



JAMMU, APRIL 28: Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture Production and Farmers' Welfare, Navin Kumar Choudhary, today convened an online meeting to review preparation for the upcoming Kharif season here today.

Principal Secretary sought details about wheat procurement and functioning of government mandis established in the UT. He directed the respective officers to ensure that farmers receive payment, through direct bank transfer only, against their produce within a period of five days. Regarding promotion of sale and procurement of maize crop, Principal Secretary asked the Agriculture Department to establish experimental maize mandies one each in Rajouri-Poonch and Ramban-Doda in Jammu region.

Reviewing progress on seed distribution by the department, Navin Choudhary emphasized the need to further streamline working of departmental agriculture farms to meet much of the domestic seed requirement. He directed the department to evolve an effective strategy to increase production of the farms by 50 percent during the year 2021-22. He also asked the Directors and Joint Directors to review one agriculture farm every month spending 'one entire day every quarter' at these farms to ensure the production here increases manifold.

While discussing fertilizer consumption and requirement of the Union Territory, Principal Secretary highlighted the need to cut dependence on chemical fertilizers and shift towards sustainable alternates like organic fertilizers and vermi-compost. 'Increasing dependence on chemical fertilizers is a disaster in making', he added and called for a well planned strategy from both Directors for promotion of organic fertilizers, vermi-compost and other sustainable alternates.

Regarding farm mechanization, Navin Choudhary maintained that subsidies would be provided for major agricultural implements only and directed the Directors to prepare a subsidy-structure list. Principal Secretary laid stress on increasing production of spices and cash crops in J&K and called for substantial increase in production of turmeric, chillies, aloe vera, lavender and other medicinal plants. He also directed the department to eliminate 'monkey menace' from at least 50 panchayats this year.

The meeting was attended by Director Agriculture Jammu, KK Sharma; Director Agriculture Kashmir, Mohammad Iqbal Choudhary and Joint Directors Agriculture from Jammu and Kashmir divisions.