



Cabinet approves utilisation of pulses from the buffer stock through Central Government Schemes having nutrition component

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The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved to utilize part of stock of pulses in the buffer maintained by the Department of Consumer Affairs, for meeting the protein component under various schemes of Central Government providing nutrition to various target groups/beneficiaries. To give effect to the decision, the CCEA has empowered the concerned Departments/Ministries to carry out suitable amendments in their schemes/guidelines to enable them to take/provide pulses from the buffer in kind under their respective Schemes.

The disposal through the Central Government Schemes is in addition to the disposal of pulses from the buffer through open market sale and supply to States.

All the concerned Ministries/Departments will make necessary changes in their schemes and assess requirement of pulses within next three months of the approval. Supply of pulses from the Central buffer would commence based on such requirement indicated by these Ministries/Departments.

The objective of the approval is to enable the concerned administrative Ministries/Departments to ensure that pulses from the buffer are utilized as in 'kind' component of the Centre's contribution in such schemes, in lieu of its financial contribution of equivalent amount. The concerned Departments may revert to the current system of making nutrition available only in case of non-availability of pulses in the buffer. Ministries/Departments or their agencies providing food/catering/hospitality services have also been enabled to make suitable provision in their Commercial arrangement(tenders/contracts) to ensure that the requirements of pulses for such operations are met through the central buffer.

The approval will also help ensure adequate supply of nutrients/pulses under the various schemes/programmes of Government including Mid Day Meal(MDM) scheme, hospitals, etc. as well as Ministries/Departments or their agencies providing food/catering/hospitality services.

For a sustainable buffer operation, availability of regular and assured channels of disposal wherein a committed quantity is taken/lifted from the buffer at regular periodicity may be of critical importance. This would facilitate optimal utilization and efficient management of pulses in buffer through regular/planned rotation of pulses and replacement of stock through fresh crop on continual basis.

The cost of pulses supplied to States would, in no case, be higher than the market price, protecting their interest as well.

Background:

The buffer of up to 20 Lakh MT has been created to enable effective market intervention by government, discourage market manipulation and provide cushion against price rise to consumers. It may incentivize farmers and encourage production of pulses as well.

As the buffer of pulses serves the interests of both consumers and farmers, ensuring its attainability and efficient operation is important for the welfare of these stakeholders. For a sustainable buffer operation, availability of regular and assured channels of disposal wherein a committed quantity is taken/lifted from the buffer at regular periodicity may be of critical importance. This would facilitate effective management of the buffer. Such assured channel for disposal of pulses may be provided by the Central Government Ministries/Departments and their agencies that are operating Schemes under which food and nutrition is being provided to the beneficiaries e.g. Mid Day Meals. This would also facilitate nutritional security.

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