

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Introduction

The agricultural sector will continue to play an important role in the application of strategies targeted towards a planned socio-economic development of the country. Rapid growth of the agricultural sector, particularly the domestic food production, floriculture and export crop sectors is essential to achieve self reliance at national level, ensure food security and to bring about equity in the distribution of income and wealth for alleviating of poverty.

This document presents the National Agricultural Policy Statements for the Food, Floriculture and Export Agricultural Crop Sectors, with the aim of solving many problems and facilitating their rapid growth. The objectives stipulated in the policies therein have been designed to meet the basic needs of the farming community in terms of food and nutrient security, enhanced employment opportunities and incomes, through the adoption of technically feasible, socially acceptable, economically viable and environmental friendly agricultural production technologies, marketing and related strategies.

National policies relating to other sectors of agriculture, plantations, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry and land use have been formulated by the concerned ministries.

Goals and Objectives

- 1) Increase domestic agricultural production to ensure food and nutrition security of the nation.
- 2) Promote agricultural productivity and ensure sustainable growth.
- 3) Maximize benefits and minimize adverse effects of globalization on domestic and export agriculture.
- 4) Adopt productive farming systems and improved agro-technologies with a view to reduce the unit cost of production and increase profits.
- 5) Apply environmental friendly techniques in agriculture.
- 6) Promote agro-based industries and increase employment opportunities thereof, and,
- 7) Enhance the income and the living standard of farming community.

Policy Statements

1. Promoting Agricultural Production

- 1.1 Implement technically sound, economically viable, environmental friendly and socially acceptable programmes to promote sustainable agricultural development with efficient and effective utilization of resources.
- 1.2 Increase local food supply, employment opportunities, and agricultural exports by emphasizing on cultivation of rice and other field crops, horticultural and floricultural crops, roots and tuberous crops, export agricultural crops, herbal crops, other underutilized crops and bee-keeping.
- 1.3 Increase productivity of water and land by enhancing crop production through the application of sustainable cultivation practices.
- 1.4 Promote good agricultural practices such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Integrated Plant Nutrition Management (IPNM), for sustainable agricultural development.

2. Seeds and Planting Materials

- 2.1 Produce and supply high quality seeds and planting materials of commercial varieties in a competitive environment with participation of the private sector.
- 2.2 Maintain seed security by having buffer stocks of certified seeds of recommended varieties.
- 2.3 Enforce strictly governmental certification and quarantine regulations with regard to seeds and planting materials.
- 2.4 Enact laws to ensure that the seeds and planting materials available in the market are of good quality.

3. Fertilizer and Manures

- 3.1 Promote production and utilization of organic and bio-fertilizers and gradually reduce the use of chemical fertilizers.
- 3.2 Ensure timely availability of inorganic fertilizers and in sufficient quantities, while providing soil and plant testing facilities for their rational use through site specific application.
- 3.3 Promote application of straight fertilizers.
- 3.4 Promote manufacturing fertilizers using locally available raw materials.

4. Pesticides

- 4.1 Minimize the use of synthetic pesticides through promoting bio-pesticides and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- 4.2 Provide adequate institutional and infra-structural facilities to operate pesticide regulatory system effectively in conformity with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- international code of conduct on the distribution and use of pesticides in order to minimize associated health and environmental risks.
- 4.3 Promote the production and use of environmental friendly bio-pesticides with public and private sector participation.
 - 4.4 Strictly adhere to plant protection regulations to prevent alien weeds, insect pests and diseases from entering the country.

5. Agricultural Machinery

- 5.1 Provide low cost, quality machinery by encouraging the public and private sectors to develop and manufacture agricultural machinery, with appropriate technology applicable to the agricultural sector.
- 5.2 Promote mechanization to make agriculture more efficient and cost effective.

6. Irrigation and Water Management

- 6.1 Encourage the use of efficient water management and moisture retention techniques to achieve high productivity in agriculture.
- 6.2 Conserve the existing water resources for sustainable agricultural development.
- 6.3 Improve efficiency of rain-fed agriculture through water harvesting, mulching and other appropriate techniques.
- 6.4 Promote participatory irrigation management in maintaining and improving irrigation and drainage systems.
- 6.5 Safeguard irrigation reservoirs, canals, drainage systems and other structures from damage by natural calamities and usage.

7. Land Use

- 7.1 Adhere to the National Land Use Policy in allocating land for cultivation purposes.
- 7.2 Promote maximum use of degraded, barren, infertile and lands under shifting cultivation (Chena) to ensure higher productivity and idle lands to be used for crop/forest cultivation and animal husbandry.

8. Soil Conservation

- 8.1 Enforce implementation of the provisions of the Soil Conservation Act to ensure proper soil conservation.
- 8.2 Create awareness among the farming communities on the importance of soil conservation for sustainable agricultural development.

9. Agricultural Credit

- 9.1 Strengthen rural credit institutions connected with farmers' investments, savings and risk management.
- 9.2 Introduce simple procedures in providing loan facilities for agricultural activities and agro based industries.
- 9.3 Ensure availability of credit to farmers at concessionary interest rates.
- 9.4 Establish a mandatory share for agricultural credit in the state bank's overall lending for the benefit of the farming communities.

10. Agricultural Insurance

- 10.1 Introduce appropriate agricultural insurance schemes to protect the farmers from the risks associated with natural calamities.

11. Agricultural Research

- 11.1 Focus agricultural research and development on livelihood improvement and poverty alleviation, achieving food security, enhancing agro-based industries and preparing the agricultural sector to face global challenges.
- 11.2 Use cutting edge technologies such as Bio-technology, Geographical Information System (GIS) technology, pre- and post-harvest technology, nanotechnology for efficient agricultural production and environmental conservation.
- 11.3 Promote problem solving collaborative research with the involvement of the private sector, universities, farmer and producers organizations and other relevant partners.
- 11.4 Promote investment by the private sector in agricultural research and development.
- 11.5 Formulate strategies for quick dissemination of research outputs to end users and avoid technology lag.

12. Agricultural Extension and Education

- 12.1 Reorganize and strengthen existing extension system to disseminate innovation and information to the farming community.
- 12.2 Introduce modern Information Communication Technology (ICT) for effective information dissemination to the farming community.
- 12.3 Ensure active participation of farmers and other community based organizations as partners in the dissemination and use of updated technologies through an effective research and extension linkage.
- 12.4 Redesign and modernize the curricula and courses in the schools of agriculture and other

agriculture related training institutes to meet the current and future demands of the agricultural sector.

12.5 Provide opportunities for agricultural scientists and farmers to local trainings and foreign trainings for skills development.

13. Post Harvest Technology

13.1 Develop and popularize better harvesting, processing, value addition, storage and transport methods to minimize pre and post-harvest losses to improve quality to meet domestic and export market demands.

13.2 Enforce sanitary and phytosanitary measures in post harvest processing and value addition of agricultural products.

14. Marketing

14.1 Minimize problems associated with marketing of agricultural products through government intervention as and when necessary for price stabilization.

14.2 Promote private sector investment to improve infrastructure facilities necessary for marketing agricultural products.

14.3 Explore and promote foreign markets for crops with high export potential.

14.4 Encourage product branding, certification and use of geographical indicators for products to enter competitive markets.

14.5 Facilitate marketing information dissemination and marketing operations through the establishment of district level agro enterprise centers.

14.6 Appropriately align the agricultural sector in the current multi and bilateral trade agreements.

14.7 Identify the requirements of agro business enterprises to cater to the needs of small farmers and promote public and private investments in such agro business.

14.8 Promote the involvement of producers in agricultural processing and marketing.

14.9 Strengthen the supply chain management to develop an efficient agricultural marketing system.

15. Agro-based Industries

- 15.1 Promote agro-based industries and product diversification in collaboration with the private sector.

16. Traditional Agricultural Crops and Methodologies

- 16.1 Foster, preserve and disseminate traditional knowledge in agriculture relating to organic farming, pest control, and preservation and processing of food for nutritional and medicinal purposes and facilitate exchange such knowledge among the farming communities.

17. Home Gardening

- 17.1 Promote home gardening and urban agriculture to enhance household nutrition and income.
- 17.2 Promote women's participation in home gardening for enhancing family nutrition.

18. Investment in Agriculture

- 18.1 State to invest adequately on the agricultural sector for its rapid and sustainable growth.
- 18.2 Encourage private sector investments particularly in areas of seed and planting material production, agricultural research and development, human resources development, post-harvest management, marketing, export promotion and agricultural entrepreneurship.

19. Institutional Development

- 19.1 Develop mechanisms for coordination among government and provincial council institutions involved in agriculture and related activities.
- 19.2 Ensure active involvement of all community based organizations (CBO) in agricultural development and strengthen the same.

20. Utilization and Sharing of Plant Genetic Resources

- 20.1 Collect and conserve crop varieties and their wild relatives for future crop breeding and improvement programme.
- 20.2 Develop and maintain diverse farming systems for ex-situ conservation of crop genetic resources.
- 20.3 Use farmer participatory breeding methods for utilization of crop genetic resources.
- 20.4 Adopt suitable strategies to preserve national identity on utilization and sharing of benefits of genetic resources with other countries through international treaties.

21. Youth Involvement in Agriculture

- 21.1 Promote Youth Organizations for active participation of youth in agriculture and related ventures.
- 21.2 Promote high value crops and agro-based small and medium scale industries for enhancing rural employment generation and youth involvement in the sector.
- 21.3 Provide concessions and rewards to young entrepreneurs for promoting agriculture and related industries.

22. Agricultural Exports

- 22.1 Facilitate promoting all forms of agro based exports.
- 22.2 Establish coordination mechanisms among governmental institutions and agriculture producers, marketers and the trade sector, to promote agricultural exports.
- 22.3 Establish food safety and quality assurance mechanisms for crops with export potential that could meet international food safety standards.

