

# To keep food supply on, farmers seek bailout in Telangana

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HYDERABAD: Farmers are facing hardships due to 21-day nationwide lockdown, said Consortium of Indian Farmers Association (CIFA) on Saturday, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief ministers of all states.

CIFA demanded that government issue a moratorium on loan repayments and interest waiver on crop loans. Farmers are facing problems due to closure of shops, non-availability of pesticides and fertilisers and labour shortage due to barricading of villages.



CIFA general secretary Bojja Dasaradharami Reddy told TOI, “During the lockdown, it is extremely important to ensure that food supplies are maintained, and the population does not become vulnerable to the risk of secondary infections due to malnutrition on account of short supply of food.”

## POLICE DISTRIBUTE ESSENTIALS TO MIGRANTS



## SATELLITE TELECASTS TO HELP STUDENTS

➤ To help students preparing for competitive examinations like EAMCET, NEET and JEE, the state government has started telecasting lessons through T-SAT network channel

➤ The network will be telecasting 500 episodes to help students prepare for exams. The lessons will be telecast until May 3

➤ As per the schedule on the official website, lessons will be telecast round-the-clock, allowing students to study at their convenience

➤ Meanwhile, as part of its Integrated School Programme, CBSE is offering a foundation course for competitive exams through the DIKSHA app and website

➤ Several platforms are providing online classes, but many are charging hefty fees. Through TSAT, my son can download the schedule and attend classes as per his choice and study at his own space  
M Kumari | A PARENT

“We suggest an immediate removal of all village barricades. Most farms require farm labour from neighbouring villages and the barricades prevent the free movement of labour which is effecting the farm operations, such as picking of chillies, vegetables, horticulture crops and other crops which are currently ready for

harvest,” Reddy said.

If prompt action is not taken to address this issue, it is likely that there will be a huge loss of crops on account of the produce not being harvested. The barricades have hindered access to towns in case of health emergencies. The barricades have been installed by local communities either on their own or on instructions of local panchayat authorities or local law enforcement personnel,” Reddy added.

CIFA demand a message be sent that barricading of villages is not permitted unless as a containment strategy on the instructions of the local health authorities in case of a spike in Covid-19 cases.

“The instructions currently issued, while permitting farm operations, are silent with regards to the issue of supply of pesticides and fertilisers to farms. The fertiliser and pesticide shops are being closed by the local law enforcement only to be opened as soon as the police leave. It is necessary to provide clear instruction to the law enforcement authorities so that they do not close down the fertiliser and pesticide shops,” said Dasaradharami Reddy.

CIFA suggested that in order to limit the physical movement of people, the government should make arrangements to deliver the stock from the shop to the farmers on a fixed fee basis based on the delivery distance so as to prevent large scale movement of farmers to the nearby towns. “There is a difficulty in marketing perishable goods such as vegetables due to non-availability of transport. While some states such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have already announced that the produce will be purchased from the villages directly, a comprehensive policy is required to be framed and a system put in place so that the crops do not get damaged waiting for the arrival of the government agencies to procure perishable agri produce and other agri produce at fair prices. The policy may also provide for a redressal mechanism to promptly address any issues which may be faced by the farmers in selling their produce,” he added.

CIFA alleged that farmers are facing a lot of harassment from the local law enforcement personal while transporting labour from the neighbouring villages.

“In recent times, there has been a massive increase in the number of auto rickshaws in rural areas, as they provide last mile connectivity in the most interior villages apart from forming the backbone of labour transport. However, since the lockdown, law enforcement have not been permitting the autos to ply between villages and rightly so, as it is difficult to maintain social distancing norms in an auto . However, there is every need to address the issue of labour shortage and it is suggested that the road transport authorities may operate special buses in rural areas in order to facilitate safe movement of labour to farms,” he said.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative that the government declare a moratorium on the loans disbursed to the farm sector for one crop season similar to the moratorium declared on working capital loans taken by companies, Reddy said.

“It is further requested that the government provide interest free loans for the next crop season in order to facilitate easy access to capital and prevent loan sharks from taking undue advantage of the farmers. Apart from the above, it is requested that the government provide an insurance cover of Rs 50 lakh to each farmer and farm labourer currently risking their life in order to feed the country and treat them on par with our health care professionals,” Reddy concluded.

**Source:** <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/defer-loan-repayment-waive-off-interest/articleshow/74879783.cms>