

FM allocates ₹1.52 lakh cr for agri, allied sectors

AGRI BOOST. Govt to introduce national co-op policy, promote digital infra for farming

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Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday allocated ₹1.52 lakh crore for agriculture and allied sectors in the Budget. Stating that agriculture was a key agenda of the government, she said productivity and resilience will be in focus when formulating policies.

In the next two years, one crore farmers will be initiated into natural farming, she said, adding that the government will support them in matters of certification and branding.

There would also be a comprehensive review of research to develop climate-resilient seeds. As part of the 100-day programme, 109 new seed varieties across 32 field and horticulture crops will soon be released.

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

The new announcements include Jan Samarth-based Kisan Credit Card in five States, finance through



STATUS QUO. The fertilizer subsidy has been maintained at ₹1.64 lakh crore, same as proposed in the interim Budget

Nabard for shrimp farming and export and financial support for setting up a network of nucleus breeding centres for shrimp broodstocks will be provided, she said.

The government will introduce a national cooperation policy for overall development of the country, Sitharaman said.

She said the Centre will promote digital public infrastructure for agriculture in

partnership with States. The details of six crore farmers and their lands will be entered into registries over the next three years, she said, adding that a digital crop survey would be undertaken in 400 districts from the current Kharif season.

The government is taking measures to increase the supply of fruits and vegetables in the market, she said, adding that large-scale vegetable clusters would be de-

veloped closer to major consumption centres. "We will promote Farmer-Producer Organizations (FPOs), co-operatives and start-ups for vegetable supply chains including for collection, storage, and marketing," she said.

Commenting on the Budget, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said not only is there a talk of increasing production, but efforts are also being made in this budget to reduce costs. When the farmer gets a Kisan Credit Card or a cheap loan, the cost of production will be reduced.

Meanwhile, the fertilizer subsidy has been kept at ₹1.64 lakh crore, same as proposed in the interim Budget, though it is lower from ₹1.88 lakh crore in 2023-24 (revised estimate).

The food subsidy has also been set at same ₹2.05 lakh crore as was in the interim Budget, which is lower from the revised estimates of ₹2.12 lakh crore during 2023-24.