

# Agriculture Sector Seeks Building Brands of Its Products Abroad

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- **NDDB seeks higher allocation for Dairy Plan II**
- **Farmer unions want GST exemption on agri inputs**
- **Agro processing for acceleration in depreciation benefit**



## Our Bureau

**New Delhi:** Building brands of Indian agricultural products abroad and giving processing industry benefits equivalent to agriculture top the pre-Budget wish list of agriculture and agro-processing industries.

At a customary pre-Budget meeting with finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) pitched for higher allocation for National Dairy Plan II in the upcoming Budget.

"If the allocation is increased from ₹1 lakh crore and the plan is approved, the milk industry can continue to grow at a healthy rate of 6%," Arun Raste, executive director of NDDB, said. It also sought removal of customs duty of 30% from genetic material that requires to be imported for rearing of bulls.

Farmer unions have sought goods and services tax (GST) exemption on agricultural inputs, a long-term policy for imports and exports, besides removal of commodities like guar and cotton from futures trading on the grounds that they do not benefit farmers or consumers directly.

"Long-term import and export policies will help in avoiding situations like the one we're seeing now with onion prices," said Dinesh Kulkarni, organising secretary of the Bhartiya Kisan Sangh. Farmer unions have asked for speedy implementation of connecting 20,000 markets under the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act, such that farmers can reap benefits faster.

During the meeting, representatives of the agro-processing and rural development sectors also sought acceleration in depreciation benefit to agro-processing industry, revamping of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), encouraging development of farm eco-system services and market intelligence systems, besides further tweaking of e-NAM.

Stakeholders also sought benefits for development of agro-medicinal forestry, fiscal incentives for farmers with primacy to soil health, crop diversification vis-à-vis agro-climatic suitability and revisiting of the Food Security Act.

"Incentives for promotion of organic farming, extending subsidy to the producers of green manure, bio-fertilisers and bio-pesticides and steps for promoting large-scale production of compost by utilisation of urban solid waste were also asked for," said an official.