Govt To Promote Drone Use In Agriculture

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In a major boost to promote precision farming in India, the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has issued guidelines to make drone technology affordable to the stakeholders of this sector.

The guidelines of "Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization" (SMAM) have been amended which envisages granting upto 100% of the cost of agriculture drone or Rs. 10 lakhs,whichever is less, as grant for purchase of drones by the Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes, ICAR institutes, Krishi Vigyan Kendras and State Agriculture Universities for taking up large scale demonstrations of this technology on the farmers' fields.

Key Highlights

- The Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) would be eligible to receive grants up to 75% of the cost of agriculture drone for its demonstrations on the farmers' fields.

- A contingency expenditure of Rs.6000 per hectare would be provided to implementing agencies that do not want to purchase drones but will hire drones for demonstrations from Custom Hiring Centres, Hi-tech Hubs, Drone Manufacturers and Start-Ups.

- The contingent expenditure to implementing agencies that purchase drones for drone demonstrations would be limited to Rs.3000 per hectare. The financial assistance and grants would be available until March 31, 2023.

- In order to provide agricultural services through drone application, 40% of the basic cost of drone and its attachments or Rs.4 lakhs, whichever less would be available as financial assistance for drone purchase by existing Custom Hiring Centers which are set up by Cooperative Society of Farmers, FPOs and Rural entrepreneurs.

- The new CHCs or the Hi-tech Hubs that will be established by the Cooperative Societies of Farmers, FPOs and Rural entrepreneurs with financial assistance from SMAM, RKVY or any other Schemes can also include Drone as one of the machines along with other agricultural machines in the projects of CHCs/Hi-tech Hubs.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*