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INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE PULSES PRODUCTION IN INDIA

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Parliament's Monsoon Session". The topic "Parliament's Monsoon Session" has relevance in the Polity section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:

About Adjournment Sine Die?

For Mains:

GS 2: Polity
Highlights from Recent News?
Parliamentary Session Structure?
Major Bills discussed during Session?
Concerns?

Why in the news:

In a written response in the Rajya Sabha, the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare shared significant insights concerning the comprehensive tactics being deployed to enhance the production of pulses in India.

National Food Security Mission (NFSM)-Pulses:

The NFSM-Pulses initiative is a strategic endeavor led by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, covering 28 States and 2 Union Territories, including Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Key Interventions Under NFSM-Pulses:

- **Farmer Assistance:** The program extends support to farmers through States/UTs, encompassing a range of interventions.
- **Demonstration Farms:** Cluster demonstrations are organized to showcase an improved package of practices that enhance productivity.
- **Optimized Cropping Systems:** The initiative promotes efficient cropping systems that maximize yields and sustainability.
- **Seed Focus:** Encouraging the adoption of High Yielding Varieties (HYVs) and hybrids through seed production and distribution.
- **Advanced Farming Tools:** Farmers are equipped with modernized farm machinery, tools, and equipment to increase efficiency.
- **Water Management:** The initiative promotes the use of efficient water application tools for sustainable irrigation practices.
- **Plant Protection Measures:** Implementing effective plant protection strategies to safeguard yields from pests and diseases.

- **Nutrient Management:** Addressing soil health and nutrient balance through the use of soil ameliorants and management practices.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Providing training to farmers on cropping systems and sustainable agricultural practices.
- **Technology Dissemination:** Distributing seed mini-kits of newer pulse varieties and showcasing technological advancements through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs).
- **Seed Hubs:** The creation of 150 Seed Hubs dedicated to pulses has notably enhanced the accessibility of high-quality pulse seeds. These hubs have collaboratively generated more than a lakh quintals of superior pulse seeds since their establishment in the fiscal year 2016-17.

ICAR's Role in Research and Variety Development:

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) plays a crucial role in enhancing pulse crop productivity through focused research efforts:

- **Research Spectrum:** ICAR engages in both basic and strategic research on pulses, exploring innovations to boost yields.
- **Collaborative Research:** Collaborations with State Agricultural Universities help in the application of research findings at the ground level.
- **Customized Varieties:** ICAR's efforts lead to the development of location-specific high-yielding varieties and production packages.
- **Variety Recognition:** Over the span of 2014 to 2023, a total of 343 high-yielding varieties and hybrids of pulses have been officially recognized for commercial cultivation across the country.

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The production of pulses during the last three years and in 2022-23 (as per third advance estimates) are given as under:	
Year	Production (Lakh Tonnes)
2019-20	230.25
2020-21	254.63
2021-22	273.02
2022-23*	275.04
*As per third advance estimates	

Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) Scheme:

Comprehensive Framework: Launched in 2018, the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) Scheme encompasses three essential components:

- **Price Support Scheme (PSS):** This component involves the procurement of pulses from pre-registered farmers at Minimum Support Price (MSP).
  - During the financial year 2021-22, around 30.31 lakh tonnes of pulses were acquired, delivering significant advantages to more than 13 lakh farmers.
  - In the ongoing fiscal year 2022-23 (as of July 2023), around 28.33 lakh tonnes of pulses have been procured, benefitting more than 12 lakh farmers.
- **Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):** This scheme compensates farmers for the difference between the market price and MSP.

- **Private Procurement Stockist Scheme (PPSS):** This component encourages private sector involvement in the procurement process.

Pulses Production in India:

- **Significant Global Role:** India holds a prominent position as the largest producer, consumer, and importer of pulses, contributing to 25% of global production, consuming 27% of global supply, and importing 14%.
- **Contribution to Agriculture:** Pulses cover about 20% of the area under foodgrains and contribute around 7-10% of the total foodgrains production in the country.
- **Seasonal Distribution:**Though pulses are grown in both the Kharif and Rabi seasons, Rabi pulses contribute to more than 60% of the overall production.
- **Top Producing States:** The leading pulses-producing states include Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka.

Importance of increasing production

- **Food Security:** Pulses are an essential source of protein, especially for a predominantly vegetarian country like India. Adequate production ensures a stable supply of protein-rich food, contributing to a balanced and nutritious diet for the population.
- **Nutritional Balance:** Pulses are not only rich in protein but also contain vital nutrients like iron, zinc, and dietary fiber. Increasing production helps address micronutrient deficiencies and contributes to improved overall health.
- **Reducing Imports:** India is a major importer of pulses. Enhancing domestic production can reduce the dependence on imports, making the country more self-reliant and resilient against international market fluctuations.
- **Trade Balance:** By increasing domestic production, India can reduce its trade deficit in the agricultural sector, positively impacting the overall trade balance.
- **Income Generation:** Higher pulses production can lead to increased income for farmers. Pulses are often grown in rotation with other crops, diversifying income sources and enhancing rural livelihoods.
- **Soil Health Improvement:** Pulses have the unique ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen into the soil, enriching its fertility. Increased pulses cultivation can reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers, leading to more sustainable agricultural practices.
- **Crop Diversification:** Focusing on pulses can contribute to crop diversification, which reduces the risks associated with mono-cropping and increases the resilience of farming systems.
- **Water Efficiency:** Many pulses are water-efficient crops, requiring less irrigation than some other crops. Promoting their cultivation can contribute to water conservation, especially in regions facing water scarcity.
- **Climate Resilience:** Pulses are well-suited for diverse agro-climatic conditions. Promoting their cultivation can enhance the resilience of agriculture to changing climate patterns.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Pulses play a role in promoting biodiversity and reducing greenhouse gas emissions due to their nitrogen-fixing capabilities and reduced need for synthetic fertilizers.

SOURCE:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1947893

Q.1 Consider the following statements regarding the production of pulses in India:

1. India is the largest importer of pulses
2. India is the largest producer of pulses
3. India has the highest productivity per unit area of land in pulse production

How many of the above statement/s is/are correct?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None

ANSWER: B

Q.2 In relation to pulse production in India, assess the accuracy of the following statements:

1. Black gram is suitable for cultivation in both kharif and rabi seasons.
2. Green gram constitutes a significant portion of total pulse production.
3. Over the past three decades, kharif pulse production has demonstrated growth, whereas rabi pulse production has witnessed a decline.

Choose the correct statement(s) from the options provided.

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 2 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: A

Q.3 Discuss the significance of enhancing pulses production in India and analyze the key initiatives taken by the government to achieve this objective.

Rishabh