

CEHARVEST

22nd September 2025



ASCI
Agriculture Skill Council of India

CEASI
CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE FOR
AGRICULTURE SKILLS IN INDIA



CEFMI
Centre of Excellence for
Farm Mechanization Skills in India

CEHSI
Centre of Excellence for
Horticulture Skills in India

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Dear Readers,

It is a privilege to reach you through our weekly newsletter, which reflects the pulse of CEASI working under the aegis of ASCI, our collective journey toward skill development and sustainable agriculture. Every story we share here is a testament to the dedication of our teams, partners, and farming communities.

Our mission remains clear: to empower farmers and agri-professionals with the skills, knowledge, and technology they need to thrive in a changing world. By combining innovation with grassroots engagement, we are laying the foundation for a more productive, resilient, and inclusive agricultural sector.

I invite you to read, learn, and actively participate in the opportunities this newsletter presents. Your involvement is what transforms ideas into impact.

Dr. Satender Singh Arya
Chief Executive Officer



Dear Readers,

CEASI weekly newsletter is not only a summary of activities. Rather it is a platform to exchange ideas, celebrate achievements, and strengthen our shared vision for the future of Indian agriculture and its allied sectors like Dairy, Horticulture, Farm Mechanisation, Climate resilience, to name a few. Each edition carries stories of innovation, collaboration, and progress from across the agriculture domain and across geographies.

As we move forward, our focus will continue to be on sharing knowledge, latest developments, building capacity, and sharing success stories at every level from the farmer's field to the policymaker, ensuring that modern tools, techniques, and best practices reach those who need them most.

I agree that this newsletter is at its nascent stage. I encourage the readers and stakeholders to stay engaged with the initiatives, trainings, and updates featured here, and to share the salient achievements and developments that can be published herein. Your ideas for improvement of coverage, publication frequency, new sections to be included and feedback will be of immense importance to make it a model periodical that will provide opportunities to grow stronger and together.

Jaswant Singh Kalsi
Chief Operating Officer

ABOUT CEASI

Who We Are:

“Centre of Excellence for Agriculture Skills in India (CEASI)” is an autonomous organization working under the aegis of “Agriculture Skill Council of India (ASCI)”, which is working under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) for skilling and capacity building of farmers, wage workers, self-employed professionals, extension workers etc. engaged in organized and unorganized segments of Agriculture & Allied sectors.

CEASI is an apex organization of Centres of Excellence in various sub-sectors of agriculture viz.

- Centre of Excellence for Dairy Skills in India (CEDSI)
- Centre of Excellence for Horticulture Skills in India (CEHSI)
- Centre of Excellence for Farm Mechanization Skills in India (CEFMI)
- Centre of Excellence for Climate Resilient Agriculture (CoECRA)
- Centre of Excellence for Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture (CoE-AI)

What We Do:

Skilling & Capacity Building:

Building capacity based on stakeholder needs in agriculture and allied sectors.

Knowledge Management:

Developing QPs, NOS, skill gap reports, and newsletters to support workforce standards.

Research:

Conducting industry research to identify needs and bridge skill gaps as per industry demands.

Advocacy & Advisory Services:

Creating networks to share innovations and address sectoral challenges.

Our Vision

An autonomous institution of excellence committed to developing a highly skilled workforce in agriculture, driving innovation, technological advancement, and sustainable practices to enhance the prosperity and resilience of Indian agriculture.

Our Mission

To emerge as the leading organization for skill development in cutting-edge agricultural practices, both nationally and globally, fostering holistic sector growth through sustainability, profitability, capacity building, knowledge dissemination, policy advocacy, and innovative research.

CEASI's Impact:

CEASI is driving transformative change in Indian agriculture by empowering individuals, enhancing skills, and uplifting communities across the country.

- ▶ 15+ States
- ▶ 15 FPOs Trained & Supported
- ▶ 20,000 Agri / Dairy Professionals Upskilled
- ▶ 5000+ Entrepreneurs Skilled
- ▶ 3000+ Women Empowered
- ▶ 30,000+ Lives Impacted

GST ON FARM MACHINERY REDUCED, GOVERNMENT URGES BENEFITS TO REACH FARMERS



Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan held a meeting in New Delhi with representatives of key farm mechanisation associations to discuss recent reforms in Goods and Services Tax (GST) for agricultural machinery. Associations present included the Tractor and Mechanization Association (TMA), Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers Association (AMMA), All India Combine Manufacturers Association (AICMA), and the Power Tiller Association of India (PTAI). The Minister announced that GST on tractors and other agricultural equipment will be reduced from the existing 12% and 18% to 5%, effective 22 September. This measure, he

noted, will help lower the purchase cost of tractors and implements for farmers. For example, the price of a 35 HP tractor is expected to decline by around ₹41,000, while higher HP models and various machines such as power tillers, seeders, and combines will also become more affordable.

Chouhan urged manufacturers and custom hiring centres to ensure the reduction directly benefits farmers. Industry representatives welcomed the decision and expressed support for strengthening farm mechanisation.

ODISHA TO HOLD 58 FARM MECHANIZATION MELAS TO PROMOTE MODERN FARMING



The Government of Odisha has announced plans to organize 58 Farm Mechanization Melas across the state between November 2025 and January 2026. The events will connect farmers with manufacturers, dealers, and financial institutions to enhance adoption of modern agricultural practices.

The program will include four regional melas in Sonapur, Mayurbhanj, Gajapati, and Nabarangpur, along with 26 district-level and 28 sub-divisional melas. At a recent Farm Machinery Manufacturers Meet, Principal Secretary Dr. Arabinda Kumar Padhee highlighted the state's vision of improving farm

power availability, which reached 2.61 kW/ha in 2024-25, with long-term targets of 3.50 kW/ha by 2036 and 4.50 kW/ha by 2047.

For 2025-26, subsidies worth ₹540 crore have been allocated to support machinery purchases worth ₹1,200 crore. Support ranges from 40% for general farmers to 90% for FRA patta holders. Women SHGs are eligible for up to 75% subsidy.

Digital systems such as Go Sugam, DBT transfers, e-RUPI vouchers, and traceability codes are being introduced to simplify access. Officials urged manufacturers to ensure adequate availability and pass on GST benefits to farmers.

PUNJAB EXPANDS CROP RESIDUE MANAGEMENT EFFORTS TO REDUCE STUBBLE BURNING



The Punjab Government has approved the distribution of 15,613 Crop Residue Management (CRM) machines to farmers as part of its strategy to reduce stubble burning and promote sustainable agriculture. The initiative forms a key component of a ₹500 crore plan led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann and implemented through the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

According to Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian, farmers submitted 42,476 applications for CRM machines, with the Super Seeder being most in demand, followed by the RMB Plough, Mulcher, Zero Till Drill, and Rake. Of the sanctioned

machines, about 9,000 have already been delivered. Farmers are being encouraged to adopt in-situ crop residue management practices to improve soil health and limit air pollution.

Administrative Secretary Dr. Basant Garg reported a 70% reduction in stubble burning incidents last year, with 10,909 cases recorded. Alongside these efforts, the government has also launched Mission Chardikala to support rehabilitation of communities affected by recent floods, where damages are estimated at ₹13,800 crore.

DRONE SPRAYING DEMONSTRATION IN NAYAGARH HIGHLIGHTS PRECISION AGRICULTURE



The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Nayagarh, Odisha, recently organised a large-scale demonstration of drone technology for pesticide spraying, covering nearly six hectares of farmland in Sajjanpada. The initiative, held under the guidance of the state Agriculture Department, showcased how modern tools can be integrated into traditional farming practices.

Officials explained that drones offer several benefits compared to conventional spraying methods. They ensure more uniform distribution of pesticides, reduce the risk of chemical overuse, and cut down significantly on labour requirements. Importantly, the use of

drones also lowers human exposure to hazardous chemicals, addressing a major health concern for agricultural workers.

The technology is being viewed as particularly relevant for small and marginal farmers, who often face rising input costs and shortages of labour during peak seasons. Encouraged by the success of the trial, the Agriculture Department is planning training programs for farmers and field workers. The long-term goal is to expand drone-based applications across districts, promoting efficiency, safety, and sustainability in agriculture.

INDIA TARGETS REDUCTION OF POST-HARVEST LOSSES IN HORTICULTURE TO BELOW 5% BY 2047



New Delhi: The government has set an ambitious goal to bring down post-harvest losses in horticulture to less than 5% by 2047, compared to the current level of nearly 15%. India, the world's second-largest producer of horticultural crops, currently loses about 15 million tonnes of produce annually out of a total output of 365 million tonnes. These losses not only reduce farmer incomes but also affect nutritional security and economic growth. Revised engineering guidelines are being developed with wide stakeholder consultation, alongside efforts to digitise the cold chain infrastructure for nationwide accessibility.

Strengthening cold chain infrastructure has been highlighted as a crucial step in achieving this target. India currently has 32–35 million tonnes of cold storage capacity but requires greater investment in packhouses, ripening chambers, and refrigerated transport to bridge farm-to-market gaps. With the global refrigerated transport and commercial refrigeration markets expected to grow significantly, India's cold chain sector holds immense opportunities for driving farmer prosperity and expanding export potential.

PUSH FOR VEGETABLE CULTIVATION UNDER NADP IN TIRUKKADAIYUR



Mayiladuthurai: The Department of Horticulture is promoting vegetable cultivation under the National Agriculture Development Programme (NADP). Farmers in the region are raising crops such as bottle gourd, ridge gourd, and bitter gourd with support through subsidies, seeds, inputs, and farm tools. The programme covers a wide range of crops including vegetables, fruits, flowers, medicinal plants, and tree species, with the aim of enhancing farm incomes and strengthening the rural economy.

Under the initiative, farmers in Tirukkadaiyur have received traditional vegetable seeds,

organic and bio-inputs, integrated nutrient and pest management support, and implements including spades, wheelbarrows, and soil pans. Inputs worth over ₹80,000 have already been distributed for activities such as seed supply, nutrient management, and organic cultivation. These interventions are designed to improve crop yield, reduce input costs, and ensure better returns, while also motivating more farmers across the district to expand vegetable cultivation.

ODISHA LAUNCHES 15 NEW HORTICULTURAL CROPS, INCLUDING INDIA'S FIRST ROSE APPLE



Bhubaneswar: Odisha has taken a major step in strengthening its agricultural sector with the release of 15 new horticultural crop varieties during a State Seed Sub-Committee meeting. The initiative aims to diversify crop options, enhance farmer incomes, and promote region-specific innovations. The newly introduced varieties include eight from Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology, two from the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute, and five from the Central Horticultural Experiment Station. Among them, the Rose Apple marks India's first release of its kind, adding a new dimension to fruit cultivation. Other highlights include the Kalinga Baby Potato, known for its unique flavour, and Kalinga Black Turmeric, valued for its medicinal properties.

These crop varieties are expected to increase productivity, improve resilience, and meet both domestic and commercial demands. With options spanning vegetables, fruits, tubers, and medicinal plants, the new releases are set to strengthen Odisha's horticultural base. The move also reflects the state's growing leadership in agricultural innovation, ensuring better livelihoods for farmers and expanding opportunities in the agri-value chain.

CLEAN PLANT PROGRAMME TO BOOST INDIA'S HORTICULTURE AND FARMER EMPOWERMENT



New Delhi: The government has approved the Rs 1,765.67 crore Clean Plant Programme (CPP) to strengthen India's horticulture sector and empower farmers by providing virus-free planting material. Supported by a \$98 million Asian Development Bank loan, the initiative focuses on key fruit crops such as grapes, oranges, and pomegranates. Under the programme, nine Clean Plant Centres will be established nationwide, including three in Maharashtra—Pune for grapes, Nagpur for oranges, and Solapur for pomegranates. Large nurseries will receive up to Rs 3 crore, and medium units Rs 1.5 crore, collectively producing 8 crore disease-free seedlings annually.

The CPP aims to increase yields, improve fruit quality, and safeguard small farmers against biotic and abiotic threats. ICAR will oversee technical progress and capacity building, while a national-level laboratory in Pune will conduct research on original plant species. A central CPP website provides updates and resources, and bioinformatics pipelines have been developed to rapidly test and ensure the health of nursery plants, reinforcing the programme's impact on sustainable horticulture in India.

MANIPUR DAIRY REBRANDS UNDER NDDDB MANAGEMENT, EXPANDS PRODUCTS AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS



The dairy sector in Northeast India has gained momentum as the Manipur Milk Producers' Co-operative Union Ltd, now rebranded as Manipur Dairy, unveiled its new identity and product portfolio under the management of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB). The initiative marks a renewed focus on strengthening cooperative dairying and expanding its role in the country's dairy economy.

The rebranding introduced a range of new milk and value-added products, including fortified and probiotic lines. NDDDB also rolled out its Automated Milk Collection System (AMCS) and Dairy ERP platform to improve transparency, traceability, and farmer payments. Additionally, a Bulk Milk Chilling Centre was

established, alongside plans for all-women dairy cooperatives in rural Manipur, supporting women's participation in the sector.

With a cattle population of 2.6 lakh and favourable conditions, Manipur is emerging as a dairy hub. NDDDB has extended financial and technical support through grants, loans, and capacity-building initiatives, with retail expansion through Milk & More outlets also planned.

KDFA HIGHLIGHTS DAIRY FARMERS' CHALLENGES DURING FLOOD ASSESSMENT VISIT



A delegation of the Jammu & Kashmir Dairy Farmers Association (JKDFA) met with the Union Agriculture Minister during his visit to the flood-affected areas of Badyal Brahmana, R.S. Pura, on Friday. The delegation, including Jeet Ram Choudhary (Founder Chairman), Sunil Sharma (President), Davinder Singh (General Secretary), Kulbhushan Khajuria (Chairman, FWC & Member, J&K Kissan Advisory Board), and Dalip Singh (Vice President), provided a detailed briefing on the impact of recent floods and heavy rains on the region's dairy sector.

The JKDFA representatives highlighted major challenges faced by farmers, such as livestock losses, acute fodder shortages, and extensive damage to agricultural infrastructure. During

field discussions, the delegation offered ground-level insights into the sector's pressing issues and emphasized the need for timely relief measures, including emergency fodder supply, compensation for livestock losses, and comprehensive rehabilitation support.

The interaction underscored the importance of coordinated efforts in addressing the immediate needs of flood-affected dairy farmers and ensuring sustainable recovery for the sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

HIMACHAL PRADESH TO APPOINT 1,000 'PASHU MITRAS' FOR ANIMAL HUSBANDRY SERVICES



The Himachal Pradesh government on Saturday launched the Pashu Mitra Policy-2025 to enhance local participation in the animal husbandry sector and improve veterinary healthcare and breed management. Under this initiative, 1,000 young locals will be trained and appointed as pashu mitras in rural areas to act as a bridge between veterinarians and farmers, particularly where veterinary services are located far from villages.

Pashu mitras will work at veterinary institutions on a non-transferable basis, assisting in livestock management, creating awareness about man-animal conflicts, stray cattle, and other local issues. They will receive an honorarium of ₹5,000 per month for a 4-hour

workday.

Eligibility requires candidates to be residents of the gram panchayat or urban local body under the concerned veterinary institution. Responsibilities include handling large animals such as cows, buffaloes, horses, and mules, and managing liquid nitrogen containers of varying capacities for veterinary use. The policy aims to improve animal healthcare, strengthen community involvement, and provide local employment opportunities in the livestock sector.

NATIONAL SEMINAR HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES IN INDIAN DAIRY INDUSTRY



The NDRI Graduates Alumni Association (NGAA), in collaboration with ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), organised the 12th national seminar on "Globalisation of Indian Dairy Industry" at the Dr D Sundaresan Auditorium, NDRI, on Saturday. The event brought together experts to discuss key challenges in dairy production, processing, and marketing.

Padma Bhushan Dr RS Paroda, Chairman of the Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), New Delhi, was the chief guest. Key speakers included Dr HS Oberoi, Director of the National Institute of Food Technology and Entrepreneurship Management, and Dr C

Anandharamakrishnan, CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology, Thiruvananthapuram. In his welcome address, Dr Dheer Singh, Director and Vice-Chancellor of ICAR-NDRI, highlighted the institute's pioneering contributions to the dairy sector.

The seminar saw participation from over 400 delegates and included 'Milkathon 2025', a national-level research and business idea contest for students. Team NDRI won the first prize, while CDFST Raipur received the consolation prize. Dr A. K. Agarwal received the Lifetime Achievement Award, and Dr P. N. Raju was honoured with the Best Teacher Award by NGAA.

ARUNACHAL PUSHES FOR STATE-SPECIFIC AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AND YOUTH TRAINING



Itanagar/New Delhi: Arunachal Pradesh has called for state-specific policy interventions to address the unique physio-geographic and agro-climatic challenges of Himalayan and hilly regions. Proposals include supporting land terracing initiatives for soil and water conservation, expanding cropped areas, and establishing Agricultural Science schools nationwide, modeled on Industrial Training Institutes, to train educated youth in professional farming practices. These measures aim to rejuvenate the farming community and attract younger generations to agriculture.

The national conference on agriculture also outlined strategies for a successful Rabi season,

including a production target of 362.5 million tonnes for 2025-26 and ensuring adequate seed and input availability. The 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' will engage over 2,000 teams of scientists and officials under the 'Lab to Land' initiative, providing timely guidance to farmers. Efforts will focus on boosting pulses and oilseeds productivity, sustaining rice and wheat performance, and curbing counterfeit agro-inputs, reinforcing sustainable and resilient agriculture across India.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE – RABI CAMPAIGN 2025 CONCLUDES IN NEW DELHI



The two-day National Conference on Agriculture – Rabi Campaign 2025 concluded in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare & Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Agriculture Ministers and senior officials from across the country participated in the deliberations, focusing on strategies for strengthening agricultural growth in the upcoming Rabi season.

In his address, the Union Minister stressed that the sale of spurious or substandard fertilizers, seeds, and pesticides would not be tolerated, and informed that stricter laws are being framed to address the issue. He urged States to work in

close coordination to protect farmers from such practices.

Shri Chouhan also highlighted measures to improve the functioning of Kisan Call Centres, ensure timely redressal of farmers' grievances, and expand the coverage of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Emphasizing the role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras and agricultural extension systems, he called for their further strengthening.

The Minister encouraged States to support the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan, beginning 3 October, to advance the vision of taking modern agricultural practices from "Lab to Land."

SHASHWAT MITHAS INITIATIVE SHOWCASES TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE SUGARCANE FARMING IN AYODHYA

Under the Shashwat Mithas initiative, the Centres of Excellence for Agriculture Skills in India (CEASI), in collaboration with UPL SAS Limited, are promoting sustainable sugarcane farming practices in Ayodhya. The program aims to equip farmers with eco-friendly techniques that improve productivity while conserving natural resources and enhancing resilience to climate change.

So far, 500 farmers have been surveyed across 90 unorganized and 3 organized farmer groups to understand existing cultivation practices and identify areas for improvement. Based on these insights, village-level demonstration plots have been set up to showcase best practices in water-use efficiency, soil health management, and the application of organic inputs.

As part of this effort, a Farmers' Field Day was recently organized at one of the model plots, where participating farmers compared outcomes with a control plot. The demonstration of ZEBA technology highlighted significant benefits, including improved crop growth, better soil moisture retention, and reduced irrigation needs. The event witnessed the participation of over 100 farmers, who expressed keen interest in adopting sustainable and water-efficient practices.

Key stakeholders, including UPL, KM Sugar Mills, and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), also joined the program, reinforcing the shared vision of driving ecological sustainability and inclusive growth in the sugarcane sector.



CEFMI PARTNERS WITH EKL CSR FOUNDATION TO STRENGTHEN FPO LEADERSHIP IN HARYANA

The Centre of Excellence for Farm Mechanization Skills in India (CEFMI), in collaboration with Escorts Kubota Limited, is conducting a 3-day residential capacity-building training program for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) at Escorts Kubota Advanced Farming Institute (EKFAI), Kurukshetra, Haryana.

The program, scheduled from 15th to 17th September 2025, is being held in two batches and brings together 75 Board of Directors (BoDs) and CEOs representing 35 FPOs from Madhya Pradesh.

The training has been designed to strengthen organizational governance and structure of FPOs, enhance participants' understanding of farm mechanization, and improve their

knowledge of financing mechanisms for agri-business activities. Special emphasis is being placed on developing leadership skills, fostering better decision-making practices, and promoting sustainable mechanization solutions that directly benefit member farmers.

Through interactive sessions, case studies, and group discussions, the program provides a platform for FPO leaders to exchange experiences, address operational challenges, and explore opportunities for collective growth. The residential format ensures an immersive learning environment, encouraging peer-to-peer learning and collaboration across participating FPOs.



AWARENESS PROGRAM ON QUALITY, HYGIENE & FOOD SAFETY FOR DAIRY AND STREET FOOD STAKEHOLDERS IN ASSAM

The Centre of Excellence for Dairy Skills in India (CEDSI) successfully organized the 2nd batch of its Awareness Program on Quality, Hygiene & Food Safety on 16th September 2025 at its training centre, hosted c/o Directorate of Dairy Development, Khanapara, Assam. The program brought together 30 participants, including traditional sweet makers, members of dairy cooperative societies (DCS), and street food vendors from across Assam.

The sessions were conducted by Dr. Manashi Das, Head of the Food Technology Department at Assam Skill University, who shared her expertise on maintaining high standards in food quality and safety. Participants received practical guidance on implementing hygiene practices,

enhancing the quality of traditional sweets and dairy products, and ensuring safe preparation and handling of street food.

Interactive demonstrations emphasized key aspects such as proper storage, sanitation, and personal hygiene, along with techniques to preserve taste and nutritional value. Attendees gained actionable knowledge to meet regulatory standards and improve consumer trust. Feedback highlighted the relevance of the program in supporting sustainable and safe food practices.

This initiative underscores CEDSI's continued commitment to capacity building and skill development in Assam's dairy and street food sector.





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