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New agricultural marketing policy unveiled



Policy aims to increase competition, develop markets, empower farmers

The government on Wednesday unveiled the Karnataka Agricultural Marketing Policy 2013 for “bringing in competition, enhancing capacity building, and ushering in an era of single unified licence market” in the State.

The policy will be implemented in this financial year by developing markets and warehouses, said Minister for Horticulture and Agro Marketing Shamanur Shivashankarappa.

SIMPLE PROCEDURE

Launching the policy, he said that licensing procedures would be simplified and a single licence would be made applicable for participants.

The policy envisages elimination of barriers to participation in markets to foster competition and ensure efficient determination of price, linking the primary market in the State to the national market for the benefit of all stakeholders in the marketing chain.

A panel, headed by Manoj R., Additional Secretary of the Cooperation Department, submitted the draft policy to the department in May 2013 after holding consultations with Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and University of Agricultural Sciences here.

The policy recommends warehousing-based sales, rationalisation of private markets, market fee waiver for perishable produce, and focus on direct purchase centres. The Minister said that the conditions that restrict participation would be removed to increase competition in the auction of agricultural produce.

It would reduce the role of middlemen and also help arrest unfair trade practices.

The policy aimed at adoption of technology required for setting up a comprehensive electronic auction system by regulated markets operating across the State for transparent price determination.

VIRTUAL MARKET

“A State-wide networked virtual market would be established by linking various regulated markets and warehouses, provided with assaying and grading facilities and other infrastructure,” the Minister said. Farmers and other participants would have the choice to offer and sell in any regulated or private market in the State. An enabling environment would be created to facilitate farmers to avail themselves of pledge loans to avoid distress sale.

Processes would be simplified and farmers would get online timely payment into their bank account.

The policy would enable the farmer to decide when to sell the produce and at what price, with a right to reject the price offered, the Minister said. Mr. Shivashankarappa said that the Karnataka Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation and Development) Act 1966 would be reviewed to facilitate the policy objectives and initiatives and to create a distinct, level-playing regulatory environment for transparent and efficient functioning of agricultural markets in the State.

Principal Secretary, Horticulture, M.K. Shankarlinge Gowda said that efforts would be made to give accreditation to 50 warehouses from Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority at the Centre.

Mr. Manoj made a presentation on the policy to the Minister and the media.