



An interactive meeting on
DOUBLING THE INCOME BY 2022: VIEWS OF PROGRESSIVE FARMERS
ICAR-Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes, Hisar, Haryana
20th June, 2017



This interactive meeting was a concerted effort to get the views of progressive farmers hailing from various districts of Haryana and Punjab, having entrepreneurial abilities, excelling in various enterprises. Farmers shared their experiences on the issue and gave their insights, based on their experiences, on doubling the farmer's income for policy formulation. Dr Hema Tripathi, Dr VB

Dixit and Dr Inderjeet Singh organised this meeting in collaboration with Haryana Kisan Ayog. They share their observations here.

CONTEXT

On the call given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India for doubling farmers' income, all organisations related to development of agriculture and allied sectors have put this agenda in focus for meeting the challenge. A number of meetings of policy planners, researchers, development departments and other stakeholders have already been organised to dwell upon the issue through improving productivity, marketing, financing and other related aspects. On the other hand, we do have examples of several progressive farmers who, by themselves, have done well in many spheres of agriculture through scientific inputs, integrated farming, non-conventional farming and innovativeness in their approach. They are earning several times more than their fellow farmers. Therefore, there was need to have a dialogue with such farmers, understand and take into account their perspectives, which may provide some pragmatic insights to address the PM's call.



Another objective was to bring the multiple organisations, which are presently working in isolation in the Government as well as non-Government sectors, on board for better convergence. In this context, a one-day interactive meeting with a selective group of 34 progressive farmers from all

over Haryana was arranged at ICAR-CIRB, Hisar, on 20th June, 2017, to understand their views on the topic, “कैसे बड़े किसान की आय: प्रगतिशील किसानों की राय”. Apart from these progressive farmers, officers from CCS Haryana Agricultural University (CCSHAU), Hisar; Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technology (GJUS&T), Hisar; Lala Lajpat Rai University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (LUVAS); Haryana Kisan Ayog (HKA) and line departments of agriculture were also present in this interaction.

THE PROGRAMME

A one-day interactive meet was organised at ICAR- CIRB in collaboration with HKA under the chairmanship of Prof KP Singh, Vice Chancellor, CCSHAU. Dr Ramesh Kumar Yadav, Chairman, Haryana Kisan Ayog was the Chief Guest of the function. Dr RS Dalal, Member Secretary, HKA; other members from HKA – Dr RS Balyan and Dr Shyam Bhaskar; Dr Inderjeet Singh, Director, ICAR-CIRB; Dr BN Tripathi, Director, ICAR-NRCE; officers from line departments; Dr RS Hudda, Director Extension, HAU; Dr BS Shokand, Director Extension, LUVAS; Dr KK Kundu, Professor, HAU; scientists from ICAR-CIRB and 34 progressive farmers from different districts of Haryana and Punjab participated in the meeting.

The inaugural session

Welcoming the guests with opening remarks on the occasion, Dr Inderjeet Singh mentioned that it is one of the most important priorities of this government to double the income of farmers by 2022. He emphasised the need to have proper enterprise selection, better input usage, better technology adoption with integrated farming as well as group farming with own branding to make notable changes in farmers’ income. He also highlighted the need to sensitise farmers to suitability of crops with respect to region and season, application of fertilisers based on soil testing, better utilisation of farm advisories, adoption of scientific packages of practices, as well as the importance of making wise selling decisions. Dr RS Dalal also expressed his views on the occasion and stressed on establishing more agro processing units and the need for promoting direct selling by the farmers keeping market intermediaries away to reduce the burden of indebtedness.

Technical session and farmers’ remarks

In the first round, farmers briefed the attendees about themselves and their major enterprises. A majority of the farmers were either National, ICAR or State award winners and came from diversified fields such as animal rearing, poultry farming, bee keeping, mushroom cultivation, organic farming, fisheries etc. Most of them were practicing integrated farming system, following the group approach. Thereafter, these farmers articulated their views on the ways and means to enhance the farm income with a focus on their own enterprise. Also various constraints faced by them and strategies to effectively address them were discussed and recorded to make the final recommendations.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthening animal husbandry/dairying sector

- ❖ Livestock championships, milk yield competitions etc. are to be encouraged through better incentives.

- ❖ Farmers should be encouraged to import high quality germplasm of livestock. Feasibility of import of sexed semen and Gir semen from Brazil are to be explored. Also smooth transportation of animal produces should be facilitated.
- ❖ Use of duplicate uncertified semen, and adulteration in milk and milk products should be checked and to be made stringently punishable.
- ❖ Regarding insurance, it was felt that each animal should be assigned a unique ID number. All animals, including pregnant ones, should be insured.
- ❖ The sale price of milk is much lower *vis-a-vis* the input cost and labour. A mechanism was deemed necessary to ensure remunerative prices to the producer.



- ❖ There was an interesting discussion on 'Defining a cow' and the need to conserve indigenous animals was underscored by the participants.
- ❖ Presently there is a requirement of multiple vaccinations at frequent intervals, which also affects the animal production. Therefore, a single livestock vaccine has to be developed to check all the major cattle diseases, which would encourage better adoption of health practices.
- ❖ Properly organised and authorised means of disposing of dead animals should be created in a cluster of villages so that carcasses could be disposed of hygienically while also making recovery of valuable animal parts like hides, bones etc. The progressive farmers felt the need for abattoirs with modern facilities for environmental hygiene and human health.
- ❖ Efforts must be made to reduce the age at first calving to 2 years for cows and 3 years for buffaloes. Also, cows and buffaloes should be made ready for next calving within 12 and 13 months, respectively.

Strengthening crop farming

- ❖ Farmers should be encouraged for seed production instead of normal crop production to fetch better prices and to reduce cost on purchase of seed for their own use.
- ❖ Government should not recommend sale of any variety/hybrid seed for sowing unless it is tested and recommended by state SAU/ICAR.
- ❖ Diversification of agriculture needs to be promoted further for regular income, through integrated units of agriculture, dairy, horticulture and fisheries.
- ❖ Maize crop has high potential in Haryana as it can provide material for feed and poultry industry. So the wheat-paddy or cotton-wheat rotation must be changed with maize, as it can be grown in both the seasons. Also, processing units for maize must be established close to production centres. In *mandis*, where maize arrivals are high, driers should be

established. This would help the farmer fetch better prices for his produce by reducing its moisture content before its sale.

- ❖ Crops should be grown only in those areas where they are well adapted e.g. Bajra should be grown in southern parts of Haryana or areas adjoining Rajasthan. Bajra and maize should be included in the Public Distribution System (PDS) for ensuring better nutritional security to the masses.
- ❖ Crop yield competitions should be encouraged through better incentives. Vegetables, fruits, flowers etc. should also be covered under insurance schemes. Promote organic farming to reduce cost of production, improving the soil health and environment and quality of life.

Strengthening fisheries

- ❖ Lease amount on reservoirs/ponds/wasteland for fisheries should be reduced. Good brooder to provide quality seed for achieving higher fish production and promotion of group approaches by engaging cooperatives/production clusters should be encouraged to reduce the cost of production and transport.
- ❖ Fish-based integrated farming system approach should be taken up in a holistic manner, by moving from single enterprise to multiple enterprises. Fisheries development should encourage construction of ponds, and availability of advance technology for processing/freeze storage of fishes.



Strengthening beekeeping

- ❖ A holistic approach must be taken up for beekeeping with proper policy interventions to promote cultivation of friendly crops which provide more nectar to honeybees. An inventory of all the beekeepers, at state/district/ block level must be made and proper co-ordination with the line departments should be ensured.
- ❖ All the honeybee products (honey, royal jelly, bee venom, wax etc.) should be popularised through advertisements, promotional campaigns, Kisan Melas etc. or through Integrated Bee Keeping Development Centers (I.B.D.C.) centres. This can also be for other agriculture produce and products as well.
- ❖ Consumption of honey and similar products could be promoted by establishing unique selling points like “Pure Honey Hut” of Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ Trials on beekeeping on GM crops should be validated to see if there are any ill effects. According to farmers, Bt cotton and newly developed sunflower hybrids have reduced the bee population. Reasons should be scientifically studied. Insurance coverage for beehives against fire/wind storm etc. is to be provided.

Strengthening post-harvest management

- ❖ Emphasis should be given on post-harvest management of agro produce to have “Zero Discharge Factories”, so that no waste is discharged from the industries.
- ❖ Agri-processing units in the form of hubs for processing of vegetables, fruits, flowers, milk, honey etc. should be promoted in villages. They should have direct access to farmers for procurement. Such hubs will help farmers, get open market access and space in suitable localities including highways.
- ❖ During midday meals in schools, value-added processed products should be served e.g. milk pouches, bajra biscuits/products, cornflakes, soya products etc.
- ❖ Food product testing labs with trained staff for agricultural, dairy and organic products etc. must be established at district levels to check adulteration and maintain safety standards of food products.

Strengthening marketing

- ❖ Regional hubs for specialised, region-specific crops and livestock etc. should be established. Cropping plans should be made as per soil health and water management carried out through micro-irrigation, soil health cards etc.
- ❖ There is a need to establish and made available to farmers farm grocer-type selling booths in the urban centers where the farmers can sell their products.

Strengthening the extension system

- ❖ Farmers should be motivated to form self-help groups/cooperatives/FPOs in different areas of crops, horticulture, dairying, beekeeping, mushroom cultivation, fisheries etc. to fetch better price for their produce by selling directly to the consumers.
- ❖ Trainings need to be organised on regular basis for farmers by various agricultural and allied organisations/departments/institutes in different enterprises to impart skills and enhance their knowledge. Initiatives like *Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav* may be strengthened for the purpose.
- ❖ Efforts are required to enhance farmer-scientist interactions through programmes like Farmers First, Model village development approach and creating awareness about various government schemes by involving the relevant line departments, universities, ICAR institutes etc.
- ❖ Cold storage facilities are to be established in villages for buffering market fluctuations. Post-harvest management also needs to be strengthened on priority.
- ❖ District-wise database of horticulture and specialised crop entrepreneurs, beekeepers, dairy owners, fishery owners may be prepared for policy interventions, institutional support and establishment of agro-processing units.
- ❖ Farmers may be motivated through various awareness programmes to use non-conventional sources of energy such as solar, biogas etc. Similarly agricultural waste management is a big issue in addressing climate change. Use of bio-fertilisers, bio-pesticides and insect biocontrol agents etc. should be encouraged for input cost reduction, environment protection and public health.

Policy-related issues

- ❖ Policy-level interventions are required for control of stray animals. *Bos taurus* and desi cows need to be distinguished in the policy. Recommendations of various advisory bodies

may be considered for taking suitable actions. Agriculture and related departments should be headed by experts from the field of agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, animal husbandry etc. under the State Government.

- ❖ It was felt necessary to define “farmer” and his “income” to address various issues. Identification of farmers should be his proof as producer. Soft agriculture loans for longer durations may be given to farmers based on their repayment capacity. Land, livestock and rural households should be considered as collateral security for agribusiness/related loans.
- ❖ MGNREGA must be linked with productive agricultural activities and industries to combat the adverse effects of non-availability of labour in the agricultural sector during the harvesting season.
- ❖ GST on ghee and packaging material of agro products should be relooked at in the GST policy.



- ❖ Farmers wanted that they should be compensated like industry for cuts in electricity. Farmers’ grievance redressal cells must be formed at state and district levels for timely reporting of the same. There is a need for better coordination among the allied enterprises in agriculture in a complementary manner.
- ❖ Farmer-led innovations may be encouraged by giving grants for research to farmers. To this purpose, an agriculture fund may be established at the state level. Patents of new innovations made by farmers should be filed by the Government rather than individual innovator.
- ❖ Minimum support price (MSP) of the major commodities should be revisited regularly in the view of dynamic input and other costs to be worked out by regional SAUs/ICAR institutes. Farmers felt that SAUs and ICAR institutes should also play a role in deciding the MSP of major commodities. Jobs should be ensured for farmers and their families who are displaced due to industrialisation, development of highways etc. for their livelihood security.
- ❖ Rural/farm women and ex-servicemen should be considered equal to SC category for extending benefits from different schemes.

FINAL REMARKS

The Chairman of the meeting, Professor KP Singh, Vice Chancellor, CCSHAU, Hisar stressed on marketing reforms and MSP reform as need of the hour. Development of solar-driven tube wells should be promoted. He requested farmers to concentrate more on seed production with the concept of whole seed villages to enhance their income instead of regular farming. He said that distribution of soil health cards to farmers, streamlining farm

credit facilities, making efforts for allied activities, use of bio-control methods, bio-pesticides etc. will not only reduce the input cost of farming but also generate additional income. He further emphasised the need to take decisive steps to transform agriculture and other land-based activities using a Natural Resource Management Framework to conserve the natural resources and also to make agriculture more productive to meet the goal of Doubling Farmers' Income by 2022.

Dr RK Yadav felt the need of setting small-scale processing units in the villages. He encouraged conduction of regular *melas* to create interest and urged promotion of farmer-to-farmer extension. He opined that maize and bajra, as the major crops of Haryana, should be incorporated in the public distribution system. He also mentioned to promote maize instead of *kharif* paddy and emphasised on need for post-harvest management. He focused on the need for new approaches and innovations, as well as increasing collaboration between the private sector and other stakeholders in the food system in true convergence mode. Competencies of the diverse organisations would provide a congenial platform for better prices to farmers and an enabling environment that supports innovation and action.

The discussion clearly brought into focus the multifarious information needs of farmers. They want information on animal husbandry, improved varieties of seeds, horticulture, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, post-harvest management etc. Therefore, under the present situation it is not possible by any single agency to fulfill all the extension needs of farmers. There are various agencies, both in public and private sectors, providing extension services in agriculture and allied areas. Convergence of extension efforts at the district level is the need of the hour. The existing extension delivery mechanism in agriculture development sectors may be strengthened by enhancing interdepartmental interfaces, stakeholder workshops, adopting commonly agreed training strategies and collaboration in developing joint actions in field programmes.

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