



Union Agriculture Minister reviews the progress of two flagship schemes - National Agricultural Markets (E-Names) and Soil Health Card

9 crore Soil Health Cards distributed to the farmers so far: Shri Singh

Centre making efforts to make e-NAM scheme successful: Shri Singh

Shri Radha Mohan Singh addresses a meeting of Agriculture Minister from States/UTs

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Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that the idea of development of agriculture sector was being contemplated for a long time, but since independence, this is the first government that has been working at the ground level for the development of agriculture and the economic growth of the farmers. Shri Singh said this at a meeting of the State Ministers in-charge of Agricultural Marketing and Agriculture Ministers from different states in New Delhi. In this meeting, the progress of two flagship schemes - National Agricultural Markets (E-Names) and Soil Health Card was reviewed.

Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's dream is to double farmers' income by 2022 and that farmers should realise their contribution in the mainstream development. To achieve this, the Central Government and all the State Governments need to make multi-faceted joint efforts.

Shri Singh informed that the first pillar is that the cost of production should be reduced and productivity should be increased. The second pillar is that farmers need to diversify and adopt other agricultural activities such as animal husbandry, poultry, goat rearing, bee keeping, and timber plantation. The third and the most important pillar is that farmers get regulated markets close to their farms to sell their produce and earn profitable returns.

Union Agriculture Minister pointed out that Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme is a flagship scheme of the Government to promote the use of fertilisers based on analysis of Soil Health and enable farmers to get maximum yields at lower cost with minimum damage to the ecosystem. The central Government launched this scheme in February 2015 to provide SHC to more than 12 crore farmers once every 2 years. Comprehensive testing of soil samples on 12 parameters including the status of micro-nutrients is being carried out for each and every soil sample under the scheme. The first cycle (2015-17) of the scheme is expected to be completed by July 2017. Shri Singh said that States have reported 100% collection of soil sample i.e. 253 lakh soil samples and testing of 244 lakh soil samples. So far 9 crore soil health cards have been distributed to farmers.

Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that after the formation of the government, they have taken several important decisions to accelerate the economic condition of the farmers. In order to double the income of the farmers, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the National Agricultural Markets (e-NAM) scheme on July 1, 2015, with a budget allocation of Rs.200 crore. As part of the pilot project, 21 Mandis of 8 states were linked to e-National Agricultural Markets (e-NAM) Scheme on 14/04/2016 by the Prime Minister. This scheme provides an online portal to the farmers for electronic trading and provides a transparent market enabling price discovery and competition. Under the scheme, each Mandi is provided assistance of Rs. 30 lakh for the purpose of preparing necessary infrastructure in the integrated regulated markets. In this year's budget, this amount has been increased to Rs.75 lakh. The main objective of this scheme is to give farmers access to prices of different Mandis and facility to sell their products in a transparent manner to those who offer the best price. One important component of this scheme is that the farmer gets the value of his yield according to the quality as the quality is checked before the electronic bidding.

For the success of this scheme, the State Governments need to make genuine efforts and the Ministers play a key role in this. e-NAM is an important milestone in promoting digital India and digitisation programs of the government.

Shri Singh said that his ministry and the officers are making efforts to make e-NAM scheme successful. The Agriculture Minister himself visited the states and conducted meetings and reviewed various schemes related to the progress of farmers. Some State Governments like Chhattisgarh and Telangana are doing good work to ensure that farmers are benefitted by e-NAM. There is no lack of commitment by the State Governments, but the way Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh is taking an interest, all states should take inspiration from him.

Union Agriculture Minister said in the changing scenario, the government has taken an active step in the interest of the farmers by devising a new model called Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act and it was inaugurated on 24/04/2017. APMC Act 2017 provides the facility of creating private market yards and farmer-consumer markets. Now, if the states actively enforce the act, it will be easier for the farmers to have a liberal market available as this Act is based on the model of "ease of doing business" to encourage direct marketing.

