

Agriculture Growth Rate of 4.1% shows that the government is working seriously for the betterment of the farmers and farming: Shri Radha Mohan Singh

Budget manifests government's commitment to double the farmers income in a span of 5 years: Shri Singh

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Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that this time it has become very clear again that the Central Government is working for the villages, the poor and farmers. Shri Singh further added that agriculture growth rate has increased from 2% to 4.1% and it shows that the government is working seriously for the betterment of the farmers and farming. The commitment of the Government to double the income of the farmer in 5 years has been under scored in this budget. Shri Singh said this in an informal talk with journalist in the Ministry. On this occasion, Union Agriculture Minister informed the journalist in detail the provision made for agriculture sector in the budget.

Shri Singh said that this budget manifests government's commitment to double the farmers income in a span of 5 years. Apart from this, provisions have been made to continue erstwhile schemes. Goals of White and Blue Revolution have been reiterated in this budget. Ambitious schemes have been chalked out to promote the agriculture sector in this budget. For instance, a sum of Rs. 9000 crores have been provided for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana resulting in the enhancement of crop security coverage to the farmers.

Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister said that this budget has provided security coverage to agriculture sector as well as farmers. The government has made up its mind to dig one million ponds. This is a praise worthy step. By providing irrigation and fisheries facilities through these ponds, the farmers will be helped to double their incomes. In the previous year, 5 lakh ponds have been built. Besides, this budget aims to provide 100 employment days to the farmers through MNREGA which is also a praise worthy step. To promote "per drop more crop", those areas will also be provided water for irrigation which were earlier deprived of this facility through long term irrigation fund.

Shri Singh informed that budgetary provision of Rs. 45,250 crore for the year 2016-17 was made for Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare which has now been increased by 15.31% to Rs. 51,026 crore for the year 2017-18. The Minister highlighted the following provisions of the Budget:

- While accelerating the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, 40% agricultural area will be brought under the scheme this year. It was 30% in the previous year. Similarly, it will be increased to 50% for the year 2018-19. During the previous year, there was a budget provision of Rs. 5.5 thousand crores which will be increased to Rs. 9000 crore during this year. Simultaneously, an additional sum of Rs. 7.7 thousand crores has also been provided during this year for the dues of previous year.
- Soil Health Card – for all 648 KVKs, a provision has been made to establish mini soil testing labs. 1000 labs will be activated through local entrepreneurs. Loan related subsidy will be provided for this purpose by the government.
- e-NAM – at present, 250 mandis are linked with e-NAM platform which will be increased to 585 mandis. For this purpose, each mandi will be provided assistance upto Rs. 75 lakhs for their basic infrastructures (sanity grading and packaging). In addition to this, it has also been suggested to denotify from APMC Act (Mandi Act) those commodities which are quickly perishable.
- Dairy is a prominent part of agriculture economy. During year 2016-17, there was a budgetary provision of Rs. 1136 crore for White Revolution which has been increased by 43.8% in the form of Rs. 1634 crore for year 2017-18. Along with this, dairy processing and infrastructural fund will be set up with a sum of Rs. 8000 cr for the modernization of old milk processing units under Operation Flood. This will be completed within a period of 3 years. Initially it will be started with a sum of Rs. 2000 crores.
- Blue Revolution is one of the priorities of the government. Keeping this in view, the budget provision of Rs. 247 crore for year 2016-17 has been increased by 62.35% amounting to Rs. 401 crore. The MNREGA was given an assurance to make 5 lakh ponds during last year to cope with the problem of drought prevailing in rural areas. During present year, 5 lakh new ponds will also be built up.

- A sum of Rs. 5189 crore for Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna has been increased to Rs.7377 crore. Besides a long term irrigation fund has been set up with a sum of Rs. 20,000 crore for irrigation scheme in previous financial year concerned with NABARD. During this year, it will be doubled in the form of Rs. 40,000 crore.
- A dedicated micro Irrigation fund with a sum of Rs. 5000 crores will be set up for the achievement of the goal of “per drop – more crop”.
- Other features in the Budget : The total loan amount of Rs. 9 lakh crore for previous year has been enhanced as Rs. 10 lakh crore this year. In this respect, dedicated efforts will be made for low irrigated areas, eastern states and Jammu & Kashmir. In addition to this, as per the announcement made earlier by the Hon’ble Prime Minister, the waiver will also be provided on loan interest for 60 days.
- Efforts will be taken to computerize 63,000 PACS being operated by NABARD in the area of cooperatives. This work will be completed within 3 years with an assistance of Rs. 1900 crores.
- Model contact farming law will be formulated to make improvements in the policies relates to agriculture.

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