

India to control FMD in cattle

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India is committed to control foot and mouth disease (FMD) in cattle to increase the productivity of the livestock sector. Stating this at the inaugural session of three-day International Conference on Scientific Developments and Technical Challenges in the Progressive Control of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), in New Delhi, Mr Harish Rawat, minister of State for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries, said controlling the disease will help improve the livelihood of small, marginal and resource poor farmers. The minister said that for ensuring the maintenance of disease free status, and to be compatible with the international standards, major health schemes have been initiated to support animal health programs in the states. In order to control the economically important livestock diseases, and to undertake the obligatory functions, related to animal health in the country, the central government is implementing various schemes to control these diseases, Mr Rawat added.

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Noida authority to set up biotech park

A project for setting up a world-class biotech park at Greater Noida has been initiated recently by the Greater Noida Authority. The park is proposed to be spread across 100 acres and would cost around `31 crore. According to the authority, the park will primarily promote projects in healthcare, industrial biotechnology and agricultural biotechnology in the areas of manufacturing as well as research. It will consist of a technology incubator to enable the technopreneurs to develop commercially viable technologies and will have laboratory spaces with all the utilities like gas connection, power and water among others. The tenants will also have access to various common facilities like animal house, green house and common cold storage facility. A bonded warehouse has also been conceived. The park is expected to provide access to some of the India's major research institutes like AIIMS, Center for Biotechnology, National Brain Research Center, ICGB, Tata Energy Research Institute, IIT-Delhi and the Indian Agricultural Research Institute among others.

Green signal for national policy on NDPS

The Union Cabinet approved the national policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) drafted by the

Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue, in consultation with the concerned ministries and agencies of the government and the state governments. The objective of this policy is to keep an eye on legal production, manufacturing, trade and use of NDPS for medical and scientific uses and to maintain balance between supply and demand ratio. The policy attempts to curb the menace of drug abuse and contains provisions for treatment, rehabilitation and social re-integration of victims of drug abuse. Implementation of the provisions of the policy will lead to reduction of crime, improvement in public health and uplifting of the social milieu. The NDPS policy will serve as a guide to various ministries and organizations and re-assert India's commitment to combat drug menace in a holistic manner.

PPP for inclusive growth in agriculture

Globally, there is an increased interest in agricultural research and development because of the food concerns around the globe and escalating food prices. There is a need for consolidation of research programs, development of a long-term human resources plan and public-private partnership to ascertain inclusive growth in agriculture, said Mr Sharad Pawar, minister of Agriculture and Food Processing Industries, Government of India. Speaking at the annual conference of vice chancellors of agricultural universities and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) directors held in New Delhi, Mr Sharad Pawar said the ICAR institutes and state agricultural universities must reinforce the interface mechanism to improve synergy in order to minimize duplication of efforts and lead to judicious use of resources. Mr Pawar called for a demand driven approach to research and development of synergies both between the researchers and between the researcher and the end user. He asked the vice-chancellors who are training the future researchers to see that this aspect of agricultural research is internalized in our students. Conversations should involve a broad array of stakeholders with an interest in undergraduate agriculture education. The minister pointed out that ICAR is devising innovative programs to improve the technology delivery and agricultural education with enhanced emphasis. This would greatly improve the entrepreneurial skills of the agricultural graduates, the minister added.