



India-EU Meet on Agriculture

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Why in News

Recently, a Virtual meeting between **India's Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** and a **Member of the European Commission (EC), Agriculture** was held.

- The strong momentum of the India-European Union (EU) relations especially since the last **India-EU Summit in July, 2020** was acknowledged.
- Earlier, Indian Prime Minister participated in the **India-European Union (EU) Leaders' Meeting**.

Key Points

- **Major Discussions:**

- **EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP):**

- **Launched in 1962**, it is a **partnership between agriculture and society, and between Europe and its farmers.**
- It is a **common policy for all EU countries.** It is managed and funded at European level from the resources of the EU's budget.
- It aims to support farmers, improve agricultural productivity, ensure a stable supply of affordable food, safeguard EU farmers, tackle **climate change** and the sustainable management of natural resources etc.

- **EU Farm to Fork Strategy:**

- It is at the heart of the European Green Deal aiming to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly. It aims to **accelerate transition to a sustainable food system.**



- Reforms were undertaken by the EU in the CAP as well as the **Farm to Fork Strategy** to make agriculture green as well as sustainable.

The EU has also set a **target of bringing 25% of the area in the EU under Organic Farming by 2030.**

- **G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting 2021:**

- It is one of the ministerial meetings organized as part of the **G20** Leaders Summit 2021, which will be hosted by Italy in October 2021.
- It will **focus on three broad, interconnected pillars of action: People, Planet, Prosperity.**
- Both India-EU are looking forward to bilateral cooperation at the summit.

- **United Nations Food System Summit 2021.**
 - The **United Nations (UN)** Secretary General has called for the first ever **UN Food Systems Summit to be held in September 2021** to strategize the actions for positive change in Agri-food systems in the world to realize the vision of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.
 - The EU and India are looking forward to strengthening their cooperation at the summit.
- **India's Stand:**
 - **Dominance of Small Farmers:**

70% of its rural households still depend primarily on agriculture for their livelihood, with **82% of farmers being small and marginal**.
 - **Highlighted the recent initiatives to Increase Farmers Income:**
 - **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund** with a corpus of Rs One Lakh Crore for development of farm gate and agriculture marketing infrastructure in rural areas.
 - **Scheme of formation of 10000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)** to help small and marginal farmers in marketing of agricultural produce.
 - **Explained Steps to Make Agriculture Sustainable and Environment Friendly:**
 - Encouragement of application of **Nano-urea**.
 - **Organic Farming** under the **Pramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana**.
 - **Maximum Residual Limit (MRL) of Tricyclazole:**

Raised the issue of fixing the **Maximum Residual Limit (MRL)** of **Tricyclazole** used in rice crop which has been a concern for India and is **affecting India's Basmati Rice Exports to the EU**.

 - The **MRL** is the **maximum concentration for a pesticide on a crop or food commodity** resulting from the use of pesticide according to Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), which is expressed in ppm.
 - **Tricyclazole** is a fungicide used for the control of rice blast but it is not approved for use in the EU.

European Commission (EC)

- **About:**
 - It is an **executive body of the EU**, responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the EU treaties and managing the day-to-day business of the EU.

The EU is a group of 27 countries that operate as a cohesive economic and political block.
 - The Commission is **divided into departments known as Directorates-General (DGs)** that can be likened to departments or ministries headed by a director-general who is responsible to a commissioner.

- **Structure:**
 - It **operates as a cabinet government**, with 28 members of the Commission. There is one member per member state. These members are proposed by member countries and European Parliament gives final approval to them.
 - **One of the 28 members is the Commission President** proposed by the European Council and **elected by the European Parliament**.

Way Forward

- India can pursue EU countries to **engage in Indo-pacific narrative, geo-economically if not from a security prism**.
It can **mobilise massive economic resources for sustainable development of regional infrastructure**, wield political influence and leverage its significant soft power to shape the Indo-Pacific discourse.
- India and the European Union have been negotiating a free trade deal, but it is pending since 2007.
Therefore, for **closer convergence between India and the EU, both should engage in finalisation of the trade deal as soon as possible**.

Source: PIB