

# Govt plans to boost farm income with TOP priority

## 'Trade Map' For Tomato, Onion And Potato For Better Prices

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**New Delhi:** At the time when indications are that the Centre is devising a financial package to quickly address farm distress, the agriculture ministry has stepped up efforts to roll out some new measures. It includes setting up 24 clusters for tomatoes, onions and potatoes (TOP) and initiating an exercise to have an exclusive "trade map" for the three high-priority produce.

The idea behind the move is to enhance value realisation of these perishable horticultural produce by farmers. It will happen through targeted interventions and linking the farmers with both domestic and international markets.

"The TOP's trade map, being prepared by the ministry, will have all the details (varieties, price trend, buyers, sellers and processors) which may help in price and demand forecasting. We have been in touch with experts in Scotland, Russia and other countries to compile round the year data on buyers and producers," said an official.

He said such basic

moves would directly help lakhs of farmers in the exclusive TOP clusters in Maharashtra, Andhra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal.

"Tomato, onion and potato clusters will be set up for agricultural processing under the TOP scheme. Focus on price and demand forecasting will enable farmers to choose which crop to sow in order to maximise benefit," said Union agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh.

He told **TOI** on Monday these efforts and all the other measures, taken by the government in the past over four years, would go a long way in addressing farmers' concerns. "The success of the government's policies is reflected in record production of food-grains and horticultural produce in 2017-18," said Singh.

The government is meanwhile, working on various proposals to extend financial help to farmers. Such proposals include waiving off interest for farmers who repay crop loans on time to providing income support for meeting input costs and lowering premium of existing crop insurance schemes.



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