

GENE CAMPAIGN

Charter of Demands

On the occasion of Gene Campaign's 20th anniversary, a number of experts from across India , came together to brainstorm on the policy changes that were needed to **make farming profitable and farmers prosperous**. Given below is the Charter of Demands that was formulated by the experts after a daylong meeting.

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1. The government must increase annual budgetary outlays for agriculture , by the Union and state governments , to 10 per cent of India's gross domestic product (against less than 1.5 per cent at present) for the next ten years. Of these outlays, between 60 per cent and 70 per cent should be reserved for rain-fed farming. systems.

2. Programs for food security must include nutrition security. Fortification of common staple foods with micro-nutrients should receive attention. A comprehensive program to establish homestead gardens should be promoted to boost household nutrition.

3. All programs providing food and nutrition support to children must be linked to their being registered in school and receiving regular health checkups.

4. Credit and insurance facilities should be provided to all those who cultivate land and keep livestock (not merely to land owners) by revamping the *kisan* credit card and making insurance more widespread.

5. Given the growing feminization of agriculture in India, there an urgent need to : enforce property rights of women and encourage joint ownership of productive assets, incentivize women's access to credit cards (through an interest rate subvention of at least one per cent) , invest in agriculture equipment suitable for women.

6. Restore and reorient agricultural extension services to promote high yielding, diversified and ecologically sustainable agriculture. This should be backed by research support and indigenous knowledge.

7. To reduce financial burden on small farmers, establish and incentivize Smallholder Farmer Estates with common facilities and equipment, skill building in joint estate management, bionutrition and IPM , water conservation and management, micro irrigation, fertigation , post-harvest value addition , packaging and collective marketing etc

8. Government policies must strengthen and promote a broad genetic base for agriculture and encourage conservation of agro-bio-diversity, to build resilience in farming

9. Launch a comprehensive soil testing program across India to implement location specific measures to restore and improve soil health.

10. Develop a policy and research framework for the development of agriculture in the mountainous regions of India.

11. Launch a water literacy campaign at policy and implementation levels that demand management is the main strategy for overcoming water scarcity.

Water management must be used as an entry point to improve livelihoods through productivity enhancement, value addition, and income generating activities through market-led diversification.

12. The public distribution system must be diversified and decentralized. Government policies should encourage procurement from about 50 km from the points of consumption and the PDS should include a range of locally produced foods.

13. Divert a part of fertilizer subsidies to public investments in agriculture leading to capital formation for strengthening alternative farming systems, especially climate resilient agriculture.

14. Encourage and incentivize states that reduce reliance on chemical inputs in agriculture and encourage bio-organic farming systems.

15. All government policies must be geared towards enabling the Indian farmer to become an entrepreneur. Only then can those who are in the riskiest profession in the world be empowered, making farming profitable and farmers prosperous.

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Dated: Saturday 9 November, 2013

New Delhi