

Govt promotes organic farming by providing incentives

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Demand for organic food items is on the rise during the last few years. Organic products are costlier in the country due to demand by consumers for chemical residue free food grown by nature friendly methods without the use of synthetic inputs.

Considering the opportunity, government is promoting production of organic crops, fruits and vegetables through various schemes viz National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan States (HMNEH), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Project on Management of Soil Health and Fertility (NPMSHF), National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF), Network Project on Organic Farming under Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and various schemes of Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

India produced around 3.88 million metric tons of certified organic products which includes all varieties of food products namely basmati rice, pulses, honey, tea, spices, coffee, oil seeds, fruits, processed food, cereals, herbal medicines and their value added products. The production is not limited to the edible sector, but also produces organic cotton fiber, garments, cosmetics, functional food products, and body care products.

Currently, India ranks 33rd in terms of total land under organic cultivation and 88th position for agriculture land under organic crops to total farming area. The cultivated land under certification is around 4.43 million hectares (2010-11).

"There is no provision of Minimum Support Price (MSP) in respect of organic farm produce. However, the government is promoting organic farming by providing incentives to cultivators of organic food products under the NHM at Rs 10,000 per hectare for maximum area of four hectare per beneficiary, setting up of vermicompost units at 50 percent of the cost, subject to a maximum of Rs 30,000 per beneficiary and organic farming certification at Rs 5 lakh for group of farmers covering an area of 50 hectare. Assistance for organic food promotion is also available under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) for projects formulated and approved by the state level sanctioning committee," said Mr Tariq Anwar, Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries, Government of India.

India exported 86 items in 2010-11 with the total volume of 69,837 metric tons. The export realization was around \$157.22 million registering a 33 percent growth over the previous year. Organic products are mainly exported to Europe, US, Australia, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, South Africa and Middle East. Oil Crops (except Sesame) leads among the products exported (17966 metric tons).