

Farm reforms will help doubling farmers income – says Dr Saroj Kumar Swain

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The three farm reforms introduced by the Government are immensely useful and would help doubling farmers' income- says Dr Saroj Kumar Swain, Director, ICAR-CIFA. The Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, the premier research institute for freshwater aquaculture is a constituent of ICAR, New Delhi. During the last 33 years the institute has developed several farm worthy technologies. India is producing around 15.0 million tonne (MT) fish out of which over 70 percent is contributed by inland fishery sector. Government has geared up its effort to raise it to 22.0 MT by 2022.

Besides research, ICAR-CIFA is active in extension, training and capacity building, entrepreneurship development, women empowerment, promoting aquaculture in SC/ST dominated areas. Institute is also operating a host of development at present including- Farmer FIRST, STC, NEH, SCSP, RKVY etc. Through such programmes the institute reaches out to over 5000 farmers every year. Use of official whatsapp channel and launching virtual training has expanded the reach many fold.

Recently Govt. has introduced three farm reforms viz. i) Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and facilitation) Act, 2020 ii) Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and iii) Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

As a part of the reforms, the minimum support price (MSP) has increased significantly from September 2020 as a safety net. The farmers are given freedom of choice to sell in APMC mandi or outside (ending the monopoly). The farmers will also enjoy the benefit of online trading. The long chain of intermediaries will be reduced to minimum or no intermediary, which will help the farmers getting higher share in consumer rupees. The concept of contract farming will be spread to more no of farmers with proper price assurance and boosting the linkage with the food processing sector. Through this, the rights of both farmers and buyers will be under protection. Reduction in market fees and taxes will realise a better price discovery. The small and marginal farmers having scattered landholding will be benefitted through forming Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and it will ultimately help for better bargaining power.

These three farm laws when implemented throughout the country would help realising the goal of doubling farmers' income by the year 2022.