

## **Karnataka govt releases Agri Marketing Policy '13 to boost competition**

### **Our Bureau, Bengaluru**

The Karnataka government recently released the Agricultural Marketing Policy 2013 in an effort to increase competition, augment capacity-building and introduce a single unified license market environment across the 30 districts in the state.

Shamanur Shivashankarappa, the state's horticulture and agro marketing minister, said it will be implemented by developing markets and warehouses this financial year by developing markets. The policy aims to simplify the licensing procedures, remove the barriers to participate in markets to foster competition and ensure the efficient determination of price, linking the primary market in the southern state to the national market for the benefit of all stakeholders in the marketing chain.

In May 2013, a team led by Manoj R, additional secretary, cooperation department, submitted the policy after discussions with the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIM-B) and the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS). He highlighted the key features of the policy, which recommends warehousing-based sales, the rationalisation of private markets, a market fee waiver for perishable produce and focus on direct purchase centres.

According to Shivashankarappa, the policy would create a ban environment to reduce the role of middlemen and curb unfair trade practices. It would also insist on adopting the technology required to set up a comprehensive electronic auction system by regulated markets operating across the state for transparent price determination.

The minister also stated that a state-wide network of virtual markets would be set up by connecting regulated markets and warehouses, equipped with assaying and grading facilities and related infrastructure.

With this in place, the farming community would have the choice to sell the produce in any regulated or private market across Karnataka at opportune times and favourable prices to earn profits. Moreover, there would also be opportunities for farmers to avail of pledge loans to avoid distress sales, and there would also be simpler procedures in place for farmers to get timely

payment.

The policy would transform the agricultural marketing model in the state. Shivashankarappa said there was also the provision to reject the price offered.

M K Shankarlinge Gowda, principal secretary, Karnataka's horticulture department, all efforts would be made to give accreditation to 50 warehouses from the Central Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority.