Doubling Farmers’ Income

- Kindly note that it is the income which has to be doubled and not just the production or share of agriculture in GDP. Hence a multidimensional approach is required in order to achieve the target
- Inter-ministerial Committee to examine issues relating to Doubling Farmers’ Income has identified 7 sources of income growth – improvement in crop productivity + improvement in livestock productivity + resource use efficiency/savings in cost of production + increase in cropping intensity + diversification towards high value crops + improvement in real prices received by farmers + shift from farm to non-farm occupations
- The agriculture landscape has to undergo tremendous transformation and shift from philosophy of ‘green revolution led’ productivity to ‘green methods’ led sustainability
- For data on agriculture refer to ‘Agriculture and Food Mgt’ chapter in ES 2019 Vol 2 or NITI India@75 report

On the input side

- The cost of production should be reduced through judicious use of fertilizers and pesticides; the aim should be to move towards Subhash Palekar’s idea of “Zero Budget Natural Farming” as advocated by ES 2019
- Distribution of Soil Health Cards, reorienting fertilizer subsidy towards secondary fertilizers and micro-nutrients, subsidies for liquid “fertigation” etc to rationalize use of fertilizers
- Efficient irrigation practices like micro-irrigation through PMKSY will lead to “Per drop more crop”
- Mechanization of agricultural practices will improve operational efficiency - Custom Hiring Centres
- Steps should be taken for easy availability of institutional credit to farmers
- Increased research and adoption of improved, high yielding, climate resilient seeds
- Development of climate resilient varieties of crops for the 128 agro-climatic zones of the country
- Creation of a knowledge hub to disseminate info on best practices in agriculture

On the output side

- Better returns for the produce – increasing MSP to cost plus 50%
- Crop intensification, crop diversification and moving towards high value crops and away from cereals
- Livestock rearing, fisheries etc can provide additional income to the farmers
- Value-addition in agricultural produce. Government should encourage FPO and FPCs to add value to their produce and help in better remuneration by making use of schemes of Food Processing Ministry
- Development of infra like warehouses and cold chains can help reduce post harvest losses
- Connecting agri-markets though technology (e-NAM) will lead to better price discovery and transparency, leading a unified market across the country
- Encouraging states to adopt the Model APMC Act
- Encouraging contract farming through state govts by promulgating Model Contract Farming Act
- Strengthen market for organic products and promote measures to recycle and utilize agri-waste
- Finally, risk mitigation measures must be undertaken. Farmers should be encouraged to opt for crop insurance and avoid distress sale in unforeseen circumstances. The PMFBY provides comprehensive insurance coverage to hedge against yield losses.

Conclusion

- It is highly important that our farmers live a healthy and economically stable life. Increase in income will reduce the unfortunate instances of farmer suicides
- Lead to economic, social and environmental development of the country and ensure food security
- Help reduce the gap between “Bharat” and “India”