

# Agriculture in Focus: Budget 2025-26

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**Context :** The Union Budget 2025-26 presents a critical opportunity to reshape Indian agriculture, which is vital for the nation's economy. Strategic measures are essential to enhance productivity, boost farmer incomes, and address environmental concerns.

### Key Challenges and Recommendations

#### Addressing Climate Change

- **Impact:** Rising temperatures and decreasing monsoon precipitation are significantly affecting crop yields.
- **Solution:** Develop climate-resilient agricultural systems to safeguard food security.

#### Boosting Agri R&D

- India invests **less than 0.5% of its agricultural GDP in R&D**, far below global benchmarks.
- Doubling this to **at least 1%** can:
  - Support climate-resilient crops.
  - Improve irrigation techniques.
  - Advance precision agriculture for optimal resource use and environmental protection.

#### Promoting Sustainable Farming

- Sustainable practices like crop rotation, cover cropping, and using organic amendments (e.g., compost, bio-fertilisers) can **restore soil health**.
- Enhancing **soil organic carbon** improves productivity and helps mitigate climate change.

#### Balancing Natural and Chemical Farming

- Natural farming practices are eco-friendly but insufficient to meet the needs of a growing population.
- **Balanced nutrient management** using bio-fertilisers and chemical fertilisers is critical for sustainable productivity.

#### Encouraging Technological Innovations

- Technologies like **nano-urea** and **nano-DAP** can improve nutrient efficiency.
- To drive adoption, subsidies favoring conventional fertilisers should be reformed, and awareness campaigns introduced.

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## Additional Proposals

### Modernising Fertiliser Policies

- Replace fertiliser subsidies with **direct income transfers** to farmers based on landholding size.
- This shift:
  - Encourages balanced nutrient use.
  - Reduces environmental harm.
  - Enhances resource efficiency.

### Strengthening Agri-Value Chains

- Inspired by India's dairy sector success, **robust value chains** for fruits and vegetables can:
  - Stabilize markets.
  - Increase farmers' share of consumer spending.
- Establish a dedicated board for perishable produce similar to the **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)**.

### Reforming Export and Market Policies

- Current export bans suppress domestic prices and indirectly tax farmers.
- **Market reforms** are needed to:
  - Enhance price support.
  - Create fair opportunities for farmers.

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## Path Forward: Prioritizing Agriculture in Budget 2025-26

The Union Budget must focus on:

1. **Increasing investment** in climate-resilient R&D.
2. **Rationalizing subsidies** for balanced fertiliser use.
3. **Building value chains** to stabilize markets and increase farmer incomes.
4. **Reforming export policies** to ensure fair pricing for farmers.

### Conclusion

By prioritizing agriculture, the Union Budget 2025-26 can address climate challenges, protect natural resources, and improve farmer livelihoods. **Effective implementation will secure a resilient, equitable, and sustainable agricultural future for India.**