



Empowering Agroforestry and Natural Farming

For Prelims: Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddati (BPKP), Quality Planting Material

For Mains: Government's initiatives for promoting natural farming

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Why in News?

The erstwhile **Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF)** has been restructured and incorporated as an **agroforestry component within the framework of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)**.

- This innovative approach aligns with India's commitment to eco-friendly practices, including the promotion of **natural farming** – a chemical-free method rooted in integrated agriculture and animal husbandry.

What are the Key Features of Restructured Agroforestry Scheme Under RKVY?

- **Focused Approach:**
 - The revamped scheme places a strong emphasis on promoting and **ensuring the availability of Quality Planting Material (QPM)** as a crucial element in the domain of agroforestry.
 - The **Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Central Agroforestry Research Institute (CAFRI)** takes on the pivotal role of being the **nodal agency** for providing technical support, capacity building, and guidance for establishing nurseries, producing, and certifying QPM.
 - The production and certification of **QPM** accorded a distinctive priority under this scheme.
- **AICRP Centers:**
 - Under the framework of **All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) centers** on agroforestry, CAFRI collaborates with research centers located across the nation to foster innovation, develop sustainable practices, and disseminate knowledge.
- **State Nodal Departments/Agencies:**
 - For effective implementation, each **State/Union Territory identifies a designated State Nodal Department/Agency**.
 - The State Nodal Department/Agency undertakes the responsibility of ensuring the **production and availability of QPM**, either independently or through collaborations with various institutions and entities.
- **Free Distribution to Farmers/SHGs:**
 - The QPM raised through this scheme is made accessible to farmers and **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, either free of cost or based on decisions made by respective States/UTs.
- **Key Components and Activities:**

- Establishment of Nurseries for QPM Production
- **Tissue Culture** Lab for Quality Planting Material
- Skill Development and Awareness Campaign (up to 5% of allocation)
- Research & Development, Market Linking
- Project Management Unit (PMU) and **Agroforestry** Technical Support Group (TSG)
- Local Initiatives (up to 2% of Approved Annual Plan).

Quality Planting Material (QPM):

- QPM is an essential input in **agriculture and forestry for maximizing revenues**, improving adaptability to **adverse environmental conditions**, and meeting **quality raw material requirements** of markets.
 - The quality of planting material is **determined by origin, the authenticity of variety and stock, vegetation development, and health state.**
- QPM certification is a process of **ensuring that the planting material meets the prescribed standards of quality** and is suitable for the intended purpose.

What are the Government Initiatives for Promoting Natural Farming?

- **Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP) Sub-Scheme:**
 - Launched under **Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)** since 2019-2020, this **sub-scheme advocates chemical-free farming** through an integrated approach that involves livestock and local resources, emphasizing biomass recycling and mulching.
- **Namami Gange Program:**
 - As part of the PKVY scheme, the government is promoting chemical-free organic farming along the banks of the Ganga River. Since 2017-18, approximately 1.23 lakh hectares of land have been covered under this initiative.
- **Expansion Along the Ganga Corridor:**
 - In 2022-23, the government approved Chemical-free Natural Farming for a 1.48 lakh hectare area in 5-km wide corridors along the Ganga River in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme:

- Implemented by the **Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC & FW) since 2016-17.**
- Aimed at encouraging farmers to plant **multi-purpose trees alongside agricultural crops for climate resilience and added income sources.**
- Farmers need a **soil health card** to avail benefits under the scheme.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q.1 How is permaculture farming different from conventional chemical farming? (2021)

1. Permaculture farming discourages monocultural practices but in conventional chemical farming, monoculture practices are predominant.
2. Conventional chemical farming can cause an increase in soil salinity but the occurrence of such phenomenon is not observed in permaculture farming.
3. Conventional chemical farming is easily possible in semi-arid regions but permaculture farming is not so easily possible in such regions.

4. Practice of mulching is very important in permaculture farming but not necessarily so in conventional chemical farming.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 and 3
- (b) 1, 2 and 4
- (c) 4 only
- (d) 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Q.2 Which of the following is the chief characteristic of 'mixed farming'? (2012)

- (a) Cultivation of both cash crops and food crops
- (b) Cultivation of two or more crops in the same field
- (c) Rearing of animals and cultivation of crops together
- (d) None of the above

Ans: (c)

Mains

Q.1 What are the present challenges before crop diversification? How do emerging technologies provide an opportunity for crop diversification? **(2021)**

Q.2 How has India benefited from the contributions of Sir M. Visvesvaraya and Dr. M. S. Swaminathan in the fields of water engineering and agricultural science respectively? **(2019)**

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