

After Sikkim, organic farming to get a push in other Hill States

OUR BUREAU

Ahmedabad, September 7

Parshottam Rupala, the Union Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, informed that the government is increasingly focusing on organic farming to boost production of nutritionally rich agri produce.

As a part of the government's push, States adjoining the Himalayan range will be encouraged to go all organic, Rupala said, while addressing the Assocham summit on Food Processing, Agriculture and Dairy industry held in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

"This government is open to innovative ideas in food processing. Also, we want to encourage organic way of farming to make our agri produce free from chemicals. All those States adjoining the Himalayan region will be

encouraged to adopt and focus on organic farming on the lines of Sikkim. Sikkim has been a great success and we want to replicate it," said Rupala.

In her speech, Sadhvi Niranjani Jyoti, Union Minister of State for Food Processing Industries, stated that demand for organic food was increasing. "I have visited several countries and found that there is a growing demand for organic food. We have an opportunity there and we should work to tap it," said Jyoti.

Notably, in January 2016,

As a part of the government's push, States adjoining the Himalayan range will be encouraged to go completely organic

Sikkim was declared a fully organic State by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The State contributes about 800,000 tonnes of organic farm produce out of the 1.24-million tonnes of India's total organic production.

The Gujarat government has decided to declare the tribal district of Dangs and nearby talukas of Dharampur and Kaprada in Valsad district and Vansda in Navsari district as 100 per cent organic.

"There is already traditional farming taking place in these regions of South Gujarat. The traditional way of farming is giving them good yields and production without chemicals. This is the reason Gujarat government plans to declare these talukas and Dangs district as fully organic," said Sanjay Prasad, Principal Secretary, Agriculture, Government of Gujarat.

AGRIBUSINESS SUMMIT

Think big, time for small things has passed: Rupala to industries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 7

MINISTER OF State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Parshottam Rupala on Thursday said that there is a need for industries to scale up for future growth, hence a need to think big.

Speaking at the inaugural function of the 11th International Food Processing, Agribusiness, dairy Summit-cum-exhibition, he said, "You have to think about the scale. The time for small things has long passed. You have to bear in mind that the future of the industry is on its scale." The summit organised by ASSOCHAM was largely attended by MSME players operating in the food, agribusiness and dairy sectors.

Rupala said, "If I can give you an instance of a local industry, then in diamond (sector), there were a lot of units in our region (Saurashtra). They started by keeping 10 polishing machines. They used to run very nicely. But, today the diamond units that are employing 5,000 or 10,000 people are running well. This is a by-product of a progressing world and globalisation. If you make five km of very good quality chutney, it will not work. You have to produce a quantity that will fit containers."

Urging the farmers to "get together" he said that 80 per cent of the farmers in the country have



MoS
Agriculture
Parshottam
Rupala

small land holdings which restricts them to traditional crops. "Increase the scale of whatever you produce. Five farmers cannot do anything, but if 100 farmers get together they will have 100 acres of land parcel and they will be able to deliver more," he said.

Rupala said that changes need to be brought in to the agribusiness sector to improve the earnings of the farmers. He said, "To implement a good idea, how much time do we need? We have to implement it in whichever manner possible, even if we have to impose things making them compulsory. Taking a small pox vaccine is not a happy experience for anyone. But it has to be taken. We cannot say that we will wait till a few people in our family get suffer from it. It should not happen like that."

The minister suggested that the agribusiness sector could tap events to increase business. "In our country, events and utsavs are very important. In a single year, such events cater to as many as 25 crore people. We should think about catering at such events," Rupala said.

'Farmers' income will rise if food processing industry grows'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD, SEPTEMBER 7

FARMERS' INCOME will increase if food processing industry grows, said Union Food Processing Industries Minister Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti on Thursday.

"If we have to double farmers' income, we will have to work in the area of food processing," said Sadhvi Jyoti who was here to inaugurate a food processing summit organised by ASSOCHAM. She said her ministry has worked extensively in the direction of encouraging food processing industry, including providing subsidies for setting up cold chains and food parks.

Her government also encouraged small investors to come forward to set up food parks in smaller areas, she said.

Hundred per cent FDI in food processing was also in the direction to ensure that farmers get right price for their produce, she added. The minister also spoke against the use of excessive fertilisers to increase farmers' output.

