

Govt. Gives Approval To The Creation Of Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF)

Syllabus: Storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints

In News

The union government approved the creation of a corpus of Rs. 2000 crore for **Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF)** to be created with NABARD for development and up-gradation of agricultural marketing infrastructure.

Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF)

1. **Upgradation of APMCs and GrAMs:** The fund will provide the States/UTs subsidized loans for development and up-gradation of agricultural marketing infrastructure in 585 Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) and 10,000 Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs).
2. **PPP and other agri-infra projects:** States may also access AMIF for innovative integrated market infrastructure projects including Hub-and-Spoke mode (where centers collect agriculture produce from various farms, consolidate them and send to suitable markets) and in Public Private Partnership mode.
3. **The Scheme is demand driven**, and so its progress is subject to the demands from the States and proposals received from them.

Grameen Agricultural Markets (GrAMs)

- Announced during the Union Budget 2018, Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs) provides farmers facility to make direct sale to consumers and bulk purchasers.
- They are electronically linked to e-NAM portal and exempted from regulations of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs),
- In the first phase, the Centre has identified about 1900 rural haats for modernisation and development of infrastructure through MGNREGA and other Government Schemes by March 2019.
- In total, infrastructure in around 22,000 rural haats will be upgraded and modernised.
- Every complex will have provision for allowing space for small processing units like rice huller plant, small cold store, etc.

Govt Announces Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme

In News

In a bid to reduce farmer's distress, the government, in the Interim Budget 2019, has introduced PM-KISAN, an annual income support scheme for small and marginal farmers.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

- **Eligibility:** PM-KISAN is a structured income support scheme for small and marginal farmers owning less than 2 hectares of land. There are about 12.50 crore small and marginal farmer families in India.
- **Benefits:** It is a direct cash transfer scheme providing Rs. 6,000 per annum, in three equal installments of Rs. 2,000 each. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare will transfer the benefit directly into the accounts of the beneficiaries.

- **Funding:** This programme will entail an annual expenditure of Rs 75,000 crore, and will be fully funded by the Central government.
- **Identifying beneficiaries:** The government has developed a portal for managing the scheme. The States have to upload the data of the beneficiaries on the portal.
- There is no distinction between urban and rural cultivable land under the scheme. Both urban and rural cultivable lands are covered under the scheme, provided that land situated in urban areas is under actual cultivation.

Benefits

- **Augments income of poor farmers:** The average annual income of small and marginal farmers is well below the average income of all farmers. The PM-KISAN scheme provide assured supplemental income to these most vulnerable farmers.
- **Help in input costs:** The scheme helps meet their emergent needs especially before the harvest season, for procuring seeds, fertilizers, equipment etc.
- **Help reduce agricultural indebtedness**
- **Enhance rural consumption**

Shortcomings

- **Inadequate financial support:** PM-KISAN's Rs. 2,000 every four months is not sufficient to remove the stress for even small and marginal farmers. The income support, amounting to Rs. 17 a day for a household, is largely insufficient for even bare minimum sustenance of vulnerable farmers.
- **Land records not proper:** Majority of the States have incomplete tenancy records and land data are not digitised (for instance, in Jharkhand, Bihar, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu). In such states, identification of beneficiaries is a daunting task.
- **Ignores other small farmers:** The scheme ignores many other small farmers like the share-croppers and tenant farmers.
- **No grievance redressal mechanism:** The scheme does not provide a clear design of transfers and a framework for effective grievance redress.

Final Analysis

PM-KISAN is an ambitious scheme that has the potential to deliver significant welfare outcomes. However, a few improvements are needed for it to be successful:

- **Updated and digitized land records:** This is the most important step for a successful identification of beneficiaries and implementation of the scheme.
- **Greater amount of benefits:** To be effective, any cash transfer scheme should ensure that there is enough cash provided to help an affected community. For example, Telangana's **Rythu Bandhu Scheme** (RBS) provides Rs. 4,000 per acre to each farmer in each season.
- **Take inflation into account:** Given the volatile market and price fluctuations in different regions, it is important to index the cash transfers to local inflation.

Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog Annouced

Syllabus: Economics of animal-rearing.

In News

- In the interim budget, the finance minister announced setting up of "Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog" (National Commission for Cows) to upscale sustainable genetic up-gradation of cow resources and to enhance production and productivity of cows.
- The plan falls under **Rashtriya Gokul Mission**:
 - Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) was a Rs 500-crore programme launched in 2014 to conserve and enhance productivity of India's indigenous cattle breed in mission mode, through professional farm management and superior nutrition.
 - RGM is a focused project under the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development during the 12th Five Year Plan.
 - The interim budget increased allocation to Rashtriya Gokul Mission mission to Rs 750 crore for fiscal year 2019-20.

Benefits

- **Development and Conservation of cattle:** The setting up of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog will lead to conservation, protection and development of cattle population in the country including development and conservation of indigenous breeds.
- **Inclusive development:** It will result in increased growth of livestock sector which is more inclusive- benefitting women and small and marginal farmers.
- **Provide policy direction:** The Aayog will be a a high-powered permanent body which will formulate policy and issue directions for scaling up sustainable genetic upgradation of bovine resources.
- **Implementation of cow welfare schemes:** The Aayog will also look after effective implementation of laws and welfare schemes for cows.
- **Collaboration for better research and outcomes:** The Aayog will work in collaboration with Veterinary, Animal Sciences or Agriculture organizations of the Central/State Government engaged in the task of research in the field of breeding and rearing of cow, organic manure, biogas etc.

Final Analysis

Cow is a revered animals for Indians and the majority source of milk and dairy products. At present, India has 33 breeds of cows and 16 breeds of buffaloes. The 2012 livestock census had put the total bovine population (cattle, buffalo, Mithun and Yak) in the country at nearly 300 million. The setting up of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (National Commission for Cows) as a dedicated body ensures focus on conservation, protection and development of cattle population and genetic up-gradation of cow resources. This will help enhance production and productivity of cows providing not only food and nutritional security but also important source of income to millions of poor and vulnerable people in India.