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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5260
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24TH MARCH, 2026

PROMOTION OF NATURAL FARMING

5260. SMT. POONAMBEN HEMATBHAI MAADAM:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has undertaken comprehensive measures to promote natural farming practices across the country, if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether any training programmes are being conducted to promote natural farming practices, including preparation of natural inputs such as Beejamrut, land preparation techniques, pest and disease management and soil health management practices;
(c) if so, the details thereof;
(d) whether any assessment has been conducted regarding the impact of natural farming on soil health, crop yield and farmers' income; and
(e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) to (c): The Union Cabinet approved the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) on 25th November 2024 as a centrally sponsored scheme with an overall outlay of ₹2481 crore. The Mission aims to strengthen agriculture practices with scientifically backed approaches, towards sustainability, climate resilience and safe food. The Mission focuses on improving soil health, restoring ecosystems and reducing input cost to the farmers.

Under the mission, 18,786 clusters have been formed covering 8.80 lakh hectares' area and 18.19 lakh farmers have been enrolled to promote Natural Farming (as on 05.03.2026). An output based incentive of ₹4000/- per acre per year per farmer for 2 years (up to 1 acre per farmer) is provisioned in the scheme for farmers to practice natural farming, training, upkeep of livestock, preparation of natural farming inputs etc. Further, farmers are being supported by a simple certification system for increased market access. Under the implementation of the NMNF, Community Resource Persons (CRPs) such as Krishi Sakhis have been deployed to provide guidance and training support to farmers at the village level. 33,676 CRPs have been trained at Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)/Agricultural Universities (AUs)/local natural farming institutions. Further, a Bio-input Resource Centre (BRC) is a cluster level enterprise that provides ready to use Natural Farming bio-inputs such as Beejamrut, Jeevamrut etc. to local farmers who may not themselves be making on-farm inputs as alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides. BRCs also disseminate knowledge, training and demonstration on these natural farming bio Inputs to farmers.

(d) & (e): Indian Council of Agricultural Research through All India Network on Natural Farming is carrying out research programme with 20 cooperation centres covering 16 States to develop package of practices for Natural Farming. The programme involves 11 State Agricultural Universities, 8 ICAR institutes/centres and 1 deemed to be university. The study shows that the performance of Natural Farming is highly context specific, dependent on the crop, region and perhaps at the transition stage of the soil. Soybean + maize- vegetable pea + coriander (green leaf) recorded mean system yield (Soybean equivalent) of 6475 kg/ha/year at Bajaura (Himachal Pradesh), Almora (Uttarakhand) and Gangtok (Sikkim) under complete natural farming. Yield gain under Natural Farming was 5% over organic farming/integrated crop management.

The research outcome shows measurable improvements in soil health indicators. Over 2–3 years, Natural Farming plots showed rising soil organic carbon (SOC) levels – for example, SOC increased from ~0.90% to 1.15% in Himalayan trials. Natural Farming soils had significantly higher microbial counts and diversity indices than chemical-fed soils. Richer microbial communities (e.g. more beneficial bacteria, fungi, and actinomycetes) and more balanced microbial evenness under Natural Farming was observed, indicating a healthier soil ecosystem developing over time. This boost in soil biota and organic matter under Natural Farming improves nutrient cycling and soil structure, laying the foundation for sustained fertility and yield stability.

Natural farming reduces the input cost of cultivation as it does not use externally purchased chemical inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides, weedicides, etc. (like Urea, Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP), carbofuran, pendimethalin etc). Natural farming inputs are produced on-farm using cow dung, cow urine, plant leaves and household ingredients, which are sourced locally from the field or from within the villages. Reducing costs incurred due to transportation and market price fluctuations is associated with chemical inputs.

The NITI Aayog's final report on "Evaluation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) in Package 1 Agriculture and Allied Sector" indicates that approximately 91.2% of farmers reported that adopting and continuously improving natural farming practices has increased crop productivity and significantly improved soil health. 90.1% of farmers reported that adopting natural farming has reduced input costs (production costs). 68.5% of farmers reported that adopting natural farming has improved soil health.

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