

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

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Agriculture is a State subject. The Government is supplementing the efforts of State/UT Government for promoting sustainable agriculture through various schemes and programs. Under these schemes emphasis is being placed on balanced nutrient management, efficient water use, conservation agriculture, integrated farming systems, agroforestry, natural and organic farming, and promotion of climate-resilient agricultural technologies.

Under the Soil Health & Fertility Scheme, assistance is provided to States for promoting Integrated Nutrient Management through the judicious use of fertilizers. This improves fertilizer use efficiency and promotes balanced nutrient application. 26.18 crore Soil Health Cards have been generated so far. To increase water use efficiency at farm level through micro irrigation, Government is implementing Per Drop More Crop Scheme. Under the scheme, fertigation is also promoted. This enables application of water-soluble fertilizers directly to root zone ensuring precise nutrient delivery. 114.60 lakh hectares has been brought under micro-irrigation, benefitting about 100 lakh farmers. Organic farming is being promoted through Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) and Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER) for the North Eastern States. Assistance of Rs. 15,000 per ha is provided to farmers through Direct Benefit Transfer under PKVY and MOVCDNER. PKVY has covered 18.93 lakh hectares, benefitting 33.63 lakh farmers. MOVCDNER has brought 2.36 lakh hectares under organic farming, benefitting 2.74 lakh farmers. Agroforestry Scheme is being implemented to encourage integration of trees with agricultural crops. To ensure availability of quality planting material, financial assistance is provided for setting up of new nurseries and raising of saplings in existing nurseries under Agroforestry Scheme. Financial assistance includes ₹16 lakh for setting up big nurseries (1 ha), ₹10 lakh for small nurseries (0.5 ha), and up to ₹5 lakh per existing nursery for raising saplings is provided under the programme. 826 nurseries have been established and about 1062.18 lakh saplings raised in last 3 years. The National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) was approved by the Union Cabinet on 25.11.24 to promote Natural Farming. The Mission strengthens agriculture practices with scientific agro ecological approaches for sustainability, climate resilience and safe food. Under NMNF, 11.81 lakh hectares have been covered in 24,031 clusters, benefitting 24.69 lakh farmers. Incentive support on Rs. 4000/ acre for 2 years is given for farmers to practice Natural Farming, preparation of natural farming inputs or purchase of inputs from Bio-input Resource Centers (BRCs) etc. Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses, National Mission on Edible Oils–Oilseeds (NMEO-OS) and National Food Security Nutrition Mission (NFSNM) & Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) promote crop diversification. Financial assistance/incentives under the Schemes are provided in accordance with the respective operational guidelines of the Schemes.

The Government is implementing the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) to enhance physical access to water on farms, expand cultivable area under assured irrigation, improve on-farm water-use efficiency and promote sustainable water conservation practices. Under the Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP) component, the schemes of Surface Minor Irrigation (SMI) and Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of Water Bodies are being implemented by the Department of Water Resources, River

Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti. As reported by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Central Assistance is provided to States/UTs for creation and restoration of irrigation potential under these schemes. Besides, under Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission – Gramin (VB-G RAM-G), being implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, water conservation activities are prioritised through Natural Resource Management (NRM) works. These constitute 110 works out of 318 permissible works under the programme, improving water security and conservation.

NITI Aayog has undertaken the evaluation of various schemes being implemented. As per the evaluation reports, under Per Drop More Crop Scheme, 62.46% of farmers reported a substantial increase in water use efficiency or crop yield. Under the Rainfed Area Development Scheme, 70.28% of farmers reported a substantial improvement in farm productivity. The study also reported that 63.78% of farmers adopting soil Health Card recommendations experienced improved fertilizer use efficiency or crop yield, while 68.5% reported improvement in soil health through the use of natural inputs. Under the Organic Farming, 75.85% of farmers reported significant improvements in soil fertility, reduced chemical input costs, or enhanced produce quality. Under the National Mission on Natural Farming, 90.1% of farmers reported reduced input costs compared to the use of chemical fertilizers. The report also highlights the positive contribution of MIDH to farm profitability, livelihood diversification, and long-term capacity building in the horticulture sector. As per the evaluation report, strategic interventions could increase domestic edible oil availability to 16 MT by 2030 and 26.7 MT by 2047, strengthening self-sufficiency in oilseeds.

As reported by Central Ground Water Board, as per the pre-monsoon 2026 assessment, the groundwater situation remains largely stable across the country. Out of 9,085 monitoring wells, 87.8% (7,977 wells) fall under the normal category. These findings indicate that the interventions are contributing to efficient water management, strengthening resource conservation, improving climate resilience and supporting the long-term sustainability of agricultural production systems.

The adoption of sustainable agricultural practices varies across regions depending on agro-climatic conditions, availability of irrigation infrastructure, and local resource endowments. The Government continues to strengthen sustainable agricultural practices through improved irrigation, water conservation, efficient resource management and climate-resilient interventions to integrate sustainability with economic viability and enhance the resilience, competitiveness and long-term growth of the agricultural sector. Despite the challenges posed by biotic and abiotic stresses, the agriculture sector has recorded sustained growth in crop productivity and overall agricultural production over the last decade. Food grain production has increased from 252.03 million tonnes in 2014–15 to a record 357.73 million tonnes in 2024–25, while horticulture production has increased from 280.98 million tonnes in 2014–15 to 370.73 million tonnes in 2024–25, reflecting the resilience and steady growth of agricultural production across the country.

This information was given by the Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare **SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR** in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

RC/MS

(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2297651) आगंतुक पटल : 1305
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