

NSAI NEWSLETTER

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NSAI SECRETARIAT

- Y. R. Meena
- R.K.Tripathi
- Yashpal Saini
- Deepanker Pandey
- Pramod Sharma
- Aashima Batheja
- Celeste Varghese

Meeting of NSAI Officers with Dr. Kirori Lal Meena, Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Rajasthan on 3rd May 2025

Dr. Y.R. Meena, Executive Director, along with Dr. Deepanker Pandey met Dr. Kirodi Lal Meena, the Hon'ble Agriculture Minister, Government of Rajasthan on 3rd May 2025 at Jaipur, Rajasthan. The meeting was attended by Mr. Satish Bhardwaj, General Manager, NSL; Mr. H.N. Senapati, Deputy General Manager, Krishidhan Seeds and Mr. Purushottam Saini, Regional Business Manager, MAHYCO as representatives of the seed industry.

At the outset, Dr. Y.R. Meena presented the key issues before the Agriculture Minister. He provided a detailed explanation of the matters at hand, referring previous meetings and relevant background information to ensure clarity. In response, the Hon'ble Minister took keen interest in the discussion and raised several queries, which Dr. Y.R. Meena promptly addressed. Mr. Sanjay Sharma, Officer on Special Duty to the Agriculture Minister, informed us that certain Bt cotton varieties had been banned last year in the interest of farmers due to failure in germination tests.

Dr. Deepanker Pandey clarified that the ban on the sale of Bt cotton varieties due to the failure of a single seed lot would contravene existing legal provisions. He emphasized that restrictions should apply only to the specific compliant lot.

Industry representatives highlighted that all seed material released into the market undergoes stringent quality checks. They also noted that no complaints had been received from farmers regarding these seed varieties during the relevant season. The Hon'ble Minister took serious note of the matter and directed the concerned officials to resolve the issue at the earliest. He emphasized that swift action is necessary to uphold farmer's interests.

NSAI Celebrates its 18th Foundation Day on 8th May 2025 in the Secretariate Office of the NSAI at Surya Kiran Building, 19 KG marg, New Delhi



Team NSAI celebrated its 18th Foundation Day on 8th May 2025 in the Secretariate Office of the NSAI at Surya Kiran Building, 19 KG Marg, New Delhi. On this occasion the entire team at NSAI extends its warm and heartfelt greetings to all stakeholders of the Seed Industry. On this occasion the team also expressed its sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for all the hon'ble member's unwavering support and cooperation throughout the NSAI journey.

He informed that suggestions of NSAI already received on the new Seed Bill have been considered and accordingly the document was being finalized and then after the consultations with the different stakeholder shall be held. He also assured us to update about the further progress in the matter.

ED and Dir (Tech) met Dr. D.K. Srivastava, Dy. Commissioner QC and requested him to reconsider the recent circular on provision of package of practices along with the Bt cotton seed packets in the form of QR code and pre-printed leaflets.

They also suggested him that instructions should have been either for printed leaflets or QR code as per the convenience of the industry and not both. He appreciated NSAI concerns and expressed that if they receive any further representation, they will look into it. Hence, it was decided that a fresh representation on the provision of QR code/printed leaflets with the seed packets will be submitted for their reconsideration.

Meeting for onboarding TL seed module/research varieties over SATHI Portal held on May 26, 2025 at Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi

Dr. Y.R. Meena, ED and Dr. R.K. Tripathi, Director (Technical), NSAI along with Mr. Dinesh bhai Patel, Vice President, Mr. Vaibhav R Kashikar, Treasurer, Mr. Chunduri Ram Babu, GC member, Mr. Maruthi Prasad, NSL and Mr. Jatin Kansal from Kohinoor Seeds participated in the meeting on integration of TL Seeds with SATHI portal chaired by Joint Secretary (Seeds) at Krishi Bhawan. The meeting was also attended by DC (QC), Seed Division, Officers from NIC and FSII representatives. After initial introduction by JS and brief presentation by DC (QC), JS wanted to know about the difficulties faced by seed companies in implementing the TL seed integration with the SATHI portal.

The companies equivocally expressed that their confidentiality of data, commercial interests and IPR needs to be protected through the SATHI portal. The major concern was about mentioning the name of the producer, details of the location of the seed production, capturing the cost details concerning distributors and dealers and invoicing for the retail sale of seeds produced by the seed companies. JS agreed that they may make some provisions to mask the name of the farmer producer as well as the location of the production area which will not be shown on the QR code, just mentioning these fields as verified.

JS also agreed that details of pricing for distributor/dealer need not be captured and only retail sale invoicing can be integrated with the portal. JS also assured that the confidentiality of the data shall be the prime responsibility of the government and it was never intending to infringe into the confidentiality of the companies. It was also indicated that subsequently the QR code of the POPs would also be integrated with the Sathi portal QR. However, the companies may continue to place their own QR for company specific information. Representative from East West Seeds also indicated that there were difficulties in placing the QR code on the tags inviting some objections from the seed inspectors. JS also assured that he will look into the prescribed sizes of the seed tags and ensure that there is no difficulty in putting the QR codes on the Tags.

It was also agreed that in case of some companies which have already got their system computerized, their data could be migrated on the SATHI portal through the APIs. For this they will be happy to work out the required protocols. It was further suggested that the PPV&FRA registration number may also be added on the SATHI portal as an additional information, as requested by Mr. Nitin Joshi from Corteva seeds.

The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair and other participants and with the request to all the participants to communicate their concerns and objections on the TL integration with SATHI portal to the Seed Division so that the same may be considered while finalizing the SATHI portal with respect to TL seeds.

Seed Industry Updates

India Becomes First Country to Launch Genome-Edited Rice Varieties Using CRISPR-Cas

India has become the first country in the world to launch genome-edited rice varieties using CRISPR-Cas technology, marking a significant milestone in agricultural biotechnology. On May 4, 2025, Union Agriculture Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan unveiled DRR Rice 100 (Kamala) and Pusa DST Rice 1 at the Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam Auditorium in New Delhi. Developed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), these rice varieties promise enhanced climate resilience, higher yields, and sustainable farming practices.

DRR Rice 100, created by ICAR-IIRR and derived from Samba Mahsuri, offers 19% higher yield, tolerance to drought and salinity, a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and substantial water savings. Meanwhile, Pusa DST Rice 1, developed by ICAR-IARI, shows yield improvements up to 30.4% in saline and alkaline soils, with the potential for a 20% boost in production. This scientific breakthrough is expected to revolutionize rice cultivation in India and beyond.



Maharashtra Leads in Seed Value Chain Digitization via SATHI Portal

In a landmark development for Indian agriculture, Maharashtra has become the first state to make available complete information in seed value chain on the SATHI portal (Seed Authentication, Traceability and Holistic Inventory). This milestone is part of a broader initiative by the Indian government to digitize the seed production and distribution process across the country.

The seed value chain encompasses all stages from breeder seeds to foundation seeds to certified seeds, and finally to the distribution level. The SATHI portal enables real-time traceability and verification of seed quality and origin under the supervision of State Seed Certification Agencies (SSCAs).

BASF introduces indigenous crop protection solutions for global rice growers

BASF has launched **Valexio** insecticide and **Mibelya** fungicide, developed in India to help rice growers at global level in achieving higher yields and improved crop quality. Giridhar Ranuva, Business Director (Agricultural Solutions), BASF said that the products address major threats to rice crops, including sheath blight and brown plant hopper. Sheath blight, particularly damaging during tillering stage, can cause 25–50% yield loss if not managed effectively.

Punjab Halts Hybrid Paddy: PUSA-44 Ban Challenged in High Court, Verdict Awaited

Punjab government has banned hybrid/pusa-44 paddy varieties due to groundwater concerns and milling issues. As of late May, the Punjab & Haryana High Court has reserved its judgment on petitions filed by the Federation of Seed Industry of India challenging the ban. Hybrid rice currently represents only ~5–6% of Punjab's 32 lakh hectares under paddy. As of now, no date has been fixed for the final judgment, leaving stakeholders in a state of limbo.



Shri Chouhan Launches Nationwide Farmer Outreach Campaign

Union Agriculture and farmers welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has launched a 15-day campaign named 'Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan' from May 29 to June 12, 2025 to educate and create awareness among 10-15 million farmers across 700 districts.

Shri Chouhan has announced the formation of 2,170 teams comprising a total of 16,000 scientists to engage directly with farmers across villages. The campaign aims to promote two-way communication, scientists will share technical knowledge and research-based recommendations on crop selection, seed varieties, fertilizer use, natural farming, and the cultivation of pulses and oilseeds. Simultaneously, they will gather information about the practical challenges that farmers face in the field.

This initiative is being implemented with the active involvement of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). Their role is crucial in ensuring that the latest scientific advancements reach farmers in a simplified, actionable form, thereby fulfilling the core objective of translating research from "Lab to Land."



Uttar Pradesh to Establish Five Mega Seed Parks to Boost Self-Sufficiency

In a significant step toward agricultural self-reliance, the Uttar Pradesh government has announced the establishment of five major seed production parks, each spanning over 200 hectares. Developed under a public-private partnership (PPP) model, these parks will feature state-of-the-art infrastructure including seed processing units, storage facilities, and testing labs. The initiative aims to enhance local seed availability, cut down annual seed import costs estimated at ₹3,000 crore, and improve farm productivity by 15–20%. In addition to ensuring better quality seeds tailored to regional agro-climatic zones, the parks are expected to attract investment and generate employment across the state.

Union Agriculture Minister Sets 5% Growth Target for Agri-Sector

Union Agriculture Minister, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan emphasized the need for India's agriculture sector to achieve an annual growth rate of 5% which is a significant jump from the current average of around 1.5% in order to meet the nation's economic goals for 2047. Highlighting the sector's pivotal role in India's long-term development, Chouhan outlined key strategies including increased investment in agricultural research and development (R&D) as well as a focused push to boost farm exports.



Centre Set to Amend Seed Act for Stronger Traceability and Farmer Protection

The Central Government is planning to amend the Seeds Act, 1966 to strengthen traceability and accountability in the seed supply chain. This initiative comes in response to growing pressure from states like Haryana and Telangana, which have sought to implement stricter laws to curb the sale of counterfeit and substandard seeds. However, these state-level efforts faced legal hurdles, as seed regulation falls under the purview of central legislation. The proposed amendments aim to modernize the decades-old Act by introducing stronger penalties and digital tracking mechanisms, ensuring quality assurance and better protection for farmers.



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