

“No scientist greater than a farmer”: Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Union Minister Shri Chouhan addressed farmers of Uttarakhand at the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan event held in Dehradun

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Uttarakhand will be given priority under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (National Agriculture Development Scheme) to address the issue of crop loss to animal intrusions

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Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan was on Friday invited as the Chief Guest for a programme organized as part of the Union Government's *Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan* at the Himalayan Cultural Centre, located in Kaulagarh of Dehradun. Under this campaign, the Union Agriculture Minister is interacting with farmers from across the country. In the same vein, Shri Chouhan addressed the farmers of Uttarakhand in Dehradun on Friday.

Addressing the farmers at the Himalayan Cultural Centre, Shri Chouhan said that Uttarakhand is the Land of the Gods (Devbhoomi), and its spiritual power draws everyone toward it. He said that the real role of the agriculture and farmers welfare, and rural development Minister is to work at the grassroots level, visiting fields, directly interacting with farmers, and working for the advancement of agriculture.

Shri Chouhan emphasized that for agricultural scientists, the real laboratory is the field itself. Therefore, he envisioned linking the 'lab to land' and launching the *Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan* by forming teams of 16,000 scientists who will visit villages across the country.

The Union Minister noted that this massive campaign has been initiated with the support of scientists, central and state agriculture departments, and progressive farmers. He shared that 2,170 scientific teams are visiting villages across the country, considering regional characteristics, climate variation, soil fertility, and other important factors, and engaging directly with farmers. In Uttarakhand, 75 teams of scientists are engaging in direct dialogue with the farmers. The knowledge gathered from this research is guiding future agricultural strategies. Shri Chouhan added, "There is no scientist greater than a farmer." Hence, the campaign promotes two-way communication — listening to the real-world problems of farmers to shape future research, policy,

programs, and planning.

Shri Chouhan said that many farmers in Uttarakhand expressed the need for fencing/barriers to protect crops from animals. He assured that under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Uttarakhand will be given priority for this need, marking a significant step toward protecting crops and farmlands.

The Union Minister also said that the hills of Uttarakhand are full of miracles, and the fruits and vegetables produced here are excellent in comparison to other regions. He noted that Uttarakhand's apples are now competing with those from Kashmir, indicating the state's advancement in horticulture. He also mentioned the local fruit 'Kafal' (*Myrica esculenta*), stating that its medicinal properties are increasing its demand globally.

While speaking about millets, he remarked that Uttarakhand's coarse grains are exceptional. The traditional grain 'Mandua' (finger millet) is gaining recognition widely. He emphasized the need to increase production of such traditional grains, develop high-quality seeds, and focus on marketing and branding. He called for efforts to protect and boost the production of millets and other crops so that Indian products can gain global reach. He also noted that organic farming of such crops is already being practiced in many areas, which is highly beneficial for health — hence, concrete steps must be taken in this direction.

Shri Chouhan stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, and with the cooperation of the Uttarakhand government, a roadmap for agricultural development will be prepared in the state. He said that serious efforts will be made to turn Uttarakhand into a global fruit hub, and also pointed out that balanced use of pesticides can reduce the cost of farming, and that scientific advice should guide the use of pesticides — only as much as is needed.

In conclusion, the Agriculture Minister urged all farmers to use soil health cards and apply fertilizers based on the actual needs of the soil. He also announced that he would return to Uttarakhand on the 14th of June as part of the Agricultural Fair to meet with farmers once again.

Other dignitaries present at the event, along with several scientists who also attended the programme, were Shri Ganesh Joshi, Agriculture Minister, Government of Uttarakhand; Dr. Surendra Narayan Pandey, Secretary, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of Uttarakhand; Shri Ranveer Singh Chauhan, Director General, Agriculture and Horticulture, Government of Uttarakhand; Dr. Manmohan Singh Chauhan, Vice-Chancellor, Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Uttarakhand; Dr. Triveni Datt, Director, Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh.

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