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CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR  
AGRICULTURE SKILLS IN INDIA

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## AGRICULTURE INSIGHTS



### India's Foodgrain Production Hits 1,663.91 Lakh Tonnes in FY25, Up 106 Lakh Tonnes

India's total foodgrain production in FY 2024-25 rose by over 106 lakh tonnes to 1663.91 lakh tonnes. Rabi crop output increased from 1600.06 lakh tonnes in 2023-24 to 1645.27 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, according to the Ministry of Agriculture. This growth showcases India's push to boost productivity and become a global food basket, meeting domestic and international needs.

As part of initiatives to enhance agriculture, a national-level Clean Plant Program lab will be established in Pune to conduct research on original plant species, ensuring disease-free nurseries and quality seed production.

The government plans to strengthen the link between research institutes and farmers, with over 113 ICAR institutes across the country, including 11 in Maharashtra, to be actively involved in accelerating agricultural development. These steps are aimed at improving production efficiency, reducing costs, and fostering sustainable farming practices nationwide

### Six Traditional Farming Systems Earn Global Recognition for Sustainability and Heritage

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has designated six new sites as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), recognizing traditional farming methods in Brazil, China, Mexico, and Spain for their sustainability, biodiversity conservation, and cultural value. These additions raise the total number of GIAHS sites to 95 worldwide.

Among the new inductees are Brazil's shade-grown erva-mate agroforestry, three systems in China—Deqing's pearl mussel aquaculture, Fuding's white tea culture, and Gansu's ancient pear orchards—Mexico's Metepantle ancestral terraces, and Spain's volcanic sand-based agriculture in Lanzarote.

Each system showcases unique ecological adaptations, from using volcanic ash to trap moisture in dry climates to centuries-old crop-livestock integrations and seed-saving traditions.

The FAO praised these systems as models of resilience and innovation amid growing climate and environmental challenges. These living landscapes blend traditional knowledge with biodiversity preservation, offering valuable lessons for sustainable agriculture globally.



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## Beekeeping Programme Introduced at Cherlapalli Prison to Train Inmates in Apiculture

A beekeeping program was launched at Cherlapalli Prisoners' Agricultural Colony, Telangana, to train inmates in apiculture. It covers hive maintenance, colony management, honey extraction, wax processing, and product marketing. The site's flowering plants provide an ideal setting for honeybee farming. The program equips inmates with skills

for sustainable livelihoods post-release and emphasizes honeybees' vital role in pollinating 75% of global food crops. Hands-on sessions also foster discipline, teamwork, and responsibility among participants.



Support for the programme includes technical training from the Telangana Bee Hub Society and subsidies from the Horticulture Department, which provides financial assistance to inmates interested in pursuing apiculture post-release. The initiative aims to combine environmental conservation with skill development within the correctional system.



## TN Posts 5.66% Agricultural Growth with Irrigation, Productivity Gains

Tamil Nadu has achieved an impressive average agricultural growth of 5.66% from 2021 to 2024, a sharp rise from the earlier 1.36% average recorded between 2012 and 2021. Focused government initiatives to expand cultivable land and strengthen irrigation infrastructure have led to a significant increase in irrigated area from 36.07 lakh hectares in 2020-21 to 38.33 lakh hectares in 2023-24.

Under the Kalaingar All Village Integrated Agricultural Development Scheme, 47,286 acres of fallow land were cultivated at a cost of ₹786.86 crore, benefiting over 51 lakh farmers. The state tops in finger millet and guava productivity and ranks second in maize, sugarcane, tamarind, tapioca, jasmine, and oilseeds.

A total allocation of ₹1,94,076 crore through five dedicated agriculture budgets introduced several new schemes. Infrastructure upgrades include desilting canals, renovating 917 irrigation tanks, and building 88 check dams. Livestock and fisheries sectors saw notable milk and egg production growth.

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## Drone Didis Transform Farming Landscape with Technology and Skill

A growing number of women in rural India are using drones in agriculture, symbolizing a modern shift in farming practices. Known as "Drone Didis", these women are increasingly recognized for their role in operating drone technology to enhance efficiency in seeding, spraying, and crop monitoring. Their involvement shows how new tools boost productivity and empower rural areas.

The use of drones by women farmers is part of a larger trend of integrating modern technology with traditional agriculture. These "sky warriors" use drones to cut labor, boost precision, and promote sustainable farming.

India's agricultural sector plays a vital role in food security and rural employment, supporting a large part of the population. As drone usage expands, it holds the potential to make farming more data-driven and less labor-intensive, especially in areas facing labor shortages and environmental challenges. Training and accessibility will be key to scaling this change nationwide.

## Nationwide Campaign to Link Agricultural Research with Field Practice Begins May 29

A new national campaign, "Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan," will begin on May 29 to promote modern farming practices across India. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between agricultural research and field implementation by engaging farmers directly. More than 2,000 expert teams will visit over 65,000 villages to guide farmers on crops, soil, irrigation, and sustainable farming.

This effort aligns with a larger vision to boost food production, support farmer incomes, and ensure long-term environmental sustainability.

The campaign focuses on cutting input costs, promoting natural farming, diversifying crops, and encouraging value addition. It supports India's food security with record wheat, rice, oilseeds, and pulses outputs this year. Crucially, the campaign emphasizes two-way interaction. Farmers will receive customized advice and also share field challenges, contributing to future research. With support from agricultural universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras, the campaign seeks to make scientific knowledge widely accessible in rural areas.



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## DAIRY INSIGHTS



### India to Launch Three Multi-State Cooperatives for Sustainable Dairy Development

In a bid to improve sustainability and efficiency in the dairy sector, the Indian government has announced the establishment of three new multi-state cooperative societies. These cooperatives will focus on animal feed, dung management, and circular use of cattle residues to promote an eco-friendly dairy sector.

The first cooperative will focus on enhancing animal health through improved feed production, disease control, and artificial insemination. The second will develop effective dung management models aimed at reducing waste and promoting its use in agriculture and bioenergy. The third will emphasize the circular use of dead cattle residues, supporting bio-economy initiatives and minimizing environmental impact.

The move also includes efforts to ensure that benefits from carbon credits are extended directly to farmers through scientifically developed models. The initiative was discussed in a high-level meeting attended by officials from NDDB and NABARD, highlighting a collaborative approach to modernizing the dairy industry through sustainable and circular practices.

### Comfed Eyes Global Markets Amid Domestic Expansion

The Bihar State Milk Co-operative Federation Ltd (Comfed), known for its Sudha brand, is expanding its operations both domestically and internationally. With an annual turnover of ₹1,500 crore, Comfed currently collects about 30 lakh litres of milk daily and plans to increase this to 45 lakh litres. Around 18 lakh litres are sold as liquid milk, while the rest is used for producing a variety of dairy products.

Comfed has recently started exporting premium dairy products such as ghee, gulab jamun, and makhana to the United States through the Bihta dry port and Gujarat's Mundra port.

The cooperative is also exploring opportunities in the UAE market. Domestically, it has expanded into West Bengal and the National Capital Region (NCR), though these plants are still ramping up capacity.

The organization operates through a network of over 30,000 milk societies and has implemented direct benefit transfers to improve transparency. It also plans to offer a ₹5 lakh accidental medical insurance scheme for its member farmers, strengthening farmer support systems.



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## Sistema.bio and Danone to Equip 6,500 Dairy Farms with Biodigesters by 2030

Sistema.bio has partnered with global food company Danone to install 6,500 biodigesters on smallholder dairy farms by 2030. Announced at the 17th International Agricultural Exhibition (SIAM) in Morocco, the initiative targets farms in Mexico, Morocco, and India. Biodigesters turn livestock waste into biogas and fertilizer, promoting sustainability and aiding small farmers by cutting emissions, costs and boosting the health of the soil.



This effort reflects a broader push toward circular agriculture and climate-resilient farming. The collaboration supports local sustainability programs such as Danone's "Hlib Bladi" in Morocco and seeks to build more self-reliant farms globally. By turning livestock waste into valuable resources, the project contributes to decarbonizing the dairy sector and improving long-term farm productivity.

Many of Danone's partner farmers operate with fewer than 20 cows, and the biodigesters will provide them with clean energy while lowering dependence on synthetic fertilizers.



## NDDB Proposes Strategic Roadmap for Dairy Sector in Puducherry

A high-level meeting was recently held at the Legislative Assembly in Puducherry to discuss the development of the Union Territory's dairy sector. The session was attended by senior officials and representatives from the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), including Chairman Meenesh Shah and Executive Director Rajeev. The NDDB team visited to mark the foundation of an ice cream plant at Ponlait.

During the meeting, NDDB outlined a detailed roadmap to develop the local dairy sector. The plan emphasizes breed improvement programs, increasing productivity, expanding market access, and strengthening cooperative networks. It also prioritizes women-focused development initiatives to empower dairy farmers within the cooperatives.

Officials confirmed that the Union Territory will continue collaborating with NDDB to execute a structured development plan. Participants in the meeting included the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Secretary, and the Secretary to the Government of Puducherry.

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## Kerala Introduces Livestock Insurance Scheme to Support Dairy Farmers

Kerala has launched a livestock insurance scheme to provide financial assistance to dairy farmers facing losses due to disease and environmental stress. The scheme offers compensation of ₹37,500 for cows that die from skin diseases or extreme heat, ₹20,000 for calves that die, and ₹10,000 for stillbirths. This initiative aims to lessen financial losses and stabilize the dairy sector.

The scheme was announced during an event in Neeleswaram block organized by the Neeleswaram dairy development unit, Milma, the Animal Husbandry Department, and Kerala Feeds. The event also included the inauguration of a new hygienic milk collection room by the Edayilakode Milk Producers' Cooperative Society, focusing on improving infrastructure and quality in the dairy industry.

Officials and local representatives emphasized a collaborative effort to enhance farmer welfare. This insurance program forms part of Kerala's broader plan to build resilience against animal diseases and climate stress, promoting better animal care and sustainable dairy farming across the state.

## HORTICULTURE INSIGHTS

### Haryana Brings Seven Horticulture Services Under Right to Service Act Framework

The Haryana Government has brought seven key services of the Horticulture Department under the ambit of the Right to Service Act, 2014, ensuring timely and accountable service delivery. As per the official notification, specific timelines have been set for processing various horticulture-related applications. Hortnet portal applications must be approved or rejected within 21 days.

For the grant of Nursery Fruit and Nursery Seed Licences, a period of 90 days has been allotted for processing. Disbursement of subsidies, following physical verification and subject to the availability of funds, must be completed within 30 days.

Furthermore, a 21-day timeline has been fixed for disbursing incentives under the Bhavantar Bharpayee Yojana (BBY) after claim approval. The enlistment of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), upon submission of complete documents and feasibility reports, must be completed within 45 days. Designated officers, along with first and second grievance redressal authorities, have been directed to ensure timely and efficient service delivery under the Act.



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## Bihar Unveils Major Agricultural Reforms to Promote Scientific Horticulture and Infrastructure

In a significant push to modernize agriculture and promote scientific horticulture, the Bihar government launched multiple initiatives and laid the foundation for key infrastructure projects. As part of the reforms, appointment letters were distributed to 315 newly selected Block Horticulture Officers, aiming to enhance extension services at the grassroots level.

Initiatives include raising farmer awareness on cash crops and modern practices, highlighted by a ₹144.72 crore Agricultural Engineering College project in Ara (Bhojpur).



The 16-acre institution will feature academic and administrative blocks, hostels, workshops, and staff housing, along with 62 sub-divisional agricultural buildings to enhance support systems. A Kharif campaign with awareness vehicles was launched, and the Bihar Krishi mobile app was introduced to offer farmers timely digital agricultural information.



The farmers shared insights about their cultivation practices, cost of production, and challenges, highlighting that Singhada is a time-intensive crop. Since fields remain waterlogged after harvest, they cannot be reused immediately for other crops, limiting farmers to a single annual yield.

## Singhada Farmers to be Included Under Horticulture Mission Scheme

In a significant move to support traditional Singhada (water chestnut) cultivators, the district horticulture department has decided to integrate these farmers under the Horticulture Mission scheme. This development comes after an inspection of Singhada cultivation areas and interaction with local farmers. For the first time, farmers growing Singhada will be linked to a government scheme aimed at improving agricultural livelihoods.

Farmers expressed happiness over this outreach and support, with many preparing to submit necessary documents to be enrolled in the scheme. The department aims to develop further strategies to enhance support for Singhada growers, encouraging more farmers to benefit from the program by contacting local offices.

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## FSSAI Directs States to Act on Synthetic Fruit Coatings and Illegal Ripening Agents

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed all States and Union Territories to strengthen inspections and enforcement against the use of unauthorized ripening agents and synthetic fruit coatings. The focus is on cracking down on the illegal use of calcium carbide, a banned substance under the Food Safety and Standards Regulations, due to its serious health risks.

Authorities have been urged to maintain strict vigilance in fruit markets and mandis to protect consumer health and ensure food safety compliance.

FSSAI has also highlighted instances where food operators are using ethephon solutions for artificial ripening by directly dipping fruits, particularly bananas. It reiterated that ethylene gas, generated from approved sources, should be used strictly following the prescribed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Inspections of godowns and suspected storage units have been recommended, with any presence of calcium carbide treated as evidence for legal action. Violations will attract strict penal measures under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

## FARM MECHANIZATION INSIGHTS

### India's Tractor Industry Gears Up for Growth Despite Slight Dip in Sales

India's tractor industry, among the largest globally, ended FY 2024-25 with domestic sales of 8.83 lakh units, marking a slight 1% decline from the previous year. Despite the dip, the sector remains optimistic about reaching the 1 million units annual sales mark in the near future. This requires either 13.2% growth in one year or 6.4% annually over two years.

The transition to higher sales will depend on several factors beyond demand. Consistent monsoon patterns, greater access to rural credit, and deeper mechanisation in regions like eastern India are key to expanding the market. Mechanisation initiatives and shared-use models such as Custom Hiring Centres could help small-scale farmers benefit from tractors without direct ownership.

Market performance in FY 2025 reflected mixed results. While some brands saw moderate gains, others faced declines. Mahindra led overall sales, followed by strong showings from Swaraj and Sonalika. Meanwhile, John Deere posted notable growth, reflecting varied momentum across manufacturers.

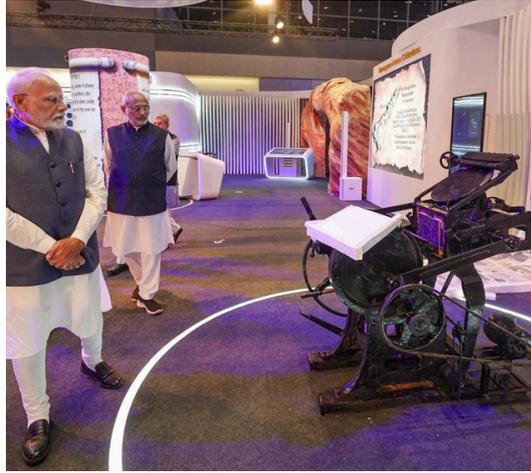


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## Maharashtra Sets Minimum Width for Farm Roads to Boost Agricultural Access

The Maharashtra government has introduced a new guideline requiring all farm roads to be at least three metres wide. This move aims to improve the movement of agricultural machinery, ensure better irrigation access, and support efficient transport of produce. The change targets concerns over unregistered, narrow farm paths as mechanization grows.

As part of this decision, farm roads will now be officially recorded under the "other rights" section in the 7/12 land title documents. This will include both existing and newly used farm roads, ensuring they are legally acknowledged without altering land ownership.



Authorities noted that such roads, although typically unpaved, are critical for day-to-day farming operations. District officials have been directed to resolve all related applications within 90 days to ensure timely implementation.

Formalizing rural routes aims to ease farmer logistics and improve access in Maharashtra's agricultural zones.



The rise in mechanisation aligns with several efforts to modernise agriculture. Training, awareness, and agri-science support have promoted farm mechanization. Better irrigation, timely inputs, and diverse crops have boosted gains, especially for small and mid-sized farmers.

## Uttar Pradesh Sees Sharp Rise in Tractor Ownership, Driving Farm Mechanisation

Uttar Pradesh has witnessed a significant shift in agricultural practices, with tractor ownership rising by 62% over the past eight years. The number of tractors increased from 88,000 in 2016-17 to 1,42,200 in 2024-25, highlighting the growing role of mechanised farming in the state's rural economy. This trend shows growing farmer confidence in modern tools and tech.

Improved access to tractor-based equipment has made a notable impact, especially in sowing and crop residue management. Financial support in the form of subsidies has helped reduce costs, while better yields in pulses, oilseeds, and sugarcane have supported income growth across the farming community.

# CEASI ACTIVITIES

## The North-East Dairy Conference

Centre of Excellence for Dairy Skills in India (CEDSI), in collaboration with the Directorate of Dairy Development, Government of Assam, successfully hosted the North East Dairy Conference on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The event witnessed the participation of over 150 esteemed delegates from 36 organizations, including government bodies, dairy and agriculture industry, academic institutions, and farmer collectives.



Graced by Smt Panchali Kakati, ACS, Director Dairy Development, Assam, Shri M.S. Manivannan, Commissioner and Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department, and the Chief Guest Shri B. Kalyan Chakravarthy, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Labour Welfare Department. Eminent experts from ICICI, NABARD, and SBI further enriched the discussions.

Key sessions focused on the critical role of the organized dairy sector in the Northeast, exploring cooperative models, technological integration, value addition, and digital platforms for traceability and market access. Topics such as the application of AI in milk production and the role of microfinance and insurance in enhancing financial inclusion were widely discussed. Skilling emerged as a central theme, with emphasis on developing new livelihood opportunities and promoting self-employment in the dairy value chain.



The conference provided a valuable platform for the Dairy sector collaboration, enabling stakeholders from government, industry, and grassroots organizations to exchange insights and best practices. Interactive discussions and experience-sharing sessions fostered a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities unique to the Northeast dairy sector, paving the way for actionable strategies and future partnerships.

Supported by industry partners Benny Impex, and sponsored by Prompt and Zeuser India, the conference underscored a shared commitment to building a resilient and self-reliant dairy ecosystem in the region.

# CEASI ACTIVITIES

## Empowering Women Farmers through Cluster Farming and Orchard Management Training in Karnal

The Centre of Excellence for Horticulture Skills in India (CEHSI) is currently conducting a 3-day residential training-cum-exposure program in Karnal for 30 women farmers, under HP-SHIVA project focusing on cluster farming and modern horticultural practices in orchard management.

As part of the ongoing initiative, participants are being exposed to practical learning through visits to the Integrated Beekeeping Development Centre in Kurukshetra and the Centre for Sub-Tropical Fruits in Ladwa. These visits are aimed at enhancing their understanding of sustainable horticultural practices, pollination management, and collective farming approaches, thereby equipping them with the skills needed to adopt innovative techniques in their own farming communities.



# WHO ARE WE

“Centre of Excellence for Agriculture Skills in India (CEASI)” is an autonomous organization working under the aegis of “Agriculture Skill Council of India (ASCI)”, which is working under **Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** for skilling and capacity building of farmers, wage workers, self-employed professionals, extension workers etc. engaged in organized and unorganized segments of Agriculture & Allied sectors.

**CEASI is an apex organization of Centres of Excellence in various sub-sectors of agriculture viz.**

- Centre of Excellence for Dairy Skills in India (CEDSI)
- Centre of Excellence for Horticulture Skills in India (CEHSI)
- Centre of Excellence for Farm Mechanization Skills in India (CEFMI)

