

Task force to be set up to regulate govt interventions in farm exports

Will form part of Commerce Ministry's efforts to implement the Agriculture Export Policy

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A high-level task force is likely to be set up soon to monitor government interventions on exports of sensitive farm products such as onions or rice. The idea is to ensure that unnecessary curbs are not imposed on sensitive farm product exports.

"Ad-hoc and knee-jerk measures controlling farm exports affect India's image as a reliable supplier in the global market. Work has started on setting up a task force which will regulate measures to be adopted to check export of sensitive farm items when required," a government official told *BusinessLine*.

This is part of the on-going exercise of the Commerce Ministry to implement the Agriculture Export Policy approved by the

The Agriculture Export Policy seeks to push farm exports by focussing on value-added and processed items and organic products.

Cabinet recently. The policy aims to double farm exports from \$30 billion to \$60 billion by 2022 and then reach \$100 billion in the next few years. It also seeks to double farmers' income by 2022.

"We are getting ready with our list of deliverables. We are identifying the department and agency concerned for various items in the farm policy. We will be communicating to them the actionable points," the official said.

The export policy has done away with curbs on organic and value-added farm products, the notification for which is expected soon. "We will soon do a consultation on the type of products on which future restrictions can apply because of food security reasons and where they shouldn't. There should be a negative list of items on which restrictions can continue," he said.

However, the government is of the firm view that even where export restrictions should apply, there should be a high level committee to regulate tinkering, the



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official added. "So constitution of a high-level group is also an actionable point. It has to be decided what level the group should be constituted and who all will be its members. The papers on this will be moved soon," he said.

On-boarding of States

Since on-boarding of States is one of the priorities of the policy, the Commerce Ministry has started writing to different States requesting them to look at the policy and the components that are relevant to them such as reforming the APMC Act. "We intend to do some State-level workshops where we want to discuss what can be done to

increase agriculture exports further from each State," the official said.

India's agriculture exports dropped from \$36 billion in 2013 to \$31 billion in 2017, a fall of 6 per cent. The policy seeks to push farm exports by focussing on value-added and processed items and organic products and also addressing logistic bottlenecks and improving infrastructure at the port of exit.

The policy also focusses on good standards regimen and a holistic response to standard barriers (SPS/TBT) imposed by importing countries and R&D for improved varieties of farm products, value addition and packaging.