

Farmers likely to earn 20% higher MSP on organic crop

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NEW DELHI: The Centre is mulling bringing organic produce under the minimum support price (MSP) regime to promote pesticide-free farming in the country. At present, there is no support price for organic produce, except in Sikkim which approved it in May for horticultural items.

The agriculture ministry recently discussed offering 20% higher MSP for organic farm produce over traditional (non-organic) produce and procuring a minimum 10% of organic produce as the way forward to promote pesticide-free and

fertiliser-free farming.

“These options were discussed when state government representatives assembled here for the Rabi (winter-sown) crops conference last month. The ministry made a detailed presentation before them on way forward to promote organic farming and sought their opinion to go ahead with the proposal,” an official who participated in the discussions said.

States with substantial organic farming had pitched for other steps such as geo-tagging of organic area, using specific logo for organic produce (Jaivik Bharat) and issuing unique IDs to farmers to ensure traceability of organic farms.

Besides eight north-eastern states including fully organic Sikkim, 10 other states participated in the discussions and forwarded their suggestions on having MSP and minimum procurement plan for organic produce. Over 23 lakh hectares has so far been brought under certified organic farming across the country.

“I think procurement of organic produce will be very useful. It will help those farmers who end up selling their high quality organic produce as traditional (non-organic) produce in the absence of a market,” farm activist Kavitha Kuruganti of the Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (ASHA) said.

However, she didn’t find the idea of MSP for organic produce encouraging. “It’s a very tricky issue. The MSP mainly covers cost of production. Organic farmers, on the other hand, get price of their produce on quality. Since production cost of organic produce is quite low, the MSP route may not provide them a better price,” Kuruganti said.

She suggested a decentralised procurement mechanism and linking use of organic produce with the mid-day meal and other schemes to help farmers as well as give consumers nutritional security.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/farmers-likely-to-earn-20-higher-msp-on-organic-crop/articleshow/66112956.cms>