

Government to revitalise cooperative sector to combat climate change

KV Kurmanath

New Delhi

The Union government has decided to revitalise the cooperative sector by expanding the scope of Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) as part of mitigating the impact of climate change in rural areas.

Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary of the Union Ministry of Cooperation, presented a compelling case for leveraging cooperatives as vital tools in building climate change resilience in rural India.

Addressing the inaugural of the *businessline's* Agri & Commodity Summit 2025 here on Friday, he outlined various initiatives being taken to revive and strengthen the PACS.

Acknowledging the significant challenges posed by rising temperatures, he said the Ministry of Cooperation is in the process of making two lakh multi-purpose PACS, expanding the traditional role of PACS beyond credit and input supply to include services like common service centres and petrol pumps.

"We are also planning to set up 70,000 grain storage points across the country, with PACS potentially playing a role in their operation. Besides addressing the critical issue of grain storage in rural areas, this initiative would reduce transportation costs and act as procurement centres," he said.

CO-OP BANKS

Stating that the government aims to improve the financial health of PACS, he said cooperation among cooperatives is very important.

This encourages cooperative societies to bank with cooperative banks and their members to open accounts with these banks.

This aims to bolster the financial capacity of cooperative banks to provide loans and credit.

Citing the example of Amul, where it took a loan of ₹600 crore from cooperative banks, he called for a collaborative approach to climate change mitigation. Bhutani said a pilot programme in Gujarat has successfully brought 6,500 new accounts into the cooperative banking system.

He stressed the need for partnerships between govern-



Climate change is impacting all of us. We need to join hands to prepare a collective action to address this challenge

ASHISH KUMAR BHUTANI

Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation

ment, cooperatives, NGOs, and private players to develop and implement effective solutions.

"Climate change is impacting all of us. We need to join hands to prepare a collective action to address this challenge," he said. "The crop insurance scheme covers 40 per cent of farmers. We need to get every single farmer covered under the scheme," he added.

The *businessline* Agri & Commodity Summit 2025 is presented by Nabard and co-powered by Federation of Seed Industry of India (FSSI) in association with Yara.

The Associate Partners are NCDEX, Indofil, Bayer, Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Ltd, Kribhco Agri, NSE, Aqua Group, and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. The Banking Partner is State Bank of India, while the Broadcast Partner is NDTV Profit.