

## Punjab and Pulses Cultivation

### Why in News?

Punjab Agriculture Department is distributing moong dal seed kits to farmers during the ongoing sowing season to push pulses cultivation in the state.

### What is the total area under pulses in Punjab?

- While Punjab is the highest contributor of wheat and paddy to the national pool, it lags behind in cultivation of pulses.
- In Punjab, mainly green gram (moong), black gram (mash) and pigeon pea (arhar) pulses are grown.
- In 2019, there was 11,700 hectares (0.74%) area under pulses in the state, out of around 39.69 lakh hectares under agricultural crops.
- This is a further decrease of 27% from the previous decade.

### Why Punjab wants to increase its area under pulses?

- Farmers are already reeling under an agrarian crisis and this can boost their income.
- Punjab is a leading state in wheat and paddy production but it is totally lagging behind in pulses and dependent on the other states.
- So, there is a want to **increase their self-dependence** in the pulses cultivation and to **increase the farmers' income**.
- Sources in the Agriculture Department said that Punjab is not even growing 3% of pulses against the total requirement of the state.

### How pulses cultivation can help Punjab farmers?

- Moong cultivation provides farmers with an opportunity to have a third crop in a year.
- Moreover, moong being a leguminous crop, it helps in nitrogen fixation and contributes to improving the soil fertility.
- In Punjab, the most suitable time for cultivating pulses is during spring/summer months (March to May).
- This is the same time when hectares of land in Punjab remain vacant after wheat and potato harvesting for over two months.
- Farmers will be able to take advantage of this period.

## How much a farmer can earn from growing moong dal?

- Farmers can get 5-6 quintals moong per acre which translates to Rs 35,000 to Rs 42,000 per acre if he gets the Rs 7000 per quintal MSP of moong decided by the Centre.
- While the input cost would be around Rs 8000-9000 per acre including seed, labour, and other expenditure.
- This can maximize the farmers' profits even from small landholdings.
- But farmers feel that the state government must make a system for local procurement, so that the produce can be consumed in Punjab.

## What is government doing on the ground?

- The government is distributing 4-kg kits to the farmers free-of-cost to multiply the seed.
- It is also holding awareness and training camps for farmers to demonstrate the use of the latest techniques for sowing pulses.
- These kits will help farmers cover two-fifth of an acre and will give a yeild that can be used as seeds that can be sown in around 20 acres.

**Source: The Indian Express**

