

Farmers' wish list: Lift ban on wheat exports

AGENCIES

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Farmers groups and associations in their pre-budget meeting with the finance minister demanded lifting the ban on exports of wheat and other agriculture products and also transfer of subsidy through the direct benefit scheme (DBT).

They also wanted the government to restrict import of products that cost below the minimum support price (MSP).

The farmers also wanted the government to focus on increasing domestic output of local oilseeds such as soyabean, mustard, groundnut and sunflower, instead of palm.

Sources said some groups and individuals who participated in the meeting also called for hiking the price of urea and pushing down DAP rates to ensure balanced use of fertiliser.

The finance minister chaired her third pre-budget consultation with the experts

of agriculture and representatives of the agro processing industry here.

In his wish list for the Union Budget 2023-24, Bharat Krishak Samaj Chairman Ajay Vir Jakhar demanded that the government should "not allow import of produce where landing costs are below MSP".

He also urged the Centre to focus on human resources development in the farm sector.

"Focus on human resources development over infrastructure — agriculture being a state subject & most states are not filling vacancies due to which there is rampant misgovernance, use of chemicals & attendant issues. @FinMinIndia find a way to fund this gap," he said in a series of tweets.

Jakhar also pitched for allowing voluntary carbon credits from farms to be traded globally to enable farmers to get the highest value.

When contacted, Raghunath Dada Patil,

President of Consortium of Indian Farmers Association (CIFA), who also participated in the meet, said income of farmers has been adversely affected because of restrictions on export of farm produce like wheat and broken rice.

Patil said that during the meeting he suggested that the government should not go for imposing restrictions on exports of agriculture products.

According to him, exports would only help the country in getting foreign currency.

India has restricted exports of wheat and broken rice to boost domestic supply and contain inflation.

To reduce dependence of India on edible oils import, Patil suggested the focus should be on increasing domestic production of soyabean, sunflower and groundnuts.

Sitharaman is likely to present the next Union Budget on February 1, 2023.

FARMERS ALSO WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO FOCUS ON INCREASING DOMESTIC OUTPUT OF LOCAL OILSEEDS