

Strengthening Agri Systems: Road to supporting smallholder farmers and boosting incomes

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' on 28th August 2019 at The Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi.

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).

Deepening its commitment to improving farmer livelihoods in India, the Walmart Foundation announced \$4.8 million (approximately Rs. 34 crores) 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).

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."



Summarizing the ethos of the event, Jyoti Vij, Deputy Secretary General, FICCI said: "We need to create an enabling environment for consolidating smallholder farmers by connecting consumers with producers, thus creating a sustainable production and consumption ecosystem. To achieve this, efforts are required to create strong market linkages, bring scientific storage technologies and efforts towards consolidation of produce by strengthening models such as FPOs. FICCI is fully committed to this cause and is directing efforts to achieve this endeavor. Discussions such

as today's Summit are important to spur greater interventions in this area."

Panel discussions also took place following the grant announcements. The “Helping smallholder farmers work through changing climate, progressive technology” session focused on understanding the ground situation and current issues being faced by farmers and FPO’s. The next session focused on how retailers, financial institutions and NGO’s are helping the small business owners gain access to markets and funding.

Followed by the panel discussions, the grantees shared their best practices.



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.