

NEW INITIATIVES

National Food Security Mission

7.34 The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, has launched a Centrally-sponsored scheme on National Food Security Mission (NFSM) in pursuance of the resolution of the National Development Council (NDC) to increase the production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10, 8 and 2 million tonnes, respectively, over the benchmark levels of production, by the end of the Eleventh Five Year Plan period. The Mission aims at increasing foodgrains production of the above crops through area expansion and productivity enhancement; restoring soil fertility and productivity; creating employment opportunities; and enhancing farm level economy to restore confidence of farmers of targeted districts.

7.35 Various activities of NFSM relate to demonstration of improved production technology, distribution of quality seeds of HYVs and hybrids, popularization of newly released varieties, support for micronutrients, and training and mass media campaign including awards for best performing districts. The identified districts are given flexibility to adopt any local area specific interventions as are included in the Strategic Research and Extension Plan (SREP) prepared for the agriculture development of the district. Rs. 2 crore each will be provided during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period to those districts which have a programme for two or more crops of the NFSM and Rs. 1 crore to the districts having a programme for any one of the crops. The NFSM is being implemented in 305 districts of 16 States of the country. An amount of Rs. 149.4 crore has been released to various States to plan and implement various interventions during 2007-08. The total outlay of NFSM is Rs. 4,882.5 crore during the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007) (Table 7.15).

Table 7.15 Allocation proposed under NFSM (Rs. crore)

Year	Rice	Wheat	Pulses	Total
2007-08	70.8	234.6	96.9	402.3
2008-09	348.1	682.7	285.9	1316.8
2009-10	366.3	290.8	287.2	944.2
2010-11	428.3	341.5	286.4	1056.3
2011-12	508.8	370.8	283.4	1163.0
Total	1722.3	1920.3	1239.9	4882.5

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)

7.36 The NDC in its 53rd meeting also decided to launch a programme to incentivise the States to increase the share of investment in agriculture in their State plans. Accordingly, on August 16, 2007, the Government approved the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) with an allocation of Rs. 25,000 crore for the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The RKVY aims at achieving the 4 per cent annual growth in the agriculture sector during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period by ensuring a holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors. The RKVY will be a State Plan Scheme and the eligibility for assistance under the scheme would depend upon the amount provided in the State budgets for agriculture and allied sectors, over and above the baseline percentage expenditure incurred on agriculture and allied sectors. The funds under the RKVY would be provided to the States as 100 per cent grant by the Central Government. An outlay of Rs. 1,500 crore has been approved for 2007-08. The main objectives of the schemes are:

- (i) To incentivise the States to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors.
- (ii) To provide flexibility and autonomy to the States in planning and executing agriculture and allied sector schemes.
- (iii) To ensure the preparation of plans for the districts and the States based on agro-climatic conditions, availability of technology and natural resources.
- (iv) To ensure that the local needs/crops/priorities are better reflected.
- (v) To achieve the goal of reducing the yield gaps in important crops, through focused interventions.
- (vi) To maximize returns to the farmers.

National Policy for Farmers, 2007

7.37 Government of India has approved the National Policy for Farmers, 2007 taking into account the recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers and after consulting the State Governments. The National Policy for Farmers, among other things, has provided for a holistic approach to development of the farm sector. The broad areas of its coverage include:

- (i) Focus will be on the *economic well-being of the farmers* in addition to production and productivity.
- (ii) *Asset reforms*: To ensure that a farmer household in villages either possesses or has access to a productive asset or marketable skill.
- (iii) *Water use efficiency*: The concept of maximizing yield and income per unit of irrigation water in all the crop production programmes would be accorded priority with stress on awareness and efficiency of water use.
- (iv) *New technologies* like biotechnology, information and communication technology (ICT), renewable energy technology, space applications and nano-technology would be encouraged for improving productivity per unit of land and water on a sustainable basis.
- (v) *National Agricultural Bio-security System* would be established to organize a coordinated agricultural bio-security programme.
- (vi) *Seeds and Soil Health*: Quality seeds, disease free planting material and soil health enhancement hold the key to raising small farm productivity. Every farmer is to be issued with a soil health passbook containing integrated information on farm soils with corresponding advisories.
- (vii) *Support services for women*: Appropriate support services like crèches, child care centres and adequate nutrition needed by women working in fields would be funded.
- (viii) *Credit & Insurance*: The financial services would be galvanized for timely, adequate and easy reach to the farmers at reasonable interest rates.
- (ix) *Gyan Chaupals* at village level with the help of ICT and farm schools in the fields of outstanding farmers to promote farmer to farmer learning would be set up through the State Governments for strengthening extension services.
- (x) Necessary steps would be taken to put in place an appropriate *social security scheme* for farmers.
- (xi) *Minimum Support Price (MSP)* mechanism to be implemented effectively across the country so as to ensure remunerative prices for agricultural produce.
- (xii) *Food Security basket* is to be enlarged to include nutritious millets such as bajra, jowar, ragi and millets, mostly grown in dry land farming areas.

An inter-Ministerial Committee has been setup to operationalize the implementation of the policy.