

Initiatives by Agriculture Mechanization and Technology Division

August 11, 2020

In order to lay special emphasis towards promotion of agricultural mechanization in the country and to bring more inclusiveness, **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)** had been initiated since April 2014. In the year 2020-21, a budget of Rs.1033 crores have been provided for the scheme, out of which Rs. 553 crores have been released to the State Governments.

Agricultural Mechanization

Agricultural Mechanization is one of the key drivers for sustainable development of the agriculture sector which helps in **increasing production by timely farm operations, reducing losses, reducing the cost of operations by ensuring better management of costly inputs.** Mechanization also **enhances the productivity of natural resources and reduces drudgery** associated with various farm operations.

Initiatives

- Paddy straw burning is one of the major problems in the northern region of the country causing environmental pollution. Paddy straw burning is currently practiced on a large scale in Punjab & Haryana to clear the fields for rabi crop sowing because the time window available between the harvesting of paddy crop and the sowing of next crops is very short (2-3 weeks). With an objective to wean away farmers of this region from crop residue burning, the **scheme of CRM (Crop Residue Management)** was initiated since 2018, wherein, **farmers are provided machinery for in-situ management of crop residue through**

establishment of CHCs (Custom Hiring Centres).

Individual farmers are also provided subsidy for procurement of machinery.

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has also developed a **multilingual mobile app “CHC- Farm Machinery”** which connects the farmers with **custom hiring service centers** situated in their locality. This app is facilitating agricultural mechanization in the country by encouraging small & marginal farmers to take machines on rental basis for agriculture practices without them having to purchase the high priced such machines.

Lockdown due to COVID-19 came as a sudden shock for the farming community when the harvesting season for rabi crops had just commenced. **Migration of agricultural labourers to their native places during the lockdown suddenly created a shortage of farm labourers.** To mitigate the effect of shortage of farm labourers and to ensure the timely harvesting of Rabi crops and uninterrupted supply of farm implements and machinery, the following activities in agricultural machinery sector were undertaken:

- Provision in the Government guidelines that farming operations by farmers and farm workers in the field would continue during lock-down.
- Operations of Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) related to farm machinery were relaxed.
- Shops of agricultural machinery and its spare parts (including supply chain) and repairs to remain open.
- **Seamless intra and inter state movement of harvesting and sowing related machines** like combine harvesters and other agriculture/ horticulture implements was ensured.
- Under the Government subsidy programmes, **agricultural manufactures were exempted from essential testing related activities** like, random selection of test samples, subsequent batch testing after the expiry validity of test reports, updating of CMVR, COP & type

approval applicable to tractors, power tillers, combine harvesters and other self-propelled agricultural machinery till 31.12.2020.

- Due to lock-down, closing out of borders and quarantine measures, disrupted the cross border movements of agricultural machines like combine harvesters & other agricultural machines across districts & states. The timely intervention of the M&T division of the ministry and coordination with the state nodal officers of agricultural machineries, district administration and agricultural machinery manufacturers ensured the **free movement of agricultural machines across the borders.**