

AMID PROTESTS, CENTRE HIKES MSP FOR RABI CROPS

Relevant for: Economy | Topic: Issues related to direct & indirect Farm Subsidies and MSP

The unions are now in the tenth month of protest against the three farm reform laws, which they claim will hurt the MSP regime, and have also demanded a legal guarantee for MSP.

The Agriculture Minister, in a statement, said, "Some people who are spreading the illusion that MSP will be abolished should also learn from this decision. After the passage of the new agricultural reform laws, not only have the rates of MSP increased but there has also been a continuous increase in the procurement by the government."

According to the Centre, the cost of production of wheat for the upcoming marketing season of 2022-23 is Rs. 1,008 per quintal, meaning that the new MSP of Rs. 2,015 will result in 100% returns. Rapeseed and mustard farmers, who saw MSP rise 8.6%, or Rs. 400 per quintal, to a rate of Rs. 5,050 per quintal can also expect 100% returns. Masoor dal also saw a Rs. 400 per quintal hike, which means MSP for the lentil will be 7.8% higher than last year, with 79% returns over the cost of production. Chana or gram saw a 2.5% hike in MSP, resulting in 74% returns.

Mr. Tomar said the government had decided to fix the MSPs of all kharif and rabi crops at least 1.5 times more than their production cost and this has helped in enhancing the farmers' income.

The Centre's decision to procure pulses and oilseeds apart from wheat and paddy is also benefitting farmers, he added. "The expected returns to farmers over their cost of production are estimated to be highest in case of wheat and mustard seed (100% each), followed by lentil (79%), gram (74%); barley (60%) and safflower (50%)," an official statement said.

The government also said that concerted efforts were made over the past few years to realign the MSPs in favour of oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals to encourage farmers to shift to a larger area under these crops and adopt best technologies and farm practices to correct the demand-supply imbalance.

BKS welcomes hikes

The RSS-affiliated farm union Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), which held a nationwide agitation on Wednesday, welcomed the MSP hikes, but pointed out that most farmers would not get the benefits as they were still unable to sell their crops at that rate.

"We welcome this attempt to diversify crops and encourage pulses and oilseeds like masoor and sarson (mustard). The water and labour costs are lower for these crops, and since the MSP has been increased, profits should be higher for farmers," said Badrinarayan Chaudhary, general secretary of the BKS. "Our *andolan* remains because the government does not procure crops from all farmers. We still want a law which will guarantee remunerative prices for all," he added.

(With PTI inputs)

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