

Governor holds review meeting with Agriculture Department

Guwahati, July 19: Assam Governor, Gulab Chand Kataria, chaired a meeting with senior officials from the Agriculture Department, along with representatives from various organizations, institutes, and bodies associated with agriculture. The meeting focused on the prevailing agricultural scenario in the state and the initiatives being undertaken to boost this vital sector.

During the meeting, Addl. Chief Secretary of the Agriculture Department, Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, presented an overview of the department's activities. He highlighted the major schemes being implemented in the state, as well as centrally sponsored schemes, including externally aided projects like APART. The presentation also shed light on new initiatives aimed at bolstering agricultural practices in Assam.

A key point of discussion was the implementation and status of the PM-KISAN scheme in the state. Governor Kataria carefully analyzed the presentation with regard to various schemes and recommended linking Aadhar and eKYC to ensure farmers can fully avail the benefits of these initiatives in a time-bound manner.

The Governor also inquired about the progress of schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana (RKVY), Food and Nutrition Security Mission, and National Mission on Edible Oil - Oil Seed (NMEO-OS). Regarding NMEO-OS, Governor Kataria encouraged officials to undertake exposure visits for the farmers to enhance edible oil production through expansion of Palm Oil cultivation.

Acknowledging the efforts of both the State and Central Governments in supporting farmers with various schemes, the Governor reiterated the need of generating awareness to all farmers. He emphasized that it is the department's responsibility to educate farmers about the available welfare schemes and help them reap the benefits.

Governor Kataria expressed a keen interest in promoting natural farming in Assam and inquired about the current scenario in this sector. He also asked the department to seek feedback from farmers to improve the results and effectiveness of the initiatives.

The Governor emphasized the importance of maximizing land usage and suggested measures to encourage multiple cropping by avoiding vacant paddy fields. He urged the Vice-Chancellor of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, to propose innovative solutions to address this issue.

To protect the interests of farmers, Governor Kataria advocated for a standardized pricing system for their produce, ensuring they are not exploited and are duly rewarded for their hard work. In the dairy sector, the Governor recognized Assam's potential and encouraged officials to devise innovative approaches that utilize local breeds of cows for milk production, reducing reliance on imported breeds.

Governor Kataria also took stock of the state's warehouse and cold storage facilities, which play a crucial role in supporting farmers. He emphasized the need to maintain and improve these facilities to prevent farmers from suffering losses due to inadequate storage options.

The Governor also raised concerns about the progress of the Shallow Tube Well project under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), which aims to enhance irrigation potential for small and marginal farmers. He called for concerted efforts to ensure the successful implementation of this project.

Regarding agriculture diversification, the Governor highlighted the suitability of Assam's environment for mushroom cultivation and urged officials to devise strategies to popularize it in the state. Additionally, he emphasized the untapped potential in horticulture and recommended community participation through model farming villages to foster growth in this sector.

Governor Kataria also identified fish hatcheries as a potential source of income and encouraged the department to focus on innovative fish hatchery projects to benefit the youth and overall development of fishery industry.

State Project Director, ARIAS Society, Akash Deep, Director Agriculture, Bhaskar Pegu, Secretary Agriculture Department, Subrata Roy Bardhan, Secretary to the Governor, Swapna Dutta Deka, VC Assam Agricultural University, Dr. Bidyut Chandra Deka, and a host of senior officials from Agriculture Department and Raj Bhavan were present in the meeting.

P.R.O.

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