL CONTRACT FARMING ACT, 2018

- The Act lays special emphasis on protecting the interests of the farmers, considering them as weaker of the two parties entering into a contract.
- In addition to contract farming, services contracts all along the value chain including pre-production, production and post-production have been included.
- "Registering and Agreement Recording Committee" or an "Officer" for the purpose at district/block/ taluka level for online registration of sponsor and recording of agreement provided.
- Contracted produce is to be covered under crop / livestock insurance in operation.
- **Contract framing to be outside the ambit of APMC Act.**
- No permanent structure can be developed on farmers' land/premises
- No right, title of interest of the land shall vest in the sponsor.

- Promotion of Farmer Producer Organization (FPOs) / Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) to mobilize small and marginal farmers has been provided
- FPO/FPC can be a contracting party if so authorized by the farmers.
- No rights, title ownership or possession to be transferred or alienated or vested in the contract farming sponsor etc.
- Ensuring buying of entire pre-agreed quantity of one or more of agricultural produce, livestock or its product of contract farming producer as per contract.
- Contract Farming Facilitation Group (CFFG) for promoting contract farming and services at village / panchayat at level provided.
- Accessible and simple dispute settlement mechanism at the lowest level possible provided for quick disposal of disputes.
- It is a promotional and facilitative Act and not regulatory in its structure

NATIONAL POLICY ON BIOFUELS - 2018

SALIENT FEATURES

- i. The Policy categorises biofuels as "Basic Biofuels" viz. First Generation (1G) bioethanol & biodiesel and "Advanced Biofuels" - Second Generation (2G) ethanol, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to drop-in fuels, Third Generation (3G) biofuels, bio-CNG etc. to enable extension of appropriate financial and fiscal incentives under each category.
- ii. The Policy expands the scope of raw material for ethanol production by allowing use of Sugarcane Juice, Sugar containing materials like Sugar Beet, Sweet Sorghum, Starch containing materials like Corn, Cassava, Damaged food grains like wheat, broken rice, Rotten Potatoes, unfit for human consumption for ethanol production.
- iii. Farmers are at a risk of not getting appropriate price for their produce during the surplus production phase. Taking this into account, the Policy allows use of surplus food grains for production of ethanol for blending with petrol with the approval of National Biofuel Coordination Committee.
- iv. With a thrust on Advanced Biofuels, the Policy indicates a viability gap funding scheme for 2G ethanol Bio refineries of Rs.5000 crore in 6 years in addition to additional tax incentives, higher purchase price as compared to 1G biofuels.
- v. The Policy encourages setting up of supply chain mechanisms for biodiesel production from non-edible oilseeds, Used Cooking Oil, short gestation crops.
- vi. Roles and responsibilities of all the concerned Ministries/Departments with respect to biofuels has been captured in the Policy document to synergise efforts.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

- **Reduce Import Dependency:** One crore lit of E10 saves Rs.28 crore of forex at current rates. The ethanol supply year 2017-18 is likely to see a supply of around 150 crore litres of ethanol which will result in savings of over Rs.4000 crore of forex.
- **Cleaner Environment:** One crore lit of E-10 saves around 20,000 ton of CO₂ emissions. For the ethanol supply year 2017-18, there will be lesser emissions of CO₂ to the tune of 30 lakh ton. By reducing crop burning & conversion of agricultural residues/wastes to biofuels there will be further reduction in Green House Gas emissions.
- **Health benefits:** Prolonged reuse of Cooking Oil for preparing food, particularly in deep-frying is a potential health hazard and can lead to many diseases. Used Cooking Oil is a potential feedstock for biodiesel and its use for making biodiesel will prevent diversion of used cooking oil in the food industry.
- **MSW Management:** It is estimated that, annually 62 MMT of Municipal Solid Waste gets generated in India. There are technologies available which can convert waste/plastic, MSW to drop in fuels. One ton of such waste has the potential to provide around 20% of drop in fuels.
- **Infrastructural Investment in Rural Areas:** It is estimated that, one 100klpd bio refinery will require around Rs.800 crore capital investment. At present Oil Marketing Companies are in the process of setting up twelve 2G bio refineries with an investment of around Rs.10,000 crore. Further addition of 2G bio refineries across the Country will spur infrastructural investment in the rural areas.
- **Employment Generation:** One 100klpd 2G bio refinery can contribute 1200 jobs in Plant Operations, Village Level Entrepreneurs and Supply Chain Management.
- **Additional Income to Farmers:** By adopting 2G technologies, agricultural residues/waste which otherwise are burnt by the farmers can be converted to ethanol and can fetch a price for these waste if a market is developed for the same. Also, farmers are at a risk of not getting appropriate price for their produce during the surplus production phase. Thus conversion of surplus grains and agricultural biomass can help in price stabilization.

BACKGROUND:

In order to promote biofuels in the country, a National Policy on Biofuels was made by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy during the year 2009. Globally, biofuels have caught the attention in last decade and it is imperative to keep up with the pace of developments in the field of biofuels. Biofuels in India are of strategic importance as it augers well with the ongoing initiatives of the Government such as Make in India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill Development and offers great opportunity to integrate with the ambitious targets of doubling of Farmers Income, Import Reduction, Employment Generation, Waste to Wealth Creation. Biofuels programme in India has been largely impacted due to the sustained and

quantum non-availability of domestic feedstock for biofuel production which needs to be addressed.

CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF UMBRELLA SCHEME 'GREEN REVOLUTION — KRISHONNATI YOJANA' IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for the Umbrella Scheme, "Green Revolution – Krishonnati Yojana" in agriculture sector beyond 12th Five Year Plan for the period from **2017-18 to 2019-20 with the Central Share of Rs. 33,269.976 crore.**

The Umbrella scheme comprises of 11 Schemes/Missions. These schemes look to develop the agriculture and allied sector in a holistic and scientific manner to increase the income of farmers by enhancing production, productivity and better returns on produce

THE SCHEMES THAT ARE PART OF THE UMBRELLA SCHEMES ARE

- (i) **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)** with a total central share of Rs. 7533.04 crore, MIDH aims to promote holistic growth of horticulture sector; to enhance horticulture production, improve nutritional security and income support to farm Households.
- (ii) **National Food Security Mission (NFSM)**, including National Mission on Oil Seeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP), with a total central share of Rs.6893.38 crore. It aims to increase production of rice, wheat, pulses, coarse cereals and commercial crops, through area expansion and productivity enhancement in a suitable manner in the identified districts of the country, restoring soil fertility and productivity at the individual farm level and enhancing farm level economy. It further aims to augment the availability of vegetable oils and to reduce the import of edible oils.
- (iii) **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)** with a total central share of Rs.3980.82 crore. NMSA aims at promoting sustainable agriculture practices best suitable to the specific agro-ecology focusing on integrated farming, appropriate soil health management and synergizing resource conservation technology.
- (iv) **Submission on Agriculture Extension (SMAE)** with a total central share of Rs.2961.26 crore. SMAE aims to strengthen the ongoing extension mechanism of State Governments, local bodies etc., achieving food and nutritional security and socio-economic empowerment of farmers, to institutionalize programme planning and implementation mechanism, to forge effective linkages and synergy amongst various stake-holders, to support HRD interventions,

to promote pervasive and innovative use of electronic / print media, inter-personal communication and ICT tools, etc.

(v) **Sub-Mission on Seeds and Planting Material (SMSP)** with a total central share of Rs.920.6 crore. SMSP aims to increase production of certified / quality seed, to increase SRR, to upgrade the quality of farm saved seeds, to strengthen the seed multiplication chain, to promote new technologies and methodologies in seed production, processing, testing etc., to strengthen and modernizing infrastructure for seed production, storage, certification and quality etc.

(vi) **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM)** with a total central share of Rs.3250 crore. SMAM aims to increase the reach of farm mechanization to small and marginal farmers and to the regions where availability of farm power is low, to promote 'Custom Hiring Centres' to offset the adverse economies of scale arising due to small landholding and high cost of individual ownership, to create hubs for hi-tech and high value farm equipment, to create awareness among stakeholders through demonstration and capacity building activities, and to ensure performance testing and certification at designated testing centers located all over the country.

(vii) **Sub Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine (SMPPQ)** with a total central share of Rs.1022.67 crore. SMPPQ aims to minimize loss to quality and yield of agricultural crops from the ravages of insect pests, diseases, weeds, nematodes, rodents, etc. and to shield our agricultural bio-security from the incursions and spread of alien species, to facilitate exports of Indian agricultural commodities to global markets, and to promote good agricultural practices, particularly with respect to plant protection strategies and strategies.

(viii) **Integrated Scheme on Agriculture Census, Economics and Statistics (ISACES)** with a total central share of Rs. 730.58 crore. It aims to undertake the agriculture census, study of the cost of cultivation of principal crops, to undertake research studies on agro-economic problems of the country, to fund conferences/workshops and seminars involving eminent economists, agricultural scientists, experts and to bring out papers to conduct short term studies, to improve agricultural statistics methodology and to create a hierarchical information system on crop condition and crop production from sowing to harvest.

(ix) **Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperation (ISAC)** with a total central share of Rs. 1902.636 crore. It aims to provide financial assistance for improving the economic conditions of cooperatives, remove regional imbalances and to speed up - cooperative development in agricultural marketing, processing, storage, computerization and weaker section programmes; to help cotton growers fetch remunerative price for their produce through value addition besides ensuring supply of quality yarn at reasonable rates to the decentralized weavers.

(x) **Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Marketing (ISAM)** with a total central share of 3863.93 crore. ISAM aims to develop agricultural marketing infrastructure; to promote innovative and latest technologies and competitive alternatives in agriculture marketing infrastructure; to provide infrastructure facilities for grading, standardization and quality certification of agricultural produce; to establish a nationwide marketing information network; to integrate markets through a common online market platform to facilitate pan-India trade in agricultural commodities, etc.

(xi) **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP-A)** with a total central share of 211.06 crore aims to bring farmer centricity & service orientation to the programmes; to enhance reach & impact of extension services; to improve access of farmers to information & services throughout crop-cycle; to build upon, enhance & integrate the existing ICT initiatives of Centre and States; and to enhance efficiency & effectiveness of programs through making available timely and relevant information to the farmers for increasing their agriculture productivity.

The Schemes/Missions focus on creating/strengthening of infrastructure of production, reducing production cost and marketing of agriculture and allied produce. These schemes / missions have been under implementation for varying duration during past few years.

All these schemes/missions were appraised and approved independently as separate scheme/mission. In 2017-18, it has been decided to club all these schemes / missions under one umbrella scheme 'Green Revolution - Krishonnati Yojana'.

CABINET APPROVES FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO SUGAR MILLS FOR CLEARING CANE DUES OF FARMERS

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval to provide financial assistance @ of **Rs. 5.50 per quintal of cane crushed in sugar season 2017-18** to sugar mills to offset the cost of cane, in order to help sugar mills to clear cane dues of farmers.

DETAILS:

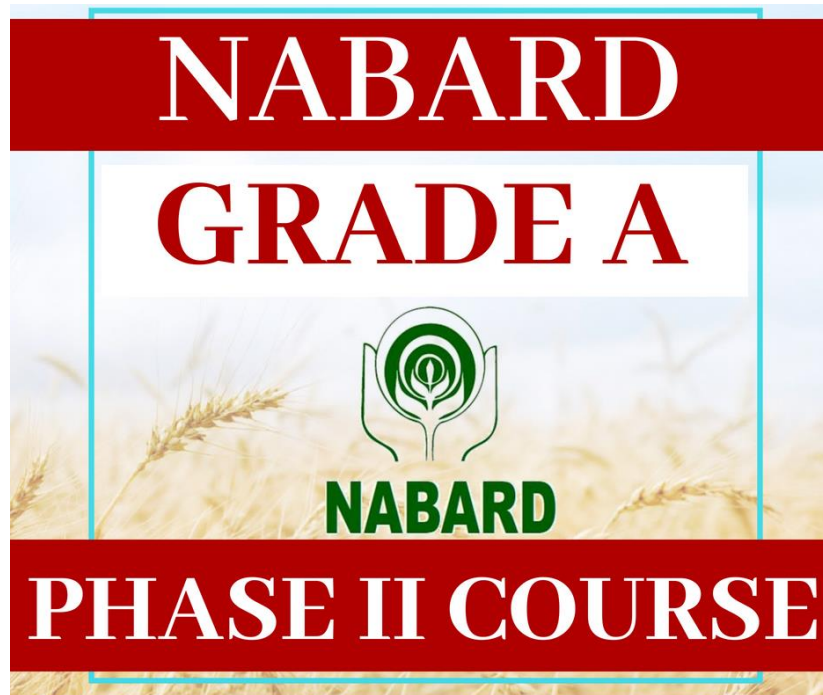
- The assistance shall be paid directly to the farmers on behalf of the mills.
- It will be adjusted against the cane price payable due to the farmers against Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) including arrears relating to previous years.
- Subsequent balance if any, shall be credited into the mill's account.
- Assistance shall be provided to those mills which will fulfil the eligibility conditions as decided by the Government.

BACKGROUND:

- Due to higher sugar production against the estimated consumption during the current sugar season 2017-18, the domestic sugar prices have remained depressed since the commencement of the season. Due to depressed market sentiments and crash in sugar prices, the liquidity position of sugar mills has been adversely affected, leading to accumulation of cane price dues of farmers which have reached to more than Rs.19,000 crore.

In order to stabilize sugar prices at reasonable level and to improve liquidity position of mills thereby enabling them to clear cane price dues of farmers, Government has taken following steps in past three months:

- a. Increased customs duty on import of sugar from 50% to 100% in the interest of farmers.**
- b. Imposed reverse stock holding limits on producers of sugar for the months of February and March, 2018.
- c. Government has also fully withdrawn the customs duty on export of sugar to encourage sugar industry to start exploring possibility of export of sugar.
- d. In view of the inventory levels with the sugar industry and to facilitate achievement of financial liquidity, mill-wise Minimum Indicative Export Quotas (MIEQ) have been fixed for sugar season 2017-18. Export Quotas of 20 Lakh tonnes of all grades of sugar; viz. raw, plantation white as well as refined, have been prorated amongst sugar factories by taking into account their average production of sugar achieved by the sugar mills during last two operational sugar seasons and the current season (up to February,2018).
- e. Further, to facilitate and incentivize export of surplus sugar by sugar mills, Government has allowed Duty Free Import Authorization (DFIA) Scheme in respect of sugar.



COURSE FEATURES

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ITC TIES UP WITH NITI TO TRAIN 2 LAKH FARMERS TO INCREASE INCOME

- FMCG major ITC has joined hands with NITI Aayog to train 2 lakh farmers to increase their income and raise productivity of major crops in 25 "aspirational districts" across seven states in the country by 2022.
- **These 25 aspirational districts are in Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and partnership is for a period of four years, i.e. up to April 2022,**
- To implement the partnership project, the Letter of Intent was signed by NITI Aayog Additional Secretary Yaduvendra Mathur and ITC Senior Vice President (Corporate Affairs) Anil Rajput in presence of NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.

- These trainers will disseminate sustainable agricultural practices and templates for seasonal planning at gram panchayat level, while the baseline and endline data will be collected by ITC for impact documentation, mapping of government schemes and programmes for improving efficiency of delivery.
- The association will cover five districts each in Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, while two each will be in Jharkhand and Rajasthan.
- ITC said one district of Maharashtra will also be taken into account under this programme.
- Launched in January 2018, the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' programme aims to quickly and effectively improve the performance of these districts across identified key performance indicators in sectors, which improve quality of life as well as economic productivity of its citizens.

CABINET APPROVES RESTRUCTURED NATIONAL BAMBOO MISSION

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Bamboo Mission (NBM) under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) during remaining period of Fourteenth Finance Commission (2018-19 & 2019-20). The Mission would ensure holistic development of the bamboo sector by addressing complete value chain and establishing effective linkage of producers (farmers) with industry.

CCEA has also approved Empowerment of Executive Committee for formulation of guidelines of the NBM and to make the changes therein, including cost norms for various interventions from time-to-time as per the felt needs and specific recommendations of States, with the approval of Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

EXPENDITURE:

An outlay of Rs.1290 crore (with Rs. 950 crore as Central share) is provisioned for implementation of the Mission during the remaining period of 14th Finance Commission (2018-19 and 2019-20).

BENEFICIARIES:

The scheme will benefit directly and indirectly the farmers as well as local artisans and associated personnels engaged in bamboo sector including associated industries. Since it is

proposed to bring about one lakh ha area under plantation, it is expected that about one lakh farmers would be directly benefitted in terms of plantation.

STATES/ DISTRICTS COVERED:

The Mission will focus on development of bamboo in limited States where it has social, commercial and economical advantage, particularly in the North Eastern region and States including **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.**

The Mission is expected to establish about 4000 treatment/ product development units and bring more than 100000 ha area under plantation.

IMPACT:

Bamboo plantation will contribute to optimizing farm productivity and income thereby enhancing livelihood opportunities of small & marginal farmers including landless and women as well as provide quality material to industry. Thus, the Mission will not only serve as a potential instrument for enhancing income of farmers but also contributing towards climate resilience and environmental benefits. The Mission will also help in creating employment generation directly or indirectly in both skilled and unskilled segments.

DETAILS:

- (i) To increase the area under bamboo plantation in non forest Government and private lands to supplement farm income and contribute towards resilience to climate change.
- (ii) To improve post-harvest management through establishment of innovative primary processing units, treatment and seasoning plants, primary treatment and seasoning plants, preservation technologies and market infrastructure.
- (iii) To promote product development at micro, small and medium levels and feed bigger industry.
- (iv) To rejuvenate the under developed bamboo industry in India.
- (v) To promote skill development, capacity building, awareness generation for development of bamboo sector.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TARGETS:

The following steps would be adopted for the development of bamboo sector:

- I. The Mission will focus on development of bamboo in limited States where it has social, commercial and economical advantage with focus on genetically superior planting material of bamboo species of commercial and industrial demand.
- II. Adoption of end to end solution in bamboo sector i.e. complete value chain approach starting from bamboo growers to consumers would be emphasized.
- III. Mission has been developed as a platform for integration of Ministries/ Departments/Agencies with implementation responsibilities given based on their mandate.
- IV. Capacity building of the officials, field functionaries, entrepreneurs and farmers through skill development and trainings will be emphasised.
- V. Focus will be given on Research & Development (R&D) to increase the production and productivity of bamboo.

BACKGROUND:

National Bamboo Mission (NBM) started as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in 2006-07, was mainly emphasizing on propagation and cultivation of bamboo, with limited efforts on processing, product development and value addition. There, was weak linkage between the producers (farmers) and the industry. The restructured proposal gives simultaneous emphasis to propagation of quality plantations of bamboo, product development and value addition including primary processing and treatment; micro, small & medium enterprises as well as high value products; markets and skill development, thus addressing the complete value chain for growth of the bamboo sector

DETAILS AND PROGRESS OF SCHEME IF ALREADY RUNNING:

National Bamboo Mission (NBM) was initially started as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in 2006-07 and was subsumed under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) during 2014-15 and continued till 2015-16. Funds were released thereafter only for maintenance of bamboo plantations raised earlier under NBM, and no new work or annual action plan was initiated. Since 2006-07, an area of 3.62 lakh ha covered under bamboo plantations and 39 bamboo wholesale markets, 40 bamboo bazaars and 29 retail outlets were set up.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS' WELFARE AND MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP SIGN MOU ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING PROGRAMMES AT KRISHI VIGYAN KENDRAS

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship today signed an MoU to conduct skill development training programmes for agriculture and allied sector, on a regular basis, at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs).

Meanwhile, the skill development training programmes currently being run across KVKs will continue.

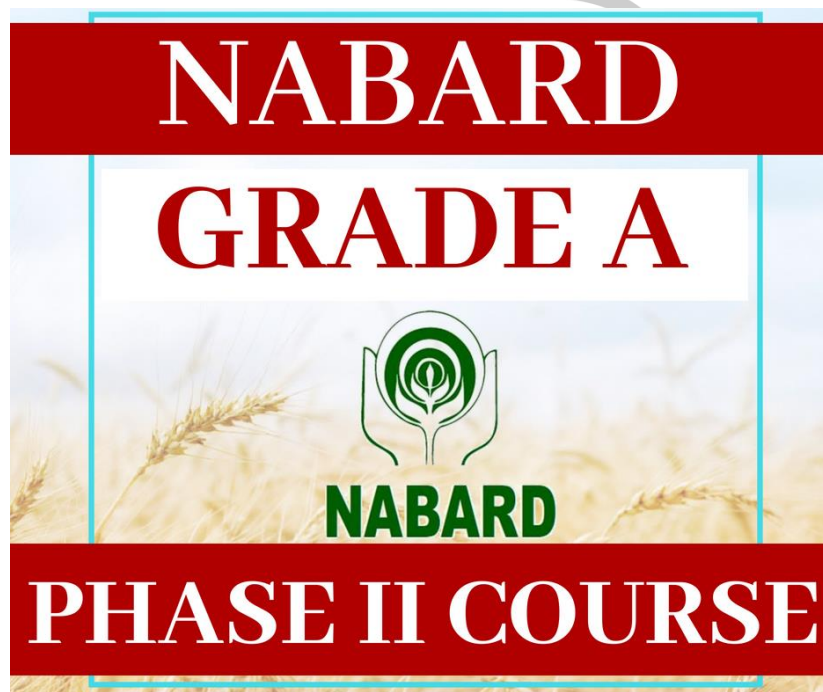
Ministry is working at four levels, namely:

- Increase productivity,
- Post-harvest management and fair-prices to the farmers for their produce,
- Lower risk in agriculture,
- Strengthen and develop other aspects of farmers' income such as horticulture, animal husbandry, beekeeping, dairying, fisheries etc.

In view of the latest developments in agriculture, several new dimensions in agri-warehousing, cold chain, supply chain, dairy, poultry, meat, fishery, horticulture, agricultural mechanization, micro-irrigation, hydroponic greenhouses etc have emerged for skilled and trained youths to gain self-employment.

In 2016-17, 203 skill development programmes comprising 200 hours were organized by 100 KVKs and 8 national training institutes, training 3549 youths. For this, Rs 3.53 crore was spent from Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY). In 2017-18, 94 training institutes have organized 116 skill development training programmes and imparted training to 2320 youths.

A provision of Rs 2 crore has been made for conducting skill training programmes in 2017-18 which is proposed to be increased to Rs 17 crore in 2018-19.



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GOBAR DHAN YOAJAN

During Budget session for 2018-19, Gobar Dhan Yojana was officially announced by the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. The new scheme is expected to help in changing and improving the conditions of Rural areas within the country. Under the new scheme the government expects to help bring new developments within the villages. Apart from this the government also expects to implement Organic Manure funding yojana (Gobar)

1	Name	Gobar-dhan Yojana
2	Full Form	Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan
3	Launched by	the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley
4	Announced in	Budget 2018-19
5	Key People	Villagers

BUDGET SET

- According to the government a set budget for implementing in the scheme has not yet been set by the government. Apart from this the statements have been made very clear that over 187 new schemes will also be implemented by the government along with this scheme under the Namami Gange Scheme.

- Under the scheme the government has made a selection of 4465 villages that are on the Ganges Banks. The government will also run the scheme for maintaining hygiene of the villages under this scheme.
- An overall set budget of Rs 16713 has been set by the government for implementation in various schemes along with Gobar Dhan Yojana. The amount has been fixed for implementation for the fiscal year 2018-18.

KEY FEATURES – BENEFITS UNDER THE GOBAR DHAN SCHEME

There are a number of benefits that the government aims by implementing the Gobar Dhan Yojana.

- **Dung fuel** – The government has announced that it shall be making best use of Solid waste excreted out by the cattle. The dung can be transformed into a type of Bio fertilizer that can be used by the villagers for fuelling up their stoves at the homes. The fuel can be used as a subsidy for CNG and LPG.
- **Villagers Advantage** – Under the new scheme the government aims at making the life of villagers much better. This will also educate the people not to defecate in the open places. This helps in maintaining hygiene factor.
- **Income generation** – In present time farmers are merely dependent on their crop yields for generating income. With the implementation of the scheme the farmers will be able to generate better ways for income. As the farmers just have to make use of animal waste so it is obvious that farmers don't need investment amounts in purchasing basic raw materials.
- **115 districts selected** – The government has made a selection of over 115 districts for implementation of the scheme. Besides the government has also made it clear that with implementation of the scheme in these villages, it shall try and improve the facilities as well including infra structure.
- **Compost** – Under the scheme the government has also made it clear that farmers will be able to make use of easily available Compost fertilizer for their farm lands. The government will educate farmers to help set up their own compost plants.
- **Infrastructure development** – Under this scheme the government aims at improving the available infrastructure to help promote development for the villages so the overall GDP of the country global wise could be much better. Under the scheme the government will ensure that it has made use of better techniques for development process.
- **Power generation** – Under the scheme the government has ensured to generate fuel in the form of Biogas. Besides the government has also stated that the Biogas can further be used for generating electricity for the villages due to availability of surplus amount of dung.

- **Invite Corporate sectors-** The government has also stated that with the development of the scheme and generation of cheaper form of fuel the corporate sectors may be interested in investing their money in the rural areas.
- **Clean India** – The scheme has been launched by the government in accordance to the movement run by Gandhiji on his anniversary in 2014. Under the drive the government had made the idea of transforming waste into something useful has been implemented in the scheme.
- **Husbandry** – In present time the husbandry of animals is one business that is very much common within villages. But with this the dung is usually wasted as it is not used up completely. Under the scheme the government will offer people with an opportunity to generate income by selling dung to the authorities.
- **Long term plans** – In present time the nation is standing 6th in place for Bio gas manufacturing. Even with increasing vehicles on the streets over 95 percent of vehicles demand more fuel. This means that the country needs more fuel to run the vehicles. With its ever increasing economy the country aims at generating better fuel opportunities by 2022.

SIX NEW USER FRIENDLY FEATURES OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURE MARKET (E-NAM) PLATFORM

The Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Shri Radha Mohan Singh launched six new features of National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) Platform to make it more users friendly.

E-NAM MOBILE APP:

Mobile app is being enhanced in multi-dimension so that the entire operation for farmers and traders can be user friendly. Mobile app has been made multilingual. Now the Mandi operators can carry out one of the critical operation of Gate Entry directly from e-NAM Mobile App. This will also facilitate the farmers to do advance Gate Entry on Mobile app which in turn will reduce a lot of time for farmers coming in the Mandi and will bring huge efficiency and facilitate smooth arrival recording at the Gate. A new feature has been introduced for farmers where they can see the progress of their lot being traded and also real time bidding progress of price will be visible to farmers on Mobile App.

During the trade, facility of viewing the assaying certificate is made available to traders on the mobile app. Now, online payment by trader (buyer) can also be done from e-NAM Mobile App through debit card and net banking. This will help buyers to transfer the payment directly through the App and make it easier for traders in online payment to farmers. Also, SMS alert

to farmer on receiving payment in their bank account will be sent thereby helping farmers in getting information of payment receipt.

BHIM PAYMENT FACILITY :

Currently e-NAM portal facilitates direct online payment to farmers through RTGS/NEFT, Debit Card and Internet Banking. Facilitation of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) through BHIM is another milestone in easing out payment to farmers which will also reduce the payment realization time from buyers' account to the pool account and in turn disbursement to farmers.

NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE WITH E-LEARNING MODULE:

A new website has been developed with improved and more informative features like live status of markets of e-NAM based on gate entry, latest information on events, dynamic training calendar etc. Also e-Learning module in Hindi language has been designed and incorporated in the website so that various stake holders can learn online about how to operate the system and continuously get trained on the system at their convenience. Currently the module is available in Hindi.

MIS DASHBOARD:

MIS Dashboard based on Business intelligence will provide a greater insight into the performance of each Mandi in terms of arrival and trade. This will help the Mandi Board officials and APMC Secretary to compare the performance of each Mandi on daily, weekly, monthly/quarterly and Year-on-Year Basis. This will also enable officials and Mandi Secretary in doing actual trade analysis from commodity level to State level operation. This will also be beneficial for the Mandi Board and Mandi Secretary in planning and coordinating their operation post historical analysis.

GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR MANDI SECRETARIES:

This system will help Mandi Secretary to raise technology issues related to portal/ software and its operation and also track the status of redressal of their query online.

INTEGRATION WITH FARMER DATABASE:

e-NAM has been integrated with Central Farmer Database so that the registration process becomes easier and Identification of farmers can be done easily on arrival at the Mandi Gate which will increase the efficiency and reduce queue time. This will help in managing the load

at the Gate more efficiently during peak time in Rabi and Kharif and reduce waiting time for farmers at the entry gate.

STRAW MANAGEMENT NOW MANDATORY IN PUNJAB

In an attempt to check the dangerous trend of stubble burning, the Punjab government has decided to make use of Super Straw Management System while using the combine harvester machines mandatory for harvesting the paddy (rice) crop.

Punjab has been declared air pollution control area. "Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, has also recommended that super straw management system be attached to self-propelled combine harvesters, which cuts the paddy straw into small pieces and spread the same. With this method, farmers are not required to burn paddy straw before sowing the next crop.

CABINET APPROVES HIKE IN MSP FOR COPRA FOR 2018 SEASON

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of "Milling Copra" to Rs.7500/- per quintal for 2018 season from Rs. 6500/-per quintal in 2017. The MSP for FAQ of "Ball Copra" has been increased to Rs.7750/- per quintal for 2018 season from Rs. 6785/- per quintal in 2017.

The MSP of Copra is expected to ensure appropriate minimum prices to the farmers and step up investment in Coconut cultivation and thereby production and productivity in the country.

The approval is based on recommendations of **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)**.

CACP is an expert body, which takes into account the cost of production, trends in the domestic and international prices of edible oils, overall demand and supply of copra and coconut oil, cost of processing of copra into coconut oil and the likely impact of the recommended MSPs on consumers, while recommending the MSPs.

The **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED)** and **National Cooperative Consumer Federation of India Limited (NCCF)** would continue to act as Central Nodal Agencies to undertake price support operations at the Minimum Support Prices in the Coconut growing states.

HP GOVERNOR LAUNCHES ZERO BUDGET NATURAL FARMING TO PROMOTE ORGANIC FARMING

The Governor of Himachal Pradesh, Acharya Devvrat, launched the Zero Budget Natural Farming project with the motive that farmers of the state would adopt organic farming. The launch took place in the presence of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur.

WHERE WAS IT LAUNCHED?

- The project was launched at Chaudhary Sarvan Kumar Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishvavidyalay, Palampur, where Thakur lauded the efforts of the state of Sikkim for taking the lead in organic farming.
- "We have to equate with Sikkim in adopting organic farming, and to use manure instead of insecticides and pesticides," the chief minister said.
- He also said that the socio-economic studies on various aspects of research and development should be kept in mind by policymakers while framing policies.
- The aim of the project is to follow Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to increase agriculture production and the income of farmers by 2022.

ZERO BUDGET NATURAL FARMING PROGRAMME

- The programme is made of a set of natural farming methods under which the cost of growing and harvesting plants is zero
- The programme is a bit different from organic farming as this practice believes more in natural growth of crops without adding any fertilizers and pesticides or any other foreign elements
- The programme involves almost no monetary investment and envisages the use of 'Jeevamrutha' and 'Beejamrutha' (sources of beneficial bacteria)
- 'Zero Budget' refers to zero net cost of production of all crops, which means that farmers don't have to buy fertilizers and pesticides to ensure the healthy growth of crops
- The main of ZBNF is to eliminate the use of chemical pesticides and use biological pesticide instead
- The farmers are advised to use cow dung, urine, plants, human excreta, earthworms and similar biological fertilizers for crop protection
- The practices not only protect soil from degradation but also help in retaining soil fertility
- They also lower the cost of inputs of farmers and give better capacity to increase their income

MAHARASHTRA GIVES NOD TO RS 4,000-CR CLIMATE RESILIENT AGRICULTURE PROJECT

- The Maharashtra government has approved a Rs 4,000-crore project aimed at promoting climate-resilient agriculture, to be partially funded by the World Bank.
- The project, named Nanaji Deshmukh Krishi Sanjivani Yojna, will be implemented in 5,142 villages across 15 districts.
- It will roll out in 2018-19 and continue till 2023-24.
- The total cost of the project is Rs 4,000 crore, 70 per cent of which will be borne by the World Bank while the state will contribute 30 per cent over six years, said the GR.
- Principal secretary, finance, and principal secretary, agriculture will decide the rate of return and repayment period by holding talks with the World Bank officials, the GR stated.
- The scheme would cover small- and medium- scale farmers, who are more vulnerable to the impact of climate change.
- The state government had set up a seven-member panel, headed by principal secretary, agriculture, to select drought-prone villages for the implementation of this project.
- Objectives of the project are to improve soil quality, develop foodgrain varieties which can sustain climate variations and effect necessary changes in the crop pattern as per the availability of water in a particular region. PTI ND KRK RDS

JAITLEY LAUNCHES OPTIONS TRADING IN GUARSEED ON NCDEX

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley launched options trading in **guarseed** on the commodity bourse NCDEX. Higher production has led to fall in prices of some agri-commodities in some places Guarseed is the first agri-commodity options. Options are derivatives which give a buyer the right but not the obligation to buy or sell an underlying asset or instrument at a specific price on or before a certain date.
- NCDEX launched guarseed options as it is one of the most liquid contracts on the exchange platform. Around 15 lakh farmers are associated with this

BAMBOO NOT A TREE ANYMORE AS PRESIDENT CLEARS ORDINANCE AMENDING FOREST LAW

- President Ram Nath Kovind cleared an ordinance amending the Indian Forest Act, omitting bamboo grown in non-forest areas from the definition of trees. This would help in exempting it trees that need permits for felling or transportation.
- Before the ordinance was issued, the definition of tree in the law included palm, bamboo, brushwood and cane. The brief ordinance, aimed at increasing bamboo plantation, states that clause seven in Section 2 of the act would omit the word

bamboo.

Though taxonomically a grass, bamboo was legally defined as a tree under the Indian Forest Act, 1927. Before this amendment, cutting and transport of bamboo grown in forest as well as non-forest land was illegal.

- Bamboo grows abundantly in areas outside forests with an estimated growing stock of 10.20 million tonnes and about 20 million people are involved in bamboo related activities. The current demand for bamboo in India is estimated at 28 million tonnes, say experts.

Though India has 19 per cent share of the world's area under bamboo cultivation, its market share in the sector is only 6 per cent

- According to the United Nation Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the bamboo business in the north-east region alone has a potential of about Rs. 5,000 crore in the next 10 years. The union cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had yesterday approved the promulgation of the Ordinance on amendment of Section 2 (7) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927.

The measure will go a long way in enhancing the agricultural income of farmers and tribals, especially in the north-east and central India

CCMB-IIRR TIE-UP FOR LOW GI RICE

- Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in association with the Indian Institute of Rice Research (IIRR) has come out with an Improved **Samba Masuri (ISM)** which is not only resistant to bacteria blight but also has a low Glycemic Index (GI) considered suitable for those with diabetes.
- National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), a constituent of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has done extensive human trials on the new variety and had come to the conclusion that ISM has low GI of 50.99 which is among the lowest value for several rice varieties tested and usually in the range of 53 to 69
- GI value of a food is determined by feeding 10 or more healthy people a portion of the food containing 50 grams of digestible (available) carbohydrate and then measuring the effect on their blood glucose levels over the next two hours.
- Consumption of food with low GI results in slow release of glucose into the bloodstream reducing the ill-effects of diabetes.
- Plus, ISM also has desirable attributes like better yield and fine grain type enhancing market potential and profit for farmers, they told a press conference.
- With financial support from National Agricultural Technology Project of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and CSIR800 program of Council of Scientific and

Industrial Research (CSIR) work began in 1999 and completed in 2006, it was validated in 10 different locations for two years across the country. It was released in 2008

- Farmers in several rice growing States have testified to the improved yield of up to 40% because of successful tackling of Bacteria Blight. In two/three years time, the scientists are confident of coming out with a new variety of rice which can not only give high yields but also be resistant to three different pests affecting rice crop with field trials currently on.

GOVT DOUBLES IMPORT DUTY ON WHEAT TO 20 PC

- The government doubled the import duty on wheat to 20 per cent to curb cheap shipments and give positive price signal to farmers in the ongoing Rabi season.
- It also imposed import duty of 50 per cent on peas to check cheaper shipments from countries like Canada.
- The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) in a notification said that it seeks "**(i) increase rate of basic customs duty on Peas, (Pisum sativum) from present Nil rate to 50%. (ii) increase rate of basic customs duty on wheat from 10% to 20%.**"
- In March, the government had imposed 10 per cent import duty on wheat to contain sharp fall in local prices in view of bumper crop of 98.38 million tonnes in 2016-17 crop year (July-June).
- As farmers have started planting of rabi (winter) wheat crop, the government wants to give positive price signal and encourage farmers to grow wheat in more area.
- The government does not want wheat growers to follow the way of pulses farmers who shifted to other crops this kharif season as prices remained low just before the sowing period owing to bumper crop last year.
- India produced a record 22 million tonnes of pulses in 2016-17 crop year which led to a fall in domestic prices, even below the MSP.
- Moreover, the country also imported about 5 million tonnes of pulses last fiscal.
- The import duty on peas has been imposed to curb shipments and boost domestic prices.
- Recently, the government had also imposed quantitative restrictions on import of other pulses like tur.

RASHTRIYA KRISHI VIKAS YOJANA

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the continuation of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied sector Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR) for three years i.e. 2017-18 to 2019-20. The financial allocation of the

scheme will be Rs. 15,722 crore with the objective of making farming as a remunerative economic activity through strengthening the farmer's effort, risk mitigation and promoting agribusiness entrepreneurship.

RKVY-RAFTAAR funds would be provided to the States as 60:40 grants between Centre and States (90:10 for North Eastern States and Himalayan States) through the following streams:

(a) Regular RKVY-RAFTAAR (Infrastructure & Assets and Production Growth) with 70% of annual outlay to be allocated to states as grants based for the following activities:

- i. Infrastructure and assets with 50% of regular RKVY-RAFTAAR outlay.
- ii. Value addition linked production projects with 30% of regular RKVY-RAFTAAR outlay.
- iii. Flexi-funds with 20% of regular RKVY-RAFTAAR outlay. States can use this for supporting any projects as per the local needs.

(b) RKVY-RAFTAAR special sub-schemes of National priorities - 20% of annual outlay; and

(c) Innovation and agri-entrepreneur development through creating end-to-end solution, skill development and financial support for setting up the agri-enterprise -10% of annual outlay including 2% of administrative costs.

The scheme will incentivize States in enhancing more allocation to Agriculture and Allied Sectors. This will also strengthen farmer's efforts through creation of agriculture infrastructure that help in supply of quality inputs, market facilities etc. This will further promote agri-entrepreneurship and support business models that maximize returns to farmers.

BACKGROUND:

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) is a continuing scheme under implementation from XI Five Year Plan. The scheme provides considerable flexibility and autonomy to states in planning and executing programmes for incentivizing investment in agriculture and allied sectors. States initiate the process of decentralized planning for agriculture and allied sectors through preparation of District Agriculture Plans (DAPs) and State Agriculture Plan (SAP) based on agro-climatic conditions, availability of appropriate technology and natural resources to ensure accommodation of local needs, cropping pattern, priorities etc. RKVY has also enabled adoption of national priorities without affecting the autonomy and flexibility of States through sub-schemes. National priorities like Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI), Crop Diversification Program (CDP), Reclamation of Problem Soil (RPS), Foot &

Mouth Disease - Control Program (FMD-CP), Saffron Mission, Accelerated Fodder Development Programme, etc. are being implemented through the window of RKVY.

During XI Plan and XII Plan, States have taken over 13,000 projects in agriculture and allied sector through State Agriculture Department as Nodal Implementing Agency. The interim report of RKVY evaluation done by Institute of Economic Growth summarizes that the income emanating from agriculture measured as the agricultural state domestic product (AGSDP) is higher in the post-RKVY period than in the pre-RKVY period. Further, almost all the states registered higher value of output from agriculture and allied activities in the post-RKVY period. Continuation of RKVY-RAFTAAR will therefore keep the momentum of agriculture and allied sector growth.

BANAGANAPALLE MANGOES, SIX OTHERS GET GI TAG

- Famous Banaganapalle mangoes of Andhra Pradesh and Tulapanji rice of West Bengal are among the seven commodities that have been granted Geographical Indications this fiscal year by the Indian patent office.
- A Geographical Indication (GI) is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.
- Typically, such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.
- Darjeeling Tea, Tirupathi Laddu, Kangra Paintings, Nagpur Orange and Kashmir Pashmina are among the registered GIs in India.
- The other five products which have received this tag this year include Pochampally Ikat of Telangana; Gobindobhog Rice of West Bengal; Durgi Stone Carvings and Etikoppaka Toys of Andhra Pradesh; and Chakshesang Shawl of Nagaland, according to the Indian patent office website.
- In 2016-17, as many as 33 items got GI registration.
- Such products also get premium pricing in the markets, he added.
- The commerce and industry ministry has also launched a contest for designing a common logo and tagline for Geographical Indications to increase awareness about intellectual property rights

SAMPADA (SCHEME FOR AGRO-MARINE PROCESSING AND DEVELOPMENT OF AGRO-PROCESSING CLUSTERS)

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for re-structuring the schemes of the Ministry of Food Processing

Industries (MoFPI) under new Central Sector Scheme – SAMPADA (Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters) for the period 2016-20 coterminous with the 14th Finance Commission cycle.

SAMPADA with an allocation of Rs. 6,000 crore is expected to leverage investment of Rs. 31,400 crore, handling of 334 lakh MT agro-produce valuing Rs. 1,04,125 crore, benefit 20 lakh farmers and generate 5,30,500 direct/ indirect employment in the country by the year 2019-20.

The objective of SAMPADA is to supplement agriculture, modernize processing and decrease agri-waste.

SAMPADA is an umbrella scheme incorporating ongoing schemes of the Ministry like Mega Food Parks, Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure, Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure, etc. and also new schemes like Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters, Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages, Creation / Expansion of Food Processing & Preservation Capacities.

The SAMPADA is a comprehensive package to give a renewed thrust to the food processing sector in the country. It includes new schemes of Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters, Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages and Creation / Expansion of Food Processing & Preservation Capacities aim at development of modern infrastructure to encourage entrepreneurs to set up food processing units based on cluster approach, provide effective and seamless backward and forward integration for processed food industry by plugging gaps in supply chain and creation of processing and preservation capacities and modernization/ expansion of existing food processing units.

The implementation of SAMPADA will result in creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet. It will not only provide a big boost to the growth of food processing sector in the country but also help in providing better prices to farmers and is a big step towards doubling of farmers' income. It will create huge employment opportunities especially in the rural areas. It will also help in reducing wastage of agricultural produce, increasing the processing level, availability of safe and convenient processed foods at affordable price to consumers and enhancing the export of the processed foods.

BACKGROUND:

Food Processing Sector has emerged as an important segment of the Indian economy in terms of its contribution to GDP, employment and investment. During 2015-16, the sector constituted as much as 9.1 and 8.6 per cent of GVA in Manufacturing and Agriculture sector respectively.

The manifesto of NDA Government stresses upon incentivizing the setting up of food processing industry for providing better income for the farmers and creating jobs.

Various measures have been taken by the government to give a boost to the food processing sector. With these measures food processing sector has grown at 7 per cent. In order to arrest post-harvest losses of horticulture & non-horticulture produce, the Ministry has accorded approval to 42 Mega Food Parks and 236 Integrated Cold Chains for creation of modern infrastructure for the food processing along the value chain from the farm to the market. Out of 42 Mega Food Parks, 8 are operational. Of this, 6 Mega Food Parks have been made operational during the last 3 years. Another 4 Mega Food Parks are targeted for operationalization in next three months. Similarly, out of 236 Cold Chains, 101 Cold Chains have been sanctioned recently in March, 2017. 100 Cold Chains have become operational. Of which, 63 Cold Chains have been made operational during last 3 years.

OTHER MEASURES TO BOOST FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR AS FOLLOWS:

- (a) To provide impetus to investment in food processing and retail sector, govt. has allowed 100% FDI in trading including through e-commerce, in respect of food products manufactured and / or produced in India. This will benefit farmers immensely and will create back – end infrastructure and significant employment opportunities.
- (b) The govt. has also set up a Special Fund of Rs. 2000 crore in NABARD to make available affordable credit at concessional rate of interest to designated food parks and agro processing units in the designated food parks.
- (c) Food and agro–based processing units and cold chain infrastructure have been brought under the ambit of Priority Sector Lending (PSL) to provide additional credit for food processing activities and infrastructure thereby, boosting food processing, reducing wastage, create employment and increasing farmers' income.

CABINET APPROVES PROPOSAL FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE NABARD ACT, 1981

Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the following proposals:

(a) Amendments to National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981 as proposed in the draft Bill with such changes of drafting and of consequential nature, as may be considered necessary by Legislative Department. The Amendments, include provisions that enable Central Government to increase the authorized capital of NABARD from Rs. 5,000 crore to Rs. 30,000 crore and to increase it beyond Rs. 30,000 crore in consultation with RBI, as deemed necessary from time to time.

(b) Transfer of 0.4 per cent. equity of RBI in NABARD amounting to Rs. 20 crores to the Government of India.

The proposed amendments in NABARD Act, include, certain other amendments including changes in long title and certain Sections to bring Medium Enterprises and Handlooms in NABARD's mandate.

The proposed increase in the authorized capital would enable NABARD to respond to the commitments it has undertaken, particularly in respect of the Long Term Irrigation Fund and the recent Cabinet decision regarding on-lending to cooperative banks. Further, it will enable NABARD to augment its business and enhance its activities which would facilitate promotion of integrated rural development and securing prosperity of rural areas including generation of more employment.

The transfer of entire shareholding in NABARD held by RBI to the Central Government will remove the conflict in RBI's role as banking regulator and shareholder in NABARD.

MISSION FINGERLING WITH A TOTAL EXPENDITURE OF ABOUT RS. 52000 LAKH TO ACHIEVE BLUE REVOLUTION

Recognizing the potential and possibilities in the fisheries sector, Government of India has envisaged a program named "Blue Revolution" to unlock the country's latent potential through an integrated approach. The Blue Revolution, in its scope and reach, focuses on creating an enabling environment for an integrated and holistic development and management of fisheries for the socio economic development of the fishers and fish farmers. Thrust areas have been identified for enhancing fisheries production from 10.79 mmt (2014-15) to 15 mmt in 2020-21.

Greater emphasis will be on infrastructure with an equally strong focus on management and

conservation of the resources through technology transfer to increase in the income of the fishers and fish farmers. Productivity enhancement shall also be achieved through employing the best global innovations and integration of various production oriented activities such as: Production of quality fish seeds, Cost effective feed and adoption of technology etc.

Fish Fingerling production is the single most important critical input visualised to achieve fish production targets under the Blue Revolution. We need to establish more hatchery to produce Fry/PL required for different categories of water bodies. Barring few States that's to in terms of fry (15-20 mm size), all States are in need of Fingerling production (standard size 80-100 mm). Use of High Yielding Varieties of brooders is another significant aspect to be addressed on priority.

The Department has identified 20 States based on their potential and other relevant factors to strengthen the Fish Seed infrastructure in the country. This program with a total expenditure of about Rs. 52000 lakh will facilitate the establishment of hatcheries and Fingerling rearing pond to ensure the fish production of 426 crores fish fingerling, 25.50 crores Post Larvae of shrimp and crab in the country. This will converge in the production of 20 lakh tonnes of fish annually and will benefit about 4 million families. The implementation of this program will supplement the requirement of stocking materials in the country up to a large extent, which is a much needed input to achieve the enhanced fish production.

PAU DEVELOPS COUNTRY'S FIRST BT COTTON VARIETIES

Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana has developed country's first genetically-modified (Bt) varieties of cotton — the seeds of which could be reused by farmers, resulting in saving the repeated cost they have to bear every season.

"PAU Bt 1 and F 1861 were developed by PAU, whereas, RS 2013 was developed at Rajasthan Agricultural University (RAU), Bikaner. While the PAU Bt 1 was completely developed at Punjab Agricultural University, the F 1861 and RS 2013 varieties were converted to Bt version by Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur. All the three varieties carry "cry1Ac" gene imparting resistance against bollworm complex

Notably, cotton is the only genetically-modified seed that's legally allowed in India. Punjab alone needs around 20-25 lakh packets of Bt cotton seed for sowing of crop which roughly amounts to around Rs. 225 crores.

NABARD GRADE A 2018-COURSE FEATURES

1. Video Lessons for Conceptual Understanding
2. Comprehensive Notes in Printable PDF Format
3. Sectional Quizzes to assess the understanding of topics
4. Mini Mock Tests
5. Full-Length Mock tests
6. Doubt Clearing Sessions
7. Regular Assessment of Descriptive English Skills
8. Daily New Classes
9. Complete Syllabus Coverage
10. Easy Learning Solutions

IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS / INSTITUTES

ICAR (INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH)

- **Headquarters :** New Delhi
Established: 16 July 1929
President: Radha Mohan Singh
Director General (ICAR): Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra
- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.
- Formerly known as Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, it was established on 16 July 1929 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 in pursuance of the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture.
- The Council is the apex body for co-coordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in the entire country. It was reorganized twice, in 1965 and 1973.
- The Union Minister of Agriculture is the President of the ICAR.
- The Principal Executive Officer of the ICAR is the Director-General, who is also the Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Agricultural Research and Education.

MILESTONES:

- Initiation of the first All-India Co-ordinated Research Project on Maize in 1957
- Status of Deemed University accorded to IARI in 1958

- Establishment of the first State Agricultural University on land grant pattern at Pantnagar in 1960
- Placement of different agricultural research institutes under the purview of ICAR in 1966
- Creation of Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) in the Ministry of Agriculture in 1973
- Opening of first Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) at Puducherry (Pondicherry) in 1974
- Establishment of Agricultural Research Service and Agricultural Scientists' Recruitment Board in 1975
- Launching of Lab-to-Land Programme and the National Agricultural Research Project (NARP) in 1979
- Initiation of Institution-Village Linkage Programme (IVILP) in 1995
- Establishment of National Gene Bank at New Delhi in 1996
- The ICAR was bestowed with the King Baudouin Award in 1989 for its valuable contribution in ushering in the Green Revolution. Again awarded King Baudouin Award in 2004 for research and development efforts made under partnership in Rice Wheat Consortium.
- Launching of National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) in 1998 and National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) in 2005.

IARI (INDIAN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE)

- **Formation:** 1 April 1905
Location: Pusa, Delhi
Director: Dr. A.K. Singh
- Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), popularly known as Pusa Institute, began its journey in 1905 at Pusa (Bihar) with the generous grant of 30,000 pounds from an American philanthropist, Mr. Henry Phipps.
- The institute was then known as Agricultural Research Institute (ARI) which functioned with five departments, namely Agriculture Cattle Breeding, Chemistry, Economic Botany and Mycology
Bacteriology unit was added in 1907.
- The name of ARI was changed to Imperial Institute of Agricultural Research in 1911 and, in 1919 it was renamed as Imperial Agricultural Research Institute.
- Following a devastating earth quake on 15th January 1934, the institute was shifted to Delhi on 29th July 1936.
- Post-independence, the institute has been renamed as Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI)
- **It attained the status of a Deemed University in the year 1958.**

- Currently, the Institute has 20 divisions 5 multi-disciplinary Centres situated in Delhi, 8 regional stations, 2 off-season nurseries, 3 All India coordinated research projects with headquarters at IARI and 10 national Centres functioning under the all India coordinated research projects.

NABARD (NATIONAL BANK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT)

- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra
Established: 12 July 1982
Chairman: Dr. Harsh Kumar Bhanwala
- NABARD was established on the recommendations of B.Sivaraman Committee, (by Act 61, 1981 of Parliament) on 12 July 1982 by transferring the agricultural credit functions of RBI and refinance functions of the then Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).
- It was dedicated to the service of the nation by the late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi on 05 November 1982.
- Set up with an initial capital of Rs.100 crore, its' paid up capital stood at Rs. 5,000 crore as on 31 March 2016.
- NABARD's initiatives are aimed at building an empowered and financially inclusive rural India through specific goal oriented departments which can be categorized broadly into three heads: Financial, Developmental and Supervision.
- The Government of India encourages farmers in taking up projects in select areas by subsidizing a portion of the total project cost. All these projects aim at enhancing capital investment, sustained income flow and employment areas of national importance.

NABARD has been a channel partner of the Government in some of these schemes. Subsidy as and when received from the concerned Ministry is passed onto the financing banks.

CURRENT HEAD/CHAIRMAN/DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS/INSTITUTES/ BOARDS (AS ON 2 APRIL 2018)

Organization/Inst./Board	Head	Date of establishment
Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare	Radha Mohan Singh	1947
Ministers of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare	Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Smt. Krishna Raj, Parsottam Rupala	----

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution	Ram Vilas Paswan	----
Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers	Ananth Kumar	----
ICAR	Radha Mohan Singh (President) Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra (Director General)	16 July 1929 , New Delhi
IARI	Dr. A. K. Singh (Director)	1 April 1905
ASRB (chairman)	Prof. (Dr.) A.K. Srivastava (Additional Charge)	1 Nov. 1973, New Delhi
NABARD	Harsh Kumar Bhanwala (Chairperson)	12 July 1982, Mumbai
MANAGE	Mrs. V. Usha Rani (Director General)	1987 Hyderabad
APEDA	Devendra Kumar Singh (Chairman)	13 Feb., 1986
NAFED	V.R Boda (Chairman)	2 Oct., 1958
FCI(Food Corporation of India)	Yogendra Tripathi (CMD)	1965
NAARM (National Academy of Agriculture Research Management)	Dr. Ch. Srinivasa Rao (Director)	1976
NDRI	Dr. R.R.B. Singh (Director)	1923
KRIBHCO	Dr. Chandra Pal Singh (Chairman)	4 May 1980
ICAR- CIWA (Central Institute for Women in Agriculture)	Dr. S.K. Srivastava (Acting Director)	April 1996 Bhubaneswar
CACP (Commission for Agriculture Costs & Prices)	Prof. Vijay Paul Sharma (Chairman)	January 1965, New Delhi
Coconut Development Board	Dr. B.N.S. Murthy (Chairman)	12 Jan 1981, Kochi
Tea Board	P.K. Bezboruah (Chairman)	1 April,1954 Kolkata
Coffee Board	Dr. M.S. Boje Gowda (Chairman)	1942, Bangalore

Rubber Board	Dr. M.K. Shanmugha Sundaram (Chairman-in-charge)	1947, Kottayam
Central Silk Board	K.M. Hanumantharayappa (Chairman)	1948, Bangalore
CCI (Competition Commission of India)	Devender Kumar Sikri (Chairperson)	14 Oct, 2003, New Delhi
RBI (Reserve Bank of India)	Dr. Urjit R. Patel (Governor)	April 1, 1935 Mumbai
NITI Aayog	Shri Narendra Modi (Chairperson) Dr. Rajiv Kumar (Vice Chairperson) Amitabh Kant (Chief Executive officer)	1 Jan,2015 New Delhi

IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

CGIAR Institutions: The Consultative Group on International Agriculture (CGIAR) Is an association of 46 countries including India, international and regional organizations, and private foundations devoted to improve global food production. It was established in 1971 and is now located in Washington, D.C. The CGIAR supports a network of 16 IARC's distributed throughout the World. The World Bank, the UNDP and the FAO are co-sponsors of this network. The 16 IARCs are indicated below.

CGIAR	Place
International Rice Research Institute (1960) IRRI	Manila (Philippines)
Centro Internacional de Mejoramiento de Maiz Y Trigo -CIMMYT (International Centre for the Improvement of Maize and Wheat)	Mexico
Centro Internacional de la Papa CIP (International Potato Centre)	Lima (Peru)
West Africa Rice Development Association, WARDA	Bouake(Cote d'Ivoire)
International Plant Genetic Resources Institute, IPGRI	Rome(Italy)
International Crops Research Institute for the	Patancheru, Andhra Pradesh (India)

Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)	
International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas(ICARDA)	Aleppo (Syria)
Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (International Centre for Tropical Agriculture, CIAT)	Cali (Columbia)
International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)	Ibadan(Nigeria)
World Agro-forestry Centre (WAC)	Nairobi (Kenya)
Centre for International Forestry Research-(CIFOR)	Bogor (Indonesia)
International Irrigation Management Institute-IIMI	Colombo (Sri Lanka)
International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI)	Nairobi (Kenya)
International Centre for Living Aquatic Resource Management (ICLARM)	Manila (Philippines)
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)	Washington, D.C. (U.S.A.)
International Service for National Agricultural Research(ISNAR)	The Hague (Netherland)

NON – CGIAR INSTITUTIONS:

Non - CGIAR	Place
Asian Vegetable Research and Development Centre (AVRDC)	Shashua (Taiwan)
International Board for Soil Research and Management (IBSRAM)	Bangkok (Thailand)
International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE)	Nairobi (Kenya)
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMD)	Kathmandu (Nepal)
South East Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCGA)	Los Banos (Philippines)

NEW VARIETIES OF CROPS RELEASED AND IDENTIFIED BY ICAR IN 2015:

1. Wheat HS 542 (Pusa Kiran)

- semi-dwarf variety
- good chapatti and bread making qualities
- resistant to stripe and leaf rust.

2. Wheat HW 1098 (Nilgiri Khapli)

- high yielding, semi-dwarf (85 cm)
- high degree of resistance to stem, leaf and yellow rust

3. Wheat: HDCSW 18

- first variety of the country bred specifically for CA.
- highly resistant to brown rust and has lower incidence Karnal bunt.

4. Wheat: HD 3117

- free from brown and yellow rust under natural condition and highly tolerant to Karnal bunt.

5. Wheat: HD 4728 (Pusa Malvi)

- semi-dwarf (90 cm),
- high degree of resistance to leaf and stem rust diseases.

6. Wheat: HS 562

- good levels of field resistance to leaf and stripe rusts
- good chapatti and bread making qualities.

7. Pearl Millet: Pusa Composite 701

- dual purpose pearl millet variety identified for A zone with high grain and stover yields.
- Resistant to downy mildew and blast

8. Pusa Double Zero Mustard 31

- First Canola type (Erucic acid-2% and glucosinolates <30ppm) Indian mustard variety in India
- yellow seeded variety with 40.56% oil content

9. Cauliflower: Pusa Betakesari

- first ever indigenously bred bio-fortified beta carotene (800 1000 Hg/100 g) rich cauliflower variety

10. Sarda melon : Pusa Sarda

- first variety of Sarda melon which can be grown in net house under north Indian plains.
- fruit are golden yellow, roundish to elongated globe shaped with average weight of 1.1 kg.

11. Musk melon Pusa Madhurima

- fruit is ovate to obovate shape with average weight of 775 gram.

12. Cucumber : Pusa Seedless Cucumber 6

- First extra early (40-45 days for first fruit harvest) improved variety of parthenocarpic gynoeocious cucumber suitable for cultivation in protected condition.

13. Long melon: Pusa Utkarsh

- First early maturing variety of long melon for spring summer season cultivation under North Indian plains

14. Round Melon : Pusa Raunak

- First early maturing variety of Round melon for spring summer season cultivation for North Indian plains

15. Marigold: Pusa Bahar

- Belongs to African Marigold group which Flowers in 90-100 days After Sowing.

AGRO-CLIMATIC REGIONS/ZONES IN INDIA

Planning Commission (in 1989) has identified 15 resource development regions in India, 14 in the main land and the remaining one in the islands of Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.

Regions	Zones
Western Himalayan Region	J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand
Eastern Himalayan Region	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, West Bengal
Lower Gangetic Plain Region	West Bengal
Middle Gangetic Plain Region	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar

Upper Gangetic Plain Region	Uttar Pradesh
Trans Gangetic Plain Region	Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan
Eastern Plateau and Hills Region	Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal
Central Plateau and Hills Region	Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
Western Plateau and Hills Region	Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh
Southern Plateau and Hills Region	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu
East Coast Plains and Hills Region	Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry
West Coast Plains and Ghat Region	Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu
Gujarat Plains and Hills Region	Gujarat, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu
Western Dry Region	Rajasthan
Island Region	Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep

AGRO - ECOLOGICAL ZONES OF INDIA

Eco - System	Region	States	Eco - Region
Arid	1. Western Himalayas	J&K, HP	Hot arid
	2. Western Plain, Kutch and part of Kathiawar Peninsula	Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab	Cold arid
	3. Deccan Plateau	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka	Hot arid
Semi Arid	4. Northern Plain & Central Highlands including parts of Gujarat Plains	Gujarat, Rajasthan, UP, MP, Haryana, Punjab	Hot semi-arid

	5. Central (Malwa) Highlands, Gujarat Plains & Kathiawar Peninsula	Gujarat, MP	Hot semi-arid
	6. Deccan Plateau	Karnataka, AP, Maharashtra, MP	Hot semi-arid
	7. Deccan (Telangana) Plateau & Eastern Ghats	Andhra P	Hot semi-arid
	8. Eastern Ghats, Tamil Nadu uplands & Deccan (Karnataka) Plateau	Karnataka, TN, Kerala	Hot semi-arid
Sub - Humid	9. Northern Plain	Bihar, UP Punjab	Hot sub-humid (dry)
	10. Central Highlands (Malwa & Bundelkhand Maharashtra & Eastern Satpura)	MP, Maharashtra	Hot sub-humid
	11. Eastern Plateau (Chhattisgarh)	MP	Hot sub-humid
	12. Eastern (Chhota Nagpur) Plateau and Eastern Ghats	Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, MP, Maharashtra	Hot sub-humid
	13. Eastern Plains	UP, Bihar	Hot sub-humid (moist)
	14. Western Himalayas	J&K, HP, UP	Warm sub-humid (to humid with inclusion of per humid)

Humid - per humid	15. Bengal and Assam Plains	WB, Assam	Hot sub-humid (moist) to (inclusion of per humid)
	16. Eastern Himalayas	Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, WB	Warm per humid
	17. North-Eastern Hills (Purvanchal) Kerala, Goa, Daman & Diu, humid Maharashtra Guj., Kerala Hot humid per	Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya	Warm per humid
Coastal	18. Eastern Coastal Plains	TN, AP, Puducherry, Odisha, WB	Hot sub-humid to semi-arid
	19. Western Ghats and coastal Plains	Kerala, Goa, Daman & Diu, Maharashtra Gujarat	Hot humid per humid
	20. Islands of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep	Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep	Hot humid per humid

IMPORTANT POINTS

1: ICAR was established on the recommendation of Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) on

Answer: 16 July 1929

2: Number of agro -climatic zones in India (Planning commission)is:

Answer: 15

3: Number of agro - ecological zones in India (NBSS & LUP)

Answer: 20

4: National Institute of Abiotic Stress Management (NIASM) is located at Baramati (Maharashtra).

5: National Institute of Biotic Stress Management, Raipur (Chhattisgarh).

6: National Bamboo Mission is renamed as National Agro-Forestry and Bamboo Mission (NABM)

7: Indian Institute of Agricultural Biotechnology (IIAB), has been established at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Q 8: First Agricultural Minister of Independent India

Answer: Rafi Ahmed Kidwai

Q 9: First KVK in India was established in Pondichery during

Answer: 1974

Q 10: Wheat variety contributed much to green revolution is

Answer: HD 2329

Q 11: ICAR was reorganized in

Answer: 1965 and 1972

Q 12: National Water Grid was proposed by

Answer: K. L. Rao

Q 13: National Water Policy was announced in

Answer: 1987

Q 14 : National Agricultural Science Museum (2004) located at

Answer: New Delhi

15 : India is the first nation in world to develop hybrid cotton variety H 4 in 1970, pearl millet hybrid HB 1 in 1965, sorghum hybrid CSH-1 in 1964, castor (GCH-3) and pigeon pea hybrid (ICPH in 1991) & second to develop hybrid rice after China in 1994.

16 : India's first safflower hybrid was DSH-129 and first mustard hybrid was NRCHB-506.

17 : Livestock Insurance Scheme was started during 2005-06 on pilot basis in 100 selected districts.

Q 18: The world's first inter-specific cotton hybrid Varalaxmi (*G.hirsutum* x *G. barbadense*) was developed by S.A.Patil at UAS Dharwad in

Answer: 1976

Q 19: Which GM crop occupies largest area in world?

Answer: Soybean

Q 20: Father of field plot technique is

Answer: J. B. Boussingault

Q 21: Pusa Nanha is a mutant variety of

Answer: Papaya

22 : Budha garden situated in New Delhi is an example of Japanese style of gardening.

Q 23 : Biggest cultivated fruit in world

Answer: Jack fruit

Q 24 : Oleoresin is extracted from

Answer: Chillies

Q 25: *Bacillus thuringiensis* was discovered by

Answer: S. Ishiwata

Q 26: Which element is deficient in milk

Answer: Iron

Q 27: Pashmina wool is obtained from Kashmiri

Answer: Goat

Q 28: Dolly clone (sheep) is created by

Answer: Wilmont

Q 29: The important green house gas releases from paddy field & wasteland

Answer: Methane

Q 30: National Biodiversity Authority is located at

Answer: Chennai

Q 31: Milk city of India is

Answer: Anand

Q 32 : The term 'Remote Sensing' was first introduced in 1960 by

Answer: Evelyn L. Pruitt.

33 : One more Central Agricultural University (for Meghalaya and Nagaland) is being set up at Barapani (Meghalaya)

34 : One more IARI type Institute has been established at Barhi, Hazaribag (Jharkhand) on 28th June, 2015 by Sh. Narendra Modi (Prime Minister of India).

Q 35 : One more IARI type Institute is being set up at IARI

Answer: Assam

36: Two Central Agricultural University in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh and two Central Horticultural University in Haryana and Telangana are being set up.

37: The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog came into existence on 1 January 2015 replacing the existing Planning Commission.

38 : Sikkim become India's first fully Organic State on January 18, 2016

39 : FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization): It is an agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO

acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy

India is a founder - member of FAO
Headquarters : Palazzo FAO, Rome, Italy

40 : World Food Programme (WFP) : It was set up in 1963 jointly by United Nations and the FAO

India is a founder member of WFP, which is mandated to provide emergency food supply in places facing acute food insecurity due to natural calamities as well as manmade causes. currently, the Country Strategy Programme (CSP) 2015-18 is under operation, which focuses on reducing hunger and malnutrition among women and children in vulnerable areas.

41 : Kisan Call Centre (KCC) : It was launched in 21 Jan 2004 to provide information to the farming community through toll - free telephone lines (telephone no. **1800 180 1551**)

42 : Minimum Support Prices : The Government fixes the minimum support prices (MSP) for various agricultural commodities based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and on the views of the State Governments. As of now, CACP recommends MSPs of 28 commodities.

43: The 23 crops covered under MSP are:

- 7 cereals (paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, barley and ragi),
- 5 pulses (gram, tur, moong, urad, lentil),
- 7 oilseeds (groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soyabean, seasmum, sunflower, safflower, nigerseed), and
- 4 commercial crops (copra, sugarcane, cotton and raw jute).

The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP since 1985, earlier named as Agricultural Prices Commission) came into existence in January 1965

GM (GENETICALLY MODIFIED) CROPS

- Genetically modified crops (GMCs, GM crops, or biotech crops) are plants used in agriculture, the DNA of which has been modified using genetic engineering techniques.
- The aim is to introduce a new trait to the plant which does not occur naturally in the species.
- **First genetically modified crop plant** : an antibiotic-resistant tobacco plant (in 1982)
- **First field trials occurred in France and the USA in 1986**

- **First country to allow commercialized transgenic plants** introducing a virus-resistant tobacco in 1992: **China**
- **First genetically modified crop approved for sale in the U.S. : FlavrSavr tomato in 1994**
- **Bt cotton** is a genetically modified organism (GMO) cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to bollworm. It is produced by **Monsanto**.
- Bt cotton was first approved for field trials in the United States in 1993, and first approved commercial use in the United States in 1995. Bt cotton was approved by the Chinese government in 1997.
- Only **Bt Cotton** is allowed to be commercially grown in **India** till now.
- The Bt cotton (Bollgard) was approved by the Government of India in 2002.
- In 2002, a joint venture between **Monsanto and Mahyco** introduced Bt cotton to India
- Leading countries of genetically modified (GM) crops worldwide in 2015, based on planted acreage (in million hectares):
 1. USA
 2. Brazil
 3. Argentina
 4. India
- **India is the largest producer of cotton, and GM cotton, as of 2014.**
- India has bred Bt-cotton varieties such as Bikaneri Nerma and hybrids such as NHH-44.

JOURNAL - AGRICULTURAL SITUATION IN INDIA (ASI)

- Publication Division publishes the monthly Journal titled Agricultural Situation in India (ASI).
- The Journal is brought out by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- It aims at presenting a factual and integrated picture of the Food and Agricultural situation in India on monthly basis. The Journal intends to provide a forum for academic work and also to promote technical capability for research in agricultural and allied subjects.