

'Centre must make MSP mandatory for rabi crops'

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NOT FAIR. Farmer leaders complained to CACP that oilseed and pulses farmers were being discriminated against PTI

Leaders of farmers' associations have requested the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) to recommend to the government to make the minimum support price (MSP) for rabi crops mandatory. Though any such recommendation of CACP will not be binding on the government, it may put pressure on the Centre due to the general election next year.

"We have requested the commission to recommend MSP guarantee for farmers. It is up to the CACP to accept our views," said Rampal Jat, president of Kisan Mahapanchayat. He pleaded that the CACP has to ensure that MSP is received by farmers and to not avoid the issue by stating agriculture as a State subject.

The CACP on July 4 held a discussion with representatives of farmers' organisations to decide its price policy report for the rabi 2024-25 marketing season (April-March).

PULSES, OILSEEDS

The annual exercise is done by the commission before submitting its recommendations for MSPs of various crops.

Wheat, chana, masur (lentil) and mustard are the key rabi crops, whose sowing will start from October after harvesting of kharif crops.

Jat said the Commission was apprised by them on how discrimination has been made against oilseed and pulses farmers vis-a-vis wheat and paddy growers. While the Centre procures maximum

quantity of paddy and wheat, the situation in other crops is completely different, Jat said alleging except in chana (gram), there is hardly any procurement despite mandi prices ruling below MSPs.

Some other farmer leaders urged the CACP to fix the MSPs based on the comprehensive cost (C2) of production and not on the current procedure of calculating it on A2+family labour cost. The Centre decided in 2018 to fix the MSPs at a minimum 50 per cent above the cost of production, which was a long pending demand of farmers. However, there are some crops such as wheat where the MSP is more than double its cost.

Last month, the Cabinet approved MSPs of 14 kharif crops for the 2023-24 crop year (July-June) by raising them in the range of 5-10 per cent from the previous year.