

Proceedings of the Interaction Meeting between the Honorable Chairman, Haryana Farmer's Commission, Dr. R.S. Paroda and farmers of Selected Districts of Haryana

On the eve of the farmer's day at Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Karnal on 08.10.2010, Dr. Paroda had an interaction meeting with the progressive farmers of the selected districts belonging to Karnal, Kurukshetra, Panipat, Jind, Hisar, Sonapat, Rohtak and Sirsa. Besides 60 farmers representatives including few office bearers of the Farmers Clubs, the meeting was attended by all Heads of Divisions of CSSRI, Karnal, OIC RRS, IARI, Karnal, Head, KVK, NDRI Karnal and selected scientists of CSSRI, DWR and IARI regional station Karnal. Dr. J.C. Dagar, Head, SCM Division CSSRI, Karnal welcomed the chairman and participants to the meeting. Dr. S.K. Gupta made a brief mention of the background of this meeting. He informed that the meeting is being organized at the initiative of Dr. Paroda. He is very keen to have first hand information on the problems being faced by the farmers wide ranging recommendations to address the problems being faced by the farmers of the state.

Dr. Paroda in his initial remarks exhorted the farmers to come out openly while discussing their problems. The problems may be of general nature or specific to the districts to which they belong. He said that you may not expect some immediate solution to your problems to emerge from this meeting. All the problems that are raised at this and other forums for similar nature would be liked into and critically examined to arrive at specific recommendations in the commission's report. Besides, pressing problems requiring immediate attention of the Government would be raised during formal discussions by the commission at appropriate levels.

Based on the discussions following important points emerged.

Water Charges

Fish farmers and others who store water in tanks, say farmers pursuing horticulture and/or conjunctive use of saline and fresh water have to pay water charges at the rate fixed for industries. Since it is affecting the net profit of the farming community, the farmers requested the chairman to draw the attention of the government to this issue.

Gypsum Subsidy

It was brought to the notice that gypsum from Rajasthan could be procured at the same rates as are being charged by the organizations in Haryana after subsidy. As such, the relevance of subsidy needs to be looked into.

(Note: The CSSRI enquiries have revealed that the rates are fixed by Rajasthan Mineral Development Corporation for gypsum supplied to Haryana. Private procurement, if made through private firms, might not be of good quality).

Nomenclature of CSR 30 as Basmati

CSR 30 has replaced large basmati areas in the state and is also spreading to other states. On the contrary, farmers are at the mercy of the rice millers who sometime purchase it as basmati while at other time as non-basmati. Therefore, a request was made to get its nomenclature changed to CSR 30-Basmati so that the farmers get the real benefits of the variety.

(Comments : CSSRI has already sent the proposal to relevant quarters)

Nexus between Industry and Aartiyas

The issue was quite seriously debated particularly due to the fact that aartiyas were on strike at the very beginning of the rice procurement season. Since such strikes on the eve of procurement periods have occurred in the past as well, farmers fear that it is due to the nexus between the millers and the aartiyas. Ultimately farmers are the loser. Government should resolve all the differences amongst various stakeholders well in time so that farmers are not inconvenienced on the procurement date and they get the full benefit of their produce.

Subsidy and Custom Hiring Kisoks

The agricultural machinery has become quite costly and new machines going beyond the reach of even the big farmers. Farmers expressed the view that besides appropriate subsidy on the purchase of zero till machines, laser land levelers, rotavators and harvesting machines, farm kiosks or machine banks should be established at village level.

Agricultural Clinics

Agricultural clinics need to be established at village level to guide on the molecules to be used and application technologies for insecticides, pesticides and herbicides. These clinics could also be entrusted with the task of soil and water analysis. Mobile van service for soil and water tests should cater to all areas of the state on regular basis.

Single Window System

A single window system should be established at appropriate level to cater to all the facilities provided by the government to the farmers.

Subsidy on Multi-enterprise Model

Farmers have shown keen interest in the establishment of multi-enterprise model developed by CSSRI and other organizations. However, they expressed that suitable subsidy on the establishment of such models should be granted to expand this technology to poor and marginal farmers.

Subsidy on Underground Pipelines

Subsidy on underground pipe lines is being given in some districts under watershed programmes. In other districts it is not being given. Since water conservation is required every where the subsidy on underground pipe lines should be given in each and every district.

Depleting Water Table

Concern was expressed on the rate of depletion of the water table in many parts of the state. Rainwater harvesting, artificial ground water recharge and other options are available to halt or even revert the depleting water table. For farmers to adopt these technologies, one time subsidy and technical guidance should be made available. For this purpose extension or research organizations in the state could play a very important role.

Organic Farming

In spite of the known advantages and high price of the organically produced food products, it is not becoming popular. A plan may be prepared to make it popular and facilities for certification may be created in each district.

Contract Farming

Although contract farming is getting attention no guidelines have come from the government. As such, farmers are completely dependent on private firms who are exploiting the farming community.

Seed production on contract farming should be encouraged both by private and government organizations.

Payment by Cheque

It should be made mandatory to make all payments through the cheque, be it the produce sold in the market or sugarcane to the factories.

Weather Forecasting

In the fast changing climate scenario, short-term weather forecasting and guidance services should be made available in the state at each district.

Prior Declaration of MSP/Bonus etc.

MSP and bonus etc. on various crops should be declared before sowing of the crop and farmers growing crops and cultivars suitable for export should be given appropriate subsidy.

Veterinary Hospitals

Since the country is going for white revolution, veterinary clinics should be established in each village.

Kisan Advisory Committees

The Haryana Farmers Commission should have its website and establish farmer's advisory committee for each district.

Bank Loan

The bank loan should be made available against the market value of land at an interest rate of 4% per annum.

Electrical Transformers

The state electricity board requires farmers to take responsibility of transformers against any theft or loss. It is a really difficult task as the transformers are located far away from the village. Necessary modifications in these guidelines are needed as farmers have to pay huge amounts even in theft cases..

Besides the maintenance of wires etc, are not done properly by the board causing loss of human and animal lives in many cases.

Bio-drainage/Subsurface Drainage

A large area of the state is under the water logging stress. The subsurface and bio-drainage technology developed by CSSRI have been implemented at few places. These should be replicated in areas affected by water logging and soil salinity.

(Note – Subsurface drainage is now being taken up by the state under the RK VY programme)

KVKs

KVKs should be activated to provide all kinds of guidance to the farmers at their door steps.

Land Revenue Demarcation Stones

The stones put up during consolidation of land holdings have been removed or have been replaced from their original point to some other point during regional development or by the farmers. These should now be put again at appropriate places so that there are no ambiguities in the land areas.

Vegetable Cultivation

Vegetables are good to increase the farmer's income. But the product is perishable and has a short shelf life. Cheap storage facilities at village level are required. Besides, if some price range is fixed it would help the farmers in getting good income for their produce. Post harvest facilities could be established so that excess produce is diverted to post harvest value added products. Such a facility would also provide employment opportunities to village youth who have no other job opportunities.

Diversification

Since large areas of Haryana are part of NCR, there is great potential of high value crops such as vegetable, flowers, baby corn, mushroom and spices provided adequate support through marketing infrastructure is made available to the farming community. Steps in this direction may be taken up to facilitate diversification to these crops.

Loan against Storage

For storage of the food grains, upto 90% advance of the stored value could be made available at village level till the product is disposed off in the market.

Distribution of Improved Breed of Bulls

One of the farmers raised this issue as he said that the current thinking of allocation of bulls to the village Panchayat of selected areas would create several problems. These should be distributed uniformly in the state and their use by the farmers should be transparent.

Agriculture in Education Curricula

Agriculture should be compulsory for school children at secondary and senior secondary level.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Paroda appreciated the overwhelming response from the farming community in raising the issues of concern. He assured that he would try to include most issues raised in the meeting so that some long lasting solutions to these problems emerge.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. P Dey of CSSRI, Karnal