

Asafoetida (Heeng) cultivation

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In news

CSIR-IHBT makes history by introducing asafoetida (Heeng) (*Ferula assa-foetida seed*) cultivation in Indian Himalayan region

About Asafoetida (Heeng)

- With the help of CSIR and Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT) farmers of the remote Lahaul valley in Himachal Pradesh taking up cultivation of *asafoetida* (*Heeng*)
- It will help them to utilize vast expanses of wasteland in the cold desert conditions of the region.
- CSIR-IHBT brought in seeds of asafoetida and developed its agro-technology.
- **Asafoetida is one of the top condiments and is a high-value spice crop in India.**
- India imports about 1200 tonnes of raw asafoetida annually from Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan
- Lack of planting material of *Ferula assa-foetida* plants in India was a major bottleneck in the cultivation of this crop.
- Raw *asafoetida* is extracted from the fleshy roots of *Ferula assa-foetida* as an *oleo-gum* resin.
- Although, there are about 130 species of *Ferula* found in the world, but only *Ferula assa-foetidais* the economically important species used for the production of *asafoetida*.
- In India, we do not have *Ferula assa-foetida*, but other species *Ferula jaeschkeana* is reported from the western Himalaya (Chamba, HP), and *Ferula narthex* from Kashmir

and Ladakh, which are not the species that yield *asafoetida*.

Which is the suitable climate for the plant?

The plant **prefers cold and dry conditions for its growth** and takes approximately five years for the production of *oleo-gum* resin in its roots, therefore cold desert areas of Indian Himalayan region are suitable for cultivation of *asafoetida*.