

# Cotton Productivity Enhancement and Banana Cluster Development Initiatives benefit Farmers in Maharashtra

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The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare is implementing the cotton development programme under the National Food Security and Nutrition Mission (NFSNM) in 15 major cotton growing states including Maharashtra from 2014-15 to increase production and productivity of cotton. The scheme is being implemented in 13 districts of Maharashtra during 2025-26. An amount of Rs. 104.14 crore has been released to the State for all crops including cotton under NFSNM for 2025-26. Under the programme, thrust has been given on transfer of technology through demonstrations and training, thereby benefitting farmers.

A special project on cotton entitled 'Targeting technologies to agro-ecological zones – large scale demonstrations of best practices to enhance cotton productivity' of ICAR–Central Institute for Cotton Research (CICR), Nagpur, is being implemented in major cotton growing states including Maharashtra under NFSNM from 2023-24 to enhance productivity of cotton. An amount of Rs. 6032.35 lakh has been allocated for the special project on cotton during 2025-26 covering 10 major cotton growing states including Maharashtra. Under the project, High Density Planting System (HDPS) and Closer Spacing (CS) technologies have been demonstrated in 10 districts and 15 districts respectively in Maharashtra during 2025-26.

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) under the Ministry of Textiles is the central nodal agency for undertaking Minimum Support Price (MSP) operations of cotton in the country including the State of Maharashtra. CCI, in coordination with the Ministry of Textiles, has liberalised the norms for opening procurement centres. As a result, the MSP procurement network in the State expanded to 168 centres, compared to 128 centres during 2024–25, across 21 districts under its Branch Offices at Akola and Aurangabad. As on 05.03.2026, CCI has procured about 130 lakh quintals of seed cotton (equivalent to 26.13 lakh bales) valued at approximately Rs. 10,400 crore, through 5.84 lakh transactions of farmers in the State of Maharashtra.

The Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, is being implemented from 2014-15 for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector including banana. All States and Union Territories including Maharashtra are covered under the MIDH scheme. Under the MIDH area expansion component for establishment of new orchards using tissue culture plants, in Maharashtra the project cost for banana cultivation through planting material is Rs. 1.57 lakh, out of which 40% subsidy (Rs. 0.63 lakh) is provided for an area up to 2.00 hectares per beneficiary.

Banana is an important crop in Jalgaon district and is cultivated in approximately 65,000 to 70,000 hectares, including in Bhusawal Tahsil. The Banana Cluster Development Programme is being implemented by the Maharashtra State Horticulture and Medicinal Plants Board with the aim of improving production, post-harvest infrastructure, processing and export of bananas from the region. Under this programme, a cluster grant allocation of Rs. 199.99 crore has been approved for the banana crop cluster in Jalgaon district.

Assessment of improvement in cotton productivity under the special project has also been undertaken. In 2023-24, the average increase in yield in HDPS demonstration plots was 30.40% over conventional farmers' practices, while in Closer Spacing demonstrations the average increase was 39.15%. In 2024-25, the average increase in yield in HDPS demonstration plots was 39.81%, while in Closer Spacing demonstrations the average increase in yield was 32.45% over conventional farmers' practices.

This information was provided by the Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Bhagirath Choudhary, in a reply to questions in the Rajya Sabha.

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