



# MONTHLY POLICY TRACKER FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

## INVESTMENT

- **The Union Agriculture Ministry has approved an annual action plan of Rs 82.50 crore** for the state of Punjab under the National Horticulture Mission in the current financial year to promote 'Agriculture Diversification' programme. Under the plan, funds will be provided for setting up and maintenance of orchards, floriculture, bee-keeping besides installation of community water tanks, green house and cold stores. This will help in motivating farmers to shift from paddy to other less water intensive alternative crops like bee-keeping, mushroom cultivation flowers, fruits and vegetables. The Government of Punjab has already received a grant of Rs 28.50 crore as first instalment of the annual action plan.
- **NABARD has decided to allocate 1,000 crore** as direct finance for cold chain infrastructure in the fisheries sector in Goa. The lack of cold storage units near fishing jetties in the state is a major hurdle for the growth of the sector.

## NEW INITIATIVE

- **A weather-based crop insurance scheme (WBICS)** for this year's Rabi season in Himachal Pradesh has been approved by the Union Agriculture Ministry. The Agriculture Insurance Company (AIC) would be the implementing agency of WBICS in Solan district for tomato while ICICI Lombard GIC will be the implementing agency in Kangra for potato produce.
- **NABARD and Origo Commodities have forged a MoU** that will help farmers in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana State avail themselves of a bridge loan against the agri produce and thereby avoid distress sale. The MoU will enable farmers use the warehousing infrastructure of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS) and also the 100 plus warehouses managed by Origo Commodities across the two States.
- **Farmers of Kancheepuram district have joined hands with Krishi Vigyan Kendra** and formed a Integrated Livestock Producers Association (ILPA), to initiate a revolutionary marketing concept of "Rainbow weekly bazaar" for marketing agricultural and livestock produce. The KVK provides space to the farmers to put up stalls and display their produce and products for sale. A project proposal has been submitted to NABARD for erecting stalls with adequate infrastructure.

## MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE

- **Bihar government has declared a bonus of Rs 300 per quintal** to motivate farmers, ignoring Centre's advisory to states. Earlier the Union Food Ministry has written to the state Governments cautioning that if they announce bonus the Centre would limit its procurement undertaken through FCI and the concerned state governments would have to take care of the surplus paddy procured.

## RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

- **The Government of Madhya Pradesh has declined to give no objection certificate** for field trials of genetically modified seeds of chick pea and mustard in the State due to doubts over adverse impact of those crops on humans, animals, biodiversity and environment. The decision over-rides the permission granted for such trials by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee under the Central Government in August.

## IMPORT

- **The Food Corporation of India (FCI) may soon import rice from Myanmar** to India's north eastern states to meet the requirement in the public distribution system (PDS) in Mizoram and Manipur. The proposal to import rice is mooted due to transportation bottlenecks in the hilly northeast region.
- **India has imported about 12,000 tonnes of wheat from Australia at \$310-\$315 a tonne** as some flour millers and traders find it more economical and convenient to purchase high-protein wheat from overseas. The central state of Madhya Pradesh does produce high-protein wheat, typically used to make pasta and noodles, but high local prices and freight costs encourage millers near India's southern ports to turn to exporters such as Australia.

## SUGAR

- **The Government of Uttar Pradesh** has decided to give tax rebate on purchase of sugarcane for crushing season 2014-15 to ensure better payment of cane price to farmers at the earliest

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