



## **SERVING FARMERS AND SAVING FARMING**

**Fifth and Final Report, 4 October 2006**

**Towards Faster and More Inclusive Growth of Farmers' Welfare**

“To those who are hungry, God is bread” – Mahatma Gandhi, 1946

“Everything else can wait, but not agriculture”- Jawaharlal Nehru, 1947

Our work during the last two years has been guided by the above words of the architect of our independence on the one hand, and by the prime mover of planned development designed to promote faster economic growth coupled with social and gender equity, on the other. The approach to the XI<sup>th</sup> Plan is “faster and more inclusive growth”. Obviously this aim should cover 70% of our population, who live in villages and whose major occupation is crop and animal husbandry, fisheries, agro-forestry and agro-processing. The four reports submitted by us since December 2004, all contain concrete suggestions on how this goal can be achieved.

This fifth and final report deals with some of the key issues confronting our farmers and farming such as the economic survival of farmers with small holdings in a globalised economy, shaping the economic destiny of farmers, strengthening the ecological foundations essential for sustainable agriculture, attracting and retaining youth in farming, and restoring the glory of Indian farmers and farming. It presents an action plan for making hunger history. The Revised Draft National Policy for Farmers is submitted separately, based on widespread consultations throughout the country as well as extensive advice received from Central and State Government Departments, farmers, farmers' organizations, tribal families, women's organizations, academia, civil society organizations, political parties, panchayat institutions, mass media representatives and individuals.

We are indebted to Shri Sharad Pawar, Union Minister for Agriculture, Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs, for his continuous guidance and encouragement and for being the major source of inspiration in our work.

We have chosen for the cover of this Final Report an extract from the Visitors Book of the National Dairy Research Institute, Bangalore, showing the Father of the Nation identifying himself as a “Farmer”. It is this pride in farming, both as a way of life and means to livelihood that we should revive. This is the pathway to “Purna Swaraj” and this report shows the way.

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# **National Commission on Farmers**

## **Serving Farmers and Saving Farming**

### **Towards Faster and More Inclusive Growth of Farmers' Welfare**

#### **Fifth Report**

#### **VOLUME II**

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# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT HYDERABAD ON 6<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2006**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Hyderabad on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, NCF, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Ms. Mamta Shankar, Director, NCF. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. Inaugural Session**

At the outset, the Principal Secretary, Agriculture and Horticulture welcomed the NCF team and participants. Commissioner Agriculture made the following points:-

- i) Over emphasis on credit without increase in plan budget will not help. Plan expenditure must go up.
- ii) Farmers' voice should be heard on a continuous basis.
- iii) Farmers had to pay very large price for transgenic seeds. Knowledge was a public good. Interest of farmers must be protected while pricing the transgenic seeds. New Seeds Act was required with built in flexibility in procedures. ICAR should encourage research in public domain for transgenic seeds. Terminator genes should not be allowed.
- iv) The State was facing adverse agro-climatic situation with 70% of its area under rain fed farming and 24% of water obtained from ground water resources. There was a need for increasing productivity in dry lands. Farmers had to be protected and Agro meteorology, with location specific forecasting was very important for

contingency planning for inputs like seeds and fertilizer, at the time of sowing. Remote sensing should be improved; it will provide a wealth of data. There was a need to work out cost benefit ratio for rain fed farming and make it credit worthy.

- v) There was a need to focus on obtaining returns commensurate with cost of cultivation and finding markets. Integrated farming should be financed.
- vi) In the AP pilot insurance scheme, village was a unit in 5 districts for a single crop and it had helped. This was proposed to be extended in the entire state.
- vii) There should be a Price Regulatory Authority for input prices.
- viii) There must be subsidy for micronutrients and increase in subsidy for Potassic and Phosphatic fertilizer since these were important inputs.
- ix) Large numbers of labs were needed for testing of pesticides.
- x) Farm mechanization research was needed.
- xi) Validated scientific practice was needed for organic farming.
- xii) There was too much confusion in Agri Export Zones Scheme which was mostly operating on papers.
- xiii) Education of farmers was a must. At least 30% of the extension workers should be women. Internet, TV etc. must be used for extension.
- xiv) After the implementation of the NREGP the cost of labour has gone up in the concerned districts.

### **3. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) There should be a paradigm shift in policy and not patch work through small interventions.
- ii) Farmers' Commission should not be wound up. It should watch the implementation and do evaluation and monitoring to ensure the implementation of Recommendations. Without these activities many good Reports had remained on papers. Jayati Ghosh Commission, Justice Ramachandra Reddy Committee had also made recommendations but no action had been taken.
- iii) A farmer should be the co-chair of the NCF and it should have a woman member too.

- iv) In 1968, the green revolution was launched with a farmer oriented approach. At present, we were more under the influence of the MNCs and middlemen.
- v) The Policy did not spell out lessons drawn from ‘ecological disasters’ and ‘technology fatigues’ during the last 40 years of Green Revolution and steps had to be taken to prevent them. The Policy on the other hand, tries to continue the same framework of more inputs, monocropping, industrial control on inputs and marketing etc.
- vi) The Policy tacitly accepted liberalization and privatization adopted in agriculture without analyzing its effects on farmers and it missed on the ways to strengthen farmer centric research system and farmer-centric extension system. Policy should have sustainable vision.
- vii) The Policy should aim towards more farmer and knowledge centric planning than input and industry centric planning. Policy should reverse the present trends of corporatizing agriculture.
- viii) The process should be handed over to farmers and their organization to discuss and input into the Policy to make it farmer led and more broad based and to address the issue of sustainability and equity.
- ix) Draft Policy talked about the need to recognize root causes for farmers’ suicides but it did not talk about fixing liability for mistakes committed. Policies should not be created without accountability.
- x) Small farmer/marginal farmer/agricultural labour had to be kept in focus while making recommendations. There was no ground monitoring system. In each state, this should revolve around small farmer needs.
- xi) It was a hope generating policy. NCF wording was too soft. It was a feel good document.
- xii) NCF had not gone deep into root causes of agrarian crisis. IMF Structural Adjustment Plan included policies like reduction in government expenditure and curtailment of rural credit, winding up of extension, wage restraint on workers etc. These policies worked in the developed countries but had led to adverse impact on Agriculture in several developing countries. They had advised diversification into non-cereal crops leading to food shortages and imports and

thereby leading to external dependence for survival. This had not been nailed down in NCF Reports.

- xiii) The Parliament had passed the Fiscal Responsibility Act. Now, World Bank was asking the States to do the same.
- xiv) Since 68% of population was in Agriculture, atleast 68% of Budget is to be allocated for agriculture.
- xv) Reinvestment surplus was not being generated from farming.
- xvi) Scale of farming was too small for mechanization.
- xvii) TVE system of China should be followed for rural prosperity.
- xviii) No rural youth less than 20 years wanted to remain in farming.
- xix) Policies had a pro consumer rather than a pro farmer orientation.
- xx) Students should be taught environment and agriculture too, at school stage.
- xxi) NREGP should be operated only in off-season.
- xxii) Agricultural Workers Bill has been pending in Parliament for too long and should be passed soon.
- xxiii) Policy has not said anything for security of landless labourers. Policy should expressly recommend enactment of Comprehensive Agriculture Workers Welfare Act to take care of social security and welfare needs of agricultural workers.
- xxiv) NCF should recommend that government should strengthen tenant farmer organizations.
- xxv) Data on suicide by women farmers, gender based asset mapping, and women registered under NREGP are necessary.

#### **4. Land**

- i) Large lands have been given away at throw away price for corporate farming. This would be undesirable.
- ii) Land Reforms should be completed and at least 1 acre with assured water supply should be allotted to the landless. There should be asset security.
- iii) Conversion of land for real estate was taking place at an unprecedented scale.
- iv) Government was not developing rural areas.

- v) No investments had been made for land development.
- vi) Large Public Investment should be made to make land productive.
- vii) Land should be allotted to landless and not given to big firms for growing bio fuels.
- viii) Since small holdings had been proved to be more productive, the recommendation in the Draft Policy in favour of land consolidation should be removed.

## **5. Livestock**

- i) Pastoralists have to make sacrifice for large dams. Agro Biodiversity is also threatened by large dams. Tanks are better in rainfed areas.
- ii) Adequate livelihood security of displaced pastoralists should be ensured.
- iii) In situ conservation of local breeds should be promoted. Policy of promoting cross breeds is antithetical to the promotion of the local breeds.
- iv) Grazing lands should not be used for bio diesel plantation.
- v) We do not need off shore genetic centre for screening germplasm. Onshore Centres should be preferable.
- vi) Strong public disease management system will better serve the needs of resource poor farmers as compared to agri clinics.
- vii) Every farmer should have milch animals to support his income from crops.
- viii) Government should provide animals on subsidy to farmers which would also facilitate organic farming.
- ix) A milk producer is not getting Rs 18 for one litre of milk whereas bottled water is sold at Rs. 12 per litre.
- x) Organic farming is not possible unless dairy development is encouraged.
- xi) Livestock rearing should be linked to agriculture in general, not just for 'organic farming' since is the only sustainable way forward. Existing livestock Departments should be strengthened, instead of relying on agri-clinics.



## **6. Technology, Research Inputs and Extension**

- i) Lacunae of green revolution should be removed before going into the second green revolution.
- ii) No new technology was needed. Only appropriate policies and funds should be ensured for rural areas.
- iii) Scientists should be accountable for wrong advice given to farmers.
- iv) Use of term 'bio security' was confusing. It should include 'bio safety' as understood now in the context of GM crops for protection of health and trade security of the nation. The formulations in the Policy in this regard were inadequate.
- v) There was no distinct advantage from GM crops.
- vi) There should be a debate on whether we need transgenics which were very costly.
- vii) Technology, inputs including seeds incentives etc. should be provided in time.
- viii) Bio fertilizers were very costly and needed subsidy.
- ix) Our research policy should be Small Farmer/Marginal Farmer oriented.
- x) Better audio visual aids for organic farmers were needed.
- xi) Organic farming saves land and water and a special package was needed for its promotion.
- xii) Organic farming should be provided by formulating a package of practices.
- xiii) At least 30% subsidy for organic inputs was required besides seeds which were subsidized.
- xiv) There should be social control on research.
- xv) Public domain research was a must.
- xvi) Seed Act 2004 was in favour of the corporate sector. No protection to farmers from spurious seeds or high prices was provided.
- xvii) SHGs should grow their own seeds. They needed a lot of capacity building.
- xviii) Land to lab transfer of technologies was also required. Universities should learn from success stories in rural areas.
- xix) There should be research on impact of Bt cotton crop residues – we should have precautionary principle in place.

- xx) There should be price control on seeds.
- xxi) Farmers face difficulties in approaching Consumer Courts and producing evidence when they had complaints against seed quality.
- xxii) More stress should be given to technology acceptable to farmer.
- xxiii) Research should clearly indicate the income it will give to the farmer.
- xxiv) Many suicide cases were due to lack of access to correct knowledge and correct inputs.
- xxv) Policy should allow full freedom to farmer to decide his technology.
- xxvi) Seed issues were not dealt with adequately- Government should have a central role for this vital input.
- xxvii) Extension services needed to be strengthened in the State and soil testing had to be conducted in almost every land holding.
- xxviii) Certified seeds should be supplied to the farmers in time.
- xxix) Private research claims should be verified and advised to farmer.
- xxx) We should promote organic farming as is done in Uttaranchal. Every farmer should have livestock, horticulture along with agriculture.
- xxxi) There was a need for shifting to organic farming in chemical fertilizer intensive areas.
- xxxii) Vermi-compost should be prepared on a large scale and subsidy should be given to the farmers for its use to popularize it.
- xxxiii) Central Government should take into consideration the cost of all inputs while deciding and fixing prices of commodities/produce.
- xxxiv) Seeds, which were resistant to unfavourable seasonal conditions should be developed.
- xxxv) Groundnut resistant to pests should be developed.
- xxxvi) Research has to be conducted on wilt pest.
- xxxvii) Horticulture crops have to be developed.
- xxxviii) Before another green revolution is attempted, the existing government staff should be reshuffled.
- xxxix) Inputs such as seeds and fertilizers should be provided in time.

- xl) Hybrid paddy could be grown with the use of chemical fertilizer if necessary with the help of banks.

## **7. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Section on credit and insurance does not talk about the need for reducing credit for agriculture through appropriate technology and other means. Agriculture technology has become a profit-earning tool for private enterprise at the expense of farmers. Need for such inputs should be questioned.
- ii) Since Government is not providing sufficient assistance to farmers for rainfed crops, agriculture has become a gamble for the farmer and he gets trapped in debt.
- iii) Farmers have no other choice but to approach private money lender since banks are not providing adequate finance for Agriculture.
- iv) Farmer has to go to the moneylender for his other needs too, and later commits suicide since the returns from agriculture are minimal. Drought also exacerbates the problem.
- v) Rescheduling of loan, as worked out in the relevant RBI circular, is ineffective because of large interest burdens. On rescheduling of loans a farmer borrowing Rs. 10,000/- is required to pay more than Rs. 27,000. Only 35-40% loans are rescheduled and compound interest is charged by banks.
- vi) Mere rescheduling of loans was not sufficient. Whenever required, a critical analysis of reasons and the methodology had to be developed, so that the farmer could come out of the debt trap.
- vii) People who had suffered drought for 5 years should have their loans written off. Private debts do not get rescheduled or written off. These debts should be waived.
- viii) Rs.3000 crores of non-performing assets have been written off for industrial borrowers but a similar facility is not being provided to poor farmers.
- ix) Every farmer/ labourer should be adopted by a financial institution.
- x) Under Usurious Loans Act, banks cannot charge more than 9%. Banks are however charging excessive interest.

- xi) Banks are not achieving 19% agriculture lending target under Priority Sector lending.
- xii) It was time to introduce the concept of a production budget.
- xiii) Our Embassies should identify export potential and the information should be passed on to the farmers along with quality requirements.
- xiv) Farmer expenditure had increased geometrically but income have been growing arithmetically, only.
- xv) Farmer has to pay stamp duty which should be reduced. Mortgage should be created on a declaration given by the farmer.
- xvi) Government should waive stamp duty for farmers.
- xvii) Credit requirement should be worked out for family and should be given to them as term loan for 5 years so that one crop failure and default of short-term installment loan does not derail him.
- xviii) We need assured credit flow even for tenant farmers at 3 per cent interest.
- xix) “Raithu Mitra” scheme to help tenant farmers is unique for AP based on self declaration.
- xx) Farmers should be provided credit at 4 per cent simple interest by all banks i.e. nationalized, cooperative and regional rural banks.
- xxi) Insurance premium should be borne by the Government.
- xxii) Every farmer should get compensation in use of natural calamity/crop failure. Farmer should be the unit of crop insurance.
- xxiii) The norms governing relief from natural calamity should be relaxed as and when required, particularly when crops are affected by repeated adverse weather conditions. Farmers should be provided with subsidy for payment of insurance premium. Comprehensive insurance should to be provided to the farmer.
- xxiv) A “Farmer Welfare Fund” may be created for the welfare of farmers and provide social security to all categories of farmers i.e. horticulturists etc.
- xxv) National Agriculture Insurance Scheme is not responsive to the losses of the farmers.
- xxvi) Even though government is collecting cess for land, it is not providing any financial help.

- xxvii) It is necessary that farmer is provided social security since he is providing food security to the nation.
- xxviii) It is necessary to provide insurance for failed bore wells. Government should create awareness about bore wells and insurance together.
- xxix) Insurance claims should be paid immediately. The evaluation procedures are too long.
- xxx) Crop insurance should be more friendly to the farmer.

## **8. Marketing, Distribution and trade**

- i) All suicides have taken place in the cotton belt. Cotton area went up due to higher international prices until 1977 after which there was a 55% decline in cotton prices. Policies of Government of India were framed in the interest of the textile industry. Liberalization of cotton imports led to depressed prices and ruining of farmers.
- ii) DOHA Round will be damaging to the Indian farmer.
- iii) We should have “variable custom duties structure - but it was not implemented.
- iv) Agricultural subsidy was reduced in 1991 and should be increased up to 10% as permitted by WTO.
- v) Farmers who have provided food to the country have no food security for themselves.
- vi) Mission statement should also include promotion of national food security in view of an unequal trade policy.
- vii) Imports of edible oil were made without checking the domestic production. Imports should be decreased to protect the interest of farmers.
- viii) ITO should be set up.
- ix) Policy talked of opportunities available for external agricultural trade without specifying these opportunities.
- x) Farmers were not getting benefit of support price since they had already sold their produce to middlemen for buying inputs.
- xi) Govt. should announce “Remunerative Price” and not “Minimum Price” and Govt. should buy at least 50% of produce.

- xii) Recommendation for contract farming should be withdrawn. The experience of contract farming in Kuppam in AP had not been good. Government should be the third party in contract farming – Govt. must arbitrate. Unless bona fides of contracting firms were established, Govt. should have a third party role.
- xiii) Farmers were not getting premium price for organic produce.
- xiv) The details of Price Stabilization Fund like its size and conditions under which Govt. will decide to intervene and the institutional mechanism for implementation were not spelt out. Input prices also needed to be regulated. Besides, farmer should get a fair share of the consumer prices after covering his cost of production.
- xv) Millet etc. should be included in PDS. PDS should be strengthened. Farmers should be protected as consumers. Food quality and food assurance had to be ensured.
- xvi) No one in mandi bothered about farmers. The staff should assess likely arrivals and make suitable arrangement.
- xvii) NDDDB model was suitable for domestic markets.
- xviii) Cooperative service system could be very helpful instead of contract farming.
- xix) Millets etc should be brought under MSP.
- xx) Middlemen should be avoided in the marketing system and farmers should be provided with MSP support for their crops.
- xxi) Farmers should be ensured with reasonable price for their produce through promotion of exports and by constructing cold storage/godowns.
- xxii) Government should provide MSP support along with market intelligence.
- xxiii) There were serious concerns in farmers' bodies on several changes proposed in APMC Act. Hence it could not be called farmer-friendly.

## **9. Dry Land Farming**

- i) All manure is going into irrigated areas and no soil enrichment of dry land is taking place.
- ii) Big dams are necessary – There is no alternative for achieving higher production – We should not allow our river water to go to the sea.

- iii) Mixed crops are very useful in dry land areas.
- iv) Although soil fertility is very important, Soil testing is negligible.
- v) Policy should specifically talk about a Separate Policy for rainfed areas and farmers there.
- vi) The Policy should pay special attention to rainfed farming and support system required for these regions. It should promote eco-technologies and not genetic engineering as alternative paradigm.

**10.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF ASSAM AND NORTH-EASTERN STATES FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT GUWAHATI ON 8<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Guwahati on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Ms. R.V. Bhavani, Director (Tech.). Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) There should be a separate section on the Northeast.
- ii) The definition of farmers should include those engaged in Piggery. Pigs in Assam are not reared by scavengers as mentioned in 3.5.14.0. Duck farming is also important in Assam.
- iii) Assam should be included among the goat producing States of India.
- iv) There should be State and district level awards for outstanding farmers.
- v) Farmers should get representation on policy making bodies.
- vi) The closed season allowance for fishers should be at least Rs.2000/- p.m. and should also apply to farmers during drought period.
- vii) Forest policy must be coordinated with agriculture policy.
- viii) All districts in the Northeast should come under NREGP.
- ix) Interests of farmers should be the prime consideration in promoting crops; Oil



palm has no prospect in Assam but was suggested for promotion whereas rapeseed and mustard which are popular among poor farmers are not encouraged.

- x) Roadside and homestead planting of fruit trees must be promoted to promote nutrition.
- xi) Each district should have an Agricultural Park based on cluster village approach, with facilities for processing and market linkages.

### **3. Land**

- i) Wasteland should be allotted to small and marginal farmers and women farmers.
- ii) Jhum cultivation needs support.
- iii) 20 ha land is needed for sanction of micro irrigation projects – not feasible in hilly States.
- iv) Embankments should be removed to ensure that all agricultural land becomes levelled.
- v) Penalty should be levied on encroachment of cultivable land.
- vi) For a farmer, losing his land is like losing a family member. Loss of farmland due to severe flood and erosion should be eligible for compensation.

### **4. Water**

- i) Hill areas need mobile HP motor that can be moved from one place to another.
- ii) There are many incomplete projects in the region.
- iii) The waters of the Brahmaputra should be properly harnessed with dams at various levels to address the problems of flood and drought.
- iv) Many farmers are affected by arsenic/fluoride poisoning of water.
- v) 'Beels' (water bodies) should be renovated for water harvesting and promotion of fish culture.
- vi) National Rainfed Area Authority must include programmes for high rainfall areas also.
- vii) Construction of tank should be in the farmer's field under community management for irrigation water and fishery.

- viii) Watershed management should address siltation not only in the river bed but also in the natural water body.

## **5. Livestock**

- i) Fodder Banks should be setup to reduce high cost of animal feed.
- ii) Dairy marketing needs attention; NDDDB should be requested to setup a State office in Assam.
- iii) Disease control measures have to be properly implemented. Vaccines are in shortage.
- iv) Non-availability of suitable germplasm is a problem.
- v) A mission mode approach is needed for livestock development.
- vi) There is no compensation for an animal's death.
- vii) FCI should procure animal feed ingredients at places of production and allocate to feed compounding units/farmers.
- viii) Locally available feed ingredients should be incorporated where possible.
- ix) Artificial insemination with selective breeding should be undertaken for upgradation of indigenous germplasm.
- x) Organizational mechanism has to be developed for research support to livestock sector.
- xi) Burning of cowdung should be prohibited and it should be used as manure in gobar gas plant.
- xii) There should be 'Pashu Vigyan Kendra', on the lines of 'Krishi Vigyan Kendra', wherever livestock is the predominant activity.
- xiii) There should be animal Quarantine Certification Station in the NE, especially because of the international porous borders.
- xiv) Farm School for dairy farmers is also a necessity.
- xv) Cattle transport to the NE is banned by the railways. But their induction is important for cattle breeding to improve productivity.
- xvi) Restrictions on grazing and camping in wildlife sanctuaries is necessary as control of diseases of wild animals and birds is difficult. Modify 4.8.4 accordingly.

- xvii) Breed conservation – modify – “users group may decide to keep only **accredited breeding males** (instead of certain) and those could be used on payment basis.[ Para 3.5.8.0 in Draft National Policy for Farmers]
- xviii) Parent farms of high quality livestock and poultry seeds should be established
- xix) Guidelines under the Indian Veterinary Council Act should be the basis for training for para-veterinarians.
- xx) A Regional Lab and Gene Bank under the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources should be setup in NE India, to facilitate characterization and conservation of the indigenous germplasm in this part of the country, e.g. swamp buffalo, Nageswari duck, Pati duck, Miri poultry, Assam local goat and pig, etc.

## **6. Research Technology & Training**

- i) Opportunities for farmers to visit farms in other states and countries to learn better techniques, will motivate them.
- ii) Greenhouses do not have facility for monitoring temperature.
- iii) Horticulture should have support of drip irrigation facility.
- iv) Technical advice for handling pest/insect attack is not forthcoming; e.g. bacterial wilt attack on ginger; insect attack on mushroom during peak summer.
- v) Location specific cropping systems research is needed.
- vi) Tripura needs an Agricultural University/College for effective extension.
- vii) Schemes should be formulated according to local climate and farmers’ needs instead of centrally recommended uniform scheme.
- viii) Change in mindset is needed. Technical extension has to be handled by technical people in participatory manner.
- ix) An inventory of extant indigenous technologies should be built.
- x) Community Information Centres can play an important role in cross learning from local experiences and other parts of India.
- xi) Research institutes should focus on developing low cost implements, harnessing effective indigenous technologies

- xii) Horticulture and Agro-processing research and training institute is a must in the region.
- xiii) KVK may be developed to offer residential training courses by adopting the approach of 'Earn while you Learn'.
- xiv) Sons and daughters of farmers need reservation for admission in Agricultural colleges.
- xv) 75% of ICAR research should be on farmers' fields.

## **7. Credit & Insurance**

- i) Joint patta will not resolve problems of landless for credit. They should get funding support for training.
- ii) Rate of interest on Kisan Credit Cards is very high.
- iii) All farmers should be covered under crop insurance not just those who have taken loans.
- iv) Rate of interest should be 3% in the NE due to greater hardships faced in the region.
- v) The Cooperative credit structure should be revived.
- vi) Bank credit is not forthcoming even on proposals passed by the Horticulture Department.
- vii) There should be insurance support for crops and animals affected by natural calamities.
- viii) Cooperative banks need support from government to comply with requirements under section 11. They do not get any refinance from NABARD.
- ix) The functioning of the banking system should be reviewed and rectified.
- x) Farmers need health insurance; A Policy on the lines of 'Employees State Insurance Scheme', has to be adopted.

## **8. Market & Price**

- i) Orchid production should be commercialized.
- ii) Farmers don't get the right price for vegetables.

- iii) There should be a ‘Terminal Market’ at Guwahati to promote direct farmer sale.
- iv) There should be a separate Regional Master Plan for market development in the NER integrating them with the market in SE Asia.
- v) Lack of cold storage facilities and well-equipped carriage vans hampers border trade with Tibet/China, which can yield good returns.
- vi) Sikkim should be declared Organic State and export market developed.
- vii) New crops are being introduced under the Technology Mission, but the markets are not being identified and developed.
- viii) There should be community cooperatives at Panchayat level to prevent distress sale.
- ix) FCI is not buying any produce from the NE.
- x) MSP has no meaning to farmers in Assam, as their cost of production is high.
- xi) Contract farming of poultry and feed ingredients maybe promoted, especially maize and sweet potato.
- xii) Producer companies on the lines of NDDB’s SAFAL should be promoted.
- xiii) Price of tea is determined by the international market. Small tea growers need a price stabilization fund to protect them from fluctuations.
- xiv) Commercial floriculture under Public Private Partnership [PPP] model can be promoted among urban growers organized into groups, like the women farmers’ groups in Mizoram.

## **9. Fisheries**

- i) Many fish are coming from outside Assam. Inbreeding hampers production of indigenous species and should be addressed. ICAR should undertake an impact study on effect of introduction of exotic species from Bangladesh and Myanmar, like Thailand Magur, Big Head etc.
- ii) Pisciculture should be promoted through long lease of the water bodies.
- iii) NFDB should have two wings – Fresh Water and Salt Water. The Centre for Fresh Water should be located in Assam.
- iv) Forest fishery, which covers an area of 5017 ha, offers ideal sites for *in situ*

conservation of fish germplasm. This can be done through farmers' participatory approach by the Fishery Department, if standing Forest Acts are suitably amended.

- v) Identified natural bodies under forest area should be declared 'fish sanctuary', for in-situ conservation of fish germplasm of the region.

## **10. Ariculture**

- i) This is a branch of sericulture with lot of potential. No killing of the silkworm is entailed. So it can be widely encouraged.
- ii) At present there is no policy for plantation for this purpose and women have to go to the forest to collect leaves for feeding.
- iii) Women SHGs can be promoted to rear cocoon and reel silk. At present there is no reeling unit.
- iv) The manufacturers have a problem of capital to purchase yarn. There should be yarn banks.
- v) Farmers end up selling at low rates to buyers from outside the region.

## **11. Labour & Inputs**

- i) Cost of labour is very high and unviable to employ. (Rs.100/- for women & Rs. 150/- for male).
- ii) Quality seed supply is a constraint.
- iii) Gaon Panchayat Somobai Samiti used to supply all agricultural inputs earlier. These maybe revived and linked with the VKC movement.
- iv) Farm inputs should be supplied at subsidized rate; seed, fertilizer, plant protection chemicals.
- v) Seed banks should be promoted for maintaining right variety and quality of seeds and ensure availability during calamities.

## **12. Dissemination**

- i) Central Govt. Websites should be in local language.
- ii) Information kiosks should be promoted.

- iii) There should be a conscious policy to shift population to non-farm activities.
- iv) Farmers in the region need special consideration like in the Vidharbha.

**13.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF BIHAR FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT PATNA ON 12<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Patna on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Y.C. Nanda, Member, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Dr. Ramesh Singh, Research Officer. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) It was good to note that the draft policy was in favour of small and marginal farmers as about 80% of the farmers of Bihar fell in the above categories.
- ii) Non farm activities in rural areas are almost extinct with the result that there were very little employment opportunities outside agriculture. This is one of the important reasons for migration of rural people to urban areas.
- iii) Timely availability of fertilizers, seeds and irrigation water were the major problems.
- iv) In some areas, rearing of goats has become a profitable occupation for rural people.
- v) Bihar should get the status of most favoured State regarding institutional support and infrastructure development.
- vi) There is a lack of transparency in sale of seeds by Government/cooperative agencies.
- vii) At present, most of the farming related work is handled by comparatively elderly people or those young men and women who are unable to migrate from their villages.



- viii) It was reported that about 50% work of agriculture was done by the women; they should be given special treatment by formation of women group. This would lead to capacity building, skill development and general upliftment of women in the rural areas.

### **3. Soil Health Care**

- i) Soil testing facilities are poor. There is need for assessing the micro-nutrient deficiencies of soil. All farmers should be issued soil health cards.

### **4. Irrigation**

- i) Farmers are spending major part of their resources on irrigation.
- ii) Community based common irrigation sources should be developed.
- iii) Rejuvenation and maintenance of existing water bodies was important and should be given high priority.

### **5. Research, Technology & Extension**

- i) Agricultural scientists should visit the farmers' fields more frequently.
- ii) In Bihar, the crops like maize and rice had potential for increasing income of the farmers.
- iii) KVKs should support Litchi and Mango growers to make Bihar the Litchi and the Mango State of India.
- iv) Rejuvenation of old orchards should be given higher priority over plantation of new horticulture farms.
- v) KVKs should provide custom hiring of harvesters to the farmers for harvest of crops to ensure timeliness in sowing of next crop.
- vi) Farmers should be trained in nursery management.
- vii) Government should have a plan for distribution of tree plants to farmers at nominal prices so that they take interest in planting trees.
- viii) There is a need for different cropping pattern to suit irrigated and dry areas of the State.
- ix) Traditional crops were important to provide livelihood security to the rural poor.

- x) Agriculture should not be treated only as a State subject.
- xi) Gyan Choupals should be established at least in every Panchayat at the earliest. These should serve as single window information source and should impart literacy regarding credit, insurance, trade and quality.

## **6. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Banks ignore farmers in general and the small and marginal farmers in particular for providing credit. Their focus is on financing bigger farmers who have better repaying capacity and collaterals to offer against their loans.
- ii) Professional moneylenders provide loans to farmers at a very high interest rate i.e., around 4% per month.
- iii) A high percentage of loans for installation of tubewells are misutilised for consumption purposes.
- iv) NABARD should do direct financing
- v) Outreach and quality of credit must be improved. Inefficiencies of the delivery system should not be loaded on the farmers. The State Government should also support the banks in delivery/recovery of credit from farmers.
- vi) Farmers do not have recurrent monthly income. Larger farmers also face temporary cash shortages, therefore, the banks should also provide consumption loans subject to the repaying capacity of the farmers.
- vii) There is need for upscaling the professional knowledge and managerial skills of the staff of the cooperative banks.
- viii) Pledge loans should be provided by banks to prevent “distress sale” by the farmers.
- ix) It is well known that agriculture is high risk activity and the crop insurance is the only solution to save the farmers from distress. At present, the matters regarding assessment of loss and settlement of claims under the crop insurance scheme are not satisfactory.
- x) The assessment of damage to crop is based on average yield in the Mandal and not on the basis of the yield in the farmers’ field who had taken the crop insurance cover. Further, the crop insurance as in operation now, mainly protects

the bank and not the farmer. The insurance system needs reform and insurance policies which cater to multiple needs of farmers (production, health, accident etc) need to be developed. Farmer friendly cattle insurance is also important.

## **7. Market and Investment**

- i) Need for formation of farmers' groups in large number for input delivery and marketing of produce.
- ii) Marketing of agricultural produce should be done by the farmers' groups on the pattern of NDDB.
- iii) Increase in farmers' income is most important and for that assured market is essential.
- iv) Storage facilities should be provided to farmers at concessional rates so that the farmers could keep their produce till prices improve.
- v) Diesel subsidy upto 50% should be given to the farmers to reduce the input cost of cultivation.

## **8. Observations made by Dr. H. P. Singh, Vice Chancellor, Bihar Agricultural University, Pusa**

Dr. H.P. Singh, Vice Chancellor, Bihar Agricultural University, Pusa, who was appointed by the Government as the nodal point for the Consultation, highlighted the following recent agricultural trends in Bihar:

- i) Integrated farming should be promoted as per the need of specific locations – a mechanism for minimizing the risk from natural disasters occurring frequently in the State.
- ii) On the principle of “Build, Operate and Transfer” (BOT), the Government should provide post harvest and value addition facilities to rural entrepreneurs for prevention of post harvest losses as well as for providing employment opportunities in rural areas.
- iii) While promoting integrated farming, among crops, sugarcane, maize, rice, oilseeds and pulses should get high priority. Among livestock, buffaloes should be given greater attention than in the past. With the success of SUDHA Dairy –

based on the NDDDB Model – the livestock sector has high growth potential and income generation by the farmers. Honey production is also being attached with SUDHA Model.

- iv) On the pattern of Nalanda, the Pusa Complex, Samastipur, should be declared as a National Heritage site and a National Museum for farmers and others should be established involving the activities of the University as well as of the IARI's Regional Research Station at Pusa – established more than 100 years ago as the first scientific agricultural research centre in the country. The Museum should also exhibit the rich genetic resources and indigenous knowledge of Bihar.
- v) The State has already established the Bihar Farmers' Commission, chaired by Shri Ramadhar (Retired IAS) and a former FAO officer.

**9.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF CHHATISGARH FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT RAIPUR ON 8<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Raipur on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Dr. Prabhu Dayal Choudhary, Research Assistant. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

1.2 Agriculture Production Commissioner, Govt. of Chhatisgarh, welcomed the participants and explained the importance of farmers' welfare and development for Chhatisgarh. The State has about 50% area under forest and 72% of farmers belong to small and marginal category. Only 27% of land is irrigated. Most of the land is under single cropping. Paddy is grown in about 30 lakh ha. of area which is mostly single cropped area. State Government's priority to cover at least one third of this area under double cropping in rabi was highlighted.

1.3 Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Govt. of Chhatisgarh in his remarks highlighted the following factors essential for improving economic condition of farmers:

- i) Availability of electricity for agriculture.
- ii) Bank Credit with interest @ 7% to the farmers.
- iii) More farmers are adopting organic farming in view of rise in input cost. Hence steps are being taken to facilitate organic farming by having a certifying agency at State level apart from other measures.

- iv) Schemes for increasing irrigated areas through new projects, drip and sprinkler irrigation projects were emphasized and the farmers of the State were adopting these in a big way.

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) Dignity of the farmers was a major issue according to some farmers. Agriculture should be commercialized so that young persons are attracted to it.
- ii) Electricity tariff for using implements for animal husbandry and fisheries was higher than the rate applicable for agriculture in Chhatisgarh. Electricity Regulatory Commission had stipulated a higher tariff for “high-tech agriculture” compared to agriculture. This will discourage horticulture, pisciculture and other forms of agriculture that can yield higher farm income.
- iii) Social audit of programmes and schemes being implemented by Govt at Gram Panchayat or village level should be taken up. The schemes were generally not benefiting farmers.
- iv) Fake farmers grabbing land for “Farm house” should be taken to task by Income Tax Department since they were showing large income for agriculture without cultivating any land.
- v) Small/ marginal farmers were facing difficulties since they could not engage agriculture workers and their income was less than landless agriculture workers due to high wages.
- vi) Impact of sponge iron plants on neighboring farms was adverse. The units were not operating ESP to control pollution. Pollution norms be strictly enforced since it is adversely affecting environment.
- vii) The benefit of 25% subsidy from State Government was not benefiting farmers since the concerned items were priced higher by about 15-20%.
- viii) Local crops and coarse grains produced by farmers should be given priority for procurement under MSP operation and PDS and local aromatic rice should be procured at a higher price under MSP.
- ix) There was need to associate Panchayats in agriculture and to encourage agro and food processing industries for improving income of farmers.

### **3. Land**

- i) Diversion of agricultural land in areas where urbanization was taking place should be discouraged.
- ii) The ceiling surplus land was being acquired by Govt. without any compensation. The farmer should be compensated. When industries were not subject to any land ceiling, why should it be applicable to farmers?
- iii) Because of theft and mischief by the villagers, land was sometime being kept fallow by farmers.
- iv) Govt. land, which was used as passage/road to the farmers was being encroached. Hence it is not possible to adopt mechanized spraying and other operations which were necessary for high-tech farming.
- v) Consolidation of landholding through mutual transfer among farmers may be encouraged as a policy. For this purpose, the stamp duty at concessional rate should be levied by State Govt.
- vi) Survey of soil condition all over State be taken up to monitor soil health and to determine proper and balanced application of fertilizer.

### **4. Water**

- i) The women & tribal farmers emphasized inadequate irrigation facility which should be increased through small projects like cross-check dams on nullas.
- ii) Water distribution as per practices under CADA should be ensured in irrigated land.
- iii) The rainwater harvesting techniques and percolation tanks constructed by the farmers have improved water availability for farming. But it needs investment and is difficult for small farmers.
- iv) Irrigation ponds and bunds should be protected from encroachment by mischievous elements and these should be maintained with help of local administration.
- v) Water Management system in watershed areas involving Farmers' Committee be encouraged.

- vi) Minimum distance between two tubewells should not be insisted upon since it prevents poor farmers from having access to water.
- vii) Chhatisgarh in spite of heavy rainfall and number of rivers has highly inadequate irrigation facilities. Bigger irrigation projects be constructed on rivers.
- viii) Advice for sowing 'suryamukhi' was given by Agriculture Deptt. but in the last two months, the irrigation water was stopped by Irrigation Deptt. There should be coordination between extension agencies and Irrigation Deptts.
- ix) In absence of proper water management system, no diversification from paddy is possible. Chhatisgarh Govt has enacted law for formation of water users' committees, which would regulate and ensure proper water management system. It is being implemented in a phased manner.

## **5. Technology / Extension/Research**

- i) The livestock policy to improve indigenous milch animals was adopted by the State Government. Farmers can choose type of frozen semen as per their need. Local 'Sahiwal' cow can yield 15-16 litres of milk and it can be upgraded to 25 litres with frozen semen from improved Sahiwal bulls.
- ii) Only about 15% of agriculture extension staff were capable of giving quality advice and extension service to farmers. They need refresher training. Conscious farmers may work for extension of technology in rural areas.
- iii) Technology backup for recycling of agriculture waste, as fodder is inadequate and the same was not available to farmers.
- iv) Potato seed is not available and was costlier in Raipur since production facility was not available in the State.
- v) School teacher may teach agriculture practices to students. This was not being done. The school curriculum may be modified to include agriculture.
- vi) Subsidy on improved implements, irrigation works, to the extent of 50% be made available to the farmers for adopting hi-tech agriculture.
- vii) Farmers should be taken into confidence by Government while implementing projects/ schemes.



- viii) Agro forestry in suitable areas may be taken up for benefit of farmers particularly in highland areas to optimize farm income. In some villages bamboo plantation had been taken up by the farmers profitably.
- ix) A small land holding of 4.7 acres was used for fish seed production, horticulture and animal husbandry by a farmer to get good income with minimum investment.
- x) No ICAR institution was available in Chhatisgarh, hampering research activities in the State.
- xi) The quality and quantity of technology developed and extent of its adoption should be examined. The inadequacies should be studied.

## **6. Quality seed and Inputs**

- i) Facility of natural breeding for milch animals be given in the villages for improving the quality of indigenous cattle.
- ii) Livestock was adversely affected due to inadequate pasture land.
- iii) Use of organic fertilizer and waste products should be encouraged by Government for use by farmers.
- iv) Availability of quality milk animals/ poultry at a reasonable rate with Government assistance was necessary for livestock development.
- v) Timely availability of seed inputs and coordination between agriculture scientists and Agriculture Department was necessary for improving productivity.
- vi) Cost of pesticides and agro chemicals varies from company to company and the farmers were sometimes misled/ cheated. Uniform price of pesticide should be adopted. There was a need for regulating the price and quality of pesticide/ agro-chemicals.
- vii) Punishment for selling spurious fertilizers and pesticides should be more stringent. The culprits were charged under 420 IPC and they were mostly getting away with lighter punishment.
- viii) Subsidy in fertilizer was given mostly to the manufacturers. For organic fertilizers, no subsidy was available.

## **7. Credit & Insurance**

- i) Central Government's help to State to extend credit to farmers @ 7% p.a through cooperatives was required. This had not been possible so far in view of the three tiers in the cooperative system with margins to be provided at each level.
- ii) A number of farmers complained that adequate credit was not available from banks even after mortgaging costly land.
- iii) Complicated procedures laid down by the Banks for availing credit were difficult for the farmers to comply.
- iv) Procedure for assessing crop loss for crop insurance was not transparent. The system was faulty and not beneficial to farmers.
- v) Premium for crop insurance had been increased substantially beyond farmers capacity to pay. For "Arhar," 19% premium fixed was not viable for the farmers. As a result the coverage of farmers under crop insurance was not satisfactory
- vi) For crop insurance, village should be the unit instead of "tehsil".
- vii) No relaxation was being extended by bank for restructuring of loan of farmers when it becomes a non performing asset due to natural calamities. Waiver of loan/reduction of interest was not necessary. But timely action to restructure loan when required and adequate credit would largely mitigate the problems faced by farmers.
- viii) Emergency consumption loan may be considered for farmers against paddy stock to avoid distress sale when there was slump in the market.
- ix) Interest holiday to farmers like "tax holiday" being extended to the industries should be considered by Government.
- x) OTS facility be extended by NABARD for agricultural loan taken by farmers from Banks/Cooperatives.
- xi) For better access to credit, women farmers be organized as SHG so that the Banks will be encouraged to give loan to the SHGs since recovery of SHG loan is about 98%.

- xii) Effective interest rate for agriculture loan from cooperatives in Chhatisgarh is 11% instead of 9% since farmer has to give 15% of loan as share capital without any return, effectively increasing interest rate.
- xiii) Warehousing facility was mostly available near urban areas but not in rural areas. Loan against warehouse receipt should be available to the farmers.
- xiv) Information to farmers about different insurance schemes is not adequate.

## **8. Marketing**

- i) Most of the farmers had no access to market and depended on middlemen/dalals who decide the price deriving substantial profit and preventing farmers from getting remunerative price.
- ii) Training programmes conducted by Government on agriculture/cropping did not highlight the problems of marketing. Extension machinery did not have an understanding of markets for explaining to the farmers.
- iii) No processing facilities were available due to inadequate infrastructure and the benefit of processing of agro products was going mostly to the traders and not to the farmers.
- iv) Organic farming/produce cannot be sold in cities due to inadequate facilities like a certifying agency in the State. Chhatisgarh Government is discussing with APEDA to have a certifying agency set up at Raipur.
- v) MSP for paddy was increased only by Rs. 10/- per quintal last year which is negligible compared to increase in the cost of input. The basis for deciding MSP is not transparent.
- vi) Prices received by farmer were not remunerative. Even a graduate farmer with 12 acres of irrigated land farming for 20 years has left it this year due to increased cost compared to the prices of produce.
- vii) “Mandis”/ markets for agriculture should be well equipped and connected with other markets to maximize returns to farmers.
- viii) Three tier cooperative marketing structure as in case of marketing of milk (NDDB pattern) may be implemented associating the farmers.

## 9. Suggestions made by the State Government

The State Government stressed that in view of rain-fed rice cultivation, there was water stress at different growth stages in rice and water logging in the initial vegetative stages of every crop. Rain water harvesting and recycling and crop diversification in fragile rice growing environment was, therefore, necessary. *Biasi* system of rice cultivation in Chhatisgarh has been prevalent since a very long time and in view of the agro climatic conditions, it cannot be replaced easily. It has inherent defects – high seed rate, greater water loss through percolation leading to drought at terminal stage etc. *Biasi* operations cannot be done without standing water of at least 5 cm depth. The general definition for drought did not apply to rain-fed rice under the *biasi* system and hence Chhatisgarh does not get full benefit of drought relief. Farmers have low risk bearing capacity in view of mono cropping in the light of agro climatic conditions. A separate credit policy was, therefore, needed for the State. Large scale migration needed to be checked through better employment opportunities after the rainy season, increase in double crop area and other activities like bee keeping, sericulture, mushroom cultivation etc. Chhatisgarh is already giving importance to farm ponds and roof water harvesting and enjoys an advantage since each rice field also works as recharge pond. Chhatisgarh State Biodiversity Board would be working on detailed guidelines for protecting the rights of farmers in their various roles. It was pointed out that in Chhatisgarh, rice was grown under broadcasting *biasi* system whereas most of the dynamic crop simulation are made for transplanted rice with high inputs. It was necessary to develop dynamic crop simulation programmes for directly seeded *biasi* system.

Government of Chhatisgarh further indicated that they had planned to take up measures like crop diversification, increasing cropping intensity, organic farming, agro-forestry, strengthening of soil testing laboratories, fodder and cash crops and promoting agro-based industries for development of agriculture. Traditional and nutritive crops of Chhatisgarh like kulthi, kudo-kutki, kesri daal etc should be procured under PDS especially since “Pratik” variety of Kesri daal had only 0.6% toxicity. It also suggested that scope of fishermen welfare insurance be extended and subsidy component be increased. Another suggestion was that research in agriculture needs reorientation for

small farmers and should utilize traditional agricultural knowledge available with the farmers. Policy be reoriented to establish linkages between common property resources, livelihood support system and traditional institutional arrangements. Policy should also encourage rainwater harvesting. Employment opportunities should be improved through vocational training.

10. After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF GUJARAT FOR FEED BACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT AHMEDABAD ON 15<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Ahmedabad on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Y.C. Nanda, Member, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Dr. Deepak Rathi, Research Officer. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) A large percentage of the rural households are landless and also assetless. As they also did not have any vocational skill/ education, they were therefore not likely to benefit much from the growth of the economy. There may not be any trickle down effect for them unless they had some productive assets or marketable skills. Jobless growth was really joyless growth.
- ii) The need was for a rural non-farm livelihood initiative with KVIC and a restructured SFAC as its core to work on a consortium basis as a counterpart to NREGP in the skilled employment sector. It may bring all rural non-farm employment programmes together.
- iii) An effective and efficient delivery system was an important pre-requisite for improving our agriculture. Delivery system constraints need attention. Entire component of the delivery system [non-plan] needs to be supported. The staff needed retraining/ greater mobility and more knowledge, as knowledge was likely to play an important role in future.
- iv) Most of the recommendations of the NCF were laudable but the question was as to who would fund those.

- v) Budget for agriculture needs to be increased particularly at the State level as agriculture is a State subject.
- vi) Definition of the farmer as proposed in the draft policy covers different groups, which require segregated planning including different new policy packages.
- vii) Scale is important in agriculture and inefficiency should not be rewarded. However, marginal and small farmers needed to be protected and supported.
- viii) The farmers need education/training in every aspect of farming including marketing to face the challenges of modern diversified commercial farming.
- ix) There is need to involve more educated youth in farming. Rural non farm activities needed to be enhanced.
- x) Day to day weather report should be made available to farming community on a regular basis.
- xi) Poor electricity supply is a serious constraint.
- xii) There is a need to promote VKCs.
- xiii) The State is fortunate to have no farmer suicide.
- xiv) The time of telecast of programmes on agriculture should be shifted from 6.00 pm to 7.00 pm for the benefit of the farmers. Serials should be prepared on agricultural activities. Need for a 24 hour Kisan Channel.
- xv) Private persons should also get the benefit of Indo-US Knowledge Initiative for their capacity building in relevant field.
- xvi) Due to the National Commission on Farmers, the farmers have some voice in the country now.
- xvii) There is a need for separate budget for agriculture like Railways for giving more emphasis and proper orientation to agriculture under the changing scenario.
- xviii) On one hand we have food security related issues and on the other development of the competitive market with free choice; the farmer will go for the crop that will generate more income for him. How are the food security issues to be addressed? There are also chances of cheaper imports of agri-commodities in the present WTO era. The farmers would need support to face these challenges.

- xix) Government looks at farming with social angle and there is need to think in the entrepreneurial way. There are eight Agri-Export Zones in the State, which could be exploited for the benefit of the farmers.
- xx) Agriculture should be treated as a Central subject or placed in Concurrent List with the changing scenario and implementation of the WTO.
- xxi) High tech agriculture and horticulture may be treated as industry.

### **3. Land**

- i) There was a need to relook at the 'land ceilings'. Some cultivators felt only 70-80 acre land size was viable.
- ii) Land Use Board need restructuring and should be renamed as Farm Use Board and placed under Agriculture Department rather than the Revenue Department as at present.
- iii) Land laws need modification.
- iv) Consolidation of land holdings was required. The concept that land size should not be allowed to be reduced below a minimum size needs to be examined and introduced in the land laws.
- v) Allocate wastelands to small/marginal farmers and their groups instead of corporates.

### **4. Livestock**

- i) Some of our best breeds of livestock are being protected under IPR in foreign countries; we should protect our gene heritage. Knowledge and technology growth is very much required; the Agricultural Universities should be funded liberally for research and technology development for the farmers.
- ii) Non descript animals are increasing; their characterisation should be made.
- iii) Poultry comes under agriculture (activities allied to agriculture) but treated as an industry.
- iv) Milk production is stabilised now : The need is to increase it further.



- v) Gujarat is rich in animal genetic resources which needs to be protected and disease infestation should be checked. Very little is being done in this direction in an organised manner.
- vi) Need to provide doorstep artificial insemination services for the cattle.
- vii) Women do most of the work regarding cattle rearing in Gujarat.
- viii) Extension system is very weak in the animal husbandry sector.
- ix) There is need to give more emphasis to Agriculture Extension and Training in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan.
- x) Stray cattle often destroy the crops. But certain religious considerations come to the forefront in dealing with, uneconomic cattle and wild animals.

## **5. Research and Technology**

- i) There is need to look at organic farming in a holistic manner; organic farming requires more knowledge input than the normal farming system.
- ii) Research and technology dissemination may look at the issues connected with the need for increased productivity, efficient input use, quality management, marketing, value addition and processing, diversification in the direction of export oriented crops, waste management, energy management, natural resource management, promotional role of APMC, agri processing and commodity parks, disaster management and improved support systems.

## **6. Inputs**

- i) Spurious input supply should be checked and right input at right time and place be made available to the needy farmer. The transport expenses should be kept at the minimum. There is a need to look at farmers in a disaggregated manner in different regions to work out a good delivery system. The prices of pesticides need to be controlled.
- ii) Agriculture inspection services need to be established. Use of pesticide should be regulated.
- iii) Quality of inputs and its timely supply and prices could be reduced by routing these through linkages with banks, suppliers and farmers.

- iv) Need to form one resource centre in a cluster of 40-50 villages.
- v) No need of service tax on seed as farmer is also a grower of the seed.

## **7. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Gujarat inspite of having good growth in agriculture was facing the problem of outreach of the financial system. Only 10 per cent of the farmers were getting credit from commercial banks, 17 per cent from cooperatives and nearly 42 per cent from informal sources. After 40 years of nationalisation of banks and 20 years of credit-targeting, poor outreach was extremely worrisome.
- ii) World Bank and NCAER study [2003] showed that in UP and AP, the percentage of farmers to the rural households who could get credit were only 24 and 19 per cent respectively. Loan approval required on an average 33 week time in commercial banks. 27 per cent of the farmers reported paying bribe. The bribe amount ranged between 10 to 20 per cent of the loan amount.
- iii) Outreach and quality of credit should be improved with appropriate interest rate. Inefficiencies of the delivery system should not be loaded on the farmers and Government may provide subvention if the interest rates were to be kept lower than the economic rates.
- iv) Farmers also need credit to meet emergency expenses as also for consumption expenses as their incomes are seasonal. The banks could consider devising suitable schemes to meet these credit needs within the overall repaying capacity of the farmers.
- v) Banks need to develop new schemes to meet credit needs of the farmers for switching over to higher productivity levels, new economic activities, value addition and new technologies.
- vi) The crop insurance premium for cotton crop was very high.
- vii) Agriculture is high-risk activity; proper crop insurance scheme is needed. The crop insurance in the present form is not farmer friendly and the government is also incurring large liability every year. In spite of the above, the farmers are not satisfied. This needs revision. The farmers also need insurance for covering

market risks, which have increased considerably in shifting from subsistence farming to commercial farming.

- viii) Medical expenses are increasing. An affordable and effective system of rural health insurance is needed. The primary health service should be improved.
- ix) Farmers want quick cash after the harvest. In absence of adequate storage arrangements and problems in negotiability of warehouse receipts, pledge finance has not developed. Banks need to innovate and consider providing finance against produce stored at farmer's house.
- x) There was a need for an Agriculture Risk Fund to take care of the risk materialising in agriculture lendings by banks.
- xi) The scale of finance for different crops should be realistic and revised regularly.

## **8. Cooperatives**

- i) The cooperatives appear to be the most effective way to reach the marginal and small farmers. However, there is a need for reforms in the cooperatives. These should be professionally managed with clear demarcation of duties and responsibilities between the officials and the Board of Directors. Audit and accounts need improvement
- ii) Recommendations of the Vaidyanathan committee for revitalisation/recapitalisation of credit cooperatives should be implemented quickly.

## **9. Marketing**

- i) How to produce, when to produce and where to sell should be answered and integrated with market for the benefit of the farmers.
- ii) Need to give more attention to remunerative prices for the farmers for their produce. APMCs and State Marketing Boards should understand their new developmental role. There was a huge scope of improvement in existing working style of the APMCs.
- iii) Hamal and coolie do not deal with farmers respectfully; rather they insult them. Farmers selling their produce in APMC feel that the traders and management

connive and often cheat them. There is need for a greater say of farmers in managing the APMCs and a say particularly in the auction system. The farmer's interest should be uppermost in the working of the APMCs. Ungraded produce fetches low price. The need is to introduce grading at the farm gate itself.

- iv) Increase in farmers' income is most important and for that making him secure in the marketing field is essential. Insurance to cover market risk does not really exist. Vulnerability on this account will continue to be there unless some mitigation mechanism is put in place.
- v) At present farmers do not get sufficient return from grading but they are doing this only because of their reputation for supplying quality material in the market.
- vi) With entry of big corporates in agriculture and related areas, it would be essential to ensure that the interests of the farming community are protected.
- vii) There is a time lag between picking to export of cotton produced by the farmers. During this period they feel shortage of money at one end due to expenses incurred in ginning, grading and getting international certificate regarding quality of the cotton and on the other they don't have money as they are not selling cotton; therefore to promote export of cotton, funding for the period mentioned above should be provided to such farmers for meeting day-to-day expenses.
- viii) Storage facilities should be provided to the farmers at cheaper rates so that they can keep their produce in the godown and avoid sale during the glut period.
- ix) Informal contract farming is taking place in the State. It is necessary that a suitable farmer-centric code of conduct is decided at the earliest. The present arrangements are rather fragile.
- x) The Government should provide subsidy to farmers for processing, transportation and value chain management.
- xi) According to the changing scenario in the marketing of farm products there is need to implement the Model APMC Act in all the States. Demand driven export oriented mega markets must be established to increase the income of the farmers.

- xii) There was a need to promote the National Agro Product Futures Exchange by APMC etc with membership of all APMCs.
- xiii) Need to develop farmers' markets so that farmers could market his produce directly to the consumers.
- xiv) The traders take benefit from MSP by procuring production of the small/marginal farmers at low price and then sell it at MSP. Value addition at farm gate level is required.

## **10. Women in Agriculture**

- i) Special treatment should be given to the women involved in agriculture activities. There is a need to form more women self help groups.
- ii) Women capacity building and skill development is urgently required.
- iii) Women do not get land titles and also find it difficult to access services including credit from banks.

**11.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF HARYANA FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT CHANDIGARH ON 25<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Chandigarh on 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2006. The NCF was represented by Dr. R.B. Singh, Member, Shri G.C. Pati, Joint Secretary and Dr. Deepak Rathi, Research Officer. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

1.2. Mrs. Asha Sharma, Principal Secretary, Agriculture, welcoming the participants explained how farmers of Punjab and Haryana had taken leadership in making the country self-sufficient in food grain during green revolution. But now farmers of Haryana are adversely affected due to stress on natural resources on account of green revolution. Government of Haryana has adopted the strategy of diversification of agriculture to tackle the problem.

1.3 On request of the Principal Secretary (Agriculture), Shri Surajewala, a former senior Minister of Haryana and presently a Member of the Legislative Assembly of Haryana and President of the Bhartiya Kisan Sabha (Haryana), a person with several decades of association with farmers and himself a farmer, gave the following account and status of farming and farmers of the State:

i) A good number of farmers, including landless farm workers (a detailed list was provided), several in the age group of 20-45 years, have committed suicide in the last few years, a phenomena unknown 15 years ago. This was primarily due

to the increased indebtedness because of the low or negative income of the farmer.

- ii) The overall Human Development Index in Haryana has gone down and people are even losing their culture and identity. The level of education, especially the technical education, was one of the poorest in the country.
- iii) Some of the best livestock genetic resources of the country such as Murrah buffaloes are being lost rapidly due to poor policy of livestock marketing. The three major ICAR Livestock Research Institutes, namely, (i) National Dairy Research Institute, Karnal; (ii) Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, Karnal and (iii) Buffalo Research Institute, Hisar, should ensure the conservation of the rich livestock biodiversity of Haryana.
- iv) The present price policy has been defective and it was requested that a Regional Agricultural Prices Commission, comprising a good number of farmers, should be established to look into the input and output balance in the North West region, which is different from those in other regions.
- v) Haryana being a major exporter of Basmati Rice, the Basmati procurement prices should be delinked with other Government-supported prices as export of Basmati Rice is the main foreign exchange earner amongst the agricultural commodities of the country. The price suggested by the CACP is generally unfavourable for farmers; hence the methodology of price calculations should be improved. There is good scope for promoting export of organic Basmati.
- vi) Unthoughtful promotion of new crops has resulted in almost complete elimination of some of the very important crops such as, Chickpea (Gram) and Guar.
- vii) The prevalent rice - wheat cropping system has resulted in serious fall in waer table, thus has adversely affected the water quality as well as the cost of water pumping.
- viii) The flow of credit to the poor farmers is highly unsatisfactory and majority of the farmers take loans from private moneylenders at the interest rate of about 35-40 per cent. The problem is further aggravated due to spurious seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.

- ix) Most of the agricultural credits in the States are unemployed yet reluctant to take to farming resulting in social problems.
- x) The loaning by the formal institutions in Haryana is relatively at high rate of interest of 12-14 per cent whereas the Central Government has declared agricultural loaning 7 per cent against 4 per cent interest rate recommended by the NCF. The subsidy should be given direct to the farmer.
- xi) The agricultural research has been sluggish as high yielding varieties of oilseeds and pulses been released in recent years.
- xii) The Government Departments work in isolation; hence there is poor extension services and technology transfer. Further, public-private partnership is also poor.

## **2. Land**

- i) Land record should have the name of woman farmer since she was totally involved in agriculture.
- ii) Survey of status of land, its use and facilities should be conducted and computerized.
- iii) A farmer should be considered a small farmer for land holding up to 4 ha against the existing limit of 2 ha.
- iv) Land Reforms should allow lease of land by marginal farmers to other farmers to improve viability of farming. Land consolidation should also be undertaken. Fragmentation of holdings goes on unabated and 10 to 15% of the farmers have disposed off their tiny land pieces and of the farmers have become landless labourers.
- v) Adequate soil testing laboratories should be made available in the State.
- vi) Diversion of prime agricultural land for industrial purpose was mentioned as a critical issue. Waste land be developed by industry, part of it given to farmers, rest be used by them.
- vii) About 15% of farmers in Haryana were reportedly landless and unviable.
- viii) Land in some cases was lying fallow and uncultivable. Land development be taken up with govt. funding and may be recovered from farmers without interest.



- ix) Problem of land consolidation be sorted out since land holding was more fragmented.
- x) Productivity has reduced even after using higher quantum of fertilizers due to degradation of soil. Organic manure should be provided so that 'organic farming' can be taken up in a big way.
- xi) Law should provide vertical development like multistoreyed buildings to minimize division of prime agricultural land in urban areas.
- xii) In order to discourage excessive use of urea & DAP which adversely affects soil fertility, the subsidy on urea/DAP fertilizer should be withdrawn or reduced.

### **3. Water**

- i) Depletion and deterioration of quality of ground water level in Haryana was stated to be a critical factor that would influence farmers adversely. Subsidy of 40 to 50% for drip and sprinkler irrigation project as well as for other implements should be given to farmers.
- ii) Water shortage, particularly for drinking water was mainly due to expansion of urban areas which should be prevented and villages be developed.
- iii) Groundwater level varied from 20' to 150' in the State. Cost of irrigation is higher where level is 150'. MSP should take into consideration this higher cost.
- iv) Industrial waste from industries should not be drained out the River; since it may cause harm to organic farmer.
- v) For utilization of drip irrigation properly, skill was not available in Haryana. 50% of fertilizer can be saved with drip/sprinkler irrigation if properly used. Need for training and skill development in this aspect was highlighted.
- vi) Out of loan for tube well about 40% was wasted as commission or excess expenditure. Hence subsidy was not benefiting farmers.
- vii) Rain water harvesting from roof of Government building should be taken up first to popularize it.
- viii) Drip irrigation in plain and hill regions should be promoted to conserve water.
- ix) Water be treated as national asset. Scientists should evolve new seed to utilize saline water and inferior water.

- x) Along with rice Haryana was also selling its water and natural resources to other State in shape of food grains.

#### **4. Livestock and Fishery**

- i) Livestock was highlighted as an important asset for women farmers and landless labourers as it supplemented the household income of family preventing extreme steps like suicide.
- ii) Apart from food & fodder, health care facility for livestock was stated to be a critical problem area.
- iii) Problem of stray cattle should be tackled. Stray bulls should be castrated.
- iv) India has one-third of World's cattle population with per animal yield being lowest in the world. Per capita milk consumption was also lowest.
- v) Livestock and fishery had to be adopted along with cropping in order to improve income of the farmers.
- vi) Birth and death of indigenous and other livestock and animals should be registered to facilitate conservation of indigenous breed.
- vii) Farmers with livestock should be covered under milk route for higher income and security.
- viii) Social security for farmers should be at the same rate as per class IV government employees.
- ix) Numbers of farmers have fish pond along with agriculture farming. Integrated farming has more benefits with less risk.

#### **5. Technology**

- i) Law must be in place to punish the companies supplying fake or spurious inputs to the farming community.
- ii) There is a need to establish technological parks where new technologies for value addition could be disseminated to the farmers was highlighted.
- iii) Biodegradable mulching is required instead of plastic mulching to protect the environment and flora and fauna of the soil microclimate, as well as for increasing carbon content of the soil.

- iv) Budget under research head should be increased so that new technologies would be developed for the benefit of the farmers.
- v) Technologies like zero tillage for conservation agriculture must be generated and replicated.
- vi) Vegetables should be given due importance in the National Horticulture Mission.

## **6. HRD and Education**

- i) Need for education in rural areas was stressed since it will create off farm employment opportunities for farmers for improving livelihood security.
- ii) A large number of Agriculture graduates were unemployed. They may be given dealership for fertilizers/pesticides.
- iii) Kisan Call Centre “1551” number should be accessible from the mobile phones also.
- iv) Government should fund visit of farmers to other states and to other centres to train in new technology.
- v) Technical guidance in proper use of fertilizer, land etc to farmer through Farm Schools should be provided.
- vi) Training in vegetable/ fruit nurseries and other allied agriculture and agro processing should be imparted to the youths through KVKs.

## **7. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Private moneylenders dominate over institutional sources in terms of share of credit disbursement and they charge the interest up to 30 to 40 per cent per annum. A Law should be in place to regularize the moneylenders and to cap the rate of interest, may be around 12 per cent.
- ii) Insurance should not be done on village basis but on unit area basis because many a times there were losses in a set of fields but some other farmers may harvest good crop.

## **8. Market**

- i) Original quality of 'Basmati' was restored after introduction of organic farming. "Organic Basmati" was profitable with no disease, for which sustainable certification facility should be available within easy reach of the farmer.
- ii) Setting up of Farmers Clubs was reported to be beneficial.
- iii) While finalizing MSP, cost of implements, irrigation etc should be taken into account. It should be linked to wholesale price index.
- iv) Increase of MSP would result in increase in consumer prices and may not be politically acceptable. Hence subsidy in the cost of implements, credit, electricity etc. should be given. Credit at nominal cost should be allowed to farmers. Alternatively higher MSP should be allowed.
- v) Monopoly trends in procurement of agricultural produce due to permitting large corporate houses to take up procurement should not be allowed since after 2/3 years, the industry may exploit both the farmer and the consumers.
- vi) For 'Contract farming' Government should be the third party to contract and a sound dispute resolution mechanism be specified.
- vii) Agro-processing units be promoted, particularly for medicinal and aromatic plants since it would attract youths to farming.
- viii) MSP should be changed to Minimum Remunerative Price (i.e. MRP) and be linked to price index to give assured income to farmer and no subsidy would be necessary for agriculture. MSP should be different for different regions.
- ix) In ground water stress area, heavy water consuming crops like paddy should be banned. Summer paddy should also be banned.
- x) Crop insurance scheme should incentivise and reward crop diversification efforts in different areas.
- xi) No trader should be allowed to purchase in "mandi" at a price less than approved MSP.
- xii) Facilities for grading packaging, sorting necessary for diversification should be in place.
- xiii) Instead of giving subsidy to farmers market should be developed with skill development training in value addition in farmers' backyard.

- xiv) Elimination of middlemen in marketing of agricultural produce (arthiyas) should be ensured.
- xv) Food cooperative stores/shops for sale of SHG Horticulture and other Products should be set up by State Government in each Block.
- xvi) Higher MSP for basmati rice should be notified by Govt. of India.
- xvii) Veterinary medicines should be sold at MRP.

## **9. Suggestions made by the State Government**

After the Consultation, the Member, NCF had discussion with Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Haryana in presence of officers of State Government where following views/suggestions were given:-

- i) In view of amendment of succession law giving property right to women, the land held by women should be considered separately for ceiling as per Land Reform Act .
- ii) Processing and storage facilities should be set up for fresh water prawn which has excellent potential particularly in salinity affected land in the State. About 3.50 lakh ha of water-logged land in the State should also be converted to fishery.
- iii) A regulatory framework for controlling and testing the bio products in the market to prevent sale of spurious products should be in place.
- iv) Movement of farmers from primary to secondary/ tertiary sector should be facilitated for improving their income.
- v) Food security should not be a burden on farmers. Areas which can be taken up for food grain production be identified by Government of India.
- vi) There is need for preservation of indigenous genes and seeds for developing genetically modified seeds by ICAR institutions for benefit of the farmers.
- vii) In livestock production maintenance of phytosanitary standards for international markets should be ensured. Livestock insurance should take care of reproduction losses.

- viii) NFDB and National Agriculture Authority should have a representative from every State and a few farmers engaged in inland aquaculture.
- ix) Water should be declared a national resource. Efficient use and conservation of water should be the focus of research and technology.
- x) Sprinkler and drip irrigation system should be encouraged.
- xi) Government of India should assist State Govts. in setting up of State level Institute of Plant Genetic Resources and for developing DNA Fingerprinting of selected crops.
- xii) New wheat variety should be developed to withstand higher temperature in February.
- xiii) A law to ensure MSP at full economic cost of production and profit should be enacted by Parliament.
- xiv) For women, small and marginal farmers subsidy element under various central schemes should be increased to 75%.
- xv) State bio-security units must be set up in all States.

**10.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF HIMACHAL PRADESH FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT SHIMLA ON 26<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Shimla on 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Shri Y.C. Nanda, Member and Ms. Mamta Shankar, Director. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) A Separate Policy for Hilly Regions is needed.
- ii) Awards for farmers should also be instituted at the Gram Panchayat level.
- iii) Farmers should get facilities and incentives, which are available for the small-scale industries sector.
- iv) A State Commission on Farmers should be set up with farmers as members. The Commission should submit bi-annual Report to the State Assembly.
- v) Agriculture, especially marketing should be made a concurrent subject under the Constitution.
- vi) Central projects should take local conditions into account before setting conditionalities.
- vii) Community Development Programme is destroyed and the line Department's control has not helped farmers much.
- viii) H.P. can't use heavy fertilizers adequately since top soils are thin.
- ix) There is a problem in extension since there is a ban on recruitments and old staff is retiring.
- x) Farmers should be awarded by Padma Awards to encourage them.

### **3. Land**

- i) Two-third area in Himachal Pradesh is with the Forest Department. Substantial proportion of this land is unutilized. It is either encroached or is in the form of wasteland for which Forest Department has no road map.
- ii) There is no focus on farmer or fodder in the Himachal Pradesh forest policy.
- iii) People should be associated in the management of forests.
- iv) Fodder varieties should be planted in afforestation programmes.
- v) Land Use Board should be with Planning Department for better coordination and acceptability.
- vi) Industry should not be promoted at the cost of agriculture. Agro-based industries would be more appropriate for promotion.
- vii) Urban expansion under schemes like 'Rajiv Gandhi Urban Renewal Mission' should not be at the cost of agricultural land.
- viii) There should be a law on constructing houses and drawal of water, since these have a major impact on Agriculture.
- ix) Size of landholding is getting smaller and land is getting fragmented.
- x) Nearly 80% land holding is small. There is need to diversify into multi livelihood options, through non-farm/off farm activities and mixed farming under the guidance of specialists and with adequate training.

### **4. Water**

- i) Forestry and irrigation departments should have been invited to participate in the Consultation.
- ii) In Himachal Pradesh only 18% of cultivated area is under assured irrigation. Retention of water is therefore critical. Under Horticulture Technology Mission an incentive is given for water harvesting structures and there is a good demand for these structures from the farmers.
- iii) Different rate of subsidy was given by different departments for water harvesting structures, confusing the farmer. These should be harmonized.



- iv) In upper reaches, melting snow and glaciers could be harvested with the help of check dams and shrubs.
- v) Water recharging should be made compulsory at village level. Ear marking of common land (100 canals) for water recharge should be made compulsory.
- vi) A boom in the construction of industrial, commercial and residential projects has placed a huge and unsustainable demand on the water resources.
- vii) The drainage systems constructed by PWD etc. usually terminate in farmer's fields resulting in flooding of these farms in the rainy season. There should be separate provision for this purpose.
- viii) There is a need for strengthening and enhancing irrigation especially lift irrigation.
- ix) Micro hydel projects are retarding recharging projects. They also do not allow for storage reservoirs.
- x) Before diverting water through tunnels, farmers should be consulted and cost/benefit should be weighed.
- xi) Farmers should be involved in water management.
- xii) Water should be a community property and managed by local community. The government should bear the cost of water management.
- xiii) All rivers should be nationalized and managed by a National Water Authority.
- xiv) Rainwater harvesting should be encouraged especially in hill areas.
- xv) In case of nationalization of water, the originating State should have the first right on hydel generation.

## **5. Climate Change and agro meteorology**

- i) The frequency of storms, hail and untimely rains have increased. Snowfall has decreased. The weather has become perceptibly warmer and apple no longer grows below 8000 ft. The production of apple has declined.
- ii) Calamity Relief Fund guidelines need change to provide substantial help to farmers. Compensation under Calamity Relief Fund should be given to the farmer directly.

- iii) Weather monitoring centre is ineffective and farmers do not get timely information.

## **6. Livestock**

- i) No attention is being paid to stray and unproductive cattle. Government should be responsible for them and treat them as resource.
- ii) Scientific management of pasture land is required.
- iii) Policy for migratory livestock is required.

### **6.1 Livestock Feed**

- i) There is a ban on green felling leading to shortage of fodder.
- ii) No single agency has taken responsibility for fodder supply.
- iii) The Government is providing the feed for trout fishing at present but the quality is not guaranteed and the supply is also insufficient.

## **7. Fisheries**

- i) Trout farming is a good source of income and it should be promoted among more farmers.
- ii) Trout culture is very costly and risky too, unfortunately a subsidy of only Rs.7,000/- is available for an investment of Rs. 1 Lac.
- iii) The level of subsidy should be increased especially in hill region where trout can be an important source of livelihood and employment.
- iv) Hill farmers have specific training need but presently there is no Institute in the country where farmers as well as extension workers could receive training in latest techniques in hill area fisheries.
- v) There is no assured market for trout.
- vi) Since trout farming was risky there was a need for insurance for protection against flood/ poisoning.
- vii) The electricity and water rates are charged at industrial/commercial rates, whereas rates applicable for agriculture should be applicable.

- viii) The micro-hydel projects were also destroying trout farming by obstructing the flow of the rivers and churning of beds. The entire riverine water is sucked through a trench weir.
- ix) No allocation of water is made for fish ponds in irrigation projects.
- x) Centrally sponsored schemes for fish reared in plains have provision for first year input subsidy. No such provision is there for cold water fish in the hills where expenditures could be substantial in view of the specialised nature of trout and mahseer.
- xi) Natural fish breeding grounds are being destroyed by road construction and micro hydro project.
- xii) University and premier research institutions involved in research in fisheries should develop artificial seed production technology.

### **7.1 Fish seeds**

- i) No seeds are available for stocking of reservoirs.
- ii) Narrow view is taken as environmental issues leading to a set back in seed multiplication.
- iii) Quality control of fish seed is very important.

## **8. Research and Extension**

- i) Pesticides Sales license should be given only to agricultural graduates.
- ii) SAUs should be strengthened. Research efforts are inadequate and no benefits are accruing to the farmers.
- iii) Micro-survey is needed to decide what to grow if there are frosts.
- iv) SAUs are in dire need of funds.
- v) Vacancies of extension staff should be filled.

## **9. Organic Farming**

- i) Organic farming was advantageous in the hill States where there was a danger of contamination of the water bodies by excessive use of chemical fertilizers.

- ii) Animal Husbandry was very important for organic farming and it was claimed that a single cow could give profit of Rs. 50,000/- against the supply of organic manure and cow urine which was used as pesticide.
- iii) Organically grown peach had a longer shelf life.
- iv) Awareness should be created to encourage good practices in organic farming. For this purpose training was required.
- v) Chemical fertilizers were subsidized whereas no such subsidy for organic manure was available. On top of it 8% VAT was charged on organic manure from other States. Use of organic manure should be subsidized.
- vi) Government should provide financial assistance for organic farming and bear the certification cost (At present Morarka Foundation was helping in certification).

## **10. Horticulture**

- i) Productivity of apples is very low compared to Jammu & Kashmir. Most of the apple varieties grown are at least 100 years old. Whereas Jammu & Kashmir has introduced new varieties, new varieties have been only recently imported from US. The State government is carrying out high density plantation in upper reaches for testing purpose.
- ii) Apple is also grown on wastelands with the help of the area expansion scheme of NHB.
- iii) Soil health in horticulture orchards is declining. Nutrient replenishment is required.
- iv) KVKs are needed in each district. Farmers should be given professional and business orientation.
- v) There is a need for Horticulture Price Commission and a Market Intervention Scheme in years of excess production to protect farmers from price crash. Every State should have a Horticulture Produce Board, to take care of marketing needs in view of the highly perishable nature of horticultural commodities.
- vi) National Horticulture Mission should provide adequate assistance.

- vii) With so many research institutions and universities there should be no need for importing varieties from abroad.
- viii) Subsidy should be given on 'made tea' from Kangra region. Subsidies will also encourage the production of diversified products like chantelli and beer.
- ix) Due to liberalizing of trade, a niche market catering to the rich has come up for imported apples. However imported apples coming into India are waxed which is banned in the world. The local Kinnaur variety is of superior quality but is not fetching high prices.
- x) Imported fruits have the advantage of heavy subsidy in their countries of origin, window dressing and packaging.
- xi) Small farmers do not have export permits/licenses. Efforts to take up the matter with Commerce Ministry have been in vain.

## **11. Inputs**

### **11.1 Seeds**

- i) The Agricultural Universities should produce good quality root stock.
- ii) There is a problem of shortage of good quality seeds/sapling faced by Nursery Growers. This should get a thrust in the National Horticultural Mission.
- iii) There is a need to grow new varieties and carry out location specific research. We must develop our own varieties in order to fetch good prices and compete globally.
- iv) Germplasm Bank and Root Stock Banks should be established.
- v) Nursery growers are neglected in the horticultural policies. Multi-nationals are taking major benefits of seed production by farmers.
- vi) The provisions under the proposed Seeds Act 2002 proposing that no farmer should keep his own seed, are unacceptable since this would only benefit seed companies.

### **11.2 Implements and Tools**

- i) Women farmer friendly tools and implements suited for small farms in hill areas should be designed and distributed.

### **11.3 Soil**

- i) Soil has been extensively exploited and its health is precarious. It has stopped responding adequately to chemical fertilizers.
- ii) Soil mapping should be carried out with proactive advice to farmers on crops to be sown.
- iii) The fertilizers usage is unbalanced in favour of Nitrogen. Due to poor extension, MNCs were dictating usage. The research is slow and does not percolate to the grass-root level.
- iv) Subsidy on Nitrogenous fertilizers should be reduced and subsidy on potassium and phosphatic fertilizers should be restored to improve soil quality since the requirement of nitrogen in the soil could be met by Vermi compost etc.
- v) Top soil is thin and heavy fertilizers are generally not effective.
- vi) Cost of organic inputs is higher compared to NPK. There should be a subsidy on organic inputs.

## **12. Other Support Services:**

### **Rural Infrastructure**

- i) Roads are essential for rural infrastructure and more money needs to be allocated for building roads in the hilly regions since cost of laying roads is higher.
- ii) Small apple farmers do not have holding capacity for their produce. Their marketing efforts should be supported.
- iii) Transport costs are very high in hilly and tribal areas.
- iv) Cold storage and cold chain infrastructure is required. Cold storage should come up in production areas. At present the subsidy on setting up cold storage has been taken by the middlemen in cities and the cold storages are located there (the State Government has recently asked the Adani Group to set up seeds stores and cold storages near the orchards. The Group will buy directly from the farmers and will do the grading, packaging etc. so that the farmers will be spared these costs as well as the inflated costs of the transporters. Reliance is also

expected to participate in a big way. A model code of conduct for arrangement between farmers and companies had been drawn up by the State Government.

- v) Department of Fisheries should have a refrigerated van for transporting fish.

### **13. Credit & Insurance**

- i) Role of Banking Institutions was painted in very poor light.
- ii) Farmers found it very difficult to approach the banks due to commission, harassment and corruption. This along with cumbersome paper work had forced borrowers to resort to borrowing from moneylenders at very high interest rates or resort to microfinance by forming Self Help Groups [SHGs].
- iii) Too much land is being asked as collateral even for small loans.
- iv) Loan should also be given for consumption purposes. Status and the repayment history of the borrower should be taken into account.
- v) Processing charges should be waived.
- vi) There is very little institutional finance for Apple growers. Middlemen dominate the financing.
- vii) Rates of interest for loans from NABARD are higher and should be brought down especially for Cooperative Banks.
- viii) Rate of interest on the agricultural loan should not be higher than that for housing or automobiles.
- ix) It should not be mandatory to take bank loans for availing subsidy from the National Horticulture Board.
- x) Corruption in obtaining no demand certificates from Banks should be curbed.
- xi) A Revolving fund for farmers should be set up, to support them in case of artificial/natural calamities.
- xii) Consumption loan should be provided to the farmers by the Banks in order to save them from falling into the clutches of money lenders.
- xiii) Insurance is needed for horticulture crops just like cereals/cash crops.
- xiv) The premium on agricultural insurance is very heavy. The premium should be reasonable based on crop yield estimation.

- xv) There is a problem faced in assessing the losses for insurance purposes. Crop yield estimation methods like crop cutting may not give accurate results.

#### **14. Marketing**

- i) Fluctuating market and non-remunerative prices create difficulties for farmers.
- ii) It is felt that there is a huge gap between the prices that the producers get and that which the consumers pay. The proportion going to middlemen should come down. Farmers are harassed by truckers while carrying their produce and have to pay commission in Delhi mandis and they get a raw deal.
- iii) Marketing should dictate area wise production plans for deciding what should be grown where. Information regarding spatial and temporal pattern of demand in various parts of the country should be made available for proper production planning and remunerative prices to farmers growing off season vegetables.
- iv) Pre and post harvest losses should be cut.
- v) MSP should be extended to horticulture crops.
- vi) The MIS allocation is too low to permit institutions to really benefit farmers.
- vii) The central Price Stabilisation Fund scheme is not a success in H.P. because land holdings were very small. Separate price stabilisation fund is needed for hill states.
- viii) Price Stabilization Fund should be established with 1:1:1 ratio between the farmer, State and Central Government.
- ix) Due to the scattered settlements and poor road links to interior villages, there is a problem in Marketing of milk and other perishable commodities especially in remote areas.

#### **15. Women Farmers**

- i) Women farmers expressed their appreciation of the Krishak Mahila Samiti Scheme run by the state government.



## **16. Agro-tourism**

- i) Tourism could be combined with agriculture. Especially orchard tourism has great potential in H.P.
- ii) Farmers could also be taken out to visit model farms in the country and abroad.
- iii) Model farms are needed in the villages for field visits.

## **17. Youth and Agriculture**

- i) Every year a huge number of youth join the job market after finishing school; however there is a ban on Government jobs. They could be absorbed in Agriculture if they are trained. Hence, Agricultural training institutes, like ITIs, should be set up to train farmers to enable them to undertake scientific agriculture.
- ii) Agricultural University graduates should have compulsory experience/training in villages.
- iii) Agriculture University students should not double up as extension staff. The Departments should be doing it. In Himanchal Pradesh Agriculture Department staff was merely working for sale of pesticides and seeds.
- iv) Today's youngster does not see much benefit in agriculture. To attract youth to farming, the cost of farming should be brought down, and its profitability should be increased through better marketing.
- v) Our education policy is not farmer oriented. Farmers do not get research support.

## **18. Animal Human Conflict**

- i) Farmers are threatened by the increasing population of the monkeys, wild boars and neelgai. There is ban on killing/capture and export of monkeys and they are playing havoc with the agricultural and horticultural crops.
- ii) Monkeys should be declared "Vermin" under the Wildlife Act.
- iii) Laws are needed for protection from wild animals.

- iv) Forests should take care of wild life by planting trees which can sustain bears, monkeys etc.
- v) Forests Department should plant Crabpine to feed animals and monkeys so that farmers' crops are saved.

**19. Suggestions Made by the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh**

Members of the NCF held separate discussions with Hon. Minister for Agriculture, H.P. He mentioned about the problem of Extension caused by substantial number of vacancies due to the ongoing ban on recruitment. He pleaded for consumption loans to be given by credit institutions to farmers to save them from moneylenders. He opined that cooperatives and RRBs had performed poorly in the state and had limited capacity for helping farmers. Bankers did not have appropriate mindset in favour of farmers. He felt that the growth of credit should be studied to see if it had gone for productive purposes. Regarding inputs, he indicated that the top soil in H.P. was thin and it was not feasible to apply heavy doses of chemical fertilizers. Decontrol of potassic and phosphatic fertilizers had led to unbalanced use of nitrogenous fertilizers. While vermi compost was being encouraged by the state, there was a need to provide subsidy for organic inputs in view of their high cost. He also informed that the state was encouraging rainwater harvesting and backyard fisheries. He opined that Agriculture, especially marketing, should be made a concurrent subject. Member Secretary, NCF, thanked the Minister for the courtesy shown to the NCF team.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF JAMMU & KASHMIR FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT SRINAGAR ON 18<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2006**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Srinagar on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member, Shri Y.C. Nanda, Member and Dr. (Mrs.) Laxmi Joshi, Research Officer. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. Hill Farmers and Hill Farming: Agro-Ecologically Differentiated Approach**

- i) Differential policy for hill farmers for capturing the special and unique physical, ecological, cultural and socio-economic settings in the hills should be carved out.
- ii) The State of J&K has four distinct agro-ecological zones, the temperate and cold arid zones being limited to the State which should receive specific R&D support.
- iii) The State is rich in biodiversity, particularly in those of fruits, vegetables, legumes, medicinal and aromatic plants. Unique variability exists in rice (glutinous), wheat barley and maize (multiple cobs) which should be conserved and judiciously utilised. In the cold arid zone, *Kala Jeera*, seabuckthorn, walnut, apricot, flowers, unique possessions of livestock, such as Pashmina

goats and cold fish variations are highly impressive and need to be conserved and commercially utilised. A State Biodiversity/Biosecurity Board should be established which should also address Plant Variety Protection and Farmers' Rights issues.

- iv) Indigenous knowledge, including farmers' selections of crops and crop species, *viz* turmeric, walnut, etc. should be scientifically evaluated and encouraged; community conservation and farmers' rights should be supported and realised.
- v) Transport subsidy for achieving price parity in inputs procurement and output delivery among hill and plains farmers should be provided.
- vi) Special support is needed for the pastorals and tribes like Gaddi and Bakarwals, who have often been "cheated" in getting access to forest areas and to degraded lands for grazing and raising their animals. Strengthen "grazing rights" of the pastorals. The pastoral tribes and local communities should be mobilised for collection of genetic resources and should be compensated suitably.
- vii) To help nomadic tribes, activities like grafting wild ber and planting of amla and citrus fruits on barren forest land should be undertaken and local people should be involved in this.
- viii) In Ladakh, only 6 months are available for field farming; the need to store inputs and create grain, seed, fodder and feed banks was emphasised; buffer storing and single window delivery systems should be promoted.
- ix) Green House cultivation should be promoted in Ladakh in view of the large number of sunny days there.
- x) Solar driers need to be encouraged in Ladakh for dryfruits.
- xi) More investments are needed on tubewells rather than canals in Jammu region.
- xii) NHB/APEDA should have offices in Srinagar.
- xiii) There is only a single road linked to New Delhi which is the most important market for the produce from the State. Blockage of the road due to weather conditions results in losses for the farmers. More road/rail linkage to Delhi should be provided.

- xiv) Baramula was earlier a rail head and this facility should be restored.
- xv) Diesel should come in as an agricultural input for the State in view of its dependence on road transport.
- xvi) Jammu & Kashmir State has niche advantage in May-June due to its varied climate.
- xvii) Agricultural Universities should guide farmers on what, when and how for farming, depending on local conditions.
- xviii) Farmers should not attempt to grow everything; everywhere otherwise incentives get distributed too thinly and also get dissipated.
- xix) All schemes should be regularly evaluated to cull out the non useful ones and focus effort and resource on schemes which are succeeding.

### **3. Natural Resource Management**

- i) Given the acute shortage of agricultural land in the State, prime agricultural land should not be diverted to non-agricultural purposes. Land consolidation is essential. The State of J&K was pioneer in registering and allocating land to the tiller – a historical development which promoted equity and reduced poverty, but the Revenue Act is outdated and should be amended.
- ii) Rainfed agriculture should be intensified through the National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA). Forest conservation, forest rejuvenation and transparent forest management are highly unsatisfactory. Command area development, water conservation and community-based land and water management are missing. These shortcomings should be addressed urgently and wells should be dug or recharged at strategic points.
- iii) Integrated soil-plant-nutrient management, based on soil/plant analysis, is totally missing. Each District should be provided with at least one soil testing laboratory and mobile soil testing should also be encouraged. The KVKs and ATMAs should play an important role in this context. Soil Health Card should be issued to each farm family and judiciously used for maintaining soil health.

- iv) The Land Use Board is non-functional; extension services are equally poor; innovative farmers' farm field schools should have special usefulness.
- v) Soil survey should be conducted in each zone.
- vi) Forest wasteland should be identified for growing organic walnut.

#### **4. Technology**

- i) There is a need to strengthen the Agricultural University and its linkage with public and private sectors for generation and effective transfer of appropriate technologies (there appeared limited interaction between the Agricultural University and the State Government extension and development machinery).
- ii) Horticulture Technology Mission has only been partially successful. Projects worth Rs 33 crore, against an allocation of Rs 100 crore, have been submitted for approval. The State should take due advantage of the NHM and prepare itself suitably for the purpose. The State University and Department of Horticulture must work closely, and alongwith private sector, should harness the following opportunities:
  - a) Low-cost green houses in the cold arid region.
  - b) Management of Cuddling moth in apple in Leh.
  - c) Promotion of walnut, apricot and dry fruits as a whole.
  - d) Minimum support prices for horticultural produces.
  - e) Production and distribution of quality planting materials and seeds.
  - f) Exploitation of "off-season" production and marketing of vegetables *viz* green peas and vegetable seeds.
- iii) Fish industry has a bright future. Cold water fisheries should be promoted. Rohu was not doing well even in Jammu, which needs to be investigated. Private fish culture has good prospects for self-employment. Fish disease diagnostic and improved management practices should be promoted.
- iv) Livestock, especially goats and sheep, have special role. Despite the huge local potential, over 50% of the meat consumed in J&K is imported from other States.

Alongwith fisheries, this gap should be filled by local production. Buffaloes in J&K have great prospects; efficacy of local vs crossbreds or exotic breeds should be compared.

- v) Organic Farming, especially of medicinal/aromatic plants which deserve intense scientific and development attention, including certification and marketing should be promoted.
- vi) Quality control of organic manure should be ensured through legislation.
- vii) Selective mechanisation was considered strategic for increasing land and labour productivity.
- viii) The desirability of developing and introducing hybrid rice varieties in the State should be critically examined.
- ix) High tech Green House technology should be encouraged to attract youth to make better profits from small holdings.

## **5. Credit and Other Institutional and Policy Support**

- i) Private sector has not been proactive in investment (primarily due to security reasons). The local trained/educated youth should organise themselves into SHGs and establish producer-processing-marketing-consumer linkage. In general, SHGs, both in farm and non-farm sectors, have been active and successful and the approach should be further mentored and supported both by the State and Central Government Schemes. Credit should be readily available also for promoting entrepreneurship which should be duly supported by SFAC and NABARD as youth unemployment is a major problem in the State.
- ii) Flow of formal credit to the poor is highly unsatisfactory. Everyone emphasised the need for additional and larger credit and financial support to J&K farmers and farming systems. Kisan Credit Card to each farm family to facilitate access to formal credit was advocated.
- iii) The State Government invests the least in agriculture and farmers' welfare which is a tragic trend. Farmers complained that subsidies provided under

different schemes are rather meagre and they face several hassles in procuring them.

- iv) Quality of inputs is generally poor; there should be faster and more effective action against adulterators; State Pesticide Board should be created to regulate quality of pesticides, with a farmer in the Board to safeguard their interest. Provisions should be made for establishing and operating inputs storages or agri-clinics at strategic sites.
- v) Supply of seed is poor and not on time and there is need for stringent quality testing.
- vi) Because of the dominance of fruits cultivation, the demand for Potash is high, but its supply is extremely poor. Special attention is called for improving cost-effective availability of Potasic fertilisers.
- vii) Poor governance and the lack of transparency were voiced by most of the farmers and NGOs; the small and marginal farmers remain neglected; there should be regular monitoring and evaluation of resources allocations and outcomes; land tenure and land rights must be rendered pro-poor.
- viii) Rural industrialisation should be strengthened to improve off-farm employment and income security. The NREGP and Bharat Nirman initiatives should be linked with self-employment of agricultural graduates and other educated youth and for strengthening infrastructure, especially roads, transport and information/knowledge connectivity. “Kisan Wani” programme and each village cluster as a knowledge centre are urgently needed to share technology, market, price and weather related information.
- ix) Institutional systems at grassroot levels, such as Panchayats and Gram Sabhas, are absent, and the administrative machinery at the block level is defunct. Necessary grassroot community-based institutions are a must for planning, preparing and overseeing the implementation of agricultural and other developmental programmes at village level.



- x) Schemes of SFAC/NHB should not be compulsorily linked to credit. Since small entrepreneurs face many difficulties in the bank and would instead, like to invest their own resources for their projects.

## **6. Marketing, Distribution and Trade**

- i) Highest attention is needed for linking producers with markets, and ensuring appropriate returns; removal of middlemen; providing cold chains and promoting the use of non-wood packaging materials such as corrugated boxes through higher subsidies in order to bridge the cost differential with wooden boxes and gradual elimination of wooden boxes for packaging in order to save trees.
- ii) Linking distant production centres with (proposed) rural market centres; promotion of niche production and markets and branding of the products; other things being equal, promote consumption of local products, including supplies to military personnel and establishments in the region.
- iii) High priority should be given to post-harvest, agro-processing, value addition, marketing and entrepreneurial development.
- iv) Regional Trade Agreements are hurting the interest of local farmers, and should be reviewed and restructured to meet India's overall competitiveness. For instance, in case of J&K, the apricot produced in Ladakh is superior to the apricot imported from Afganistan, but still the Government goes on importing apricot at the cost of the local production and distribution.

**7.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF JHARKHAND FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT RANCHI ON 13<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Ranchi on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Y.C. Nanda, Member, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Dr. Ramesh Singh, Research Officer. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) Participants appreciated the draft National Policy for Farmers and felt it was in the interest of the farmers.
- ii) It was hoped that the implementation would also be in tune with the spirit in which the Draft Policy for Farmers was prepared by the National Commission on Farmers.
- iii) Much greater attention was needed from the Government for the agriculture sector.
- iv) Urban elite had no awareness about the plight/problems of agriculture.
- v) Jharkhand is 'Ratna Garbha'.
- vi) 80% population of Jharkhand is dependant on agriculture for their livelihood.
- vii) Government schemes are centered on people below the poverty line [BPL]. For better results, the Governments should cover agriculture and the related sectors as such, covering people both below and above the poverty line. People who are above the poverty line have capabilities to achieve better results.
- viii) The ecology of Jharkhand is the economy of Jharkhand.
- ix) Mahua & Karanj plants of Jharkhand have the potential for producing bio-diesel.

- x) Sale of fertilizers is in the hands of few dealers who exploit the farmers because of their monopolistic status in their area. The State Government needs to be more active in controlling such practices.
- xi) The participation of IFFCO and KRIBHCO should be strengthened in distribution of fertilizers to eliminate sale of spurious fertilizers.
- xii) Lac cultivation is an important source of livelihood for people of Jharkhand. Nearly 50% lac production in the country is from the State.
- xiii) The programmes of the Grain Banks should be strengthened.
- xiv) Need for an integrated approach for all the State and Central Govt. Schemes/ Programmes.
- xv) Profitability in agriculture is declining.
- xvi) There is a need of coordinated approach for solving the problems of the farmers.

### **3. Soil Health Care**

- i) Land and soil health problem are the major problems in Jharkhand
- ii) Jharkhand soil is generally deficient in lime and if there is no lime treatment the yields from even high quality seeds remain low.
- iii) 25000 Soil Health Cards have been issued to the farmers in Jharkhand. The target is to issue the Soil Health Card to each farmer.
- iv) Immediate analysis of soil is essential with the help of mobile soil testing laboratories. This programme should be launched on a national scale.

### **4. Irrigation**

- i) Most of the area of Jharkhand is under rainfed farming and it is essential to plan cultivation of those crops which require less water.
- ii) In Palamu region, citrus and grape cultivation should be encouraged.
- iii) A major programme for Soil reclamation is needed for the State.
- iv) In Jharkhand annual rainfall is 1100 mm. There is need of water harvesting and watershed development in a scientific manner. Each farmer should try to harvest rain water.

- v) Diesel pump sets are the main source for lifting irrigation water which is costlier than lifting water with electric motors.
- vi) Maintenance of check Dam is an important issue.

## **5. Research, Technology and Extension**

- i) Field centric approach for development agriculture is essential. Research which is not oriented to solve field level problems is not of much use to the farmers.
- ii) Village level approach for appropriate technology is necessary.
- iii) There is huge potential for organic farming in herbs/medicinal and other aromatic plants as the State is rich in natural vegetation and is home for of several species [for example, 114 medicinal plant species]. The tribal pockets of the State where no chemicals are used in agriculture could be declared as 'Organic Zone'.
- iv) Crop wise detailed package of practices is necessary for a State like Jharkhand.
- v) The State Agriculture Department officials do not appear to be favouring organic agriculture as the productivity levels and production figures which they have to report are quite low in system of organic agriculture.
- vi) Jharkhand is capable of producing many horticultural crops. The uplands could be mainly used for developing horticultural crops.
- vii) The work of the National Horticultural Mission is progressing well in the State.
- viii) The diversity of agro-climatic conditions in Jharkhand should be taken into consideration in formulating the projects/schemes.
- ix) Rainfed agriculture is important as only 10% area has assured irrigational facilities.
- x) Awareness of farmers about the latest technology of agriculture is rather low.
- xi) Integrated farming approach is essential.
- xii) Seed replacement rate is only 5-10%.
- xiii) There is need for strong extension network in Jharkhand.
- xiv) At primary school level the children should be made familiar with plants etc.
- xv) There is a lack of extension workers.

- xvi) How to retain the youth in agriculture is a serious issue as most of the farmers are elderly persons.
- xvii) Rejuvenation of old orchards is extremely important.

## **6. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Land passbook should be issued to each farmer.
- ii) Backward blocks should be identified for greater focus by the financing institutions.
- iii) Outreach of Kisan Credit Card should be increased manifold.

## **7. Market and Investment**

- i) Not only marketing of agriculture produce is a problem, the marketing system is also inefficient. The producers get a very small part of the price paid by the consumer. Large profits are made in the supply chain.
- ii) There is need for much greater capital investment in agriculture.
- iii) Production should be market oriented.
- iv) Around Ranchi vegetables like cauliflower & capsicum are available throughout the year. The need is for a good market chain to market these vegetables. The Market Yards should also have facilities for grading, storage etc.
- v) Litchi is being grown in Ranchi even before the plant was introduced in Muzaffarpur [Bihar] on a commercial scale. There is considerable potential for developing this fruit crop in the State.
- vi) Farmers do not have any trade organisation of their own to articulate their issues as in other trades and industries. Hence their problems are often overlooked.
- vii) Product price should be based on input cost with at least a profit margin of 8-10%.
- viii) A vegetable export zone should be established in Jharkhand.
- ix) Market development without the assistance of Govt. is extremely difficult in the State.
- x) Private sector is now becoming interested in entering the agricultural produce market.

- xi) The prevailing prices of many agricultural crops often remain below the MSP announced by the Govt. of India. The MSP should be protected.
- xii) Transport subsidy is needed for input distribution in tribal areas.
- xiii) There should be free movement of lac to strengthen the lac market all over the country.
- xiv) MSP of the lac should also be announced.
- xv) Soil testing units should be established at KVKs.
- xvi) NGO should also be permitted to buy agricultural produce directly from the farmers without going through the APMCs.

8. Shri M.K. Mandal, Chief Secretary, Government of Jharkhand, gave an overview of the current agricultural situation in the State and the future roadmap. He emphasized the need for policy for development of agriculture in the State which should be implemented both in letter and spirit and not merely remain just a document. He regretted that despite 80 per cent of the Jharkhand population being dependent on agriculture, the State has so far given only secondary importance to this vital sector, most of the attention going to industries and minerals. While appreciating the contents and implications of the draft NCF Policy on Farmers for development of livelihood security of the people of Jharkhand, he identified the following aspects for priority action at the State level:

- i) Notwithstanding the priority for small and marginal farmers, attention should also be paid to medium and large farmers so that they could serve as role models for small farmers.
- ii) Generally, most of the Jharkhand farmers have not benefited from the Green Revolution and still continue to practice traditional methods of cultivation. The thrust, therefore, should be given to the development, identification and transfer of appropriate modern technologies, duly blended with indigenous knowledge, and by emphasizing integrated use of chemicals and organic products throughout the producer-consumer chain. **Agricultural Renewal** (as highlighted in the NCF Draft Policy) should earnestly be started during 2006-07

and Birsa Agricultural University, in collaboration with other stakeholders, should lead this **Renewal**.

- iii) Tribal belts and other niche areas suitable for organic farming should be declared as Organic Farming Zones and appropriate production, post harvest management, certification and marketing facilities should be provided in an integrated manner. Organic production of medicinal and aromatic plants holds a great promise in the State.
- iv) Since most of the upland in Jharkhand is marginally utilized, there is ample scope for diversification towards horticultural production. Enterprises like dairy, poultry and fisheries should also be promoted in an integrated manner. Agricultural diversification should be based on market demands. While training should be intensified in the diversification programme, training of women farmers should be given special attention.
- v) Irrigation remains generally neglected in Jharkhand. The Government of India should give special support for increasing irrigation intensity in the State.

**9.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF KARNATAKA FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT BANGALORE ON 24<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Bangalore on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2006. Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman, NCF was accompanied by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, NCF, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member, NCF, Shri Y. C. Nanda, Member, NCF and Ms. Mamta Shankar, Director. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. Inaugural Session**

### **2.1 Welcome address by Shri Bandeppa Kashempura, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Government of Karnataka**

During his welcome address, Shri Bandeppa Kashempura, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture spoke about the following pro-farmer programmes initiated in Karnataka State by the present Government:

- i) *Panchasutra* programme for accelerated growth in agriculture sector.
- ii) Distribution of soil health cards covering 9000 villages at a cost of Rs.5 crores in a span of three years.
- iii) Credit facilities through co-operatives to the extent of Rs.3 lakhs per farmer at 4% interest.
- iv) Schemes for agricultural processing and post harvest technology with financial allocation of Rs. 20 crores and Rs. 10 crores respectively.



- v) Further, he requested farmers, experts and representatives of NGOs and other organizations to suggest to the National Commission appropriately to improve economic status of the farming community.

## **2.2 Address by Shri Doreswamy, Freedom fighter**

Veteran, revered freedom fighter Shri Doreswamy expressed on Gandhian thought about import of food grains as “Colossal insult to the Nation”. He opined that agriculture be treated as an industry. He also suggested that while making policies, attention be given to the small and marginal farmers. Further, he said that agriculture is a fine art occupation and creates opportunities for work.

## **2.3 Opening Remarks by Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman, NCF**

- i) Dr. M.S. Swaminathan released *Panchasutra* poster designed and brought out by the Department of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka.
- ii) Chairman, NCF informed that the main purpose of the interaction session was to elicit advice from farmers, subject study groups, other allied institutions, NGOs, input supply agencies etc which reflect the need of farming community, for making necessary amendments in the Draft Policy. His discussion was mainly centered around the following subjects :
- iii) Slow growth rate of agriculture as against the target of 4% was alarming.
- iv) Market surplus has no meaning for small and marginal farmers.
- v) He appreciated the credit policy of the State at 4% interest through co-operatives.
- vi) He narrated Shri M.K.Gandhi’s visit to NDRI, Bangalore and recording in the visitors book as Porabandar farmer against profession column in the register which signified Gandhiji’s concern towards the farming community.
- vii) He appreciated the *Panchasutra* programme suggested in the Draft Policy of NCF that had been adopted in Karnataka State.
- viii) Need for creating broad based policy which would also take care of interest of landless labourers, other stakeholders, trend setters and farm related distribution.

### **3. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) Investment in agriculture sector should be increased.
- ii) Budgetary allocation to agriculture and horticulture sectors should be enhanced.
- iii) There is a need for recognition of farmers' efforts in their innovations, methods and experiments.
- iv) Farmers' Organizations should be involved in drafting farm policy.
- v) Interaction sessions of NCF should be held at Gram Panchayat level also.
- vi) Small scale and cottage industries that generate income for rural people should be encouraged.
- vii) Bottom up approach - Gram Panchayat plans should find place in annual action plans of line departments.
- viii) Farmers need not only be ensured remunerative prices but also they should get respect /dignity.
- ix) Men farmers should also be encouraged to form SHGs on the lines of women SHGs.
- x) Uninterrupted power supply to be ensured for villages.

### **4. Land**

- i) Selling of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes should be avoided.
- ii) Transfer of land for non agricultural purposes should be banned.
- iii) Need for land reforms was stressed.
- iv) Extension of cities should be restricted and infrastructure facilities should be developed in villages to make rural life attractive to youth.

### **5. Livestock**

- i) SHGs should be given training in production of animal feed concentrates for which raw materials may be supplied to them.
- ii) Every Gram Panchayat should have a Veterinary hospital.
- iii) Cultivation of fodder should be encouraged and surplus fodder stored in silos constructed for the purpose.

- iv) Programmes to supply ½ liter milk to pregnant and lactating women to meet their special nutritional needs should be launched.
- v) Under milk sector private firms are allowed in Milk & Milk Produce Order (MMPO) – this should be avoided.
- vi) Local breed of livestock should be improved as they ensure self-sufficiency.
- vii) Breed improvement centres are needed all over the country.
- viii) Medicinal properties of *Panchagavya* should be popularized.
- ix) Subsidiary occupations like rearing cows, sheep and goats should be encouraged in order to help farmers to come out of financial crisis.
- x) Farmers should be given permits for sustainable grazing of sheep /goats in reserved forest areas.
- xi) Rearing of small ruminants must be encouraged.
- xii) Extension education and vaccination facilities should be extended to sheep rearing also.
- xiii) 5 to 10% of land may be set aside for rearing /grazing livestock.
- xiv) Hybrid fodder variety development should be encouraged.

## **6. Research, Technology, Inputs and Extension**

- i) Special agricultural schools should be established in rural areas to educate agricultural labourers on agriculture and essential modern technologies.
- ii) Vacant posts in Department of Agriculture and Horticulture should be filled up.
- iii) Horticulture universities should be established.
- iv) Priority should be given to organic farming and training given to farmers. Some however expressed that Indian agriculture should not be taken 100 years back through adoption of organic farming.
- v) Forest based agricultural system through growing tree crops should be promoted.
- vi) Medicinal plants should be encouraged.
- vii) A farmer informed about existence of 2500 species of plants in his farm and produces which are converted to 500 value added products – such farming should be encouraged.

- viii) Production and supply of organic inputs at a subsidized rate is required.
- ix) Contributions of green revolution should be appreciated. Mistakes should be rectified. Modern technology should not be neglected. A proper balance is needed.
- x) Programmes related to conversion of plant and animal residues to manures should be adopted.
- xi) Villages should have internet facilities for accessing meteorological information and technical information on agriculture.
- xii) Diploma course in agriculture may be introduced in universities at the undergraduate level and syllabus on agriculture needs to be included in school curriculum.
- xiii) Small farmers should be given subsidies for purchase of bullocks and carts (at present big farmers are getting benefit for purchase of tractors).
- xiv) Quality control of inputs and their regulations should be strictly enforced.
- xv) Quality seeds should be supplied - Sellers of spurious, sub-standard seeds must be punished.
- xvi) Supply of spurious/non-standard fertilizers, seeds and equipments has continued-legal action should be strictly enforced.
- xvii) Quality seeds should be supplied through SHGs.
- xviii) SHG members should be educated on Seed treatment methods.
- xix) SHG members need training on preparation of Bio fertilizers.
- xx) Farmers and SHGs should be involved in Seed production.
- xxi) SHG members should be trained on ascertaining quality of agricultural inputs.
- xxii) Any new information /technology should be routed through SHGs; Technical support should be provided to SHGs for dissemination of knowledge in agricultural development.
- xxiii) As SHGs empower farmers, Policy should be oriented towards such efforts.
- xxiv) Karnataka State Seed Corporation should enhance its production capacity.
- xxv) State Agricultural Universities should be encouraged to take up seed production.
- xxvi) Co-operatives with limited number of members will be more successful.

- xxvii) Seed Bill 2004 is against farmers' interest; hence, do not hand over seed industry to MNCs. There should be suitable orientation for effective utilization of technology and research findings by them.
- xxviii) Agricultural University scientists should not transfer seed production technology / seed lines to MNCs and exploit farmers.
- xxix) Government should supply inputs like improved implements, machinery, bio-fertilizers etc. at 90% subsidy to poor farmers.
- xxx) Fill up vacancies of technical staff in the related departments.
- xxxi) More agricultural assistants should be employed at the grass root level and the necessary facilities should be provided to them.
- xxxii) Effective utilization of modern technologies and audio-visual aids for reaching farmers are necessary for agricultural development.
- xxxiii) Small and marginal farmers should be taken care of in horticulture development programmes.
- xxxiv) There is a need to improve transfer of research innovations developed in the laboratories to the farm level.
- xxxv) There is a need for the adequate supply of agricultural implements, machinery at subsidized prices.
- xxxvi) Implements and machinery should be available on hire basis.
- xxxvii) Information on agriculture should be given as prime news in newspapers and other mass media.
- xxxviii) State departmental activities should not be reduced to mere distribution of subsidies.

## **7. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Creditworthiness of farmers should be improved through bio-metric profiling.
- ii) Provisions to avail loans by small and marginal farmers both for development and for crop production programmes to be made.
- iii) Provide subsidies on the lines of NABARD (credit subsidy to loan accounts after proper utilization of loan amount).
- iv) Channelize credit from urban / Sauharda Banks to agricultural sector.

- v) Banks and Insurance Companies must be farmer friendly.
- vi) Credit policy needs to be changed – RRBs should not die down, credit supply formalities should be reduced. National and State Credit Policies should be same. Co-operative structure should be strengthened and easy credit should be provided to SHGs.
- vii) Commercial banks should also provide loans at 4% interest and small/marginal farmers should be given priority
- viii) National banks provide credit at 7% interest but in reality it is 9%.

## **8. Marketing Distribution and Trade**

- i) Farmers should be given proper advice on remunerative crops.
- ii) Role of corporate farming should be enhanced.
- iii) Mandates of such corporate farming should include
  - a) Participatory research programme.
  - b) Cold storage structures.
  - c) Alignment with NGOs
- iv) Minimum and maximum prices for agricultural inputs and produce should be fixed.
- v) Petrol, diesel prices are enhanced every few days – but it is not so with the prices of agricultural produce.
- vi) Fruits and vegetable markets should be strengthened in the line of silk cocoon markets.
- vii) Local markets should be established to ensure guarantee price.
- viii) Co-operative market outlets for the products produced by rural *Sthreeshakthi* groups should be launched.
- ix) Benefits of APMCs have not reached small, marginal and medium farmers.
- x) Cold storage facilities at taluk level and small food storage centers at Gram Panchayat level were needed.
- xi) Weekly shandies in villages should be encouraged.
- xii) Farmers have to practically pay 8 to 10% commission while marketing agriculture produce. This should be done away with.

- xiii) MNCs should not be allowed in agriculture produce marketing.
- xiv) Remunerative prices to agricultural produce should be ensured.
- xv) SHGs may be involved in marketing of agricultural produce on the lines of *Rythu Bazaars*.
- xvi) Mini Dairy co-operatives run by women groups have been very successful in a few villages- needs to be extended to other villages.
- xvii) Assistance was needed for marketing vermi compost produced by SHGs.
- xviii) Farmers' share in consumer's rupee should be increased.
- xix) Proper market for agricultural produce should be ensured.
- xx) Processing of agricultural commodities should be encouraged.
- xxi) There is a need for strengthening of APMC Act (not to privatize it).
- xxii) Ensure fair prices instead of providing subsidies.
- xxiii) Export promotion policy is not clear in NCF draft report.
- xxiv) Export subsidy should be provided and agricultural exports should be strengthened.
- xxv) Quantitative Restrictions (QRs) to protect interest of farmers should be brought back.
- xxvi) Marketing organizations should be improved on the lines of HOPCOMS.
- xxvii) State Governments to recognize producer companies as done by the Government of India.
- xxviii) There is a need to establish independently managed separate fund to meet the distressed farmers' needs.

## **9. Dryland Agriculture**

- i) Restrictions to be imposed for installing 1 to 2 pump sets per family.
- ii) Low External Input Sustainable Agriculture (LEISA) is the need of the hour.
- iii) Bring back life to the soils in drylands; change in attitudes/perceptions of farmers regarding rational use of natural resources is needed.
- iv) Minimum distance between two bore wells to be enforced.
- v) Need for special packages to the drought prone areas (North Karnataka districts).

- vi) To establish systematic progress, there is need for adoption of climate dependent agricultural methods.
- vii) Efficient use of irrigation water is needed.
- viii) Lands cultivated by landless labourers should be decided for allotment immediately.
- ix) NCF to fix land to forest ratio so as to avoid further deforestation.
- x) Agro-forestry and 'Green for Fuel' should be encouraged.
- xi) Irrigation cost per acre needs to be worked out.

## **10. PRESENTATION BY SUBJECT COMMITTEE EXPERTS**

### **10.1 Subcommittee on Soil Health & Productivity Enhancement**

Dr. S.A. Patil, Chairman of the Sub-committee highlighted the following strategies:

- i) Listing of soil quality indicators.
- ii) Strategies and action plan for
  - a) Mechanism to create soil health awareness
  - b) Soil & water conservation techniques
  - c) Developing packages for reasons specific sustainable farming
  - d) Setting up of precision farming centres.
  - e) Promotion of organic farming

### **10.2 Subcommittee on Irrigation Water Supply Augmentation and Demand Management**

Capt. S. Raja Rao, Chairman presented on the following terms of reference and detailed report was submitted to the Commission:

- i) Mainstreaming Rain Water harvesting
- ii) Policy incentives and awareness creation
- iii) Crop planning
- iv) Improving water use efficiency
- v) Water use regulatory mechanism



- vi) Strengthen Water Users' Association
- vii) Low cost technology for water conservation & management

He gave remedial measures under short term and long term duration as follows:

#### **10.2.1 Short Term remedial measures**

- i) Extend Under Ground Drainage system to all class-I cities.
- ii) Provide tertiary treatment for domestic and industrial water and recycle the treated water and thus reduce the requirement of fresh water.
- iii) During drought years, practice “cloud seeding” and harness additional 15% to 20% of water.
- iv) Adopt canal automation synchronizing with computer controlled management to use ground water and surface water.
- v) Resort to desalination of water in coastal areas and other problematic areas.
- vi) Adopt ‘pumped storage concepts’ wherever possible for all hydel projects and thus save water and produce more electricity.
- vii) From ecological consideration, maintain a minimum flow in the river.
- viii) Encourage less water intensive crops as far as possible.
- ix) All polluting and water based industries (17 Categories) should have to mandatorily seek ISO 14001 Certification by law.
- x) Encourage private participation in the construction, operation and maintenance of Water and Sewage Treatment Plants.
- xi) National / International Benchmark for water consumption and water reuse in each of the 17 category of industries should be fixed and a rigid time frame be set to achieve it.
- xii) Create public awareness for economizing water use with more and more participation of women
- xiii) Waste utilization technologies / use of clean production technologies with emphasis on waste minimization, recycling and reuse have to be encouraged for adoption.

- xiv) All local authorities having piped water supply scheme should conduct leak detection studies and take remedial action to save precious water.

### **10.2.2 Long Term Measures**

- i) Piped water supply for irrigation
- ii) Desilting of Reservoirs
- iii) Inter –Basin Transfer
- iv) Canal Automation
- v) Extend Under Ground Drainage and Sewage Treatment Plants to all habitations.

### **10.3. Subcommittee on Agricultural Technology and Extension Management**

Dr. Dwarkanath, Chairman of the Sub-committee pointed out that the average farm size is becoming smaller each year and the cost-risk–return structure of farming is becoming adverse. He put forth a strategy for achieving 4% growth rate in agriculture and discussed exhaustively regarding Asset reform, Land reform, Power and Economy of scale , Livestock, Fisheries, Water, Water use efficiency, Agro Biodiversity, Animal genetic resource, Climate change and Science & Technology. As a separate chapter, he presented views on pro-small farmers and pro-women programmes regarding knowledge connectivity, rural employment guarantee, digital revolution, organic farmers, crop diversification, agro-meteorology, bio-security, credit & insurance, co-operatives, assured & remunerative marketing opportunities. Finally, he suggested public policies for sustainable livelihood and further course of action.

### **10.4. Sub-committee on Credit & Insurance**

Shri. D.B. Ghosh, Chairman of the Sub-committee explained briefly about credit facilities provided through NABARD. He also suggested the issue of Kissan credit cards to farm men and farm women. Besides he suggested popularization of Farmers' Contact Center and e-Grama .

## **10.5 Subcommittee on Agriculture Market Reforms and establishing Indian Trade Organization**

Dr. R.K. Deshpande, Chairman of the Sub-committee gave presentation on the following issues:

- i) Enabling provisions and the required amendments in the APMC Act.
- ii) Contract farming and direct marketing with an established code of conduct.
- iii) Establishment of Indian Trade Centre, supported by a Trade Advisory Body for Small Farmers
- iv) Supporting /strengthening Producers' co-operatives and market linkages.
- v) Synergy between forward and backward linkages, agro-processing & export market development, production planning, use of information technology in agricultural marketing.
- vi) Establishing Hope Generation Teams.
- vii) Price Stabilization Fund, Market Intervention Scheme, group farming for self help groups, corporate farming, company farming.
- viii) Creation of SHG capacity building and mentoring centres.

**11.** After the Consultation session, Chairman and Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF KERALA & LAKSHADWEEP FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT THIRUVANANTHPURAM ON 25<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Thiruvananthapuram on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Ms. Mamta Shankar, Director. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stake holders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) Farmers should be issued Identity Cards. Farmers' rights should be defined and farmers' courts should be set up. A constitutional body to listen to farmer's woes is required.
- ii) The cost of labour was high as compared to other States. Instead of depending on raw produce, emphasis has to be given on value addition.
- iii) The Plantation Labour Act should be amended.
- iv) For assessing crop loss, per ha. or per crop criterion was adopted. This was not practicable in Kerala where homestead farming is practiced. The National Horticulture Board, Ministry of Agriculture, NABARD and Commodity Boards may be asked to restructure their schemes of assistance for crop support and assessment of crop loss to farmers of Kerala on homestead basis.
- v) Given the agro ecological diversity in the State and the localized nature of agrarian distress the farmers requested that the Commission should hold discussions in hard hit districts like Wayanad, Idukki, Kasargod, Kuttanad and Calicut.

- vi) The services of Panchayati Raj organizations, like Gram Sabha and Ward Sabha (in respect of Municipalities and Corporations) should be utilized for identifying social evils.
- vii) Definition of farmers should include mushroom cultivators and people practicing apiculture and mariculture and other farming related occupations.
- viii) There should be a provision for the forest – dwelling communities to object to or seek changes in ‘development’ projects that are impinging on their lands and resources. The decisions should be based on specific studies.
- ix) Ecotourism should be encouraged.
- x) Some mechanism was required for control of wild animals.
- xi) While framing national plans, Kerala must be given a special package like the North Eastern State due to diversity of plantation and agriculture crops.
- xii) Agriculture must be included in the school curriculum.
- xiii) The Agriculture Communication System should be redesigned with farmer at the core to provide public space where farmers could discuss their problems.
- xiv) Cottage Industries related to agriculture, livestock, marine products appropriate for Kerala should be developed.
- xv) Environmental problem due to sand mining, filling up of paddy fields, mining of granite mounts, sea erosion and indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides were a great cause for concern in the state.

### **3. Land**

- i) National Land Reform Policy and a National Land Use Policy would have to be evolved immediately.
- ii) Due to land shortage, intensive and mixed agriculture with crop rotation within the small holdings or home gardens would be beneficial.
- iii) The ‘Pattam’ system was creating problems which may have led to suicides and other adverse social evils. Under ‘Pattam’ system, cultivators take land for cultivating paddy for a season without any written agreement. The farmers are

unable to raise the loan. To facilitate credit, 'Pattam' may be legalized by providing fair rent @ 1/6<sup>th</sup> of the produce.

- iv) Kerala should look at the possibility of introducing hazelnut and other high value fruits. To achieve this, the Land Ceiling Act had to be relaxed.
- v) Before introducing Soil Health Pass Book farmers should be given training.
- vi) Soil Health Card should include bacterial count.
- vii) Land should be surveyed with the help of GIS application and computerization of records should be done for simple and transparent land transfer. The Karnataka model could be emulated.
- viii) 'Cooperative Production Samiti' should be strengthened.
- ix) A review and reorganization of "Swarsraya Sangham" is required.

#### **4. Livestock & Fishery**

- i) A Resource map of livestock resources should be drawn up and the carrying capacity of these resources should be calculated.
- ii) Appropriate breeding policy, appropriate culling rate and integrated development projects (taking care of all elements up to marketing and institutional support etc.) should be emphasized.
- iii) Disease control programmes were confined to few districts in the State. There should be comprehensive state wide disease control initiative.
- iv) Reasonable slaughter of cows for export could be carried out.
- v) By products like glands and bones should be utilised.
- vi) All Universities should do need based/demand based research.
- vii) Health care linked animal insurance scheme should be made available.
- viii) Fish may be included along with cattle, sheep, poultry in developing living heritage gene banks of the germplasm.
- ix) The development of Ecotourism should not be at the expense of traditional fish farmers. The application of Geographical Information System in fishing and the concept of virtual university in fish marketing should be exploited.

- x) In the present scenario, fishery is extractive in nature. Schemes were needed for promoting fish rearing and protective fishery.

## **5. Issues specific to major crops**

### **5.1 Coconut**

- i) Coconut was sown in homesteads and covers a huge dispersed area unlike rubber which was done in compact area.
- ii) Considering the number of people dependent on it for their livelihoods the investment was very low.
- iii) Problem of root wilt disease prevalent in 5 major districts in southern Kerala with no cure.
- iv) Replanting programme was very important. There was a provision of replanting under the National Horticulture Mission for horticultural crops. Even for rubber there was provision for replanting. There should be provision for replanting of Coconut under Technology Mission or Coconut Board.
- v) Most of the coconut was unirrigated.
- vi) Coconut Board has no mandate for research and no field units.
- vii) Coconut Board should be under Commerce Ministry.
- viii) Assistance required for replanting, irrigation and processing of coconut.
- ix) Ministry of Agriculture was going to give assistance for micro irrigation with 50% subsidy.
- x) Assistance required for replanting had to be of a high magnitude since the coconut tree had a 7 year gestation period.
- xi) Innovative diversified products like 'Nira' have been launched.
- xii) Amendment in excise rules of States was required, since at present a farmer could tap only 5 trees. For processing Nira more inputs were needed and a catchment area of 250 plants was required for setting up a processing plant.
- xiii) FTA with ASEAN would pose a threat as they were cost effective competitors and so far the domestic sector was protected with a high tariff wall with 100% tariff on imported coconut. Coconut should be in 'Sensitive list'.

- xiv) It is in sensitive list under SAFTA but coconut is also coming from illegal means and hurting our farmers.
- xv) With the help of Coconut Technology Mission processing units and tender coconut project had been initiated and cluster approach was being adapted for assistance under the Mission.
- xvi) 45% duty was imposed on imported soyabean oil. Given its importance to the Kerala Economy coconut should be declared as 'protected oil'. For this, even 45% duty rate was not enough.
- xvii) Coir, rubber were not considered as agricultural commodity in WTO.
- xviii) Coconut oil was a canalized item for import through STC. Under Advance Licensing Scheme (ALS) it had to be re-exported but no time limit was specified and there was a sudden spurt in import of coconut oil.
- xix) Due to multifarious problem faced, Coconut plantations were being converted to rubber plantations. Coconut cultivation should be subsidized.

## **5.2 Pepper**

- i) Farmers in the State should be consulted before agreeing to FTAs and import tariff.
- ii) Ministry of Commerce were signing all FTAs without consulting Agriculture Department of States.
- iii) Industry was paying premium to Sri Lanka pepper.
- iv) Quality of Vietnamese pepper was poor.
- v) For pepper we have to change our support for better revenue.
- vi) Illegal smuggling of areca nut, cardamom, pepper should be controlled.
- vii) Central Government aid should be given to the State Governments to promote our agricultural commodities by branding each produce like 'Kerala black Pepper'. This would help the farming community to fetch higher price in domestic and international markets.
- viii) Under SAFTA Agreement, countries had violated rules of origin and imported pepper from Vietnam and re-exported it to Kerala. The mixing of this low



quality pepper with world famous Kerala pepper was bringing bad name to Indian pepper.

### **5.3 Rubber**

- i) Rubber should be re-defined as agricultural product due to influx of cheap import.
- ii) Certification of wood products by Forest Stewardship Council for export was necessary. Rubberwood must be included for that purpose.
- iii) Rubber producers society may be exempted from Value Added Tax as they were self help groups.
- iv) Subsidies for planting as well as replanting should be same.

### **5.4 Cardamom and Ginger**

- i) Traditional export like ginger cardamom were facing stiff competition. These crops may perish if the interests of the farmers are not safeguarded with the help of research and price support.
- ii) Cardamom was cultivated in forest areas of Idukki by small growers. Small growers affected by the Indian Forest Act should be protected with a package.

### **5.5 Vanilla**

- i) Crash in prices of vanillin had ruined the vanilla farmers. The import of synthetic vanillin should be banned.

### **5.6 Paddy**

- i) In Kuttanad area, due to the fall of price of paddy, crop failure for the last three seasons also created a crisis like situation. Specific importance should be given to this region.
- ii) The Government should fix floor price of agricultural products like, paddy coconut etc. and procure the product from the farmers without middlemen. The produce may be sold through Public Distribution System (PDS). The Kerala

model of procuring paddy by the State Supplies Corporation @ Rs.700/- per quintal during the previous panja season could be adopted.

## **5.7 Pineapple**

Pineapple was grown as intercrop in rubber replantation areas. Pineapple was also grown as intercrop in coconut. It was highly labour intensive and high wages were paid to pineapple farm labourers. Proper recognition was not given to pineapple farming still its area and production was increasing. If pineapple intercropping is expanded in coconut root wilt areas it will partially compensate the loss of coconut farmers.

Suggestion for development of pineapple cultivation include: -

- i) Trucks and rail wagon with cooling facilities should be provided.
- ii) Indirect benefit like interest free loan, low cost input should be provided.
- iii) Legal sanctity for contract farming should be ensured.
- iv) Facility for product diversification and promotion of alternative fruit should be provided.
- v) Low cost machine for land preparation should be designed.
- vi) Coir Geo textile were useful in soil conservation and weed control, make it cost effective and modify its design.
- vii) Liberal facility for pest and disease management, quality control of input be given.
- viii) Pineapple Centre should be established with facilities for market information, e-commerce, training and processing and recreation.
- ix) Pineapple Board should be established.
- x) Lab was required to test agricultural inputs on payment basis.
- xi) Inadequate credit and insurance facility was a constraint. Security asked by the Cooperative banks was very high.

## **6. Organic Farming**

- i) Organic farming should be encouraged.
- ii) Organic farming needed to be systemized and inputs may be provided in cash or kind to promote it. It should be subsidized for first three years.

- iii) Government should subsidize certification and set up organic marketing chains.
- iv) State Agricultural Universities may be declared as the competent authority for certifying the organic products.

## **7. Credit and Insurance**

Most Farmers made demand for concessional, timely and adequate credit. For agrarian distress cases, writing off of debt, further help in the form of loan and agriculture inputs to marginal farmers should be considered. Specifically it was suggested that:

- i) NABARD should give loan to farmers at 3% interest directly.
- ii) Interest free loan up to Rs. 1.00 lakh for small and marginal farmers and at 4% for other holdings up to 2 ha land should be given.
- iii) Insurance scheme should be launched for farmers with pension and medical benefits.
- iv) Government should make necessary arrangements for providing interest subvention to cooperative bank for involvement of their own high cost funds in agricultural lending or NABARD may provide 85% of the total credit provided by Cooperative Banks by way of refinance. In case of Cooperative Banks, NABARD has offered refinance of only 35% of total crop loan and has not proposed any interest relief in respect of the own funds to be used by cooperative banks for agricultural lending.
- v) Convenor, SLBC, informed that the indebtedness to money lenders has increased manifold in the last decade in the state. He mentioned the various initiatives taken by the lead Bank like expansion in coverage no collaterals for loans below Rs. 50,000 etc. He also spoke about the pilot project on 100% financial inclusion in Palakkad District and the proposed survey of farmers' indebtedness in the State. Following suggestions were made:
  - a) The state government should allow to deposit registration deed in the Bank before taking loan as was the case in Bihar.

- b) At present, only annual agricultural crops were being covered by insurance. Perennial plantation crops should also be made eligible for insurance.
- c) Leasing of land was not valid in Kerala, it should be allowed to enable financing to oral lessees
- vi) The representative from NABARD suggested that consultation for agriculture credit policies should be held at corporate level. He also talked of Kerala specific issues like decline in competitiveness of traditional crops, importance of water harvesting and need for sustainable organic farming.

## **8. Issues related to the Production, Marketing, Distribution and Trade with respect to some important crops in Kerala:**

The State is producing paddy, coconut, vegetable and fruit, medicinal plants, spices, plantation crops like tea, coffee, pepper, cardamom etc. These are concentrated in different areas of the State. There were special problems facing all these products. Farmers from these districts made the following suggestions:

- i) Areas of AEZs should be expanded.
- ii) Producers' companies working on cooperative basis for procurement, grading and value addition of agricultural produce with Government participation to ensure reasonable price for the produce should be constituted. Cooperative farm shops on the lines of 'Ryathu Bazaar' in AP should be started.
- iii) Fair Prices instead of subsidies and pesticides to be given.
- iv) Boards should be formed for all commodities.
- v) The number of small growers (less than 2 ha) should be represented in various boards.
- vi) Transportation of agriculture produce was hindered by forest laws. Laws which restrict movement of goods should be rescinded.
- vii) MSP for spices should be improved.
- viii) There should be a Price Stabilization Fund for farmers.

- ix) Price Insurance Scheme was needed.
- x) Competitiveness in terms of costs was required. Productivity should be raised.
- xi) Top priority should be given by the Central Government for selection of quality seeds which will help the farmers to attain maximum productivity from their holdings.
- xii) There was a mismatch between input and output prices, Govt. should subsidize seed price.
- xiii) Industry and Trade Bodies should be more active.
- xiv) Role of PDS should be expanded.
- xv) While cost of all commodities had gone up astronomically, price of farmer produce had gone up only arithmetically.
- xvi) Comprehensive replantation programme for perennial crops and senile orchards should be adopted for coconut, arecanut, cashew, rubber, and tea with the help of high quality planting material. NREGP should include replantation activity in Kerala.
- xvii) Steps to expand medicinal plant cultivation and scientific Ayurveda treatment should be taken up.

## **9. Issues related to Import Policy**

- i) Implication of the new IPR regime and pending Seeds Bill should be elaborated.
- ii) Given the agro-climatic and ecological diversity, States should be final arbiters on policy issues be they IPRs, trade negotiations or aggregate measures and support.
- iii) WTO negotiations should be made subject to satisfactory resolution of livelihood security arising from opening of the trade.
- iv) Competition from other countries and the threat of imports at low duties were cause of concern to cash crops.
- v) Before formulating the Import Policy the views of the Farmers should be consulted. All import policies should be examined from the viewpoint of their impact on farmers.
- vi) FTAs should be entered only after consultation with States.

- vii) Quality test on the import commodity should be strictly monitored.
- viii) Seeing the plight of the Kerala farmer the import duty on spices should be raised.
- ix) M.S. Swaminathan Committee recommendations should be implemented.

## **10. Rural Energy**

- i) Biogas should be taken up as a National programme.
- ii) Flowers of cashew nut and nutmeg shell could be used for ethanol.
- iii) Energy problems in rural areas should be given importance – a comprehensive rural energy plan was needed.

## **11. Suggestions and Observations made by the Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Cooperation, Finance and Fisheries:**

After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF held discussions with Ministers in-charge of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Cooperation of the State Government. The Minister apprised the Members about the steps taken by the State Government in favour of farmers and raised various issues needing attention of the NCF relating to their State.

- i) Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Shri M. Ratnakaran, highlighted the acute crisis faced by the major crops in Kerala due to volatility in prices. The removal of quantitative restriction has led to an annual loss of Rs.7000 crores due to price crash. While signing the bilateral and multilateral agreement on trade, the State was not consulted although agriculture is a State subject. Unless the credit policy was restructured to provide interest free loan till prices improved for farmers, coconut and paddy would not survive. A viable crop insurance scheme was needed. He expressed his reservation over corporate and contract farming and alienation of land and diversion of prime agriculture land for other purposes. The cooperative Amul model should be adopted. He made a request to hold one consultation at Calicut.
- ii) The Hon'ble Minister for Cooperation, Shri G. Sudhakaran, Government of Kerala highlighted acute distress faced in Kuttunad region of the State where

the paddy and coconut farmers were facing a debt trap. He requested for a Vidarbha like package for the region and a reduction in rates charged by NABARD from cooperative banks.

- iii) The Hon'ble Finance Minister, Dr. Thomas Issac also highlighted the unprecedented agrarian crisis and the drastic squeeze on agricultural income due to impact of WTO policies. He requested that the stand taken by the Swaminathan Committee should be reflected in the Policy. He also requested that there should be a separate paragraph on lack of public investment in agriculture. He also mentioned about the difficulties faced by the State Finance Department in spending for farmers due to restriction under the FRBM Act. He suggested that the Centrally Sponsored Schemes should be amenable for decentralized local level planning. He also mentioned that all local plans of Kerala would be watershed based henceforth.
- iv) Hon'ble Fisheries Minister, Shri S. Sharma, recommended adoption of sustainable fishery with community management, aquarian reforms and a National level social security programme for fish farmers. He also suggested that there should be legislation for coastal water property ownership as the tourism resorts were taking away the beaches. The traditional catch should be included in the sensitive list in WTO.

**12.** The Members assured the full consideration of the suggestion and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF MADHYA PRADESH FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT BHOPAL ON 21<sup>st</sup> JULY, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Bhopal on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2006. Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman, NCF was accompanied by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, NCF, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Ms. Mamta Shankar, Director, NCF. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) Farmer should be those who depended wholly on Agriculture.
- ii) There was a need to develop segregated planning for every group covered under the definition of the farmers otherwise some practical difficulties may arise during the implementation of various schemes.
- iii) Detailed study was needed for identifying the reasons behind the suicide of the farmers and best possible efforts were needed for rehabilitation of the family. Serious punishment should be given to the accused.
- iv) There was need to conduct a comparative study of standard of living in urban and rural areas.
- v) Policy must speak about the illiteracy and poor health conditions of the children of bonded labourers.
- vi) National Farmers' Welfare Fund and State Farmers' Welfare Fund must be established.



- vii) There was need to strengthen extension mechanism in an efficient manner through ICT for Agriculture.
- viii) Information on various inputs, labour availability and success stories should be highlighted.
- ix) Area specific information rather than broad information was needed.
- x) Local language or dialect should be used.
- xi) Information should be delivered quickly at farmers' doorstep.
- xii) Viability of ICT mechanism and proper management were vital for ICT to be successful.
- xiii) Training one man and one woman at panchayat level for solving local problems related to agriculture was not practically possible as availability of such person in every village was doubtful. This kind of training programme should be of high quality and preferably given to agriculture graduates.
- xiv) Visits to progressive area of the country for one progressive farmer from every Gram Panchayat should be facilitated.
- xv) Reimbursement of fare to farmers for attending the Panchayat Meeting would act as an incentive.
- xvi) Meeting with farmers should be held at Mandi levels.
- xvii) Crop competition, honouring farmers and nominating top farmers at all levels in Zilla Parishad, Zilla Panchayat, Vidhan Sabha etc. should be encouraged.
- xviii) Officers at senior level should be responsive. For agriculture the District Collector should have enough time to devote for Agriculture.
- xix) Secretary of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry at centre and state level should be a technocrat for proper implementation of agricultural and allied activities as envisaged in the Draft Policy for Farmers.
- xx) A Twenty-four hour channel on agriculture on Doordarshan should be introduced for farmers.
- xxi) Section 35 (2 AB) of the Income Tax Act provides for 150 % deduction on pharmaceuticals, electronic equipments etc involved in research. This should be extended to agro based companies too as they were engaged in agri-research and development, farmers training and education etc. Agro based companies should

also get exemption from Fringe Benefit Tax for free distribution of samples of various agro inputs, expenses on sales promotion and market research.

- xxii) Private sector should be attracted by providing tax benefits and subsidy for a period of five years for strengthening the extension services of agriculture.
- xxiii) The concept of village trade balance was put forward. While seed, fertilizer, pesticide, diesel, equipment make the village trade balance negative, crop production and animal product make it positive. Policies should strive to include all suggestions which made this village balance positive.
- xxiv) Every place had its USP. We should market and exploit our quality parameters.
- xxv) Recommendations should be backed by financial implications.
- xxvi) Small Scale Units based on local crops should be set up.
- xxvii) Help to farmers in States where there were no suicides cases should be given to prevent suicides.
- xxviii) Issues related to tribal women in agriculture and women labourers were not addressed adequately.
- xxix) All Agricultural Universities should reserve one month period for village visit once a year.

### **3. Land**

- i) Prices fixed for Land acquisition were very low considering market rates. Even this was not paid to farmers.
- ii) Farmers were spending too much on litigation over land acquisition for dams and urban and industrial expansion.
- iii) Government had promised that 20% of developed land would be returned to farmers but this was not put to practice.
- iv) Farmers protesting over these issues were beaten up. A ban on lathi charge on farmers should be recommended.
- v) Policy was needed to stop acquisition of agricultural land and for establishing industries. Only uncultivable waste land should be transferred to corporate sectors or business houses.

- vi) Long term lease (30 years) for ravines of Chambal and other degraded waste lands may be given for the purpose of rehabilitation of these lands through different agricultural systems.
- vii) There was need to formulate a strong developmental programme with hundred per cent assistance from Government of India to check the erosion.
- viii) NCF should gather data for the last 20 years on acquisition of agricultural and waste land for industrialization, urbanization and construction of roads, the pending cases for distribution of compensation and total amount distributed as compensation against acquisition of land.
- ix) In the interest of Scheduled Tribe (ST) farmers, measures should be included in the policy for land acquisition, sale of land, land transfer etc.
- x) There should be a law which protects tribal community from problems arising in taking their animals for grazing in plain and forest areas.
- xi) Schedule Tribes (ST) involved in production and conservation of forest product should get similar right on forest products as given to land owner. Similar law must be there for fishers who are totally dependent on the fishing.
- xii) Farmers should be freed from various articles of land revenue and other judicial activities which hindered the progress of agriculture leading to loss of wealth.
- xiii) Size of holding below which fragmentation was uneconomical should be fixed by a law.
- xiv) Consolidation of holding was required.
- xv) Private sector was providing soil testing as the Government machinery was not providing them.

#### **4. Water**

- i) Farmers irrigating their crop using electricity should get more subsidy as compared to farmers having access to canal irrigation.
- ii) Dry land horticulture including medicinal plants should be encouraged in water scarce areas.
- iii) Water Resource Conservation Bill should come in place to protect the various water resources.

- iv) Efficient management of irrigation (from head to tail end) and uninterrupted supply should be ensured for the development of agriculture.
- v) Government may dig deep tube wells and sell the water to farmers.
- vi) Problems of tail enders should be addressed. The productivity of crops was lower in tail areas. Give free water and electricity but charge taxes.
- vii) Duty on sprinkler drip irrigation should be reduced.
- viii) To avoid problem of displacement, tank irrigation should be adopted.
- ix) Equitable distribution of water and water use efficiency was very important.
- x) Technology Mission on Rainfed Agriculture should be established.

## **5. Livestock and Fisheries**

- i) Policy for livestock feed and fodder security system must be developed in each State.
- ii) Poly clinics (Agro –Veterinary) should be established in remote areas.
- iii) Since dairies of improved breeds of buffaloes were around big cities, no care was being taken for the maintenance of calves and heifers of buffaloes due to high rearing cost. Free/ subsidized land with financial support from the govt. may be provided to landless/ small farmers/ NGOs to rear them for their benefit.
- iv) There was need to promote traditional varieties, modernize them and to motivate farmers for rearing domestic livestock.
- v) There should be provision of compensation for crop production losses due to stray cattles.
- vi) Unproductive animals should be castrated.
- vii) There was a need to setup a National level body for intensive enquiry during the last five years of the progress of various corporations before constituting Livestock Feed Corporation.
- viii) Subsidy for calf rearing was necessary for improved varieties.
- ix) Livestock insurance should be expanded.
- x) Outreach and extension services are very poor. Training of farmers in Animal Husbandry was required.
- xi) Use of agricultural equipment with Bullocks should be subsidized.

- xii) Law about National Parks being open for grazing should be reviewed.
- xiii) Farmers should be given free of cost vaccination, mineral mixture, deworming and A.I. for breed improvement.
- xiv) Farmers should adopt animal husbandry as it is less affected in comparison to crops during drought and heavy rains.
- xv) Poultry should also be added in the list of assets.
- xvi) Policy of livestock feed and fodder security system should be developed in each state.
- xvii) Fishermen require credit cards and insurance for animal husbandry.
- xviii) River ranching was needed.
- xix) Each train should have a refrigerated compartment.
- xx) OBC fishermen should get same level of subsidy as SC/STs.
- xxi) Assistance was required for pre-harvest operations in fisheries.

## **6. Research, Extension Technology and Input**

- i) There was need to suggest to farmers regarding which farming system they should adopt according to availability of resources with them so that farmers could get assured income on per day, weekly or monthly basis.
- ii) Lac cultivation, sericulture, mushroom cultivation, bee keeping and floriculture needed promotion for livelihood security.
- iii) Appropriate infrastructure in villages be developed for enhancing the quality of seeds preserved by farmers.
- iv) Policy for development of seed security systems and buffer stocking of quality seeds was needed.
- v) GM crops and Bio technologies should be promoted through public sector organizations. GM seed certification procedure should be looked into.
- vi) We should not depend too much on costly seeds.
- vii) There was a need for introduction of anti bio-piracy regulatory systems
- viii) No work had been done in traditional knowledge.
- ix) There was a need to intensify the research related to organic products and to introduce National Organic certification Process so that it cost less as compared

to international certification. Farmers should be trained in the process for getting international certification of their produce.

- x) There should be subsidy on organic fertilizer. We should certify organic fertilizer for domestic market also.
- xi) Several bacteria could be investigated for bio fertilizer. More research was needed for this.
- xii) Govt. should ensure timely availability of inputs to farmers at appropriate prices. Remunerative prices should be ensured to the farmers based upon their costing. Efficient monitoring system was needed to be developed for ensuring quality inputs to the farmers.
- xiii) Agriculture judiciary should be constituted to solve the problems related to supply of sub standard or fake inputs and compensation to farmers. These cases must be solved within the crop season.
- xiv) There is need to establish more and more labs by autonomous or private agencies for testing the quality of inputs used in agriculture. Timely availability of high quality inputs must be ensured.
- xv) Contributions made by the farmers should be acknowledged by scientists.
- xvi) The technical dominance of the Agriculture Department was diminishing as the farmers receiving advice from private sector.
- xvii) Tractorization led to displacement of labour. This should be studied.
- xviii) Inputs should be available at Panchayat level.
- xix) National Horticulture Mission (NHM) should be implemented in a well planned manner with timely evaluation. Dryland Horticulture should be given importance in NHM.
- xx) Lack of extension was hampering horticulture.
- xxi) Government should not dictate what should be grown where in NHM.
- xxii) The outreach and reverse feed back of departments and university was very poor.

## **7. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Complete list of farmers who had committed suicide needs to be prepared. Their complete socio-economic profile should be studied and “Debt Relief Board” should be constituted to provide relief to the farmers. Unproductive utilization of credit should be checked.
- ii) Indebtedness was high due to high spending on inputs and lack of control over prices.
- iii) 73% of farmers depended on moneylenders. Car is available at 0% interest but tractor loan is available at 14% interest.
- iv) Farmers should get loan at 4%.
- v) Banks should have consultancy services for farmers.
- vi) Actual implementation of crop insurance scheme was very poor.
- vii) At present G.O.I was providing subsidies (7 % interest) to RRBs and thus loans to farmers may be provided at lower interest rates i.e. 4 %.
- viii) Agri clinics must be supported by direct finance at a lower rate of interest
- ix) Institutional sources should be expanded or new branches should be opened for lending credit to more and more farmers. Experienced agricultural scientist should be employed for sanction of loan and timely training on various schemes of State and Central Govt. should be provided to them. Bankers could involve retired officers of Agriculture Department to sensitize them.
- x) There was need to develop separate Agriculture Insurance Scheme for the Scheduled Tribes as they do farming in very harsh conditions and exposed to more risk.
- xi) Crop insurance scheme should be improved.
- xii) Co-operative election should be conducted by EC. The cooperative Banks and other cooperative credit institutions should be strengthened.
- xiii) Vaidyanathan Committee recommendations should be implemented by banks.
- xiv) MP was the only state which had consented to Vaidyanathan Committee Recommendations but implementation of these Recommendations was slow.
- xv) Kisan Credit Card for women could be given if there was a Credit Guarantee. Guarantee was needed not only for deposit but also for credit needed.

- xvi) Subsidy for failed well was needed.
- xvii) Bankers were generally slow in issuing credit to the farmers.

## **8. Market, Distribution & Trade**

- i) Farmers did not have the right to decide their price based on their costs.
- ii) Central and State agencies should provide assured markets to the farmers for their produce.
- iii) MSP should be declared for all crops and before onset of sowing season. Premium price support must be provided during crises.
- iv) Self Help Groups may be assigned quality seed production, value addition and their marketing.
- v) There was a need to strengthen the marketing intelligence, agro-parks and an agricultural expert in the foreign embassies for providing proper marketing intelligence.
- vi) A policy for market intelligence and support system for organic production must be developed.
- vii) MSP should be differentiated. Special price should be given for 'Sharbati' variety compared to ordinary wheat.
- viii) There was a need to establish a market like that in Chandigarh where farmers could sell their produce directly to the consumer and entry of middlemen was prohibited. Action should be taken against middlemen if they restricted farmers from selling their produce in these markets.
- ix) Farmers produce should be procured at remunerative prices (20 percent dividend plus average cost) in place of Minimum Support Price. The farmers should get foodgrains at prices lower than prevailing in Public Distribution System as farmers were big producer and consumer too.
- x) The farmers should be motivated to establish small processing units and products should be marketed by NAFED, MarkFed, Agro, Food and Public Distribution System.



- xi) Resolution should be prepared to protect interest of the farmers involved in contract farming and it should be flexible enough from the farmer's point of view.
- xii) A white paper may be issued on Futures Market to make available the information on its benefits and losses and a study should also be conducted to know how much loss farmers incurred due to it.
- xiii) Forward trading in food grains and agricultural commodities should be stopped. In case of 'guargum' trading was disproportionate to production.
- xiv) Govt. should provide timely and assured market for the produce of ST farmers.
- xv) Terms of Reference of the Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices were not upto the mark as one of the TOR of CACP inter alia was that prices of agricultural commodities should be fixed keeping in view the poor consumer of the nation which was against the farmers. Govt. should fix two prices for the same commodity, one which was beneficial to the farming community and another for poor consumers. CACP should be reconstituted involving 2 to 3 farmers as Members. Close surveillance of the soaring prices of the inputs, variation in production and cost differences, transportation costs and impact of WTO should also be taken into account.
- xvi) Agri-Export Zones (AEZs) need to be promoted for exports of agricultural commodities by providing assured markets to the farmers.
- xvii) Traders normally decide the price and farmers have no say. Middlemen charge 8% commission in Mandis. In Mandi taxes have to be paid by farmers for everything. 'Aarhat' was charged on garlic.
- xviii) 50% grant should be given to well working Mandis. NABARD provides subsidy of 50% to private sector but only 25% to mandis.
- xix) Mandis should have right to make rules themselves without political interference.
- xx) The arrangement between the ITC and Government for licensing was not known. There should be a control on them also. ITC etc may exploit once they were in monopoly.

- xxi) Marketing in tribal areas should be with Mandis Samiti. Representation of Mandis should be there in all district monitoring bodies.

## **9. Youth and Farming**

- i) Agricultural graduates should be trained as entrepreneurs. Problems in implementing Agri-clinic scheme should be rectified.
- ii) Conditions and working style of Agriculture Department in the State was not upto the mark and therefore intelligent youth of the village should be engaged as agricultural development agent. The farmer who wins first prize for his contribution in the field of agriculture at block level should be nominated as Member, Janpad Panchayat, Zila Panchayat, Legislative Assembly for a period of one year
- iii) Agro-Entrepreneurship was not developed because there was no assured marketing.
- iv) Agriculture Entrepreneurship may be empowered to act as second tier extension.
- v) Banks should give priority to agriculture background while lending in rural areas.
- vi) Bankers did not visualize aspiration for a quality life in rural areas.
- vii) Training of rural labourers was very necessary.
- viii) Youths were not utilized in villages due to lack of infrastructure facilities. Their peers toiled much less for more returns in urban areas.
- ix) Panchayat Members could not be trained as farm managers. The agriculture graduates may be trained as farm managers.
- x) We should recognize youth and give them responsibility making them agents of growth.
- xi) “Krishak Mitra Yojna” should be launched by selecting one educated person at each village for promoting agricultural development activities in the village.

## **10. Rural Energy**

Policy on energy component was missing. Alternate source of energy as well as electricity must be made available for agricultural purposes on priority basis.

**11.** Chairman, NCF, along with Members, separately held discussions with Hon'ble Chief Minister, M.P. and Ministers in charge of Agriculture, Cooperatives, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries. Hon'ble CM recommended that interest rates for farmers should be reduced. Most of the cooperative banks did not have eligibility for free finance and in view of the three-tier system of cooperatives, their lending rates tended to be higher than that of commercial banks. It was mentioned that in spite of agreeing to the Vaidyanathan Committee recommendations, the state had not received any benefits yet. He also felt that interest should not be charged by banks on overdue interest. Turning to problems of fishermen, he pleaded that traditional fishermen should be getting the facilities available for SC/ST. Inland fisheries should also get the level of help being provided to marine fisheries. Fishermen should get liberal credit. He felt that the MSP recommended by the CACP were very low and announcements were not made well in time. He pleaded for 75% subsidy for drip irrigation to improve efficiency in use of water. He felt that four crop-cutting experiments instead of eight should suffice for assessing damage to crops. A reference was made to the launch of a Khet Talab Yojana for providing life saving irrigation to farmers in rainfed areas. Lastly, he informed that the state had decided to set up a State Farmers' Commission and was also going to rename Agriculture department as Department for Farmers' Welfare and Agriculture, as recommended by the NCF. Lord Balram's birthday would be celebrated every year as Kisan Divas. Chairman, NCF, thanked Hon'ble CM for the courtesy shown to the NCF team.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF MAHARASHTRA FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT NAGPUR ON 1<sup>st</sup> MAY, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the College of Agriculture, Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapith (PDKV) at Nagpur on 1<sup>st</sup> May, 2006. Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman, NCF was accompanied by Shri Y. C. Nanda, Member and Ms. R. V. Bhavani, Director (Technical). Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State Govt. and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Suggestions and Observations**

- i) The deficiencies in rural infrastructure like energy, roads and communication were highlighted. There should be proper all-weather roads to bring the produce home.
- ii) Concern was expressed that both renewable and non-renewable energy sources were incapable of meeting demand for electricity for irrigation and other purposes.
- iii) Enquiries about alternative energy sources like bio-fuels were also discussed but it was also felt that the land requirement was very high and often income to be generated was exaggerated.
- iv) Farmers complained that bribe had to be given for inclusion in the BPL list.
- v) Due to declining predator population the threat of attack from wild boars had increased. These were causing widespread damage to crops. The Wildlife Protection Act must be reviewed to enable some solution to address this problem. There should be compensation for crop damaged by wildlife attack.

- vi) There should be thrust on organic farming in the region; inspite of huge investment on chemical farming, farmers were not getting adequate return.
- vii) There should be taluka and district level farmers' associations.
- viii) Representatives of farmers should be there in the Vidhan Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- ix) Like Govt servants, farmers also need financial security.
- x) Crop-livestock integrated farming should be introduced in the region.
- xi) Healthcare facilities in villages is very poor.
- xii) There should be village-level storage facility to prevent distress sale.
- xiii) Farmers should also be provided with appropriate schemes for insurance, pension and old age support.
- xiv) Most cooperatives had degenerated with control by vested interests; a major overhauling is needed with a fine blend of autonomy and regulation.
- xv) A Farmers' Welfare Fund should be setup to be used for meeting crisis situations.
- xvi) Lot of agricultural land is being usurped by industry without adequate compensation. Owners are given promises of jobs that never materialize.
- xvii) Counseling Centres maybe setup to provide advice and counseling to farmers in distress areas.
- xviii) There should be both Land Use and Labour Use Policy.

### **3. Cotton Farming**

- i) The difficulties faced by the cotton farmers in the Vidarbha region like low productivity, high input cost, lack of marketing infrastructure etc. were discussed in detail.
- ii) The Cotton Corporation of India and the Mill Federation did not honour their promises to the farmers. They bought locally only if it was cheap. Otherwise cotton is imported.
- ii) The NCF recommendation to increase import duty on raw cotton to 30% had not been accepted.

- iii) While the input cost rose 6 times due to rise in prices of the pesticides, seeds etc. the output prices remained the same in Vidharbha.
- iv) It was also felt that sugarcane was the favoured crop and there was an inherent bias against cotton farming.
- v) The importance of setting up processing units in the region was emphasized.

#### **4. Inputs**

- i) Farmers complained that the power supply was highly erratic which led to the burning of motors.
- ii) Several irrigation projects awaited completion in the region.
- iii) The waiting time for connection to energize pumps was really long.
- iv) The issue of failed bore-wells was also raised.
- v) In Chandrapur the conflict between irrigation project and forest conservation was highlighted. Part of the project is through forest area and it is therefore lying incomplete. A study on the subject carried out by Drs. Rani Bang and Prakash Amte was mentioned.
- vi) There was shortage of agricultural labour. It should be ensured that agricultural labour gets the statutory minimum wage to encourage labour retention; The minimum wage for agricultural labour should be as per the 6<sup>th</sup> Pay Commission recommendation for IV class staff.
- vii) Quality inputs should be made available at affordable price.
- viii) Farmers should be encouraged to keep their own seeds.
- ix) Terminator technology for seeds should not be allowed.
- x) Soil health enhancement should be taken up to enhance productivity.
- xi) Seed cost is very high. There should be safeguards in the Seed Bill to ensure that farmers are allowed to use their own seed.

#### **5. Credit and Insurance**

- i) A number of credit related issues were raised. It was pointed out that interest payments were far greater than the principal amount.

- ii) Questions were raised on whether the cutting down of the layers of the cooperative credit structure will help.
- iii) Stakeholders complained that the bank staff was not available after 5 p.m. when it was convenient for farmers and their behavior was rude.
- iv) Farmers' debt should be waived; when banks can help loss-making corporations, why not rehabilitate farmers.
- v) Credit should be given at less than 4% interest rate.
- vi) Agri graduates should be given subsidy to start agro-units at village level.
- vii) Crop insurance coverage is poor. Farmers lack information.
- viii) Insurance compensation takes a long time in coming; does not provide relief at time of need.
- ix) Indebtedness is the main cause of farmer suicide.
- x) Just interest rate reduction will not solve the problem; total restructuring of loans is required.
- xi) Separate provision should be made in the budget for payment of premium and compensation to farmers.
- xii) The concessions given for industrial loans are not extended to farmers.
- xiii) There should be a loan window with provision for personal consumption loans for farmers.

## **6. Market and Price**

- i) The Purchase Centre set up by the government did not work. The general perception was that the intervention of State was not strong enough.
- ii) Opening of Purchase Centres should synchronise with harvesting of a crop and number of centres should be increased; Payment should be prompt and there should be safe storage facility available in case of delay in purchase.
- iii) MSP should cover cost of production; It should be decided State-wise because cost of production varies from State to State.
- iv) Import duty on cotton should be increased.

7. The Members assured the full consideration of the suggestions received and the written representations made by the participants. They also thanked the PDKV and State Government for the courtesy shown.



# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF MAHARASHTRA & GOA FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT PUNE ON 5<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Pune on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2006. The NCF was represented by Prof. R.B. Singh, Member, Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. (Ms.) Chanda Nimbkar, Member, Part-time and R.V. Bhavani Director (Tech.). Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The Pune Declaration of a workshop of NGOs organised in Pune on Aug 18-19 to discuss the Policy was also highlighted at the meeting. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Suggestions and Observations**

- i) Agriculture is an activity in the service of the nation – it is an investment not an expenditure and should get due attention. We need a separate agriculture budget.
- ii) There should be a model farm in each district and even taluka if possible.
- iii) Promotion of farm tourism can be one of the measures to attract and retain youth in farming. It also adds dignity to the life of the farm labour.
- iv) The definition of ‘Farmer’ should be qualified as one who remains in the field for more than six hours.
- v) Service providers i.e. ‘rural artisans’ who cater to agricultural needs in villages should also be included in the definition of farmer.
- vi) SEZs should be established only on waste and barren lands.
- vii) We need reorganize policies.

### **3. Land – Livestock**

- i) Soil health programmes should indicate extant government schemes and integrate the same with soil testing as follow-up action.
- ii) Integrated farming model is required to increase productivity.
- iii) Dry land agriculture needs special attention and allocation.
- iv) Farmers need advice on what to grow where.
- v) Farmers whose land is taken for other use have to be compensated adequately.
- vi) The pressure of population on land has to be reduced.
- vii) There should be a ceiling on fragmentation of land holding.
- viii) Land reform implementation and land rights protection should get priority.
- ix) Saline land reclamation needs agency approach.
- x) Boundary dispute is one of the most contentions litigation issues among farmers.
- xi) Vaccination information for livestock should be disseminated on polio campaign mode.
- xii) The recommendations of the Dhariya Committee on Wasteland Development should be implemented.

### **4. Water**

- i) Micro watershed planning is needed to reduce the vagaries of monsoon. The Pani Panchayat model should be promoted in drought prone areas to retain water.
- ii) The energy supply component is crucial for effective irrigation and needs attention.
- iii) In the name of public property, ownership over water is being hijacked.
- iv) Water consumption should be determined as per agro-climatic condition. Crops like sugarcane and paddy should be grown only in high water areas.
- v) There should be water budgeting at the village level and attention to drinking water availability as well
- vi) Artificial ground water recharge and rainwater harvesting should be promoted.

## **5. Research, Technology & Training**

- i) The benefit accruing to farmers from research should be one of the criteria for evaluating performance of scientists.
- ii) Farmer – Educational institution linkage should be promoted with students coming to work on farms during peak periods like the harvesting season when there is shortage of farm labour. In Israel, schools give a break for this purpose.
- iii) Weather prediction and disease forecasting has to improve at the micro-level. As on date only the grape and potato Research Institutes have disease-forecasting facility.
- iv) Community and FM radio should be popularized and promoted for technology dissemination.
- v) Very little digital content is available in the local language for farmers to access
- vi) Organic Farming should be included in the educational curriculum.
- vii) Promoting Post Harvest Technology wing in KVKs also requires making provision for additional manpower to handle the task.
- viii) Agricultural education should not be restricted to those who have land only. In Maharashtra, those who have land get greater weightage in the admission process.

## **6. Input Supply**

- i) Farmers' Clubs can promote cooperative or contract farming and hire out agricultural implements and supply inputs.
- ii) The Seed Village Concept should be promoted to ensure availability of good quality seeds. Small farmers undertaking seed production should get bank assistance.
- iii) Government companies meet only 10% of seed requirement. The rest is in the hands of private companies.
- iv) Minor pests have become major and pest control companies are making hay.

## **7. Fisheries**

- i) Aquaculture should be treated on par with agriculture.
- ii) Fishery exports should be exempt from sales tax as they are earning forex for the country; Export prices should be assured.
- iii) The Murari Committee recommendations on uniform fuel rate and taxation levels should be implemented.
- iv) The NFDB should have atleast 3 fishers on the Board, to represent the interests of all the nine coastal States.
- v) Leasing Policy of reservoirs should be uniform across the country.
- vi) Closed period allowance should be more than what was recommended.
- vii) Fuel station for trawlers should be close to point of vessel parking. The Coastal Zone Regulation (CZR) should permit this or Fishers' Societies should have permission to store fuel, so as to prevent cost incurrence on transporting fuel.
- viii) CZR should not apply to small fishers.

## **8. Credit and Insurance**

- i) There is no insurance for vegetable cultivation.
- ii) Banks don't reach small and marginal farmers.
- iii) Crop loans should be sanctioned on yearly basis instead of for just the cropping season.
- iv) Land Development Banks should be revived.
- v) Lower rate of interest on credit will require interest subsidy.
- vi) Farmers availing credit should not have to pay stamp duty on documentation.
- vii) The formal credit institutions do not treat the farmer with dignity and the procedure for lending is cumbersome.
- viii) Banks levy charge for issuing NOC – this should not be there.
- ix) Cooperative credit societies do not extend credit to fishers.
- x) Banks should have database of farmers with less than 3 acres land holding.

- xi) Ideally any farmer who approaches a bank should be allowed to open an account and extended credit as per ceiling fixed for different land holding categories and landless, with minimum documentation requirement.
- xii) There should be insurance cover for crops regardless of whether the farmer has availed of credit and also life insurance cover for the farmer.

## **9. Price and Market**

- i) Price of produce should be decided in accordance with cost of production.
- ii) Like Special Economic Zones, we should have ‘Special Agriculture Zones’ with supporting centralized infrastructure facilities like storage and quality testing.
- iii) When there is excess supply of a commodity, we should have the necessary information and tie-ups in place to export.
- iv) There should be direct farmer-consumer linkage with transparency in sale and reduction of intermediaries.
- v) Farmer needs advice on what can be sold where.
- vi) Advance MSP needs to be fixed for commodities and perishable crops to enable farmers to decide what to grow.
- vii) All weather road connectivity should be available to enable farmer to transport his produce to the market.
- viii) Farmers’ Markets should be promoted.
- ix) Measures like giving preference to fruit juice over coke in tender applications will promote agro-processing activity.

## **10. Women in Agriculture**

- i) Joint patta in land ownership should be implemented.
- ii) Women farmers need concentrated training and capacity building.
- iii) Women SHGs can be engaged in seed production on State farms.
- iv) Women’s entrepreneurship should be promoted in specialized areas like floriculture and medicinal and aromatic plants.

## **11. Extension and Dissemination**

- i) Success stories should be widely publicized. There should be atleast one successful model in each Block.
- ii) Effective innovations should receive priority attention.
- iii) There should be coordination between the different departments dealing with agriculture, technology and food security like, Departments of Agriculture, S&T and Health.
- iv) Farmer-Scientist Interaction Forums should be promoted – ‘Krishi-Vigyan Mandal.’
- v) Interface between progressive and common farmer and exposure visits will promote farmer-farmer learning.
- vi) There should be Help Desk Centres with farmer grievance officers and Information Centres equipped with database of farmers in the local language, whom farmers can approach easily.
- vii) There should be district level extension education centers with full-fledged team of agriculture specialists.

## **12. Governance**

- i) Agriculture department should be allowed to handle only responsibilities related to agriculture information outreach and implementation and not saddled with other non-extension activities and administrative responsibilities.
- ii) Motivated staff should be recognized and encouraged.
- iii) Horizontal integration in extension is not good – a change in approach is needed.
- iv) Budget provision for agriculture has to increase.
- v) Departments should be more sensitive and responsible. A system of monitoring has to be brought in place.

**13.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions received and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF ORISSA FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT BHUBANESWAR ON 28<sup>th</sup> JULY 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Bhubaneswar on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member, Shri Jagadish Pradhan, Member, Part-time and Shri G.C. Pati, Joint Secretary. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) The electricity distribution companies are showing complete apathetic attitude for supplying power to farmers. While electrification for industries and urban areas is being taken up on priority, the same for agriculture is often delayed. Moreover, the cost of electrification is prohibitive. If a farmer wants to take electricity line to his field, he has to pay for the cost of poles, which he cannot afford. Therefore, electrification to farmers' field should be subsidized to boost agricultural production.
- ii) ICAR was urged to establish a sugarcane research station in the State.
- iii) There is lack of co-ordination between various Departments involved in farmers' affairs. For instance, release of water in canals by Irrigation Department is not done as per the advice of the Agriculture Department. Hence, coordinated efforts of all related Departments related to agriculture should be ensured.

- iv) There should be single window facility for attending to the works/ grievance of farmers rather than directing a farmer to go to different agencies.
- v) Some farmers (particularly younger ones) stated that the Banks, Govt. officials were not extending respect/courtesy due to the farmers. The issue of dignity of farmers was highlighted as an important problem.
- vi) There are many schemes in agriculture sector involving farmers, but the farmers and other stakeholders are hardly aware of them. Moreover, frequent changes made in the schemes & the guidelines are detrimental to the overall growth of agriculture.
- vii) Mass production of a particular agricultural produce in a cluster should be encouraged. But contract farming should not be encouraged, as it is not farmer friendly. Entire State should be covered under 'Organic Farming' instead of encouraging it in certain zones.
- viii) Agriculture should be given the status of industry in true spirit. There should be agricultural estates with all required infrastructural facilities as is done in industrial estates/SEZs etc.
- ix) Jeypore region of Orissa is famous for rice biodiversity. This treasure and heritage should be adequately conserved. Niche production and marketing of selected landraces/ traditional varieties should be actively promoted. Participatory breeding and protection of farmers' rights should be strongly supported.
- x) Development of infrastructure related to agriculture like drainage, road, market is necessary.
- xi) Training and capacity development of farmers and SHGs of farmers to take up agro-processing/food processing industries and marketing of products should be encouraged in the Policy.



### **3. Land**

- i) The soil of Orissa is mostly acidic (about 70% to 80%) which needs corrective measures and it was suggested to use both chemical and organic fertilizers to optimize the soil health. This cannot be achieved by organic intervention only.\
- ii) Management of acid soils is crucial for Orissa.

### **4. Water**

- i) The State receives an average annual rainfall of about 1400 mm which is nearly 300 mm in excess of the country's average annual rainfall. But, much of the water is wasted.
- ii) Although the State's irrigation intensity is 40%, scarcity of irrigation water and poor maintenance of canals/channels affects the area irrigated in several parts of the State.
- iii) In coastal areas water logging was a major problem. Drainage facilities in water-logged areas should be developed to make the land agriculturally more productive.
- iv) Efforts should be made to provide irrigation water in water scarcity areas by proper maintenance of canal system and installation of other efficient water use system.
- v) Farmers should be associated while designing and executing minor and lift irrigation projects since the cost of such projects implemented through farmers is invariably less.
- vi) Underground tube/pipe irrigation network to increase water use efficiency was advocated.
- vii) The provisions for irrigation under Bharat Nirman could be made available for efficient use of water, for promoting micro-irrigation and for completing the several unfinished irrigation projects.
- viii) Govt. of Orissa has introduced a scheme of Pani Panchayat for management of Lift Irrigation Points (LIP) for last 4 to 5 years. Once Pani Panchayats are formed, the LIPs are handed over to them and the Govt. withdraws itself totally

from maintenance of LIPs, the farmers face lot of problems. Since the concept of Pani Panchayats is quite new, Govt. should ensure hand holding to the farmers' Pani Panchayats for successfully operating the Lift Irrigation Points. A sizeable number of Lift Irrigation Points under the management of Pani Panchayats have become defunct reducing the crop coverage area substantially due to the lack of handholding support from Government after formation of Pani Panchayats.

- ix) The primary right on use of water of any irrigation project should be with the farmers and only after meeting the irrigation needs the balance available water, if any, may be given to urban areas or the industries, which at present tend to get preference over farmers.
- x) Coastal land and water integrated management; desiltation/dredging of rivers, particularly at the points of confluence with sea; management and utilization of waterlogged areas; linking of rivers within specified areas may be examined for long term solution to the problem of flood.

## **5. Livestock & Fisheries**

- i) Pisciculture should be adopted by the farmers along with paddy cultivation to make farming more profitable.
- ii) CRRI demonstrations have shown that rice-fish-vegetable-livestock integrated farming could yield about Rs. 60,000 per acre. This model should be widely replicated.
- iii) Accent on Aquarian reforms and appropriate water reservoir leasing policy was necessary.

## **6. Research, Extension, Technology & Inputs**

- i) One of the major problems of the farmers was getting high quality seed at right time. Supply of seeds by Govt. agencies is often delayed. When Govt. announces subsidy on seed in natural calamity affected area and such subsidized seeds are made available after sowing, the farmers are really not benefited.

- ii) High quality seed, fertilizer and pesticide, essential for farming, must be made easily available to the farmers in time and in desired quantity.
- iii) Proper technological know-how must be made available to the farmers in production of quality seeds so that farmers can produce high quality seeds in their own fields rather than purchasing the same with uncertainty about its quality from the traders.
- iv) The Societies are not providing quality fertilizer/ seeds and other inputs required by the farmers.
- v) Large-scale exploitation and cheating of poor farmers is going on in the sale of fertilizers, pesticides and seeds etc. by the traders. The same item is sold to different farmers at different rates sometimes at 50% of the MRP (Maximum Retail Price). Therefore, an innocent farmer who does not bargain with the trader takes an article at a higher price whereas some other farmer may get the same article at a much lower price. Therefore, actual MRP should be written and quality of fertilizers/pesticides should be ensured.
- vi) The agricultural extension in the State has become very weak due to large-scale vacancies and for other reasons. Farmers are not getting right information or advice in right time.
- vii) Most of the farmers are using diesel and kerosene pump sets to irrigate their land. Therefore, special subsidy for agricultural use of diesel and kerosene was proposed by some farmers.
- viii) The cost of inputs, labour rate and transportation charges have become so high that farming is gradually becoming more and more un-remunerative. Moreover, the MSP fixed for different crops does not ensure adequate returns to the farmers.
- ix) Agricultural advice by the extension workers and scientists must be in tune with the need of the farmer. For example, paddy which does not produce straw should not be encouraged in rural areas where straw is a major requirement of farmers for house construction as well as for cattle feed.

- x) At least one progressive farmer in every Gram Panchayat should be extensively trained by Govt. so that he or she can further train other farmers of his or her Gram Panchayat.
- xi) Subsidy on fertilizer, pesticides, seeds etc. is benefiting the manufacturers and traders of these items. The farmer does not get any benefit. Therefore, instead of subsidizing fertilizer, pesticide, seed etc., the fund can be better utilized for fixing higher MSP which will directly help the farmers.
- xii) Another suggestion was that rural women must be trained in capacity building and food preservation and their wasteland should be earmarked for development through women farmers. Cost-effective production and timely distribution of quality hybrid seeds must be ensured. Hybrid rice seed villages should be tried.
- xiii) Production of hybrid rice in Orissa should be encouraged in view of its higher yield potential compared to best of HYVs.

## **7. Credit & Insurance**

- i) Availability of easy and soft credit from the banks in time was presented as a major problem. The interest on short-term crop loan to farmers has been reduced by Govt. of India to 7%. But the benefit is not available to the farmers since most of the Banks and Cooperative Societies are charging higher rate of interest.
- ii) The procedure of processing the documents for crop loan should be simplified. The processing fees charged by various banks need to be minimized.
- iii) The rate of interest and the processing fees for crop loan to farmers should not vary from bank to bank.
- iv) Despite the shortcomings, the State has some successful experiences of loaning to farmers' groups and to tenant farmers, and such experiences should be replicated.
- v) The educational and health needs of the rural farmers must be taken care of by credit institutions along with their farming needs. Kalinga Kisan Gold Card scheme of the Govt, is a step in the direction of widening the credit canvas, but its outreach is still very limited.

- vi) A long-term credit policy must be evolved which should also provide for credit stabilization fund in the event of rescheduling of loans.
- vii) Customers'(farmers') awareness should be enhanced on various credit and insurance schemes and their operation.
- viii) Cooperative Societies account for about 70 percent of the loan disbursed to the farmers in the State, but by and large have failed to benefit the needy farmers.
- ix) The State has adopted the Vaidyanathan Committee Report but is far from its implementation.
- x) Crop Insurance Scheme was ineffective in extending benefit to the farmers affected by crop loss. Since block is a unit for determining crop insurance, many farmers who genuinely sustain loss because of un-favourable weather or otherwise do not get the benefit of insurance. Therefore it was proposed to make crop insurance individual based and all crops and plantations must be included under the Crop Insurance Scheme.
- xi) The Compulsory Rice Insurance Scheme should be revisited and all major crops including horticulture and cash crops such as cotton and livestock should be brought under insurance umbrella.
- xii) Though some progressive farmers want to venture into innovative agriculture, they are not daring to do so because of extremely high risk associated with it. Therefore, there is need for solid crop insurance backup for such farmers.
- xiii) Nationalized Banks are not attitudinally helpful to the farmers. The schemes of NABARD have not benefited the farmers due to apathetic attitudes of Bankers.

## **8. Market, Distribution & Trade**

- i) Distress sale of agriculture produce, especially rice and vegetables, is a major problem, which affects farmers of the State. Lack of storage, preservation and agro-processing facilities were projected as the main reasons for inadequate marketing facility.
- ii) Marketing infrastructures at every Gram Panchayat level need to be built linked to the areas of mass agricultural production.

- iii) Farmers' Federations may be encouraged to facilitate storage, marketing and processing. Simultaneously, farmers, particularly women farmers/women SHG members, need to be trained on food preservation and food processing skills so that it will not only prevent distress sale but will also add value to the produce.
- iv) For cultivation of medicinal and aromatic plants, marketing is a big problem. Centres must be opened by Govt. to purchase the produces at appropriate rates from the farmers. At the time of glut, Govt. should itself purchase the agricultural produces at MSP.
- v) Govt. of Orissa has amended its Agricultural Produces Marketing Committee Act thereby allowing contract farming in the State. Several farmers voiced that there is a risk of permanent damage to the agricultural field by contract farming through excessive application of inputs. The contract farming sponsors will take away all the benefits and render the land of contract producer useless. Hence, if at all contract farming is to be encouraged, organic farming through contract farming should be encouraged.
- vi) Minimum Support Price (MSP) must be fixed and announced before crop operation starts so that farmers can decide to go for a particular crop or not considering its MSP.

**9.** After Consultation session, Members of NCF held discussion with the Hon'ble Ministers of Agriculture, Co-operation and Fisheries & Animal Husbandry Departments of the State Government in presence of concerned Secretaries and other State Government officers. The Hon'ble Minister, Agriculture apprised the Members about various problems of the State and emphasized the following points necessary for developing agriculture in the State:

- i) Enhancing land fertility and preventing degradation of soil was a critical factor.
- ii) Optimum utilization of irrigation and rainwater for increasing irrigated area should be ensured. Delivery of water through underground pipe to improve efficiency be considered.
- iii) Interlinking of rivers to increase irrigation potential may be examined by Govt. of India.

- iv) In Science and Technology from laboratory to land and from scientists to farmers should be major focus. Access of farmers to biotechnology should be improved.
- v) Reduction in consumption of chemical fertilizer and pesticides and balance between chemical and organic fertilizer to optimize soil fertility may be ensured.
- vi) Contract farming and compact farming to enable farmers to tap larger market should be examined.
- vii) Adequate market and cold chain facilities should be provided for benefit of farmers.
- viii) Credit & Insurance System for farmers needs strengthening. For the purpose of crop insurance, Panchayat instead of Block should be the unit.
- ix) Farmers be kept away from taxes like excise/VAT.

**10.** The Hon'ble Minister, Cooperation informed about the difficulties being faced by Cooperative Institutions in providing crop loan to farmers @7% p.a. as announced by Govt. of India. 3 tier cooperative structure requires additional margin of at least 3-4% over and above the rate of interest @ 5.5% charged by NABARD to the Cooperatives. Amendment of APMC Act was highlighted. Rule was being finalized. There is interest from a number of corporate organizations to take up contract farming in the State as per the amended Act.

**11.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF PUNJAB FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT CHANDIGARH ON 24<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Chandigarh on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2006. The NCF was represented by Dr. R.B. Singh, Member, Shri G.C. Pati, Joint Secretary and Dr. Deepak Rathi, Research Officer. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

1.2 Finance Commissioner, Development, welcomed the participants. Member, NCF explained to the participants the broad recommendations made by NCF so far in its Four Reports and the objectives of this Consultation. He expressed satisfaction that Govt. of Punjab has already constituted State Farmers' Commission as per recommendation of NCF. He explained that the main objective of recommendations of NCF was to improve the well-being and income of the farmers and to improve the agricultural growth rate to 4%.

1.3 The women farmers, other farmers, farmers' organizations and other participants were requested to give their views on the Draft National Policy for Farmers proposed by NCF. Views expressed are summarized below:

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) Subsidy should be targeted and need based according to time, place, quantity and be directly available to appropriate farmer in time. All the schemes of Central Government must have substantial subsidy components for providing proper and timely benefit to the beneficiaries.



- ii) How to integrate responsibilities with Panchayati Raj Institutions? About 25 per cent population in India were poor and underfed for the last 25 years. How this can be tackled should be dealt within this Policy.
- iii) Whatever policies were decided in the interest of the farmers, it always remained on paper and never reached the farmer.
- iv) Contract farming as a tool for reducing the distress among the farmers was not found successful as it was not beneficial till clear cut code of conduct could be decided in the interest of the farmers.
- v) Govt. should provide twenty years of tax holiday for establishing industries near villages with condition that out of total employment generated 90 percent must be recruited from that locality only.
- vi) Part time farming must be promoted; in Japan 87 percent population is involved in farming and about 90 percent income comes from non- farm employment.
- vii) Recently foodgrain was imported by Govt. of India. A little increase in demand increased the prices of these commodities at international level. Hence a comprehensive Food Policy is needed.
- viii) Farmers require continuous and quality electricity supply.
- ix) To provide better health service, there should be one hospital with all the facilities for every 2-3 blocks. Mediclaim policy must be mandatory for every farmer and there should be 75 percent subsidy on it.
- x) If Punjab would be saved, then the country would be saved as the State was contributing 22 million tonnes of foodgrains production every year and about 50% of it is procured for the national bufferstocking.
- xi) Detailed report of the Commission was welcomed but concern was its implementation. The policy must impart the grassroot people. Therefore, it would have been better if Draft National Policy could have been prepared by bottom up approach rather than top down approach.
- xii) Cooperatives like Gujarat must be promoted in the State also.
- xiii) Provision of Award or recognition to the farmers at Govt. of India level should be considered.

- xiv) For the last 2-3 years, no Punjab farmer representative had been invited to attend the pre budget meeting with Finance Minister, unlike the past practice.
- xv) In the last fifty years, contribution of agriculture to GDP declined from 51% to 20%. But nearly 65% of the population depend on agriculture. Hence there was need to increase the investment in Agriculture and improve the share of agriculture in GDP.
- xvi) Non-farm employment, good education and health facilities in rural areas must be the priority.
- xvii) Indebtedness in Punjab has been rising fast.
- xviii) Farmers of Punjab were bound to grow paddy for food security due to the pressure of Government but paddy should be produced on sustainable basis.
- xix) Seed security and seed sovereignty must be maintained. PVPFR Act should be made farmer friendly.

### **3. Land**

- i) Deterioration in quality of soil and water was an area of concern in Punjab due to rice/wheat intensification. Specific Land Utilization Policy should be specified and enforced according to area specific crops. No agriculture strategy, which may deteriorate the quality of land, environment including other natural resources should be implemented.
- ii) Fragmentation of land had resulted in underutilization of tractor – contract servicing of agriculture can be tried – cost will be reduced.
- iii) It was necessary to save the agriculture land from other land uses. For housing development near cities/urban areas, multistoried buildings should be encouraged to save prime agriculture land.

### **4. Water**

- i) Ground water level in Punjab had gone down and is further going down at alarming rate, resulting in increase of cost of irrigation. Small dams/check dams

to increase irrigation potential should be encouraged and Ground water recharging should be taken up on priority.

- ii) Fisheries may be raised in canal water. Dams should be constructed on Beas and Ravi rivers for recharging of ground water. Plantation for conservation of water should be undertaken.
- iii) Efficient utilization of water was a basic issue. In UP, yield per ha of irrigated wheat is 2.8 m.t compared to 4.5 m.t in Punjab. In Orissa yield of irrigated rice was 1.5 m.t/ha which can easily be increased to 2.5 m.t/ha. If irrigated land productivity in these States can be increased, it would ensure better food security in the country. Punjab agriculture in that case would go for diversification.

## **5. Livestock**

- i) Scarcity of dry fodder in Punjab was hindering the development of livestock. Hence further intensification of livestock schemes would not be viable. Livestock farmers should be given concessional loans.
- ii) Fishery should be encouraged in a big way in Punjab in view of its excellent potential in the State.
- iii) Breeds like 'Thai magur' did not allow culture of indigenous fishes in the same pond, hence these should be banned.

## **6. Technology**

- i) Spurious Bt cotton should be checked and the SAU should help the farmers by releasing Bt varieties for increasing the productivity and income.
- ii) Farmers should listen to the advice of KVKs and scientists as no revolution can take place through policy only.
- iii) Bee keeping and Mushroom growers should be covered under the definition of the farmer and these activities should also be financed. Wolamite in bee keeping was similar to bird flu in poultry and attention be given to control in an effective manner.

- iv) Environment and natural resources were precious but farmers committed mistake by over exploiting them. Therefore the policy should be area specific with emphasis on proper land utilisation and crop combinations to save precious resources and providing market with remunerative prices to the producer for various commodities.
- v) There was an urgent need for contract servicing due to fragmentation of land since with small land holdings farmers can utilise only 25 per cent of the total capacity of the machinery available with them.
- vi) Farmers were ready to go ahead with diversification but alternative crops must yield more or equal income to that from rice or wheat.
- vii) Labour scarcity is a problem and there was a need for labour saving farm equipments.
- viii) Bt vegetables were reported to be injurious for health. Europe and Canada had banned Bt vegetables. The SAU should ensure food safety of Bt. releases.
- ix) Organic goods produced by the farmers fetched better price and income. This should be encouraged by the Government.

## **7. Credit & Insurance**

- i) Credit should be extended to women with the due share in the total credit allocated for agriculture.
- ii) All interest dues should be waived as farmers were unable to service the interest.
- iii) There was need to waive all the credit to the farmers, but this alone cannot solve all the problems of the farmers.
- iv) Forty five per cent of the farmers were totally economically unviable and used credit for consumption because through agricultural activities from small piece of land as they cannot generate sufficient income to meet their basic needs. Hence there was need to provide consumption loan without collateral security.
- v) Kisan credit card must be provided to the farmers to check bribe at banks.
- vi) Private money lenders have tried to build social and human relations with their customers. But this kind of behaviour was not observed in case of nationalised banks. Hence change in mindset of bankers is required.

- vii) The interest rate should be reduced to 4%. How to pull out the farmers from indebtedness without giving more credit should be worked out.
- viii) Instead of Block, individual farmer should be the unit on the basis of which insurance cover is given.

## **8. Market**

- i) Farmers experienced difficulties in marketing mushroom and other agriculture products.
- ii) For diversification of crop, market was the biggest problem. Contract farming would not be effective unless the market prices were fixed.
- iii) Better market facility be created where remunerative price was assured to the farmers.
- iv) Niche market for crops like “Basmati” should be encouraged. Even organic “Basmati” can be encouraged. “Basmati” should not be called as ‘Super Basmati’ as announced by some traders.
- v) It was necessary to think about agriculture globally in the context of WTO. Govt. should not abandon WTO. Zoning for different areas depending on strength/ weakness like grapes in Maharashtra should be done for improving global competitiveness.
- vi) No MSP for crops like Sugarcane, Pulses etc. was available for the farmers. MSP should be linked to wholesale price index. Procurement should be at market price higher than MSP and should be effected in time.
- vii) Inadequate agro-processing capability was hindering diversification to oil seeds/pulses and other crops.
- viii) Production of farm be planned and oriented as per market demand. In this context, food parks can prove effective.
- ix) Level Playing field should be ensured in WTO regime. USA was giving high subsidy to agriculture compared to India. How can Indian product be competitive in international market should be indicated in the Policy.

- x) Agricultural price and labour minimum wages were decided by Govt. of India. Pay Commission should also look into the living condition, income of farmers and suggest the minimum pay for the farmers also.
- xi) Organic farming can give more yield and higher farm income as compared to the ongoing chemical Agriculture..
- xii) Agriculture farming should be treated like enterprise, not as a way of life.
- xiii) Farmer of Punjab could not transport surplus wheat outside due to stringent provisions in 9<sup>th</sup> Schedule of Essential Commodities Act. It had acted to the detriment of interest of the farmers in the past.
- xiv) PM in his speech on 15.08.2006, mentioned that farmer must get appropriate remunerative price from the market. This must be implemented.
- xv) Value addition to agriculture produce by farmers was discouraged. Provision of license for setting up rice mill/huller was cited as an example. Due to all these and lack of access to market, farmers had lost heavily. Hence all loans of farmers be waived.
- xvi) When there was shortage in production, Government imports foodgrain at higher price – against the interest of farmers.
- xvii) One TV/Radio channel exclusively for farmers should be commissioned both at the Central and State level.
- xviii) In contract farming detailed guidelines should be specified to protect interest of farmers.

## **9. Views of State Govt. representatives.**

### **9.1 Views of Dr. S.S. Johl, Vice Chairman, State Planning Board, Govt. of Punjab suggested the following:**

- i) 45% farmers in Punjab were economically non viable due to small land holding even if entire loan was waived. Diverting them to alternative off farm employment was the answer. For that education was stated to be the most important factor. The farmers were at a disadvantage in Higher Education. For instance, only 3.7% of the students in the PAU veterinary College are from rural areas. Thrust in the next Plan should be “Rural Education”.

- ii) Employment in industries of local persons should be incentivised fiscally so as to divert people from non-viable agriculture.
- iii) Technology be developed for small farmers like organic farming in Cuba.
- iv) Rs.17,500 crores loss (approx.) was incurred by Govt. in carrying huge stock of cereal and exporting about 35 million tonnes a couple of years ago, 90% of which was contributed by Punjab. Further, about Rs.14000 crores were spent for import of edible oils and pulses. Against this, had Punjab been provided with the requested assistance of Rs. 7400 crores, the state would have produced the quantity desired by the country and thus avoided the huge loss. With India's entry into the world market for imports, the international prices are jacked up-hurting both India and other importing developing countries.
- v) Drought loss in Punjab was mostly borne by industry due to power cuts etc., but crop (rice) yield increased, hence Punjab was not eligible for drought relief. Industrial loss be also considered for drought relief. Social loss for paddy produced by Punjab was about Rs.5000 crores per year mainly for using ground water, soil fertility etc. But most of the rice produced in Punjab was going to the deficit States.
- vi) Farmer wanted quality electricity, not free power, which was ultimately costlier.
- vii) Health service quality has gone down in rural areas. This should be improved.

**9.2 Views of Dr. G.S. Kalkat, Chairman, State Farmers' Commission, Punjab:**

- i) Financial condition of Punjab farmers had worsened; real income from wheat from 2001 to 2006 had declined.
- ii) Definition of small and marginal farmers should be changed. Small farmers should be up to land holding of 4 ha instead of 2 ha. 70% of farmers were small with unviable holdings. These farmers be trained at Government cost for off farm occupations.
- iii) Procedure of banks should be farmer friendly. This should be directed more towards small and marginal farmers to improve their income and to diversify the occupations.

- iv) Indebtedness Act should be passed to register the village moneylenders and to fix a limit on rate of interest.
- v) FCI did not pay to the farmers directly in Punjab. The payment was made through a system of commission agents. This should be changed and farmers be paid directly by FCI.
- vi) Capital investment subsidy for small farmers would be more useful compared to subsidy on fertilizers, equipment, electricity etc.
- vii) Crop diversification should be encouraged in Punjab urgently with following steps to prevent hydrological suicide: -
  - a) Law may be enacted to provide that there is no rice transplantation after 10<sup>th</sup> June.
  - b) Diversified crops should be procured under MSP and for this purpose Price Stabilisation Fund be created.
  - c) Agriculture for fuel like ethanol from maize or jatropha which will increase farmers' income by about 20% even if the fuel from this produce is sold @ Rs.18 per kg, should be encouraged.

### **9.3 Other major suggestions of the State Government:**

- i) Small farmers need special attention from the commercial and cooperative Banks, which should ensure availability of cheap credit to small farmers in time.
- ii) Diversification of paddy area to crops consuming less water should be encouraged in Punjab to arrest depletion of ground water.
- iii) Special efforts be made to improve the quality of rural education.
- iv) Production of bio fuel from crops like maize with processing facilities should be encouraged.
- v) Price stabilization fund should cover losses incurred by Govt. agencies on account of procurement of the crops being promoted by Government.
- vi) Criteria for drought relief should be based on the extent and time of failure of rainfall instead of the loss of production.



vii) Funds be made available for supply of quality fodder seeds, fodder conservation facilities and for supply of fodder to small dairy farmers at reasonable rates to improve livestock productivity.

**10.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF RAJASTHAN FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT BIKANER ON 29<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government and Rajasthan Agriculture University at Bikaner on 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member, Ms. R.V. Bhavani, Director (Technical) and Dr. Prabhu Dayal Choudhary, Research Assistant. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) Rajasthan's north-western and western regions, comprising 11 districts covering 61 per cent of the total area and 40 per cent population of the State, form the "Great **Indian Thar Desert**". People there did not have any vocational skill/education. They were therefore not likely to benefit much from the growth of the economy. They would not benefit from trickle down effect unless they had some productive asset or marketable skills. Jobless growth was really joyless growth.
- ii) Differentiation between the dryland agriculture and semi arid and arid agriculture was very pertinent issue for Rajasthan State.
- iii) There was a need for recognition of progressive farmers, as they succeeded after facing many hardships.
- iv) A State Commission on Farmers should be established.
- v) Farmers should be educated and made aware of latest developments in the agriculture sector.

- vi) Issues of farmers related to their suffering due to natural calamities, need for a support price for all the crops, education and training for farmers, role of women in animal husbandry, lack of good breeds, AI facility, need for formulation of direct farmer oriented schemes, establishment of laboratories for testing of soil and water, testing of fertilizer, pesticides at district level, regularization of forest land occupied by the farmers, continuation of subsidies on fertilizers, control on conversion of agriculture and pasture land into urban land and provision of land for pastures, by reserving community land for grazing of animals.
- vii) Awards should be given to progressive farmers and innovative farm-women. There should be model farms in each district.
- viii) There was a need to include agriculture as a compulsory subject in school education so that basic knowledge of agriculture and agro-based industries was imparted to all. A special effort was needed in this direction as farmers' suicide rate had increased.
- ix) For protection of farmers from natural calamities, integrated farming could be a good option.
- x) Impact analysis for every programme should be conducted.
- xi) Policy developed for Rajasthan may be developed as a policy for high risk category cropping system.
- xii) Drought proofing had not been mentioned or discussed in the draft policy.
- xiii) Village-level processing units should be set up by farmers and there should be tax concessions.
- xiv) Decision on Farmers' Policy or any Farmers' Issue should involve farmers.
- xv) Cultivation of dates may be encouraged in the desert areas; even agricultural labourers can be given date trees for backyard cultivation.
- xvi) Just like roads, waterways are needed and should be planned for.
- xvii) There was a need for a larger budget for agriculture.

### **3. Land**

- i) Higher subsidies for the construction of water reservoirs may be provided to encourage construction of larger sized reservoirs so that fisheries could be combined with traditional agriculture.
- ii) Land along the national border was taken from farmers for use by the army, and very low compensation was paid to the farmers. In urban areas, if land is taken from the landlord, better housing facility is provided to him. This bias against the farmers' interest needs to be mentioned in the Draft Policy.
- iii) Special mention was needed regarding water logging problems in the draft policy.
- iv) The disadvantages of flood irrigation should be explained to farmers.
- v) Rights of tribal farmers over forest land that was occupied before 1980 should be regularized.
- vi) Land mutation procedure should be simple. It costs Rs.5000/- currently. There should be a separate officer to handle it.
- vii) BOT system of tree plantation may be introduced.
- viii) Forest cover in the State is less than that prescribed.

### **4. Livestock**

- i) Establishment of Livestock Feed & Fodder Corporation should be useful for Rajasthan.
- ii) As a measure to take care of animals during drought period, the '*Goshalas*' may be strengthened for maintaining the animals surrendered by the farmers due to their inability to look after the animals.
- iii) Public-private partnership in fodder production must be introduced.
- iv) Development of elite herds and establishment of veterinary clinics on the line of agri-clinics well supported by helpline and ambulatory clinics are also the need of the State.
- v) Heritage Gene Bank and progeny testing must be taken up as an integral part of livestock development.

- vi) Fodder banking technology developed by the University under which feed blocks for animal consumption are prepared required less storage space and at the time of shortage of fodder, these could be used as alternative non-conventional feed.
- vii) Livestock owners could be provided with subsidy, loan facility for green fodder production.
- viii) Relaxation should be provided in Wildlife Protection Act/Cruelty to Animal Act as the problem of *Nilgai* in the area needs attention.
- ix) Policy for input supply and vaccines for livestock may be developed.
- x) Extension in animal husbandry should be strengthened by developing veterinary diagnostic laboratories and hospitals at each KVK in Rajasthan.
- xi) Animal welfare programme, land use planning for various kinds of wasteland for the cultivation of forage crops were needed to prevent loss of animal during drought.
- xii) Sheep migration was a serious problem in this region and it should be dealt with by developing alternate pasture lands so that the migration could be controlled to some extent
- xiii) Women's role is predominant in milk production. But there are no special schemes to encourage this.
- xiv) Pastureland should be clearly demarcated and protected in every village. It should not become wasteland.
- xv) There are no slaughter houses for goats.

## **5. Fishery**

- i) Fish cultivation could be done in the running water of Indira Gandhi canal, which stretched up to around 600 kms and it could also be tried in low lying areas near the canal.
- ii) Getting good seed for fisheries was a problem in this region, forcing fishers to get seeds which were not even of very good quality from private agencies at higher price from distant places.

## **6. Research and Technology**

- i) Inter-linking of rivers was a tangible solution to deal with famine in Rajasthan.
- ii) Instead of talking about purely organic or chemical farming, we must talk of sustainable farming and the loan to the small scale agro-cottage industries should be free from interest.
- iii) There was a need for post-harvest management including on-farm wastage, proper storage of grains because proportion of wastage was more than 25% which was very high.
- iv) Model technology demonstration facility must be available at district level.
- v) To check migration of rural youth to urban areas, provision of essential facilities like hospital, market in group of villages, quality evaluation centres for inputs and rectification of policy for digging of well and electric connection would be needed.
- vi) Suitable dams should be constructed for water storage and conservation, and a Farmers' Welfare Fund should also be created.
- vii) The problem of saline water in the region, particularly for fruit growers should be attended to. Water testing facility is needed.
- viii) Contract farming may lead to dominance of corporate sector in rural areas, which would not be in favour of the farmers.
- ix) Post harvest management and value addition should be important components of the policy for farmers.
- x) Farmers' training colleges would be opened by the banks in the villages, and land purchase schemes should also be started for small and marginal farmers.
- xi) There was a need for use of non-conventional solar and wind energy in agriculture, because the region has abundant untapped potential for these and the State faces acute shortage of electricity. The same could also be used for irrigation. Energy farming should be encouraged.
- xii) Fodder production through watershed may be promoted and the banks of canal may also be used for this purpose.

- xiii) Provision should be made for use of city waste water, water effluents of the industries; after treatment the water could be utilized for fodder development.
- xiv) Agri-clinics and agri-business should be promoted and incentives must be provided for such schemes to make them popular.
- xv) Theoretical as well as practical trainings were essential to utilize mustard crop in winter season for Bee-keeping.
- xvi) Strategy should be planned to meet out the scarcity of feed and fodder at the onset of drought.
- xvii) Research was needed on medicinal plants which could be used for producing medicines for livestock. Medicines and vaccines for most of the diseases were not available in proportion to animal population in the State.
- xviii) Weather forecasting stations should be available at each KVK
- xix) Trainings provided at KVKs should be job oriented.
- xx) Harvesting of solar energy was the need of the hour.

## **7. Inputs**

- i) B.Sc. (Agri.) should be a mandatory qualification for the registration of shops meant for the sale of insecticides and pesticides.
- ii) Supply of substandard agriculture inputs was a matter of serious concern.
- iii) Subsidies should be directly given to the farmers than to the companies. Schemes should be encouraging the farmers and not the private companies.
- iv) Fencing of horticultural fields should also be considered for the provision of credit or subsidy so that farmers could go in for plantation of horticultural saplings.
- v) Subsidy should be extended to all suitable fruit plants for the area, and not only for a restricted list under NHM.
- vi) Subsidy should be provided for diesel-based equipments on the basis of cultivable land and cropping intensity of the individual farm as well as the diesel for tractor fuel.
- vii) Sale of seed should be against bill/invoice.

- viii) Electricity connection should be prompt. Currently it takes about 2 years and wells fail in the interim.
- ix) The many small rivers in the region should be harnessed through proper planning.
- x) Mobile soil testing labs can be run through fertilizer companies.

## **8. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Agricultural credit procedure was very cumbersome.
- ii) Subsidy should also be given on solar based pumping sets.
- iii) The unit for the crop insurance schemes should be the individual farmer's field rather than the *tehsil* or the panchayat.
- iv) The rate of interest on agriculture loan including co-operative credit should be reduced.
- v) Interest on farmer's share money in the cooperative society should be provided.
- vi) There was a need to rectify the anomalies related to agricultural loan recovery.
- vii) A defaulting farmer is arrested and cell rent as well as food bill is also charged from his family and even his land is auctioned. His respect in the rural area suffers. Such harsh provisions do not exist even for criminals.
- viii) Insurance should be available for horticulture crops also.

## **9 Marketing**

- i) Beneficial support price was needed for the crops.
- ii) No market for Aloe and mushroom was available at local level, and farmers were discouraged from taking to these crops.
- iii) Support price for animal products should also be fixed, because a large share of consumer expenditure went to the marketing/private agencies.
- iv) Cheating by the marketing agencies, discouraged the farmers from taking up animal husbandry.
- v) Cultivation of medicinal plants and the like should be under buyback mechanism.
- vi) The Mandis should have farmer-friendly facilities.



## **10. Technical Manpower**

- i) Shortage of technical manpower was a serious problem and interfered with the execution of policies and extension work.
- ii) Officers appointed should live in the villages and work with the farmers. Adequate infrastructure should be developed for this.
- iii) Staff posted in Universities, are largely on contractual appointment and the commitment is not there.
- iv) The Department of Fisheries is headed by a non-technical person.
- v) There is no extension division in Animal Husbandry Department.

**11.** After the Consultation session, Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government and Rajasthan Agriculture University for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF TAMIL NADU, PONDICHERRY AND ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS, FOR FEED BACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT CHENNAI ON 27<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Chennai on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2006. Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, Chairman was accompanied by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Shri Y.C. Nanda, Member, Ms. Mamta Shankar, Director and Ms. R.V. Bhavani, Director (Tech.). Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs from Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) The current agrarian crisis has to be placed in the context of globalisation and its detrimental impact on agriculture and farmers.
- ii) All Govt. departments should explain the extant schemes in the Gram Sabha Meetings.
- iii) Need for separate section for *dalit* women farmers and workers, small and marginal farmers.
- iv) Falling investment in agriculture, closure of State farms, is a cause of concern. Investment of more funds by Government in agriculture is needed.
- v) The Seed Bill should be reviewed carefully before passing by Parliament.
- vi) The **PURA** (Provision of Urban facilities in Rural Areas) model proposed by His Excellency the President of India, should be extended all over India.
- vii) There should be assured income status for farmers.

- viii) All parts of a crop should be put to use – with facility for value addition; e.g. we can get sugar and ethanol from sugarcane.

### **3. Land**

- i) Agricultural labourers be given 10 to 15 cents homestead land to prevent migration to other places in search of jobs; wasteland reclaimed maybe so distributed for this.
- ii) Get back Government lands occupied by private persons.
- iii) Need to consolidate lands for collective farming.
- iv) Sustainable agriculture is to be achieved by proper fertility management of the soil. We should leave the soil to the coming generation to produce sustainable yield and eco friendly produce. For that we have to promote organic farming.
- v) For social and cultural uplift of small farmers and agri workers, distribution of surplus lands is essential.
- vi) As per the 9<sup>th</sup> schedule of the Constitution itself, one cannot challenge in the Court against Government taking over the lands.

### **4. Water**

- i) Implement interconnectivity of rivers to enable better water management.
- ii) De-silt the tanks and ponds in the villages and deepen wells, to store rain water
- iii) Deep borewell of big farmers affect the water yielding capacity of shallow wells of small farmers.
- iv) Besides desilting tanks, new irrigation projects are to be taken up; the new irrigation projects in the villages can be implemented from Member of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) funds.
- v) Rainwater harvesting should be mandatory and tank rejuvenation should involve the local populace.
- vi) Encroachment in riverbeds and construct check dams in the forest for improving ground water table should be removed.
- vii) The rivulets in the hills are being harnessed by company estates, and small farmers are not able to use them.

- viii) Promotion of sprinklers is needed in Nilgiris for better crop in water lean periods.
- ix) There should be construction of separate canals for effluent flow to prevent contamination in Orathupalayam dam.

## **5. Livestock, Poultry and Fisheries**

- i) Cattle maintenance is not profitable with less number of cattle; a minimum of 5-6 cows is needed.
- ii) Setting up of milk societies managed by SHGs can cater to local needs, generate income and promote local development
- iii) Subsidy to be given for cattle rearing; availability of cattle feed; There is no support for dairy farming
- iv) Abolish fishermen associations now headed by the non-fishermen and hand over to the Panchayat for better management.
- v) Poultry should get status of agriculture
- vi) Electricity tariff for poultry should be that for Agriculture. There is need for IT relief.
- vii) Abolition of ST on poultry feed, formation of poultry development board, minimum support price for egg and chicks, abolition of tax on medicines are some of the measures needed.
- viii) Inclusion of one egg daily in the noon meal scheme implemented in Tamil Nadu should be extended across India.
- ix) Transport subsidy for maize used for cattle feed received from other States is needed for maize received for poultry feed.
- x) The Namakkal region should be declared Bird Flu Free Zone to promote poultry exports.

## **6. Technology and Training**

- i) Transfer of technology and access to the technologies to the largely illiterate small and marginal farmers in the areas of soil health, quality planting materials and seeds, micro irrigation, water harvesting technologies to recharge aquifers,

plant protection, post harvest management through mechanization of harvesting, grading, cleaning, processing and packing is important.

- ii) Enhancing the technical skills of extension workers is needed.
- iii) Organic farming courses in the schools i.e. holistic training programmes are needed. This can be in collaboration with KVKs. Capacity building of grassroot innovators is important
- iv) Train rural youth in post harvest technologies to increase shelf life and help generate employment.
- v) For the controlled atmosphere ultra Oxygen technology may be used instead of cold storage.
- vi) Advising farmers in growing location specific crops is essential and required.
- vii) Mechanical planters are required to tide over scarcity of agricultural labour.

## **7. CPR, NRM and Biodiversity Conservation**

- i) Tanks, Village Ponds and Common Property Resources including pasturelands are to be safeguarded from the private companies.
- ii) In some places, where the land ceiling has been implemented, a reversal is being observed. This is a dangerous trend.
- iii) 65% of the income from the teak trees is to be given to Panchayat to grow more trees and cancellation of 2-C Patta for better revenue to Panchayat.
- iv) Need to plant trees on important occasions and plant 1/3 rd area by trees for perpetual income in the long run.
- v) Steps should be taken to get back the occupied pasturelands.
- vi) The *Mandaveli poromboke* lands should be brought from Panchayat and rejuvenated as pasturelands
- vii) Revival of the pastureland is necessary to prevent the decline in household cattle and sheep population.
- viii) Replanting of deforested area and planting of useful trees like Mango, Teak instead of Eucalyptus should be encouraged.

- ix) Traditional cattle growing people of Yadava community in Manamadurai are conserving biodiversity by breeding *Pulikulam* traditional animal breeds. They should be recognized and supported.
- x) The hill tribals are to be involved in *Koottuvana Nirvagam* (Combined Management of Forest). Eucalyptus is not to be grown.
- xi) There should be restoration of *Panchami* lands and allowing cattle grazing in hill areas.
- xii) Pasturelands occupied for residential purpose should be taken back; CPRs are getting eroded.

## **8. Food and Nutrition Security**

- i) Conversion of food cropland to non-food crop cultivation should not be encouraged for example by citing the example of Kerala, Tamil Nadu should not do so. On the contrary, incentives should be given to sustain land under food crop cultivation.
- ii) Without compromising on food production, cultivation of horticultural produce is to be promoted. Incentive is to be given to the farmers to produce food crops and reduce import of wheat.
- iii) There should be universal PDS, including 14 essential commodities under it. Foodgrain and dhal may be given as wages; Spread of Community Food Banks can help ensure safe and healthy food for all.

## **9. Plantation crops**

- i) Fix minimum rate for tea.
- ii) Tea plantation should not be treated as industry; many small farmers are engaged in the industry; their plight needs attention.
- iii) To have prosperous tea industry, the Auction Centre for tea at Connoor should be handed over to the local people.

## **10. Labour & Inputs**

- i) Constant vigil on the quality of seeds supplied by private sector is needed

- ii) While MNCS were offered many perquisites, farmers are not even assured of uninterrupted power supply.
- iii) With regard to GM seeds – we should work to make the price lower; China has for instance developed low cost Bt seed.
- iv) Government agency can produce and sell seeds at cheaper rates.
- v) Appoint a committee for pre-inspection of Private and Government nurseries while calling for the tenders. There is dire need for quality planting material.
- vi) Farmers can earn more profit in pear grafting from the old pear trees instead of cutting down.
- vii) With job guarantee, migration of labourers can be controlled.
- viii) There should be some protection for migrant labour.

## **11. Island Farmers**

- i) Separate lands should be given to farmers whose lands were submerged after tsunami and turned saline and uncultivable
- ii) Middlemen should be stopped from getting and marketing the agricultural produce.
- iii) Rain water harvesting by constructing check dams is needed. In spite of heavy rain for nine months, most of the water runs off.
- iv) The loans of farmers who availed loans from banks should be waived to overcome the loss due to crop submergence.
- v) Land patta should be given to the farmers who have been cultivating for years without proper patta.
- vi) There should be cold storage facility on each Island.

## **12. Women in Agriculture**

- i) Women in agriculture devote time to agriculture, composting from cattle and poultry waste, etc. - need for training to women self help groups and establishment of agro-based industries.
- ii) Equal wages to women, reduction in working time and more payment as noted in draft policy, should become reality.

- iii) Need to give encouragement to the women self help groups by Government and take steps to reduce the crop loan interest now given at 9%.
- iv) Revenue Forests are getting re-classified as Reserve Forest, squeezing the source of income for women from NTFP. Women should be allowed to gather forest produces to enhance their income.
- v) Besides implementation of Kolappan Committee recommendations, women should be given training in irrigation methods, marketing etc.
- vi) Under urban farming, flower and vegetable cultivation can be an income generation option for women.
- vii) Alternate jobs for women are needed to prevent migration and there should be priority to women while making payments.
- viii) Pressure should not be increased on women SHGs, by passing on responsibilities of the State.

### **13. Credit and Insurance**

- i) To prevent fleecing by private moneylenders, allocation of more funds to Government agencies at lower interest rate of 4% is necessary, to enable them to onlend.
- ii) Credit to small farmers needs special attention;
- iii) Under crop insurance, only loanee farmers are getting insured or benefited. Crop Insurance should be made mandatory, non-loanee farmers should also to be covered and the unit of assessment for damage should be changed from block to village.
- iv) Adequate compensation is to be given for crop loss due to natural disaster.
- v) Farmers need consumption credit. The KCC should be comprehensive, covering all purposes and all farmers should be eligible for it.
- vi) Crop insurance should include coverage against pest and diseases.
- vii) Health insurance for farmers should also be there.
- viii) Crop loan interest rates are higher than housing loan interest rates.



- ix) National Agricultural Insurance (NAI) is covered at block level. This year the Insurance Company came forward to cover at firka level. The farmers feel that the coverage should be at village level / individual field level.
- x) Co-operative Societies should be revamped and LAMP Societies revived.

#### **14. Market and Price**

- i) There should be affordable price policy and rational export and import policy to protect farmers' interests.
- ii) Cold storage facilities are needed to store the perishable produce like tomato.
- iii) The role of MNCs in the entire chain from input supply to market should be carefully scrutinized and regulated to ensure that farmers' interests are protected.
- iv) The minimum support price should be extended to all crops.
- v) Impact of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG), WTO negotiations and tariff imposition on farmers should be highlighted.
- vi) Direct purchase by Government to avoid middlemen interference to prevent price fall is essential.
- vii) State Price Commission should be setup to determine price locally and cover all crops.
- viii) In contract farming, tripartite agreement between farmers, agencies and Government is needed; the purchaser is usually a MNC; a govt. representative should monitor and check.
- ix) There is a need for farmers' market.
- x) We should have mechanisms to protect our produce; if production is low, we should not indulge in online trading.
- xi) Daily market prices to be made available in local languages in electronic media.
- xii) Income tax exemption should be given for floriculture Industry. Floriculture is not considered to be agriculture by the IT dept currently.
- xiii) The NHB should give priority to perishable commodities. There is need for sub-committees under the NHB for this.
- xiv) Export of onion should be stopped when there is shortage.

- xv) Promotion of industries producing dried vegetables like bottle gourds, onion etc.
- xvi) Support is needed for export of organic farming produce.
- xvii) Government should intervene to ensure timely payment by the private *sago* factories.

## **15. Policy and Governance**

- i) Agriculture development funds are operated under mission mode and allotment given in two instalments - first instalment of 50% in the beginning and another instalment six months after getting utilization certificate. This should be changed to 90% in the first instalment and 10% in the second instalment to enable proper implementation. State Governments are not in a position to spend first and then claim.
- ii) Seed replacement under paddy is 17% percent by the department, 33% is from private parties, 50% by exchange between farmers. Many times the Government of India funds are lower than the department's need. So, Government of India should provide subsidy to all the stocks available.
- iii) Hill area development projects should not be stopped.
- iv) Need for contingency practices at policy level with minimum standards for disaster situations, coordination among different departments, e.g. in clearing of blocked irrigation and drainage canals, partnership with participants and intervention to be continued on sustainable basis.
- v) The Geographical Indications Act should find a place in the Policy.
- vi) Formation of State Trade Policy Council may be formed to act as a platform for discussion between farmers and the policy makers and officials from all departments of the State.
- vii) Introduction of compulsory agricultural education in schools and measures to re-attract youth to agriculture are needed.
- viii) Need for pension for farmers.
- ix) The death of sheep due to Bt cotton consumption must be investigated.
- x) Programmes and entitlements should reach people – information dissemination
- xi) Safeguard traditional knowledge by paying royalty.

- xii) Need for formation of Commodity Boards under the umbrella National Horticulture Board for better attention to individual crops. Grapes, Banana Turmeric and Chilly can be special thrust areas in Tamil Nadu.
- xiii) Formation of agency to implement Minimum Wages Act is essential; there should be legislation for agriculture labour.
- xiv) Panchayat and Gram Sabha may elect a body that can be registered and entrusted to handle the implementation of govt. schemes – this can be a SPV.

**16.** After the Consultation session, Chairman and Members of the NCF assured the full consideration of the suggestions made and the written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF UTTARANCHAL FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT DEHRADUN ON 20<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Dehradun on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, NCF, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member and Dr. (Mrs.) Laxmi Joshi, Research Officer. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

## **2. General Suggestions and Observations**

- i) Shortage of agriculture labour was being experienced in the hills particularly for horticulture crops since the labour had moved to cities where they found higher wages and better life style.
- ii) More of infrastructure should be given top priority in the Uttaranchal particularly for roads in order to facilitate quick and efficient movement of its horticulture produce which was highly perishable. In view of poor industrialization in the hills and in view of Uttaranchal being a new State, its own resources were not adequate. Liberal Central assistance should be forthcoming especially through Bharat Nirman Programme of Prime Minister.
- iii) There should be separate policies for the Himalayan areas and for the coastal areas in view of the uneconomic nature of the holdings.
- iv) There was a need to prepare Village Plans based on local resources but this was not happening because of the poor PR set up in the State.

### **3. Land**

- i) The names of women should be recorded in the land records since men folk in the hill areas tended to migrate to cities for livelihood and their wives had to cultivate.
- ii) Since the names of women were not listed, they could not access credit and other inputs.
- iii) However, it came out that there were specific difficulties in recording the names of women and there were likelihood of long delays in mutation and getting the consent of men folk to the recording of the names of their wives. It also came out that there could be difficulties if the women were divorced or if they left the husbands on their own will.
- iv) Land management policies should be drawn up for Uttaranchal keeping the fact that mostly women were cultivating such land. This would involve special extension programmes for women, general specific tools and implements, credit support for women as well as additional nutritional support in view of the burden on them to manage agriculture as well as home.
- v) There should be a ban on plantation of 'Cheer' and 'Pine' trees in Uttaranchal since they drew too much ground water.
- vi) It would be desirable to plant trees with wide leaves in view of the specific geographic climatic conditions in Uttaranchal.
- vii) The limited land resources in Uttaranchal should be optimally utilized through the concept of Udyankunj where horticulture, animal husbandry etc. would be practiced in an integrated manner.
- viii) The limited resource prime agriculture land may be conserved by severely restricting acquisition of such valuable land for non-agriculture purposes.
- ix) Only 14% of the land was available in Uttaranchal for agriculture since the rest of it was covered by hills/forests. Further, huge parts of this agricultural land were lying fallow since some farmers had moved to the cities in search of jobs and livelihoods. This situation needs to be remedied urgently. This was because of scarce resource.

- x) The afforestation programme of the Forest Department should provide for at least 30% of trees which had a nutritional value for their fruits/berries etc.
- xi) Consolidation of land was of great importance in small holdings in Uttaranchal. However, the matter could be carefully examined in view of the possibilities of litigation and corruption.
- xii) Voluntary consolidation through exchange of land could be encouraged by exempting stamp duty on such exchanges and quick mitigation of such exchanges at the level of Revenue Inspector.
- xiii) Fodder crops could be planted on the borders of agriculture fields since enough wasteland was not available for fodder development and access to fodder in the forests was becoming a major problem.

#### **4. Water**

- i) Excessive expenditure was being incurred for repairs of canals even when there was very little water flowing through such canals.
- ii) Water and soil conservation techniques should be popularized among the farmers in the hills in order to check the silting of rivers and reservoirs down stream.
- iii) Subsidy for rainwater harvesting schemes should be available to all farmers and not only for SC/ST.

#### **5. Livestock**

- i) People in the hills had been traditionally relying on livestock like cows, goats and sheep for livelihood in view of the availability of fodder and grazing. This was however becoming scarce. Special programmes of nutrition for fodder development therefore have to be undertaken.
- ii) There should be arrangements for baling of fodder through introduction of baling machines to conserve fodder for the lean season. There was also a strong need to enrich the fodder with molasses but it is becoming difficult to access molasses after the bifurcation of Uttar Pradesh as sugar mills were located in

- Uttar Pradesh. It was mentioned that NDRI, Karnal had developed some alternatives to molasses for enriching fodder and this avenue should be explored.
- iii) Fodder is often burnt and even used for exchange purposes in the plains while Uttaranchal did not have enough fodder for its use. Steps should be taken to optimally utilize fodder both in the plains and in the hills.
  - iv) There should be a strong programme of conserving local breeds in the hills because of their stamina and other attributes. Special mention was made of Red Sindhi breed of cow which had been taken away by Argentina and rebranded as Brahmni cow.
  - v) Uttaranchal was already implementing “ParaVet” programme in order to take care of artificial insemination and health care need of the livestock owners and this was giving good results. The fodder production programmes in Uttaranchal were suffering because of the presence of weeds like Lantana and Parthenium. Scientists should suggest methods of eliminating these weeds and using them for production purposes.

## **6. Fisheries**

- i) There was a need to set up a Fisheries Technology Mission with special focus on cold water fishery and aqua water in the hills specially for sports.
- ii) National Fisheries Development Board which was being set up would have to give a special thrust to fisheries in the hill areas since there were limited livelihood opportunities through agriculture.

## **7. Technology**

- i) There was a need to design agricultural implements for women particularly in the hills through agronomic studies. While the Central Institute of Agriculture Engineering, Bhopal had brought out a compendium to agriculture implements, special designs for hill women community should be given greater attention.
- ii) In view of the large scale wastage of horticulture produce from the hills, greater attention to development of technology for farm level processing was needed

along with support for marketing keeping the quality parameter and consumers' demands in the cities in mind.

## **8. Inputs**

- i) Increased transport subsidies should be available from farm section to the rail head in hill States like Uttaranchal in view of the high cost of transportation.
- ii) Subsidies should be provided for organic fertilizers on the same lines as for chemical fertilizers in order to encourage its increased use and also to encourage production of organic fertilizers and vermi compost by women in the hills. Such a subsidy is also encouraged for increased use of organic fertilizers for improving soil health.
- iii) Suitable tests should be undertaken for the toxicity and bio efficiency of organic fertilizers.
- iv) In view of the importance of organic agriculture in Uttaranchal because of the very small or non-existence of chemical fertilizers, suitable facilities for providing certification for organic crops should be provided. Such certification should also be subsidized to enable smaller farmers also to benefit from certification.
- v) Uttaranchal had developed a good model for certification by setting up of State Certification Agency which had a tie up with internationally recognized agencies.
- vi) The seed sector should also be free from VAT in order to encourage a higher seed replacement rate and maintain the competitiveness of the seed produced in the Tarai area.
- vii) The subsidies available to the State Farm Corporation of India and the National Seed Corporation should also be available to the Tarai Seed Corporation in order to ensure a level playing field.
- viii) Seed bags should mention the recommended seed rate for the guidance of the farmers.



- ix) A seed valley concept could have a great value for Uttarakhand but the idea coming was not feasible for subsidies from the State Government which was not forthcoming.

## **9. Credit**

- i) Kisan Credit Cards should be issued in favour of women since they were mostly cultivating the land in the absence of their men folk who had gone to the cities in search of work. It was suggested that a Power of Attorney and Indemnity Bond could be taken from the recorded farmers in favour of their wives to protect the interest of the banks who come to finance the women. However, it turned out that such POA had been banned in Uttarakhand in view of its misuse by outsiders for fraudulently depriving the farmers of their land at low prices.
- ii) The target for distribution of KCC had almost been made and the entire State would be covered by the end of the year.
- iii) While many Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women have been formed, they had not actively engaged in agri or other productive activities because of the absence of loans. Credit may be made available to the SHGs of women and the banking institutions should be proactive and lenient in such matters.
- iv) It was noted that some women SHGs had set up nutrition gardens and were also engaged to produce seeds but adequate information about nutrition etc. was not provided to them.
- v) There was then adverse credit deposit ratio in Uttarakhand and the savings of the people were moving out of the State since there was not much of industrial activities either in the hills.
- vi) There was need for a separate credit policy for the hilly areas like Uttarakhand, J&K and Himachal Pradesh.
- vii) Credit should become available as soon as new technologies were administered to the farmers.
- viii) NABARD was not able to exercise adequate control on the loans by Finance because banks had their own funds and do not know much of refinance.

- ix) The ICOR level of 2.2:1 in Uttaranachal was too high and there was very little capital formation in agriculture.
- x) Most of the cooperative credit was being channeled in the plains whereas there was a great need for better outreach and greater flow in the hill areas.
- xi) National Agriculture Insurance Scheme is currently available only for wheat, ginger, ragi, potato and tomato but was not benefiting the hill areas sufficiently.
- xii) Banks were not deducting insurance premium while sanctioning loans to farmers primarily because the farmers did not see money gains in the scheme for them. This was primarily because of the units for crop cutting experiments and sanction of the system being too large.
- xiii) The possibility of giving assistance to farmers on account of pending crop cutting experiments to help them immediately after a crop failure should be explored sympathetically.
- xiv) Crop insurance and its present form was not farmer friendly.
- xv) There were also procedural problems in sanctioning of loans and the simple people in the hills faced corruption and other difficulties.
- xvi) The procedure for obtaining No Objection Certificate from various banks before a loan was sanctioned to the farmer was cumbersome and riddled with corruption. Outcomes should be clearly identified and specific responsibility should be fixed at all levels.

## **10. Marketing**

- i) Basmati rice whose home was in Dehradun valley of Uttaranchal had been taken by other States and countries, causing loss to the original growers of Basmati rice. A plea was made to create a brand out of Uttaranchal Basmati rice by using the law relating to geographical origin.
- ii) There was a need to promote Tapovan Basmati rice which was rare and was a premium product.
- iii) There was substantial exploitation of farmers in the markets and up to 10% of Adhat was charged without receipt.

- iv) There was an overall shortage, market was harsh without facilities for grading particularly in apple and other horticulture produce. This led to low price while traders made substantial profits by polishing and grading of horticulture produce and marketing in bigger cities.
- v) The State Government had proactively helped the farmers for collective bargaining in order to get them better prices for their produce from the traders.
- vi) Even though efforts had been made to set up producers markets for farmers to directly market their horticulture produce, there was a need to set up booths managed by farmer cooperatives in bigger cities in order to bridge the gap between the consumers and the producer prices.
- vii) There was a need to set up laboratory for ensuring ASTA-CODEX guidelines in order to get premium prices for quality. In general, there was a need to promote quality literacy among the farmers.
- viii) Panchayati Raj system was not functioning efficiently and in particular was not taking adequate interest in setting up rural storage godowns by utilizing rural employment guarantee programme funds. The absence of rural guidelines led to lot of wastage and the farmers often had to sell their produce in compulsion at low prices.

**11.** After the Consultation session, the Members assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF UTTAR PRADESH FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS AT LUCKNOW ON 4<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, 2006.**

## **1. Introduction**

The Consultation was organized by the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) in collaboration with the State Government at Lucknow on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2006. The NCF was represented by Shri Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. R.B. Singh, Member, Shri Atul Kumar Anjan, Member Part-time and Dr. Ramesh Singh, Research Officer. Farmers, Farmer Organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR Institutions, Bankers, officials of State and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation. The major suggestions/issues raised during the Consultation were as under:-

1.2 Member Secretary welcomed the participants on behalf of NCF and requested them to give their valuable suggestion on the Draft Policy for Farmers circulated by NCF. He also explained salient recommendations of NCF in its four Reports already submitted to Government. Dr. R.B Singh highlighted the problem of soil and water degradation adversely affecting productivity and institutional reforms necessary to tackle the problem. Shri Atul Kumar Anjan mentioned about low investment in agriculture and inadequate response of Scientists and Researchers to various problems of farmers. He suggested early constitution of State Farmers' Commission.

1.3 Hon'ble Minister Agriculture, U.P in his remarks highlighted the importance of food security, crop diversification and Bhumi Sena Yojana recently formulated by the State Government to improve "Oosar" in order to allot it to landless persons in rural areas and the need for a second Green Revolution and investment, production and supply of quality seed and other inputs. He stressed that improving functioning of KVKs for dissemination of proven technologies to farmers effectively was essential. APC briefly mentioned steps taken by State Government to improve productivity and income of

farmers and stated that State Government had come out with an Agriculture Policy with a Vision Document on 07.02.2006. He further indicated the need to improve marketing opportunities for farmers through retailing and by suitably increasing MSP.

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

- i) Spray of cow dung plus cow urine by a farmer protected crop from “*Neelgai*”.
- ii) Coverage of agriculture and farmers in media was stated to be very poor.
- iii) Compared to defence and other sectors, the budget allocation for agriculture was stated to be lower.
- iv) Subsidy should be given directly to farmers.
- v) Lot of funds for agriculture lapsed due to procedural difficulties.
- vi) Rights of farmers on seed and water should be firmly established in the Policy.
- vii) Strict governance to check corruption should be ensured and highlighted in the Policy.
- viii) Diesel should be provided to the farmers at subsidized rates.
- ix) Adequate drainage facility should be provided to prevent water logging.

## **3. Land**

- i) Land was being diverted in U.P from wheat to sugarcane on a large scale and this could affect overall production of wheat.
- ii) Average landholding by farmers was reducing due to excessive land acquisition for industries apart from other reasons.
- iii) Yield was going down due to soil degradation and incorrect application of fertilizer.
- iv) Fertile land should not be diverted for non-agricultural purpose.
- v) Planning at National and State Level was needed for desired land use pattern for growing different crops competitively.
- vi) Water logged land should be covered under sugarcane cultivation and fisheries.

#### **4. Water**

- i) In irrigated area water supply from head to tail should be ensured by lining of canals which would reduce loss of water.
- ii) Government tube-wells were not working in some cases.
- iii) Barrage over Yamuna river was needed to provide irrigation facility to a large number of farmers.
- iv) Proper utilization of irrigation water should be ensured.
- v) Problem of water logging in some parts of State was highlighted. Varieties, which could withstand water logging, should be developed.
- vi) More tanks should be dug to conserve water and increase fish production.
- vii) Dredging of river and construction check dams should be taken up.

#### **5. Livestock and Fishery**

- i) Animal husbandry gave sustainable income to farmers if properly adopted by them.
- ii) Farmers supported concept of para veterinarian to provide necessary extension services for animals.
- iii) Fisher farmers were not treated as full farmer. They got electricity at commercial rates.
- iv) Recovery of ponds destroyed by land mafias should be taken up by Government.
- v) Lease of village ponds for fishery was taking long time due to procedural hassles
- vi) Insurance of cattle was not effective. It was difficult to get the claims for insured cattle.
- vii) Increased cost of veterinary medicines was highlighted.
- viii) Livestock quality in Bundelkhand region of U.P was inferior resulting in lower productivity.
- ix) Animals should be protected through “*Goshalas*”.
- x) Animal drawn implements should be popularized and subsidy on same be allowed.

## **6. Organic Farming**

- i) Through organic farming sugarcane yield in some cases had gone upto 200 mt./ha and recovery increased by 2%.
- ii) Vermi compost was beneficial for the farmers.

## **7. Inputs**

- i) Input costs were stated to be higher compared to the prices in the market for agriculture produce.
- ii) Non-availability of quality seed, fertilizer in time was a major constraint.
- iii) Irregular supply of electricity to farmers should be avoided.
- iv) Since the Private dealers guided the farmers on pesticides, a minimum qualification should be prescribed for these dealers. Agriculture graduates should be appointed as dealers.
- v) Some pumps could save electricity upto 40% with the same efficiency for irrigation. Under different Government Schemes such energy efficient pumps should be provided.
- vi) Seed Bill was opposed by some farmers.

## **8. Training and Extension**

- i) Need for a Counsellor in each Embassy to study agricultural practices in different countries was highlighted.
- ii) There should be Training Centers for farmers in each Panchayat.
- iii) Public research to identify new varieties which could give sustainable income was not satisfactory mainly due to inadequate investment.
- iv) Training of farmers at local level particularly for post harvest management and marketing should be organised.

## **9. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Every crop and every farmer should be covered by insurance with 75% subsidy on premium.
- ii) Crop insurance should be at village level instead of block level which was not beneficial to the farmers.
- iii) Loaning procedures adopted by Banks were stated to be very complicated for the farmers. Banks decided shops from where they forced farmers to buy accessories at a higher cost.
- iv) Numbers of claims for insurance were rejected on flimsy grounds by private insurance companies adversely affecting the farmers.
- v) System of Bima Lok Pal was not effective.
- vi) Potential Linked Credit Plans prepared by NABARD for each District should be an effective tool for providing credit by Banks.

## **10. Market and Infrastructure**

- i) MSP should be fixed based on the cost of cultivation.
- ii) Full payment for sugarcane should be ensured to farmers.
- iii) MSP increased by 10% whereas input costs had gone up by about 100%.
- iv) Sugarcane prices should go up atleast by Rs. 200/- per M.T to make it remunerative.
- v) Marketing problem for sale of Soyabean was highlighted.
- vi) Import of food grain at a higher price than the MSP offered to the farmers was pointed out by some participants.
- vii) Marketing was identified as a major problem for farmers.
- viii) Middlemen as brokers should be eliminated from market.
- ix) U.P. Government had not yet agreed to contract farming.
- x) Inadequate processing facility available only for about 2% of agriculture produce was highlighted.
- xi) Irregular supply of electricity to farmers was creating problem for farmers.
- xii) Facility of assured market should be made available to the farmers.



## **11. Suggestions and observations made by the Honourable Ministers for Agriculture, Cooperation, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry**

During discussion with the Members of NCF, the Ministers incharge, Agriculture, Cooperation, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, Govt. of U.P. gave the following major suggestions on behalf of the State Government on the Draft National Policy for Farmers:

- i) Food and livelihood security is the central issue for the Policy. Government of Uttar Pradesh in its Agriculture Policy 2005 had based its strategy on a 7-point Action Plan to ensure food and livelihood security of people.
- ii) To implement the concepts like cooperative farming and corporate farming it is necessary to have a strong legal framework with a code of conduct and there should be consultation with the stakeholders before implementation.
- iii) Production of hybrid seeds through SHGs is not feasible. Government farms can be utilized for production of quality seeds according to agro climatic conditions in order to fulfill the requirements of the State.
- iv) Certification of organic products is essential to promote organic farming.
- v) There is a need to delink agriculture credit from land title.
- vi) No restriction on export of agriculture produce should be imposed.
- vii) State Government has decided to constitute Agriculture Advisory Council.
- viii) The soil quality in a large portion of land has deteriorated due to different reasons. In order to make this land cultivable, State Govts. are implementing “Bhumi Seva” Scheme. It would be desirable for Central Govt. to support such schemes through adequate funding.

**12.** After the Consultation session, the Members assured the full consideration of the suggestions and written representations made by the State Government and participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

# **STATE LEVEL CONSULTATION OF WEST BENGAL FOR FEEDBACK ON DRAFT NATIONAL POLICY FOR FARMERS HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST, 2006 AT KOLKATA**

## **1. Introduction**

The State Consultation of West Bengal organized in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture of the State, was held in Kolkata on August 1, 2006. NCF was represented by Mr. Atul Sinha, Member Secretary, Dr. R B Singh, Member and Ms. R V Bhavani, Director (Tech). Farmers, farmers' organizations, NGOs, Media Representatives, Scientists from Agriculture Universities and ICAR institutions, Bankers, officials of the State Government and other stakeholders participated in the Consultation.

## **2. General Observations and Suggestions**

The highlights of the suggestions/issues that came up are summarized below:

- i) Of late income from agriculture is coming down. As such farmers have started to switch over to other professions and moving to nearby cities. Measures have to be taken to convert farming into a lucrative profession by giving remunerative price for their produce, reducing the cost of inputs and providing necessary infrastructure support and technical guidance
- ii) There should be substantial enhancement in the central budgetary allocation for agriculture because 60% of the population is still dependent on agriculture.
- iii) Adoption of appropriate technology by farmers for higher production in different crops, development of food processing and creation of opportunities for large scale use of farm produce in industry need priority attention.
- iv) There should be thrust on moving from mono-crop to multiple cropping system; A composite farming systems approach fitting low water requiring crops with improved productivity will help raise production; no land should be left fallow to the extent possible.

- v) There is lack of coordination among the departments like Agriculture, Horticulture & Food Processing, Fishery, Animal Husbandry etc. which are responsible for economic wellbeing of farming community. Development of better coordination among line departments is required.
- vi) Number of man days in Agricultural activities is coming down every year. High level mechanization is also a reason for this. Measures have to be taken to address this aspect.
- vii) We should ensure our own food and nutrition security before we export foodgrains. Export oriented agriculture can be encouraged once this is satisfied and niche markets developed.
- viii) Peasants and agricultural labour should automatically come under the BPL list.
- ix) Organic agriculture should be made mandatory in hill areas. Certification procedures for organic agriculture should be locally available; Inputs should be subsidised
- x) The agro-forestry section in the Policy is well-developed and complete. Other sections should be organized on similar lines.
- xi) Fishery issues have not been covered adequately in the policy.
- xii) Agriculture has to be incorporated in the school syllabus to give an overview of the activities to the students.
- xiii) Measures have to be taken to attract youth to agriculture by developing youth oriented Agriculture. Diversification was mentioned as a good stimulant.
- xiv) Selection of crop should be location and demand specific. Intensive cultivation of some specific commercial crops like Tea, Jute & Cotton will help in improving economic condition of the farmers. JCI and CCI should be strengthened to purchase jute and cotton directly from farmers at remunerative price.
- xv) Actions have to be taken for drawing up schemes exclusively for small and marginal farmers.
- xvi) Cooperative based approach has to be followed in Agriculture which will minimize production cost and increase productivity.

- xvii) Rural entrepreneurship development is very essential for economic improvement of farming community
- xviii) Animal Husbandry also has to be given due importance along with Agriculture. This will help in augmenting farm income.
- xix) Specialised personalities are very often honoured by the Government for their extraordinary contributions to the nation. Likewise farmers contributing to Agriculture with their innovative ideas have to be honoured by the Government. This will drive the farmers in doing a lot for Agriculture which will in turn increase production and productivity of different crops.
- xx) A Farmers' ITK Board maybe formed to collect and document all effective ITK;
- xxi) PDS should be universalized and there should be transparency in governance and implementation.
- xxii) A large number of Government sponsored projects are lying unfinished, resulting in wastage of resources and blocking of future projects.
- xxiii) Only professionals should be made Directors of technical departments, viz. Director Agriculture/Fisheries/Horticulture.
- xxiv) Agriculture should be brought into the Concurrent List.
- xxv) NREGP should be extended to all districts of the country.
- xxvii) Small farmers under debt are selling their land and becoming landless labourers.

### **3. Land**

- i) Suitable crop planning is needed to combat the agro climatic stress. Lot of land suffering from acidity needs special treatment and cropping pattern.
- ii) The soil of Jalpaiguri district is very light and acidic. Nutrient and water holding capacity is also very poor and as a result yield is low. Soil Health improvement and water retention need attention.
- iii) More emphasis should be given on land reform. Though the Left Front Government has given a major thrust to land reforms, more impetus should be given on this prime issue. The impact of Operation *Barga* has to be reviewed and unfinished tasks completed, like distributing land to landless.

- iv) In rainfed farming areas, rainwater holding agro forestry should be promoted.
- v) Encroachment on agricultural land by different sectors is also a major threat to Agriculture. Therefore, availability of net cultivable area needs to be worked out in proportion to targeted population keeping in mind the question of food security.
- vi) Fragmentation of land is a growing problem. Consolidation through community approach is the need today.
- vii) Decisions should be made in advance on how much land should be under high value crops.
- viii) Wasteland should be distributed among the landless labourers (one bigha per landless).
- ix) Extreme shortage of DAP is causing nutrient imbalance.

#### **4. Water**

- i) Purulia, a drought prone district with red laterite soil and extreme climate, needs intensive development of rain water harvest structures to boost agricultural production.
- ii) Salinity and availability of sweet water is a major problem in South 24 Parganas district which limits the production potential and enables only a single crop.
- iii) In some areas, lack of irrigation facility for Rabi crop and Boro Rice is the main problem of harvesting good yield.
- iv) Inadequate supply of irrigation water from Tista Barrage Project is a problem for Jalpaiguri farmers. Adequate irrigation water from the State project is to be ensured to increase productivity and cropping intensity.
- v) Surface water bodies should be revived and renovated; Problem of arsenic in groundwater has to be addressed urgently
- vi) Water, the key input in Agriculture is being polluted by different companies. Thus quality of irrigation water as well as drinking water has been deteriorating, especially affecting downstream farmers. This has to be stopped and such

companies have to be taxed. The fund so accrued has to be utilized for development of farming community.

- vii) Modern projects are neglecting and even destroying existing and or traditional drainage systems.
- viii) There should be an Emergency Fund to meet out relief to crops damaged by untimely water release from dams.
- ix) Micro power generation should be permitted to run motors for irrigation.
- x) Down drawing of water from dam hampers production of fish as it generally coincides with the breeding season of fish.
- xi) Rivers have a life of their own and river linking programmes should be stopped.
- xii) Decentralised, district micro-level water use planning is needed with integrated watershed based approach

## **5. Inputs**

- i) Production suffers from non-availability of good quality seed and fertilizer and their timely supply. Networking with good NGOs can help solve this problem.
- ii) Quality seed should be made available by improving the functioning of Government farms.
- iii) Economic status of farming community particularly of the small and marginal farmers is not in good shape. Proper subsidy should be given to them for supply of quality agricultural inputs - quality seeds, fertilizer, irrigation pesticides etc.
- iv) Seeds of salt tolerant paddy variety should be provided to farmers along the coast.
- v) More emphasis should be given on promoting oilseed cultivation, particularly sunflower.
- vi) Government Inspectors should enhance their vigil regarding spurious inputs like seeds.
- vii) The policy does not say anything on GM seeds. They should not be allowed.

- viii) The Seed Corporation of India should be revitalized to supply to small and marginal farmers.
- ix) MNC seed players should not be allowed.
- x) The Seed Bill should be reviewed carefully and be in tandem with the already existing PPVFR and Biodiversity Acts and protect farmers' interest.

## **6. Technology and Training**

- i) There should be monthly meetings of the agriculture department with farmers at the block level.
- ii) The work of agriculture universities and research institutions is not reaching the farmers.
- iii) Production of vegetables through organic farming fetches higher price. Therefore greater awareness should be generated on organic farming.
- iv) Knowledge gap to tackle the soil and crop health through use of balanced nutrient and proper crop management has to be addressed.
- v) Soil testing service should be available at the village level and at all KVKs.
- vi) Emphasis has to be given on application of IT in agriculture.
- vii) Farmers need training in composite farming techniques. There should be Zonal Farmer Training Centres.
- viii) KVKs should be tapped for educating our farmers.
- ix) Each district should have at least one soil testing laboratory. This is very vital because of the fact that research studies show that due to application of chemical fertilizers the health of soil deteriorates.
- x) There should be district-level agro-meteorology stations. This will help farmers in drawing their seasonal cropping programme in a comprehensive manner.
- xi) Often R & D work is carried in the field of farmers by the MNCs. Tax has to be imposed on such works.
- xii) Participatory research should be supported.

## **7. Credit and Insurance**

- i) Institutional crop loan is not available to many. The outreach of the formal credit system has to be increased.
- ii) The Kisan Credit Card is cornered by the big farmers and is beyond the reach of the small and marginal farmers.
- iii) Crop Insurance can be a prime risk aversion type measure in the era of cost intensive modern agriculture; it should cover all crops and be available across the State. But what seems to be the main hurdle to this way is the Unit area for compensation i.e. Block as defined under the existing crop insurance programme. The village should be the unit of assessment. Also, 60% damage should be sufficient ground for compensation and the government should bear the premium burden.
- iv) Crop insurance should cover all crops.
- v) Why can't insurance be individual farmer based?
- vi) Small and marginal farmers should get interest free credit through credit cards.

## **8. Price and Market**

- i) Marketing produce at remunerative price is a problem. The price is there but does not accrue to the farmer because of the chain of intermediaries. Price accruing to the farmer should include the profit component.
- ii) Vegetables storage facility for unsold vegetables is lacking. There should be cold storages for crops like potato.
- iii) More emphasis should be given to export oriented agriculture.
- iv) Fixation of MSP of agricultural commodities is not always reasonable. Rational fixation of price of all the agricultural commodities is urgently required.
- v) Proper road infrastructure is important to reach the market.
- vi) Our farmers are not equipped to deal with Corporate Farming and Contract Farming. Local NGO of credibility may be involved to ensure that the farmer is not cheated. PRIs can take the initiative in backing PPP model with technical backup from the University. With proper support, contract farming is perhaps



the direction to take in view of the small size of land holdings and the need for assured price for produce. Government should be made a party in the contract as the third party, primarily for dispute settlement.

- vii) There should be thrust on food processing and Food Parks maybe promoted. Creation of food parks will inspire the farmers in producing agricultural commodities of extra good quality and they will also get good price of their products.
- viii) The regulated markets are controlled by a few wholesalers. They should be brought under control and competition increased.
- ix) Farmers should get scope for direct sale in the market; eliminate middlemen.
- x) MSP for fish is not applicable.
- xi) Farmers in many States are committing suicide mostly on account of non-receipt of remunerative price of their commodities.
- xii) Cost of production of Agricultural commodities varies from district to district. Therefore, different procurement prices have to be declared for different districts. In general, inputs cost has been rising fast whereas output prices remain depressed.

## **9. Women in Agriculture**

- i) Appropriate measures should be prescribed in the policy for economic uplift of women farmers.
- ii) Women should be called to meetings. They need special counseling and training
- iii) There should be equal pay for equal work and no discrimination in wage rates to male and female wage labour
- iv) Kisan Credit Card should be given in the wife's name instead of the husband.

## **10. Information Dissemination**

- i) Information on various extant Government programmes and schemes do not reach the farmers. These are generally cornered by the big farmers.
- ii) Agricultural news should be broadcast on regular basis through radio. It would be ideal if there were a separate channel for agriculture and farmers.

- iii) Success stories of farmers should be telecast/broadcast.
- iv) Interactive Programmes should be increased – farmers should be able to phone-in for advice, write with their queries.
- v) KVKs should be given license for radio transmission, like the KVK Baramati model.
- vi) Agriculture Internet outlets like E-choupal, E-Agriculture should be opened immediately for facilitating our farmers so that they can access information for fetching remunerative price.
- vii) Media should be well equipped and have to come in the forefront for the interest of our farmers.
- viii) Weather forecasting system should be more elaborate and accurate for ensuring our farmers have access to them through internet and mass-media.
- ix) All possible and effective means of information should be harnessed and effectively utilized, e.g. street plays, community newsletter, Jatra group.
- x) A large number of information centres should be opened in West Bengal from where the poor farmers will get the correct message and information for their cultivation.
- xi) Model farmer in each block maybe identified and trained to disseminate information and train others.
- xii) Grassroot workers and NGOs should be trained on aspects relating to IPR, WTO, BD and PPVFR Acts and they in turn have to disseminate the information to further reach out to farmers. Officials should also have clear idea about the process of patenting.
- xiii) Important days like Wetlands Day (June 16), Fish Farmers' Day, should be observed in each Block to generate greater awareness.
- xiv) Setting up of farmers' schools is essential to disseminate recent know how in farming, creation of extensive facilities for monitoring soil health, generating awareness to minimize dependence on plan protection chemicals to save the health of human, development of Agri-based industry to ensure remunerative prices for the farm produce.

- xv) Formation of farmers' club can help easy dissemination of agricultural technologies among farmers.
- xvi) Present extension method followed in agriculture is not sufficient enough for quick dissemination of Agricultural technologies. Measures have to be taken to this effect with the process of involving NGOs or any other private extension agencies.

## 11. Suggestions from Ministers

After the consultation, the NCF representatives had a discussion with the Ministers of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Agriculture Marketing and Fisheries and the concerned officials of these Departments. The Ministers apprised the members about the steps taken by the State Government in favour of farmers and raised various issues relating to the State that needed the attention of the NCF.

The issues and suggestions that came up are summarised below:

- i) **Fisheries:** There should be insurance schemes for fisheries also; there is ban on import of brood stock. This has to be reviewed and relaxed on case by case basis, like in the case of certain varieties of ornamental fish. In the entire cycle of breeding-feeding-healthcare-management, a pro-poor approach is needed. There should be a policy based on latest knowledge and assessment of future threats.
- ii) **Livestock:** only cattle and poultry have got attention in the Policy. There is no coverage of mulberry; There has to be Livestock Mapping on the lines of Crop Mapping;
- iii) There should be 100% insurance for all animals;
- iv) There should be KVK exclusively for livestock in each district;
- v) There is need for Local Breeding and Feeding Policy; One goat needs on an average 5 *cottah* of grazing land and a cow requires 10 *cottah* Low cost production of fodder and feed for animal husbandry has to be promoted;
- vi) Breeding of indigenous breed of quality livestock has to be promoted;

- vii) Medical care for animals is sparse. There should be two-year para- veterinary courses to setup and man PHCs for animal healthcare; SHG members in villages can also be trained; There is a an ongoing scheme of '*Prani Bandhu*' in every Gram Panchayat, the person collects Rs.60/- for every artificial insemination done;
- viii) Although export of cattle and beef is banned, there is illegal trade through Bangladesh. This has to be reviewed and a policy beneficial to protect the interests of our livestock rearers put in place.
- ix) **Inputs:** Seed multiplication is required on a large scale. Hybrid seed production should be encouraged with atleast 60% subsidy; Organic farming inputs like green manure need subsidy support
- x) There should be effective implementation of land reforms across the country to improve the standard of living of the farmer
- xi) Agriclincs and Agribusiness Centres have to be promoted; Thrust on small scale cottage and agro-based industries is needed
- xii) There should be Pension and PF provision for farmers also. West Bengal Government has introduced a pension scheme
- xiii) Contract farming should have protection for small farmers; The terms and conditions should be favorable; Composite Farming with backward and forward linkages and coordination between different sectors should be encouraged

**12.** The Members assured the full consideration of the representations made by the State Government and all the participants. They also thanked the State Government for the courtesy shown.

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