

Make Panchayat a unit for convergence of all agri related activities: Mehta

**Approves action plans for several Central Schemes*

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, June 20: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta today impressed upon the officers of Agriculture Department to make Panchayat a unit of convergence for all agriculture related schemes.

He made these remarks while chairing the State Food Security Mission Executive Committee (SFSMEC) and State Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC) Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) like NFSM, NMAET-ATMA and RKVY.

The meeting was attended by Administrative Secretaries of Agriculture, Finance, Forest, RDD, Tribal Affairs, Planning, Floriculture Departments. Besides the Head of Departments of these departments also participated in the said meeting.

The Jammu based officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

Dr Mehta enjoined upon the all the heads to work towards formulating plans with farmer as main focus. He emphasised on linking all the farmers with experts in Agricultural Universities so that each of them has access to scientific knowledge and expertise and enhance their incomes.

The Chief Secretary further advised the concerned departments to increase their reliability for farmers so that they have a trustworthy relationship with them. He asked them to be available for them on real time basis. He observed that nearly 70% of people are associated with Agriculture in one way or other so this sector deserves due priority.

He directed for making Agriculture Extension Officers readily available to farmers and



Chief Secretary chairing a meeting on Monday.

effective use of Helpline numbers for reaching higher ups by the farmers. He observed that there is no dearth of resources to aid the farmers but proper strategies are needed to benefit them most.

Dr Mehta urged them to aim for increasing the income of farmers manifold. In this direction he asked both the Agriculture Universities to study the pattern of farming in J&K and introduce reforms besides assessing their income. He also took note of delay in providing of solar pumps to the farmers and asked the concerned department to start giving them to farmers from next month.

The Chief Secretary stressed on introducing the concept of AgriStack and digital farming without any loss of time so that the benefits of schemes and plans percolates down to the targeted beneficiaries in timely and effective manner.

The Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture brought forth the need for promotion of secondary agriculture focusing on increasing productivity only. He said that the processing of just 3% of our agriculture produce is not enough to meet the goal of increasing farmers income substantially. He asked for creating more connections between lab and farms so that the future needs of farming in terms of seeds and production are met here.

The Additional Chief

Secretary, Finance assured that all the schemes regarding agriculture promotion needs to accorded. He asked the departments to work for enhancing the expenditure and seeking of more grants by timely utilization of all the released funds. He asked for making plans that are realistic and goal oriented in terms of their outcomes at the end.

The VC, SKUAST Jammu stressed on diversification of crops with focus on One District One Product (ODOP) scheme. He also stated that start ups in agriculture focusing on processing, packaging, marketing and value addition of agricultural produce is the key to turn around the fortunes of farmers. He stressed on decreasing the wastage of agriculture from 30% in the UT to 15% at par to national average.

During the meeting the review of Annual Action Plans (AAP) 2021-22 for National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Mission on Agriculture Extension (NMAET-ATMA), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana was done. In addition the approval of AAP for these central schemes was also given.

Moreover it was revealed that an AAP of Rs 6000 lakhs was recommended under NFSM by the department. It was said that under the plan 23365 quintals of seeds are proposed to be distributed among farmers besides 701 numbers of farm machinery, 600 numbers of borewells, carrying out of 18834 demonstrations and other activities are proposed under it.

Similarly under NMAET-ATMA for 2022-23 action plans to the tune of Rs 2700 lakhs were proposed. It includes training of farmers, formation of 500 Women Food Security Groups, exhibitions and holding of Kisan Goshties.