



Seed Connect

The monthly newsletter of Federation of Seed Industry of India

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The Indian farming community is all set to exercise their voting right and be part of the world's largest democratic exercise. The farmer and agriculture related industry hope that the new legislature will move away from current indifference towards a more open, technology driven, futuristic and engaged approach for the sector. Agricultural security is as important as national security for a populous country like India. Currently the farmer faces several issues, which when addressed will benefit agriculture as well as national growth. Foremost being the sustainable management of agricultural industry at holistic and global level. This entails policy making at the national level as per the internal and global trends, therefore agriculture would be best served when brought under the concurrent list.

Our crop yields are quite low compared to other countries and climate change will further impact agricultural productivity to reduce yield by 20 to 30%. We need to adopt modern science and technology like plant breeding, biotechnology and digital technology to improve our seed quality and include farm mechanization to modernize our farming and make agriculture profitable. Profitability enhancement will also require a change in our crop portfolio to optimize for water, climate change, market demand patterns, international stocks and prices and other considerations that need to be supported by the policy makers. Investment in improving rural infrastructure and enterprise including construction of roads, silo-based warehouses, cold storages and a renewable energy plan for villages is also essential for efficient farm and crop management.

One of the key reasons for rural distress is the debt trap of private money lenders, this happens due to inadequate and delayed credit being made available by the banks. Government needs to provide guarantee to the banks for farming loans to enable timely disbursement of reasonable amount. This will reduce NPAs and can replace the current trend of loan waivers. We sincerely hope that all parties will cut across political lines and support these measures which will mitigate the current agricultural distress, benefit our farmers, significantly increase the share of agriculture to our country's GDP and also make our agricultural sector globally competitive.

-Shivendra Bajaj

Seed News in India

[Give shape to plans of experts in agriculture](#)

[Times of India]

SK Chaudhari, assistant director general of soil and Water management at Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, while delivering the keynote address at a workshop on 'Land use optimization for rural livelihood in Vidarbha' organized by City-based Indian Society of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning (ISSLUP) emphasized the need of government to step in and give credence to expert proposals so that farmers may be benefited.

[How India can increase its farm productivity](#)

[Times of India]

Addressing the knowledge gap among smallholders can significantly improve productivity, farmer prosperity, and environmental sustainability all at the same time. The Chinese project showed that addressing the knowledge gap among smallholders can significantly improve productivity, farmer prosperity, and environmental sustainability all at the same time. The secret ingredient, though, was not the science, it was coordinated and consistent action among agricultural players — government, academic institutions, private sector, and farmers.

[Conference on Trait Improvement of Rice through Emerging Technologies Held at KAU](#)

[Krishi Jagran]

Conference on Trait Improvement of Rice through Emerging Technologies Held at KAU. The conference stressed on the need for effective growth and responsible use of new plant breeding technologies to reduce poverty and malnutrition and also to help improve income from farming. The conference was jointly organised by the KAU & SciGenome Research Foundation and was inaugurated by Vice-Chancellor of KAU, R Chandra Babu.

[High temperatures reduce rice, sorghum yield in Karnataka](#)

[Down to Earth]

A recent study reveals that during kharif and rabi seasons the state is exposed to a high number of days when mercury climbs above 33 degrees celsius. The study commissioned by Karnataka Agricultural Price Commission to investigate the impact of exposure to high temperature on crop yields, divided Karnataka into three meteorological sub-divisions — north interior, south and coastal. North Karnataka, in particular, is exposed to a higher number of days hotter than the threshold, found the study that considered rice, sorghum, finger millet, and pigeon pea.

[India allows 650,000 tonnes of pulse imports this fiscal year](#)

[Economic Times]

Two straight years of drought pushed up pulse prices in 2015 and forced New Delhi to allow duty-free imports. But record imports of 6.6 million tonnes in the 2016/17 fiscal year led to a crash in local prices.

[Migrant hands are scripting a veggie success story in Punjab](#)

[Economic Times]

Migrant labourers from outside Punjab, who have taken to vegetable cultivation and now own a chunk of the business in the state have also taken up the responsibility of supplying vegetables to Punjab's households.

[Indian basmati rice industry to clock its highest export ever](#)

[Down to Earth]

The growth has been fuelled by considerable firming up of average realisations, strong demand from Iran and steady increase in paddy prices for three years in a row.

[India's biggest tomato district surrenders to cheap Chinese pulp](#)

[Down to Earth]

Farmers of Chittoor and nearby areas in Andhra Pradesh are struggling to get minimum returns from the crop. Tomato farmers of Chittoor and nearby areas in Andhra Pradesh were very optimistic when the central government hand-picked the district for its One District One Product (ODOP) scheme. The project was announced after Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, in his 2018 Budget speech, said the Centre will support the production, processing and marketing of tomatoes, onions and potatoes. But the current market conditions show there is little reason to be gung-ho about ODOP. Despite government efforts, the state's farmers are struggling to get minimum returns from the crop. Mass-scale dumping of tomato pulp by China has left little room for India's tomato industry to grow. The horticulture department is now encouraging tomato farmers to shift to other crops.

[Needed, a vision document for agriculture](#)

[Hindu Business line]

Charting the course for improving yield, profits and credit flow will go a long way in mitigating agricultural distress. For a country with half the population dependent on agriculture, India does not have a visionary agricultural policy document that charts out the course of action towards food security, farmer welfare, climate-resilient farming, and environment-friendly agriculture.

[Mahindra Samriddhi India Agri Awards 2019](#)

[Krishi Jagran]

Mahindra & Mahindra's Farm Equipment Sector India's tractor manufacturer and a part of the \$20.7 billion Mahindra Group on Monday announced the winners of the Mahindra Samriddhi India Agri Awards MSIAA 2019. Instituted in 2011 the Mahindra Samriddhi India Agri Awards are bestowed upon farmers and institutions to recognize their noteworthy and purposeful contributions in the field of agriculture the backbone of the Indian economy.

[Agritech startup DeHaat raises ₹30 cr led by Omnivore](#)

[Live mint]

DeHaat, an online marketplace for farm products and services, said it has raised ₹30 crore in a funding round led by impact investor Omnivore. US-based agriculture investor AgFunder and several angel investors too participated in the pre-series A round. Owned by Green AgRevolution, DeHaat is a tech-based platform offering agri services to farmers.

[India can't achieve 9-10% GDP growth without agri-revolution: Amitabh Kant](#)

[Money Control]

India can't achieve 9-10% GDP growth without agri-revolution: Amitabh Kant. He also stressed on scrapping Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee and some old laws like Essential commodities Act, which restrict movement of farm produces.

[How Science, Marketing And Technology Lets This Farm Earn Crores From Cauliflower](#)

[The Better India]

With 120 acres, G4 Agri is the largest commercial farm in all of north India to use this kind of precision agriculture. And it provides more than 300 days of employment to over 150 women and ten men from nearby villages.

Seed News Around the World

[Harnessing plant hormones for food security in Africa](#)

[Science Daily]

Striga, also known as purple witchweed, is an invasive parasitic plant that threatens food production in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated to ruin up to 40 per cent of the region's staple crops, the equivalent of \$7-10 billion, putting the livelihoods and food supplies of 300 million people in danger. Scientists have found that they can take advantage of Striga's Achilles' Heel: if it can't find a host plant, it dies. The scientists have developed a technique that has potential to reduce the impact of Striga by more than half, helping to safeguard food supplies and farmers' livelihoods.

[Seeds Inherit Memories from Their Mother](#)

[Science Daily]

Seeds remain in a dormant state as long as environmental conditions are not ideal for germination. The depth of this sleep is inherited from their mother. Researchers reveal how this maternal imprint is transmitted through fragments of 'interfering' RNAs, which inactivate genes, and that a similar mechanism enables to transmit another imprint, that of the temperatures present during the development of the seed. This mechanism allows the seed to optimize the timing of its germination.

[Carrots with Salt Tolerance](#)

[Science Daily]

Salinity stress is considered one of the most important abiotic factors that limits the productivity of crop plants, and the estimated global cost due to salinity is more than \$12 billion annually. This is due to the extensive use of irrigation and high rates of evapotranspiration, which result in increased salt accumulation in the soil. A USDA study has evaluated the response of diverse carrot germplasm to salinity stress, identified salt-tolerant carrot germplasm that may be used by breeders, and defined appropriate screening criteria for assessing salt tolerance in germinating carrot seed.

[Breakthrough in Fight Against Plant Diseases](#)

[Science Daily]

A global research team including scientists from La Trobe University have identified specific locations within plants' chromosomes capable of transferring immunity to their offspring. The findings could lead to new ways of preventing disease in crops -- of great potential benefit to farmers.

[Illinois farmers likely to stay with equal corn-bean split](#)

[Illinois farmers Today]

Corn and beans dominate Iowa acres, dictating farm outlook. Illinois farmers haven't shifted their crop acres much in the past several years. Last year, farmers in the state planted 11 million acres in corn and 10.8 million in soybeans.

Upcoming Events

April 2019

Global Forum for Innovation in Agriculture

Date: April 1-2, 2019

Venue: Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre – ADNEC, Abu Dhabi, UAE

World Biotechnology Conference

Date: April 3 –5, 2019

Venue: Gothenburg, Sweden

International Conference on Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering

Date: April 2-3, 2019

Venue: New York, USA

ISER - 567th International Conference on Agricultural and Biological Science (ICABS)

Date: April 15-16, 2019

Venue: New Delhi, India

International Biotechnology and Research Conference

Date: April 15- 17 2019

Venue: Valencia, Spain

May 2019

International Conference on Plant Physiology and Biotechnology

Date: May 6-7, 2019

Venue: Prague, Czech Republic

Bioassays - Scientific Approaches & Regulatory Strategies

Date: 05-07 May 2019

Venue: Gaithersburg Marriott Washingtonian Center, Gaithersburg, USA

Swiss Biotech Day

Date: 7 May 2019

Venue: Basel, Switzerland

Genome Editing & Co-located Transgenic USA Congress

Date: May 14-15, 2019

Venue: Boston, USA

World Biotechnology Congress

Date: May 20-21, 2019

Venue: Shepton Mallet, UK

CRISPR & Genome Engineering Conference

Date: May 21-23, 2019

Venue: Boston, USA

June 2019

International Conference on Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering (ICABE)

Date: June 5 –6, 2019

Venue: Rome, Italy

Agro Expo Uzbekistan

Date: June 10 –13, 2019

Venue: Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Symposium Plant Breeding and Biotechnology

Date: June 11 –13, 2019

Venue: Wageningen, Netherlands

12th World Congress on Plant Biotechnology & Agricultural

Date: June 12 –13, 2019

Venue: Prague, Czech Republic

International Rapeseed Congress (IRC)

Date: June 16 –19, 2019

Venue: Berlin, Germany

International Symposium on Soil and Plant Analysis (ISSPA)

Date: June 17 –20, 2019

Venue: Wageningen, Netherlands

International Scientific Conference Plant Genetics, Genomics, Bioinformatics and Biotechnology

Date: June 24 –29, 2019

Venue: Novosibirsk, Russia

International Seed Testing Association Congress (ISTA Congress) 32nd edition

Date: June 26-July 3, 2019

Venue: Hyderabad, India

PHOTOSYNTHESIS CONFERENCE 2019

Date: June 30 – July 3, 2019

Venue: Brisbane, Australia