



BASAI News Updates

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Framing of agriculture policy our top priority: Dr Sukhpal

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Dr Sukhpal Singh, who today joined as the chairman of the Punjab State Farmers' and Farm Workers' Commission, said the state was predominantly a farming state and the sad part was that it doesn't have an agriculture policy of its own. The first mandate of the commission will be to frame an agriculture policy for the state, said Dr Sukhpal Singh, who is Principal Agro-Economist at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU).

The commission would frame the policy after extensive discussion with the state government and the PAU to enhance the profitability of farming system in Punjab. Both the Union and the state governments

should help farmers to grow diversified crops, he said.

He further said sustainable farming system was the need of the hour, which should be implemented in phases. Farmers need to come out of the circle of wheat and paddy and grow diversified crops that are suitable for consumers as well as ecosystem.

"There is no problem in farmers growing wheat, but we need to find an alternative to paddy. We have alternatives like cotton and maize, but we need to find other alternatives as well according to the region and climate. Clusters can be formed, and alternative crops can be suggested according to the suitability of specific region," said Dr Sukhpal.

Further talking about the

trade and demand of the farmers to open Pakistan border so that avenues with Gulf countries can also be opened. Dr Sukhpal said trade was a very important part in farming and should be given due importance. Opening of borders can give ample trade opportunities to the farmers. Punjab is a land locked border state, which produces non-perishable foodgrains and opening borders can also help in uplifting the economic stature of the farmers.

"The trade issue lies with the Centre while the farming is a state subject. It is the reason why this subject lies unattended but if the borders are open, it will help in improving the economic condition of the state farmers," he said. — TNS