

CAPT AMARINDER ORDERS FORMULATION OF COMPREHENSIVE CROP DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY

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DIRECTS DETAILED REVIEW OF ALL AGRICULTURE REFORM SCHEMES IN PUNJAB

Chandigarh, July 30: Pushing forward his agenda for crop diversification to end the vicious wheat-paddy cycle and save the depleting ground water in the state, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday asked the State Planning Board to chalk out a comprehensive crop diversification model.

The Board has also been directed to undertake a detailed review of the various schemes of the Agriculture Department to bring in the much-needed reforms in the sector.

Chairing an interactive session with the members of the Board constituted to suggest measures to initiate changes in the agriculture pattern, Captain Amarinder also directed the Planning Department to set up a centralised Data Analysis and Monitoring division for collation of all data related to the various agricultural schemes in the state. This would help in ensuring quality policy and decision making, besides ensuring concurrent monitoring and end-of-project evaluation of all Government welfare schemes, he added.

Expressing concern over the fast depleting water table, Captain Amarinder underlined the need to prioritise less water consuming crops, beginning with Maize, Cotton and Sugarcane. He asked the Board to come up with a strategy to persuade the farmers to shift to these crops, from the traditional wheat and paddy.

The Chief Minister asked the Board members to review the working of the Bureau of Agriculture Extension Services to aggressively disseminate crop knowledge and information amongst farmers, to guide them regarding timing and application of pesticides etc.

Stressing on the need to evolve a futuristic marketing strategy for Agri produce, Captain Amarinder sought suggestions on the same, so as to enable setting up of a common digital platform to ensure remunerative price for farm produce.

Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal suggested a ban on cultivation of paddy on Panchayat land auctioned for agricultural purposes.

Vice Chairman Planning Board Rajinder Gupta suggested more focus on standardisation of the produce, to make it more competitive in the international market.

Chairman Farmers Commission Ajay Vir Jakhar underlined the need to give more powers to MARKFED and PUNJAB AGRO to push marketing of fresh vegetable produce.

KVS Sidhu of Patiala Horticulture mooted rationalisation of farm subsidies to ensure equitable allocation of state resources for Agriculture development.

The meeting was also attended by Chief Principal Secretary to CM Suresh Kumar, Chief Secretary

Karan Avtar Singh, Principal Secretary Finance Anirudh Tewari, Principal Secretary Planning Jaspal Singh, Principal Secretary to CM Tejveer Singh and Vice Chairpersons Punjab State Planning Board Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, and Amrit Sagar Mittal, besides members Bhavdeep Sardana, Bhagwant Singh, and VC PAU Dr. Baldev Singh Dhillon.
