

COVID-19: Impact on India's Food and Agriculture Economy



The novel Corona outbreak initiated in China and has now spread to every country of the world and is creating havoc globally. As the COVID-19 pandemic sweeps across the world, cases are rising every second and are growing at an exponential rate. According to the news by Business Today, COVID-19 lockdown may cost the economy Rs 8.76 lakh crore. Going by this number, it is not difficult to predict the losses in all the sectors including the food and agricultural sector of India.

Comprising of producers, processing, storage, transportation, marketing, consumers, etc., the food supply chain is a complex web that encompasses many factors and elements. As the virus spreads, the global food system will be tested and strained in countless ways in the coming times.

With challenges in logistics and movements being affected due to the lockdown, there might be restrictions on people's access to sufficient food supply. The closure of state borders, markets, supply chains, and trade disruptions can further hit the economy and may cause food insecurity.

Farmers facing huge losses The shortage of fertilizers, seeds, and other equipment are affecting agricultural production. The impediments to transport routes are obstructing fresh food supply chains, and are resulting in increased levels of food loss and waste. The farmers do not have access to cold storage facilities. They have no other option but to throw away the perishable crops.

The sale of vegetables and fruits has plummeted, leaving farmers feeling helpless. In many areas, they are dumping their vegetable produce as they are unable to transport it for sale and earn money out of it. As the farmers continue struggling with the harvesting, transportation, storage, and marketing of their produce, the standing crops are either getting spoiled or the farmers are allowing cattle in their farms and letting them graze.

The lockdown has led to the closure of restaurants. Vegetable vendors are stepping out for the demand for freshly produced fruits and vegetables. The impact is not limited to agriculture.

Dairy, poultry farming, fisheries, aquaculture – all are severely impacted by the closure of cafes, restaurants, restrictions on traveling and tourism and suspensions of meals in schools.

Undoubtedly, the nation is facing a looming food crisis. Effective measures must be taken immediately to keep the food supply chains active and lessen the impact of the pandemic on the food supply and distribution.

Prompt government response

In view of the above situation, the government has taken several measures to combat the impact of the virus and save the nation from the food crisis. According to an addendum released by the home ministry, it has exempted several agencies from the lockdown. These are agencies engaged in procurement of agricultural products including MSP (minimum support price) operations, Mandis (wholesale markets) run by the agriculture produce market committee or as notified by the state government, farming operations by farmers and farmworkers in the field, custom hiring centers (CHC) related to farm machines, manufacturing and packaging units of fertilizers, pesticides and seeds along with the movement of harvesting and sowing related machines.

Besides, under the PM Kisan scheme, the central government has also announced an advance payment of Rs 2,000 to assist approximately 8.69 crore farmers. The announcements being made by the government have the potential to assist the farmers and combat the impact of the pandemic on the nation but at the same time, it must translate into reality on the ground. The government needs to ensure that the goods being sold do not end up in black markets.

With the rise of the pandemic, both lives and livelihoods are at severe risk now. The spreading of the virus continues like a wildfire and it is no longer just a regional issue but a global disaster that calls for a global response.

In any scenario, the worst affected will be the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population like the farmers, fishers, migrant workers, daily wage earners, etc.

In such unprecedented times, and during this lockdown period, where everything has come to a halt, the agricultural sector too is up for many seen and unseen challenges. India is the world's largest producer of pulses, rice, wheat, spices and spice products and the period between March to May is a crucial period for harvesting and plantation of several crops. With Agriculture being the most important sector of Indian Economy and a primary source of livelihood for about 58% of India's population (Source – IBEF), it is difficult to quantify the losses at this stage but yes, if effective measures are not taken, both the agricultural sector and nation's economy will go back in time and global hunger will rise to unexpected levels.

Author

Prof. K.P. SINGH is the Vice Chancellor of CCS HAU, Hisar. He is a renowned educationist and administrator, and an internationally reputed expert in the field of Agricultural Communication and Development

‘One-to-One Counselling’ Organized for Parents and their Wards at CCSHAU’s PG Married Hostel

As per the necessary guidelines issued to the officials by Prof. K.P. Singh, worthy Vice – Chancellor of Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University to create awareness and build confidence to fight the COVID-19 and to have feedback on regular availability of online study material to the students.

It was found that online study material is being routinely provided to the students.

On this occasion, DSW, Dr. Devendra Singh Dahiya, ADSW Dr. Jitram Sharma, Medical Officer Dr. Meenakshi Grewal and Warden Dr. Surendra Yadav were present.

An awareness was created about the pandemic of coronavirus and directions were given for preventive campaign. Dr. Devendra Singh Dahiya guided students on how to maintain mental calm during lock-down and also encouraged them to do kriyas, yogas and pranayams regularly. Dr. Jitaram Sharma guided students in downloading the Arogya Setu App and provided them the details regarding its usage. He also advised the parents and the kids staying in the Hostel to restrict their vigilance in view of COVID-19 infection. Dr. Meenakshi Grewal advised the parents to pay special attention to the health of their children and suggested them to have a balanced diet daily.

Sanitization is routinely in progress in the university campus and the guidelines issued by Government of Haryana from time to time are being strictly followed.

कुलपति ने की योद्धाओं पर पुष्प वर्षा



हिसार/17 अप्रैल/रिपोर्टर

चौधरी चरण सिंह हरियाणा कृषि विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति प्रो. केपी सिंह ने आज कोविड-19 के योद्धाओं की उनके अभूतपूर्व योगदान के लिए प्रशंसा की और उन पर पुष्प-वर्षा करते हुए सेवाओं को बरकरार करने की सलाह दी। विश्वविद्यालय के चिकित्सक व नर्स हर-रोज कैंपस

स्थित अंतर्राष्ट्रीय छात्रावासों, जिला प्रशासन की तरफ से बनाये हुए कोरोन्टिन सेन्टर, एसेंशियल सर्विसेज के सभी कार्यालयों को सेनेटाइज करते हैं और स्वास्थ्य जांच भी चलती रहती है, लैंडस्केपिंग यूनिट सफाई के साथ-साथ पेड़-पौधों को हर भरा रखने में सेवायें दे रही हैं, मेन्टिनेंस व वाटर वर्क्स यूनिट की

सेवाएं निरन्तर बरकरार हैं। सिव्क्योरटी विभाग विश्वविद्यालय के अंदर और सभी गेटों पर निरीक्षण कार्य के प्रति सजग व सतर्क है। इस अवसर पर विश्वविद्यालय के ओएसडी डॉ. एमके गर्ग, कुलसचिव डॉ. बीआर कंबोज और निदेशक छात्र कल्याण डॉ. देवेन्द्र सिंह दहिया उपस्थित रहे।

कुलपति ने की योद्धाओं पर पुष्प वर्षा



हिसार/17 अप्रैल/रिपोर्टर

चौधरी चरण सिंह हरियाणा कृषि विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति प्रो. केपी सिंह ने आज कोविड-19 के योद्धाओं की उनके अभूतपूर्व योगदान के लिए प्रशंसा की और उन पर पुष्प-वर्षा करते हुए सेवाओं को बरकरार करने की सलाह दी। विश्वविद्यालय के चिकित्सक व नर्स हर-रोज कैंपस

स्थित अंतर्राष्ट्रीय छात्रावासों, जिला प्रशासन की तरफ से बनाये हुए कोरोन्टिन सेन्टर, एसेंशियल सर्विसेज के सभी कार्यालयों को सेनेटाइज करते हैं और स्वास्थ्य जांच भी चलती रहती है, लैंडस्केपिंग यूनिट सफाई के साथ-साथ पेड़-पौधों को हर भरा रखने में सेवायें दे रही हैं, मेन्टिनेंस व वाटर वर्क्स यूनिट की

सेवाएं निरन्तर बरकरार हैं। सिक्वोरटी विभाग विश्वविद्यालय के अंदर और सभी गेटों पर निरीक्षण कार्य के प्रति सजग व सतर्क है। इस अवसर पर विश्वविद्यालय के ओएसडी डॉ. एमके गर्ग, कुलसचिव डॉ. बीआर कंबोज और निदेशक छात्र कल्याण डॉ. देवेन्द्र सिंह दहिया उपस्थित रहे।

कुलपति ने की कोविड-19 योद्धाओं पर पुष्प वर्षा



शक्ति टाइम्स न्यूज सलाह दी। प्रो. सिंह को अपने कुलसचिव डॉ. बी.आर. कम्बोज हिंसार। चरण सिंह हरियाणा कृषि मध्य में पाकर सभी कर्मचारियों की और निदेशक छात्र कल्याण डॉ. विश्वविद्यालय के कुलपति प्रो. खुशियों का ठिकाना नहीं रहा और देवेन्द्र सिंह दहिया उपस्थित रहें। के.पी. सिंह ने आज कोविड-19 के सभी कर्मचारियों ने समर्पित भाव से इस अवसर पर सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग योद्धाओं की उनके अभूतपूर्व अपनी सेवाओं को इसी क्रम से का पूरा ध्यान रखा गया। भारत योगदान के लिए प्रशंसा की और निभाने का भरोसा भी दिलाया। इस सरकार व हरियाणा सरकार द्वारा समय-समय पर जारी दिशा-निर्देशों उन पर पुष्प-वर्षा करते हुए अवसर पर विश्वविद्यालय के समय-समय पर जारी दिशा-निर्देशों सेवाओं को बरकरार करने की ओएसडी डॉ. एम.के. गर्ग, को अनुसरण किया जा रहा है।