

NITI Aayog

Press Release

NITI Aayog Holds a Two-Day National-Level Consultation on Natural Farming

New Delhi: NITI Aayog held a two-day national-level consultation on the ‘Principles and Practices of BPKP (Bhartiya Prakritik Krishi Padhati)-Natural Farming’, chaired by Hon’ble Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, from 29–30 September to foster an exchange of information on the potential and challenges in the adoption of natural farming in India. More than 600 participants—key officials from Central and state agriculture ministries and departments; vice-chancellors and agriculture scientists from SAU’s; subject-matter experts from ICAR; faculty of agriculture universities and institutions; Krishi Vigyan Kendras; ATARI centres; organizations and trusts/NGOs associated with BPKP; farmers’ associations; progressive farmers; and agri-entrepreneurs—attended the virtual consultation. Among international experts were Atul Bagai, FAO, Head of Country Office, UN Environment; Tomio Shichiri, FAO India; Dr Ravi Prabhu, Director, ICRAF and Satya S. Tripathi, UN Assistant Secretary-General, New York.

Representatives from farmers’ organizations—Kamdhenu Trust Jhansi; Krishi Sambridhi Aayog and Lok Bharti Karyalay, UP; Krishi Virasat Mission, Chandigarh; Bharat Krisak Samaj; Bhartiya Kisan Sangh; Haryana Kisan Ayog ; Chetna Vikas Swarajya Trust—as well as progressive farmers from Delhi, Haryana, Gujarat, Chandigarh, MP and UP shared impact and success stories.

While delivering the welcome remarks during the inaugural session, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant spoke about the importance of agriculture in economic development, with special reference to income enhancement of farmers. ‘In order to look forward in terms of sustainability, there is a growing need to emphasize on food security and food supply chain management. Accordingly, focus should be on building a common understanding and workable strategies to push natural farming to maintain the continuity in food supply system,’ he said.

‘In the next five years, 12 lakh hectares will be brought under natural farming,’ said Governor of Gujarat Acharya Devvrat. He mentioned that approximately 1.20 lakh farmers in Gujarat adopted natural farming during the ongoing kharif season and another 5.50 lakh were interested in the practice.

NITI Aayog Member (Agriculture) Prof. Ramesh Chand spoke about India’s journey from a food-deficit to a food-surplus nation and now can adopt an alternative farming system such as

natural farming. The issues related to the creation of a policy environment, product identity, value chain and marketing would be taken care of as a future course of action,' he added.

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar said the Ministry has allocated a budget to promote natural farming. 'Not only that, but proposals on BPKP by Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Chhattisgarh have also been considered and approvals accorded for their implementation,' he added. He also lauded NITI Aayog's efforts to spearhead the implementation of natural farming across the country as it help in doubling farmer's income by reducing cost of production.

Secretary (Agriculture) Sanjay Agarwal said, 'A special window introduced under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojna (PKVY) with a minimum support system (Rs 12,000 for 3 years) has been launched by the government, with a vision of covering 12 lakh ha in 600 major blocks of 2000 hectare in different states. Five states—AP, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and HP—have opted for the scheme and it is estimated that 2.84 lakh ha land will be covered under this practice (2020–21). Land holding as well as tenant farmers can avail the scheme and a special fund has been allocated for community farming practice under agriculture infrastructure development fund.'

The integrated farming system has proved to be a remunerative farming system for raising farmer income, added Atul Chaturvedi, Secretary, AHD.

Participants spoke at length about the initiatives and benefits of natural farming by sharing their administrative and field experiences and suggested ways to take it forward through an efficient supply chain, projecting the demand scenario before farmers, establishing farm-gate infrastructure pools, technology alignment, inducting fair trade practices and reducing the cost of natural produces supply system. Success stories of BPKP, with special reference to Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, UP and Punjab were presented in the consultation. India has unique Natural farming models with potential to improve farmers income, livelihood, food security and environment health, added T. Vijay Kumar, Executive Vice Chairman, APRySS.

The Agenda for Natural farming should be focused on farmers income, environment benefits, consumer awareness- healthy food for all, validated scientific data and policies to become a mass concept, added Sunita Narain, Director General. CSE.

The three technical sessions on national and global perspective; pan India: adoption and success stories; and concluding remarks and way forward was chaired by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr

Rajiv Kumar; NITI Aayog Member (Agriculture) Prof. Ramesh Chand; and Acharya Devvrat, Governor Gujarat.

In his concluding remarks, NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar mentioned about the overwhelming participation in the two-day consultation. Applauding the efforts of the Agriculture Ministry to publicize the beneficial aspects of natural farming, he said, 'Currently the acceptance and adoption of the practice is still in a transitional stage. However, India looks forward to the implementation of natural farming as a *jan andolan*, keeping pace with the science to back it, to emerge as a net agri-exporter.' Dr Rajiv Kumar remembered Swami Vivekananda and emphasized that with potential benefits and support of the government, India will emerge as a leader and set precedence with its natural farming practice. The success stories of the farmers will motivate widespread adoption of the natural farming.

While delivering the welcome remarks on the second day inaugural session, NITI Aayog Additional Secretary Rakesh Sarwal outlined the importance of natural farming, which has the potential to unleash traditional values in Indian agriculture with potential of expansion and pan-India adoption.

During session on the second day of the consultation, Governor of Uttar Pradesh Anandiben Patel said every farmer should be motivated to maintain a farm expenditure logbook. The progress of natural farming is dependent upon the creation of dedicated natural products', marketing network and quality assessment labs.

Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Kailash Choudhary spoke about the need to expand the area under *jaivik kheti* in the backdrop of the covid-19 pandemic. He stressed that the supply of quality seeds and natural farming has the potential to scale down input costs, which will draw the interest of farmers to adopt this practice.

Sh. Kaadsiddeshwar Swami Ji, Kaneri Math, Kohlapur, Maharashtra, said natural farming is required for biodiversity conservation and can emerge as an entrepreneurship model by setting up of local *jaivik* fertilizers factories. This will motivate youth and generate rural employment.

Dissemination on natural farming technology through KVKs and few challenges were highlighted by Dr AK Singh, DDG (Extension). Neeraja, JS (INM) added that there is a need to converge schemes to deploy manpower and hand-holding for implementation of natural farming across different regions.

The three technical sessions on adoption and impact evaluation; farmers' organization, experiences and challenges; and concluding remarks were chaired by NITI Aayog Vice

Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar; NITI Aayog Member (Agriculture) Prof. Ramesh Chand and Kaadsiddeshwar Swami Ji, Kaneri Math, Kohlapur, Maharashtra on 2nd day of consultation.

While delivering the concluding remarks, Dr Vallabhbhai Kathiria appreciated NITI Aayog's efforts and emphasized that the economy should rely on strengthening agriculture and animal husbandry research and development. Reforms in agri education system, technology application and digital platform for marketing, testing facilities, will help in doubling farmers' income. The government should promote schemes to motivate youth and women participation in agriculture.

The forum acknowledged the need for adoption of natural farming as a cost-effective and regenerative agriculture practice. NITI Aayog, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and other allied ministries are committed to provide best practices, scientifically validated, for smooth implementation of natural farming models. State government should take initiatives to adopt BPKP, keeping in view its benefits.

The consultation ended with a vote of thanks by NITI Aayog Senior Adviser Dr Neelam Patel.

Watch the consultation here: <https://youtu.be/6N9vXkZ-8m0>; <https://youtu.be/mrE-Oi0Lqqc>
