GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1303
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 02/08/2024

AGRITECH FOR FRAGMENTED FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN.

1303: DR. FAUZIA KHAN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has acknowledged the potential of AgriTech to address the fragmented farm-to-fork supply chain in the country, especially after the pandemic and traditional supply chain inefficiencies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether specific initiatives and policies have been implemented to support adoption of technology in agriculture like providing incentives for AgriTech Startups and facilitating access to modern inputs and markets for farmers, if so, details thereof; and

(d) whether Government has recognized the need for infrastructure development and investment in digital solutions to address issues like wastage, land utilization, market linkages and credit availability in agricultural sector, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

(SHRI RAMNATH TAKUR)

(a)   to (d): Yes, the government acknowledges the significant potential of the Agri-Tech industry in driving the transformation of food systems and enhancing the efficiency and profitability of small farms. Further, various initiatives and policies have been introduced to promote technological advancements in agriculture, recognizing the role of Agri-Tech in addressing challenges and fostering sustainable agricultural practices. The government has laid the foundation to establish a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for Agriculture, incorporating standardised Registries, Krishi Decision Support System, Agri Data Exchange, Consent Manager, Sand Box and a Unified Farmer Service Interface (UFSI).

DPI provides access to technology and information to the farmers across the country to address the farmer-centric solutions, through various digital initiatives. Under the Agristack DPI, the Government has initiated the development of three core registries; viz. Farmers Registry (Registry of Farmers), Geo-Referenced Village maps (of the Farm land plots) and Crop Sown Registry through the Digital Crop Survey to open up possibilities for developing services and solutions by Private Entrepreneurs.

Further, a component called "Innovation and Agri-Entrepreneurship Development" has been launched under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY-RAFTAAR) in 2018-19 with the objective of promoting innovation and agri-entrepreneurship by providing financial support and nurturing the incubation ecosystem. Under this programme, start-ups are encouraged to use innovative technologies to resolve challenges faced in agriculture and allied sectors. A total of 1176 start-ups have been selected in various areas of agriculture and allied sectors under this programme for providing financial support through Knowledge Partners and Agri Business Incubators appointed by the Department for implementation of this programme.

The Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) has been supporting Agri-based startups under the project called National Agriculture Innovation Fund (NAIF) initiated in year 2016-2017. It has two components viz. (I) Innovation Fund; (II) Incubation Fund and National Coordinating Unit (NCU):

I. Component I: 10 Zonal Technology Management Units and 89 Institute Technology Management Units (ITMUs) established in 99 ICAR institutes provide a single-window mechanism to manage innovations, showcase intellectual assets, and pursue matters related to intellectual property (IP) management and transfer/commercialization of technologies in these institutes.

II. Component II: Agri-business Incubator Centres (ABICs) are set up to speed up the delivery of the new technologies to stake holders. The ABICs are the nodal point to provide the desired link for Agriculture Research &Development (R&D) Institutions for incubation/ commercialization of the validated technologies. So far,50 Agri-Business Incubation Centers have been established and are operational in the ICAR network under the NAIF scheme.

*****