

## V

### Outlook

8.65 Agriculture growth has been unsteady during the last few years. Large accumulation of rice and wheat stocks, along with a distinct shift in the consumption pattern away from cereals to non-cereals (discussed in Chapter 5 – Prices and Food Management) is a stark reminder that the policy focus needs to be reoriented towards the growth of non-cereal crops - oilseeds, pulses, fruits, vegetables; and dairying. Diversification of agricultural production requires development of rural

infrastructure – transportation, rural roads, improved and reliable power supply, watershed management, cold storage and agri food processing facilities, quality testing labs and; institutional support by way of new market facilities, removal of restrictions on stock limits and agri product movement. Agriculture Research and Extension would also require reorientation to meet the changing needs of the agriculture sector. Emphasis on minimum price support which has benefited only rice and wheat crops at the expense of other crops and agri products requires a fresh policy focus so that crop diversification gains momentum.