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# ICAR calls for farm mechanisation policy

**Economy Bureau**  
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The country's apex agri research body, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has called for exploring the possibilities of joint ventures in farm machinery by manufacturers in the Asia-Pacific.

Inaugurating the annual meeting of the technical committee of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering & Machinery (APCAEM) in Delhi on Monday, the ICAR director-general, Dr Mangla Rai said, "There is a need to have a long-term farm mechanisation policy taking into consideration country's land holding pattern. Since the quality of farm machinery is critical for the success of farming, the possibility of joint ventures between the manufacturers of the Asia-Pacific region should be explored."

AOCAEM is an inter-country programme of the UN Economic & Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) supported by 13 countries of the region. Dr Rai referred to Rice-Wheat Consortium for Indo-Gangetic Plains under CGIAR um-

brella which has resulted in development of a zero-till drill, raised bed planter, straw combine and informed that in India about 2 million hectares have been put under zero-tillage resulting in net saving of \$65 per hectare.

"In fact, we envisage incorporation of precision engineering technologies to match the existing demands of input, with appropriate supply systems to maximize the returns", he said.

The mechanisation must suitably address the issues of gender equity, employment, safety and, therefore, long term sustainability and it need to be region, crop and stakeholder specific. He asked engineers to work with agricultural scientists to develop such specific



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farm size and there is a need to develop equipment particularly for small and medium farms, he said and added that this would call for precision farming.

Farm power availability needs to be increased from the present level of 1 KW/ha to 2 KW/ha in the region. In this regard, Dr Rai requested APCAEM to take initiative in improving quality of machines by formulating standards.

APCAEM should also serve as a platform to facilitate the member countries to exchange information for reducing post-harvest losses, he said.

About 30 delegates from member countries like China, Korea, Indonesia, Fiji, Iran, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and India are taking part in this meeting.

During the last 10 years about 229,000 tractors and 150,000 power tillers were sold in the country. At present the estimated population of tractors and power tillers in the country is about 300,000 and 200,000 respectively.

The adoption of agricultural machinery, particularly tractors and other power driven equipment is more common in northern states like Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The use of tractors is picking up in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The demand for power tillers is picking up in West Bengal, Assam and other northeastern states, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Orissa. The use of drought animal power in agriculture has fallen to 9.5% from 45.3% in 1971-72.