

Minister of State for Food Processing Mr Rameswar Teli lauds private sector role in aiding development in agriculture and food processing sectors

The Walmart Foundation announces two new grants; contributing over \$10 million in funding to benefit over 81,000 smallholder farmers in India

NEW DELHI, August 28, 2019: FICCI Aditya Birla CSR Centre for Excellence together with Walmart.org organized a summit on 'Strengthening Agri Systems: Road to supporting smallholder farmers and boosting incomes' yesterday. The summit included leaders in the government, trade organizations, nonprofits, suppliers, retailers and others who are leading initiatives throughout all areas of the agriculture supply chain from farm to fork and engaged key stakeholders across the sector to address the barriers faced by smallholder farmers and farmer producer organizations (FPOs).

The event was inaugurated by Mr Rameswar Teli, Minister of State for Food Processing Industries, Government of India. Delivering the event's keynote address Mr Teli said, "I laud Walmart for its Rs 180 crore (\$25 million) commitment towards strengthening the Indian farm sector. The private sector is playing a strong role in aiding development in the agriculture and food processing sectors. These will play a major role in the Government's vision of doubling farmer incomes by 2022."

Mr Vivek Aggarwal, Joint Secretary (Crops & IT) & CEO-PM KISAN, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India said, "All stakeholders, across the private and public sectors, must work together to enable better prices for farmers and help them access markets across India. This will necessitate the intervention of private sector players and for India's FPO movement to prioritize remunerative prices for the farming community."

Deepening its commitment to improve farmers' livelihood in India, the Walmart Foundation today announced \$4.8 million (about Rs 34 crore) in grants to Digital Green and TechnoServe to enable programs that help smallholder farmers have access to agriculture technology, training on sustainable farmer methods, enhanced access to formal markets, and skill and capacity building for farmer producer organizations (FPOs).

These grants are a part of the Walmart Foundation's commitment made in September 2018 to contribute \$25 million (about Rs 180 crore) over the next five years to improve farmer livelihoods in India. Separate from this commitment, Walmart India also announced it would grow its direct sourcing from farmers to 25 per cent of produce sold in its Cash & Carry stores by 2023.

"Today's grant announcement builds upon the Walmart Foundation's efforts to increase economic opportunity for smallholder farmers and their families while promoting sustainable farming practices and the empowerment and inclusion of women," said Ms Kathleen McLaughlin, Walmart Foundation President and EVP, Chief Sustainability Officer of Walmart.

"The work being accomplished by our grantees and their partners is inspiring. We hope the Walmart Foundation's commitment, alongside the work of Walmart and Walmart India's direct farm sourcing teams, will help drive real momentum in sustainable agriculture development in India and we encourage others to join us in our commitment."

The event also included participation by senior leadership from Walmart India and Flipkart Group.