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Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations

Trimonthly E-Newsletter

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KARUNADA FPO SAMACHARA



From the Director's Desk

Dear Esteemed Stakeholders, Partners, and Members of the FPO Ecosystem,
Warm greetings to all.

The last quarter has been a period of focused execution, institutional strengthening, and measurable progress for the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations. At the beginning of this quarter, we had clearly defined our priorities to strengthen governance systems within FPOs, promote enterprise-led livelihoods, especially among women and tribal communities, and deepen market linkages through strategic collaborations. I am pleased to share that our efforts have translated into tangible outcomes across all



these areas. A major thrust during this quarter was on capacity building and leadership development. In total, **13 structured training programmes** were conducted, covering **529 participants**, including Board of Directors (BODs), CEOs, Cluster Level Federations, and enterprise stakeholders. These trainings spanned diverse themes such as governance, business management, certification, market readiness, gender orientation, and enterprise development. The scale and consistency of these programmes reflect our commitment to building strong institutional foundations and enhancing decision-making capabilities within FPOs.

During the quarter, a total of **5 capacity building training programmes for Amruth FPOs** were conducted across Yadgiri, Kalaburagi, Bidar, Chikkamagaluru, and Chitradurga districts, thereby strengthening governance, business orientation, and institutional capacity of FPOs. In parallel, NCDC-supported FPOs received dedicated attention through focused training programmes for BODs and CEOs. These interventions emphasized compliance, financial discipline, and business planning, marking a critical step towards making these FPOs self-reliant and sustainable business institutions.

The quarter also demonstrated notable progress in tribal FPO development. Participation of VDVKS and TRIFPOs in platforms such as **Krushimela 2025**, along with exposure visits by management committees, has significantly enhanced market visibility and institutional confidence among tribal collectives. These initiatives are crucial in shifting tribal livelihoods towards collective, enterprise-based models, reducing dependency on wage-based income sources. Another key area of importance was women-led enterprise development under non-farm livelihood initiatives. Through gender orientation programmes, entrepreneurship training, and exposure-based learning, we have strengthened the capabilities of rural women to actively participate in and lead enterprise activities. These efforts are aligned with national priorities and are contributing to building confident, independent, and business-ready women entrepreneurs.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Smt. Uma Mahadevan. IAS**
Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner, Government of Karnataka
- Dr. Selva Kumar. IAS**
Secretary to Government, Dept. of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka
- Sri. Girish R, IAS**
Secretary to Government, Department of Horticulture and Sericulture, GoK
- Dr. Vishnuvardhana**
Vice Chancellor, University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot
- Sri Ibrahim Maigur, IAS**
Director, Department of Horticulture, GoK
- Sri Y. S. Patil, IAS**
Commissioner, Department of Agriculture, GoK
- Sri. Upendra Pratap Singh, IFS**
Commissioner, Watershed Development Department, GoK
- Sri G.T. Putra**
Director, Department of Agriculture
- Sri. Mohammed Paravej Banthanal**
Director, Watershed Development Department, GoK

The quarter was also marked by strong collaborations and partnerships. Engagements with organizations such as NRLM, NCDC, KSDH, WDD, CII Foundation, Kukkuta Federation, and private sector players like Keltech Energies and California Burrrito have enabled us to expand our outreach and strengthen market and institutional linkages. Events such as the Buyers–Sellers–Bankers Meet and the E-tractor mela and Krishi Samvaada highlight our role in connecting FPOs with markets, technology providers, and financial institutions. In addition, several institutional visits and knowledge exchange platforms, including visits by NIFTEM students, the Australian delegation (with IISc-BEST), MSME teams, and others, have contributed to cross-learning, innovation exposure, and ecosystem strengthening.

Looking ahead to the next quarter, our focus will be on deepening the impact of these interventions. A key priority will be the rollout of NRLM MKPC Training – Module 2, with a clear objective of making participants independent, confident, and capable of managing their own enterprises. The emphasis will shift from foundational learning to practical business application, ownership, and scaling.

Simultaneously, we will implement Level 2 and Level 3 capacity building programmes for Amruth FPOs supported by KSDH and WDD across districts of Karnataka. These advanced trainings will focus on business expansion, financial management, market integration, and professionalization, enabling FPOs to move towards higher levels of maturity and sustainability.

In conclusion, the achievements of this quarter are a reflection of our collective vision, coordinated efforts, and strong partnerships. We remain committed to transforming FPOs into resilient, self-sustaining, and market-driven enterprises.

Let us continue this journey with renewed focus and determination.

Dr. Seetharamu. G. K.

**Director, Centre of Excellence for Farmer
Producer Organizations, Bengaluru**

CoE-FPO's ACTIVITIES GALLERY



Training of Trainers (ToT) on MCLF and Immersion Site Development, November 3 to 5, 2025.



Capacity Building Training for Directors and CEOs of Balele and Kuppe PACCS, 4 November 2025



Meeting with the Keltech Energies Ltd. team, 5 November 2025



Gender Orientation Training for NARI-KILP Team - Batch 1 6 November 2025



Gender Orientation Training for NARI-KILP Team - Batch 2 7 November 2025



Workshop on FPO Governance and Business Management for FPO Directors and CEOs, organized by CII FACE 10 to 11 November 2025



Meeting with the California Burrrito team 12 November 2025



MoU signing between MLF and COEFPO 14 November 2025



Participation of VDVKS and TRIFPOs in Krishimela-2025 13 to 16 November 2025



Visit of NIFTEM Students
25 November 2025



Visit of Australian Delegation with the IISc-BEST
team
25 November 2025



KSDH-Buyers, Sellers and Bankers Meet 2025
26 November 2025



Capacity Building Training Programme for the Board
of Directors and CEOs of NCDC-funded FPOs
3 December 2025



E-Tractor Mela and Krishi Samvaada
4 December 2025



Visit of Haqdarshak Team
4 December 2025



Visit of the Managing Director of KAPPEC
4 December 2025



Visit of Management Committee Members to
TRIFPOs
15 December 2025



Capacity Building Training Programme for CEOs and
Board of Directors of Poultry FPOs of Gadag and
Vijayapura Districts
17-18 December 2025



Workshop on Certification, Quality Standards, and
Market Readiness for FPOs in collaboration with
KSDA
22-24 December 2025



Visit of MSME Delegation
24 December 2025



Capacity Building Training Programme for CEOs and
Board of Directors of Amruth FPOs of
Chikkamagaluru District
22-23 December 2025



Capacity Building Training Programme for the Board of Directors and CEOs of Amruth FPOs supported by the Watershed Development
Department (WDD), Chitradurga District
29-30 December 2025

A NEW ERA IN SUSTAINABLE FARMING: India's First Electric Tractor Mela in Bengaluru



In a landmark step toward sustainable and cost-effective agricultural mechanization, Karnataka hosted India's first-ever Electric Tractor Mela, marking a significant milestone in the evolution of Indian agriculture. The event, held on December 4, 2025, at the College of Horticulture, UHS Campus, Bengaluru, brought together innovation, policy, and grassroots participation on a single platform.

Organized through a collaborative effort involving the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO), along with partners such as NRDC, Villgro, and Moonrider, the mela witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 200 farmers representing more than 100 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) across Karnataka.



Electric Tractors: Redefining Farm Economics and Sustainability

Welcoming the dignitaries, Dr. Seetharamu G.K., Director, CoE-FPO, Bengaluru, highlighted the urgent need for alternatives to conventional diesel-based mechanization.

He stated: *"Amid rising input costs for farmers and environmental concerns, electric tractors are emerging as a long-term solution to reduce diesel dependence, control carbon emissions, and enhance efficiency. When implemented through Custom Hiring Centres managed by FPOs, modern mechanization*

A Historic Launch Towards Clean Mechanization

The mela was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka, Sri. N. Chalubarayaswamy, who described the initiative as a proud and historic achievement.

"It is a historic step that the country's very first Electric Tractor Mela, moving towards sustainable agricultural mechanization in India, is being held here in Bengaluru. It is a matter of pride that the Kannadigas are at the forefront of this technology. Heartfelt congratulations to Sri. Anoop Srikantaswamy and Sri. Ravi Kulkarni, founders of Moonrider, and to the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations for successfully organizing this event. May this pilot project succeed in Karnataka." The inauguration also marked the official launch of Moonrider's electric tractors, symbolizing a shift toward cleaner and more efficient farm machinery.





becomes accessible and affordable for small and marginal farmers.”

He further emphasized that electric tractors can lead to up to 75% savings in operational costs, with even higher savings when integrated with solar energy solutions.

Evidence-Based Insights: A Transformative Technology

A major highlight of the mela was the launch of the NRDC report titled “Powering Agriculture: Unlocking the Potential of Electric Tractors in India.”

The report presented compelling evidence positioning electric tractors as a transformative solution for Indian agriculture, highlighting:

- Up to 80% lower operating costs
- Nearly 50% reduction in total cost of ownership
- Significant improvement in farmer health due to elimination of heat, noise, and toxic diesel emissions

It also outlined a comprehensive policy roadmap for accelerating large-scale adoption across states and at the national level.

Ms. Dipa Singh Bagai, Country Director, NRDC India, noted:

“This report is a turning point for India’s agricultural future. The evidence is clear that electric tractors are not just cleaner but significantly cheaper to operate, healthier for farmers, and easier to use. They bring modern mechanization within reach for small and marginal farmers.”



Innovation on Ground: Industry Perspectives

The mela provided a dynamic platform for farmers to directly engage with cutting-edge electric tractor technology.

Sri. Anoop Srikantaswamy, Founder and CEO of Moonrider, shared:

“This mela marks an important milestone for us as we bring high-performance electric tractors directly to the farming community. Seeing farmers interact with our 27 HP, 50 HP, and 75 HP tractors reinforces our belief that clean and economical farming is no longer a distant promise, it is real, practical, and already happening on Indian fields today.”

Echoing the need for a strong support ecosystem, Sri. Srinivas Ramanujam, CEO of Villgro, stated:

“Sustainable mechanisation requires more than innovation; it needs the right ecosystem to scale. Platforms like this mela bring together FPOs, agricultural institutions, governments, and startups to ensure technologies reach farmers in ways that are practical, affordable, and trusted.”





Academic and Institutional Support for Future Farming

Delivering the presidential address, Dr. Vishnuvardhana, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, emphasized the importance of adopting innovation in modern agriculture:

“As our lifestyle becomes increasingly mechanized, such innovations will bring transformative change to the farming community. Farmers must make the best use of these technologies. The University and CoE-FPO will continue to support the dissemination of innovations and farmer-friendly schemes through FPOs.”

Adding to this perspective, Shri Mohammad Parvez Banthnal, Director, Watershed Development Department, remarked:

“This is an excellent innovation, and technologies must reach farmers at the grassroots level according to their needs.”

Distinguished Dignitaries in Attendance

The event was graced by several eminent personalities from academia, government, and the agricultural sector, including:

- Dr. S. V. Suresha, Hon'ble VC, UAS, Bengaluru
- Dr. Ramachandra Naik, Dean, College of Horticulture, Bengaluru
- Sri. C.N. Shivaprakash, Managing Director, KAPPEC
- Sri. Venkataramareddy J. Patil, Director, Secondary Agriculture
- Dr. A.B. Patil, President, IAT, Karnataka
- Sri. Chinmaya Acharya, Director, NRDC India
- Dr. P.M. Sobarad, Additional Director (Fruit Division), Department of Horticulture
- Sri. Sharanappa Mudgal, Additional Director (Organic Farming Division), Department of Agriculture

Their presence highlighted the collective commitment of multiple stakeholders toward advancing sustainable agricultural mechanization.



FPOs at the Centre of Transformation

A key takeaway from the mela was the central role of Farmer Producer Organizations in ensuring equitable access to modern technologies. By integrating electric tractors into Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs), FPOs can make advanced machinery accessible to small and marginal farmers, reducing financial barriers and promoting collective growth.

Driving the Future of Green Mechanization

The Electric Tractor Mela stands as a pioneering initiative that demonstrates how innovation, collaboration, and institutional support can reshape the future of agriculture. By introducing clean, cost-effective mechanization solutions and strengthening FPO-led delivery systems, Karnataka has set a benchmark for the rest of the country. As India moves toward climate-resilient and economically sustainable farming, electric tractors are poised to play a transformative role, empowering farmers, reducing costs, and paving the way for a greener agricultural future.





'QUALITY STAMP' FOR YOUR FPO PRODUCTS: COMPLETE FSSAI REGISTRATION INFO

-Dr. Sadananda G K., Deputy Director, COEFPO, Bengaluru

It is a promising development that Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in Karnataka are not limited to just selling agricultural products but are moving towards value-added food processing industries. However, before starting any food outlet or processing unit, it is crucial to follow legal safety standards. In this regard, obtaining a license from the 'Food Safety and Standards Authority of India' (FSSAI) is mandatory. This is not only a matter of legal compliance but also helps in increasing consumer trust and the reputation of your organization's products in the market. So, let us understand in detail how Karnataka's FPOs can obtain this FSSAI license and what its key benefits are.

What is FSSAI?

FSSAI stands for the 'Food Safety and Standards Authority of India'.

It is a premier statutory body of the Government of India, established under the 'Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006'. With the objective of protecting public health, this organization regulates the processes of manufacturing, storage, distribution, and sale of food items. To ensure that the food products prepared by Farmer Producer Organizations are of high quality and are safe and fit for human consumption, it is essential to follow the standards prescribed by FSSAI.

Types of FSSAI Licenses

Based on the size of the food industry and the annual turnover, the licenses that FPOs need to obtain are categorized into three levels:

Basic Registration

This applies to small-scale manufacturing units or retail outlets with an annual turnover of less than ₹1.5 Crore. This is ideal for FPOs in their initial stages.

State License

This license is mandatory for medium-sized food processing units with an annual turnover ranging from ₹1.5 Crores to ₹50 Crores. This is helpful for selling products across Karnataka.

Central License

This highest-level license is mandatory if the annual turnover exceeds ₹50 Crores, or if the business operates across different states in the country, or if the products are being exported to foreign countries.

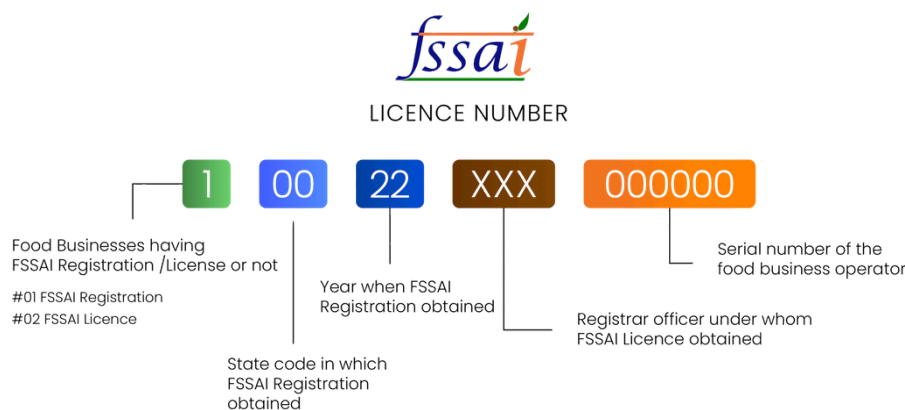
Benefits of Obtaining FSSAI License for FPOs:

- **Quality Assurance:** It confirms that the food products manufactured or packed by the FPO are completely safe for human consumption and meet quality standards.
- **Consumer Protection:** It is helpful in preventing diseases spread through contaminated food and ensuring healthy products reach consumers.
- **Brand Credibility:** It builds trust among customers regarding your FPO's products in the market and enhances your organization's 'Brand Image'.
- **Legal Protection:** It is essential for conducting business regularly and to avoid future legal complications and heavy penalties.
- **Market Expansion:** FSSAI license is a mandatory qualification for selling products in prestigious malls, supermarkets, and for participating in government tenders.
- **Export Opportunities:** This license provides a strong foundation for exporting your FPO's products to the international market.

FSSAI License Number

The FSSAI License Number is a 14-digit unique identification number issued by FSSAI to every food business. It is mandatory for FPOs to mention this number on the products they manufacture or pack, as it serves as official evidence that the organization is adhering to food safety regulations.

This number is not just an identity card for the business; it also enables consumers and officials to track the quality of the product and the validity of the business through the FSSAI official website. Generally, this number is printed on the license certificate, and it is legally required to display it on food labels and the signboards of the retail outlets.



Eligibility Criteria for FSSAI Basic Registration

For FPOs running small-scale food businesses in Karnataka, FSSAI registration is a primary and mandatory requirement. Generally, businesses with an annual turnover within the limit of ₹12 lakhs can obtain this basic registration. Within the jurisdiction of Karnataka, individuals or organizations engaged in the following activities are eligible to obtain this license:

- **Food Manufacturers:** Units involved in manufacturing all types of food products.
- **Packaging and Storage:** Units that pack food or organizations that store food in warehouses (godowns).
- **Traders:** Wholesale dealers, retailers, or commercial Food Business Operators (FBO) selling food products through online platforms.
- **Import and Export:** Entrepreneurs who import food products from abroad or export them to foreign countries.
- **Transport and Distribution:** Those involved in the transportation and distribution of food products.
- **Service Sector:** Hotels, catering organizations, or those supplying raw materials required for food preparation.



Documents Required to Obtain Food License in Karnataka

- **Organization Details:** The official name of your FPO or company.
- **Proof of Identity:** Copies of PAN Card, Aadhaar Card, Passport, or Driving License of the owners or directors.
- **Contact Information:** Full address including PIN code, along with the applicant's email ID and mobile number.
- **Photographs:** Recent photos of the organization's owners, partners, or directors.
- **Nature of Business:** The type of business you are operating (e.g., Wholesale/Retail/Hotel, etc.).
- **Financial Records:** Bank account details and supporting information related to the annual turnover of the business.
- **Technical and Safety Documents:** Food Safety Management System (FSMS Plan), FSMS Certificate, and the prescribed Declaration Form.
- **Local Permits:** No Objection Certificate (NOC) obtained from the concerned Panchayat or Municipality, or an NOC from the Health Department.
- **Special Document (For Exporters):** IE Code issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT).



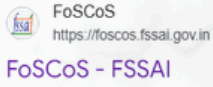
FSSAI Registration vs License

Features	FSSAI Basic Registration	FSSAI License (State/Central)
Turnover Limit	Only for small businesses with an annual turnover up to ₹12 lakhs.	For medium and large businesses with an annual turnover exceeding ₹12 lakhs.
Applicability	Small farmer producers, street vendors, and small-scale manufacturers.	Large processing units, exporters, importers, and wholesale distributors.
Application Form	The process is simple; must apply through 'Form A'.	The process is detailed; must apply through 'Form B'.
Validity Period	Ranges from 1 to 5 years based on the chosen duration.	Can be obtained for a minimum of 1 year up to a maximum of 5 years.
Fee Details	Very low cost; fixed at only ₹100 per year.	Ranges from ₹2,000 to ₹7,500 per year depending on the nature of the business.
Types	Only one type: Basic Registration.	Two levels: State License and Central License.
Display	Registration number must be mandatorily displayed in the shop and on the product packet.	It is a legal requirement to print the 14-digit license number along with the logo on the product.

Note: If your FPO's turnover exceeds ₹12 lakhs, it is mandatory to immediately upgrade from 'Basic Registration' to 'State License'. Failure to do so may result in penalties.

How to Obtain FSSAI Basic Registration?

The process of obtaining FSSAI registration for your FPO or food business is simple and can be easily completed online. Follow these steps to complete the registration process:



1

First, visit the official FSSAI portal, FoSCoS (<https://foscoss.fssai.gov.in/>)

Log in to the website with your details. Then, click on the "Apply for Registration/License" option visible on the homepage.

2



3

If your business's annual turnover is within ₹12 lakhs, select 'Form A' (Basic Registration). Accurately fill in all the necessary details of your FPO or enterprise.



Scan and upload all supporting documents, including the required ID proof, address proof, and photograph along with the online application.

4



5

Submit the application by paying the prescribed registration fee online. After submitting, you will receive an 'Application Reference Number'.



The Food Safety Department will evaluate the documents you submitted. If necessary, officials may visit your organization's location for inspection. If everything is in order, your registration certificate will be available online.

6



Direct/Offline Application Method

To obtain an FSSAI license offline, you must first download and fill out 'Form A' or 'Form B' (depending on your business turnover) from the official website. Attach this application with your ID proof, address proof, and necessary technical documents, and submit it to the Food Safety and Standards Department office in your district. At this stage, you will need to pay the prescribed fee via a challan. Subsequently, Food Safety Officers (FSO) will verify your documents and inspect your premises. If all standards are met, the license certificate will be issued.

Timeline for Obtaining FSSAI Registration

The FSSAI registration process in Karnataka generally takes place step-by-step. The timeline depends on the type of application and the accuracy of the documents:

- **Standard Timeline:** Once you submit the application, if all documents are in order, you can generally obtain the registration certificate within 30 to 60 days. This duration is determined by the nature of your business and the workload of the respective district or state office.
- **Extension in Case of Discrepancies:** If there are errors in the documents you submitted or if the department requests more details, this process may extend up to 90 days. In such cases, it is important to provide the additional documents requested by the department in a timely manner.
- **Status Notification:** After reviewing your application, the department will inform you whether it has been accepted or rejected. If the application is rejected, a proper reason will be provided in writing.
- **Issuance of Certificate:** If the department is satisfied with your application, a 'Basic FSSAI Registration Certificate' containing a unique 14-digit number will be issued. You can download this directly through the FoSCoS portal.

Note: It is advisable to regularly check your application status on the portal after submission.

FSSAI Violations and Penalty Details

In Karnataka, it is mandatory for every food business organization to obtain an FSSAI license according to its turnover. If a license is not obtained or if the prescribed safety standards are not followed, heavy penalties must be paid as follows:

- **Lack of Quality:** If the food quality does not conform to FSSAI standards, a penalty of up to ₹2 lakhs is imposed. (For small manufacturers, this penalty amount is up to ₹25,000).
- **Mislabeling:** If incorrect information or illegal labels are placed on food packets, a penalty of up to ₹5 lakhs may be incurred.
- **Substandard Products:** If found selling poor-quality food products, a penalty of up to ₹3 lakhs is imposed.
- **False Advertisement:** For providing advertisements that mislead consumers or give false promises, there is a provision to impose a maximum penalty of up to ₹10 lakhs.
- **Presence of Extraneous Matter:** If foreign or irrelevant substances (Extraneous matter) are found in food items, a penalty of up to ₹1 lakh is imposed.
- **Unhygienic Manufacturing:** If the place of food manufacturing or processing is not clean or if unhygienic methods are used, a penalty of up to ₹1 lakh is imposed.
- **Violation of Directions:** Failure to comply with the instructions or directions of Food Safety Officers leads to a penalty liability of up to ₹2 lakhs.

Bharat Vistaar

Security and growth of farmers through multilingual AI

Rithesh G.K., Consultant, COEFPO

'Bharat Vistar' is a multilingual AI-based interactive platform that enables farmers to ask agriculture-related questions through mobile or smartphones and receive immediate solutions.

In the 2026-2027 Budget speech, India's Honorable Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the launch of a significant multilingual Artificial Intelligence (AI) based advisory platform aimed at improving agricultural productivity and mitigating risks for farmers. It is available even to farmers without smartphones and internet facilities. Farmers can call the helpline number '155261' to get immediate information and real-time Mandi prices in their local

language (currently Hindi and English; soon to be expanded to 11 other languages). It is a unified platform that integrates information from AgriStack, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Thus, it provides solutions to farmers by considering various factors such as weather and market prices. This Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) platform integrates key central schemes such as PM-KISAN, PMFBY, Soil Health Card, Kisan Credit Card, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, PM Krishi Sinchayi Yojana, PM-AASHA, Modified Interest Subvention Scheme, Per Drop More Crop, and the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization.



CONNECTING
140M+
FARMERS

WHY WAS IT INTRODUCED?

- **Scattered Information-** Earlier, farmers had to depend on multiple sources to obtain information about government schemes, weather updates, market prices, etc. Now all of this information is available in one place
- **To foster self-reliance among farmers-** Farmers no longer have to depend on multiple offices, websites, applications, or middlemen; they can access all the information in their own language at their convenience

HOW IS IT BENEFICIAL?

For Farmers:

- **Voice First AI:** The farmers can have a voice-based search to get all of their questions clarified.
- **Inclusivity:** This platform can be used by both farmers with access to smartphones and the internet and those without
- **Better decision-making:** The AI bot can answer questions and help farmers by providing personalized solutions based on their real-time needs, taking into account multiple dimensions.
- **Easier accessibility** in terms of tracking application status, checking eligibility, etc.

For Government:

- **Efficient Scheme Delivery**
- **Data-driven governance:** Solutions are based on databases from IMD, AgriStack, etc., making it an evidence-based approach.
- **Minimizing the role of intermediaries**

For FPOs:

- **Better Market Linkages:** Access to real-time mandi prices enables profitable sales decisions.
- **Simplified Access to Government Schemes:** All government schemes are conveniently available on a single platform.
- **Cost Reduction:** Direct market access eliminates intermediaries, leading to lower transaction costs.
- **Risk Management:** Early forecasts of weather and pest outbreaks help prevent crop loss.
- **Increased Income:** Market intelligence and government support lead to an overall boost in total earnings.

KEY FEATURES

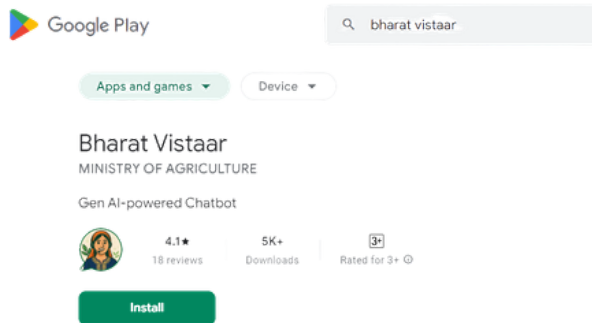
- **AI-Driven Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** An advanced technological system designed for the transformation and improvement of the agricultural sector.
- **Voice-First AI:** A facility that enables easy interaction through simple voice commands and messages.
- **Multi-Channel Access:** Options to receive information via smartphones, the internet, or standard phone calls.
- **Integrated Services:** A single platform consolidating various government schemes and technical data.
- **Real-Time Advisory:** Immediate solutions based on current weather patterns and market conditions.
- **Multilingual Support:** Information made available to farmers in their own local languages.
- **24/7 Availability:** Continuous service accessible at any time, twenty-four hours a day.



STEP BY STEP GUIDANCE ON ITS USAGE

It can be accessed in 3 ways:

Through the mobile app available on the Google Play Store



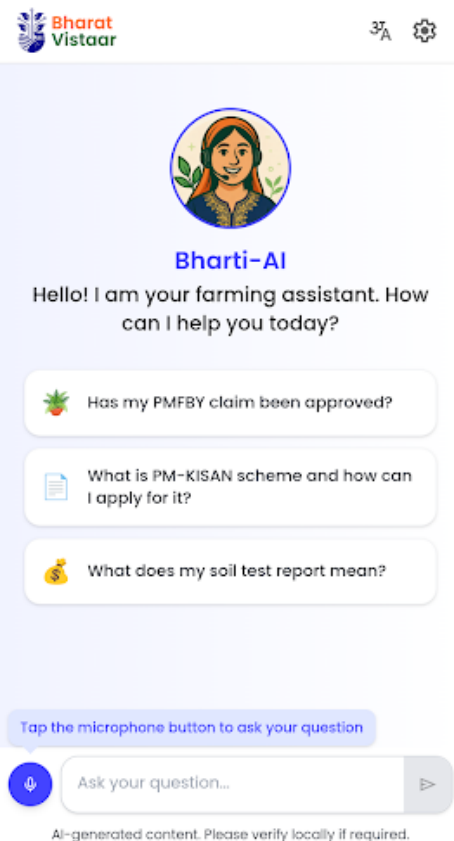
Web interface link (which will work like an app), available on the Ministry of Agriculture website and popular mobile apps like PM KISAN and PMFBY



BharatVistaar

What is Bharat VISTAAR? A multi-layered digital platform designed to provide end-to-end support to the Indian agricultural community. [Read more](#)

By calling 155261 (even from simple phones)



TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

In today's modern era, technology is no longer just a convenience; it has become an indispensable force for moving forward on the path of progress. Digital platforms like 'Bharat Vistar' are preparing the agricultural sector for global-level competition. To stay updated with the pace of the current generation, it is essential to adopt advanced technology in farming alongside traditional practices.

Only through the use of technology can we effectively face challenges such as climate change and market instability. This digital infrastructure empowers farmers and FPOs by providing real-time information, making them self-reliant. Agriculture can transform into a profitable enterprise only when we move forward with technology. Therefore, let us build an innovative and prosperous agricultural culture by actively utilizing this advanced technology.



Empowering FPOs: A Pathway to Quality, Certification and Market Success

In the current agricultural landscape, markets are largely driven by consumer demand for safe, traceable, and sustainably produced food. Certification systems such as Organic, GAP, IndGAP, and Fair Trade have become essential tools for accessing premium markets and gaining consumer trust.

However, many FPOs face challenges such as limited awareness of certification processes, weak compliance systems, inadequate post-harvest infrastructure, and a lack of knowledge regarding buyer expectations. Recognizing this gap, a three-day training program on "Certification, Quality Standards, and Market Readiness for Farmer Producer Organizations" was successfully organized from December 22 to 24, 2025, at the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations, Bengaluru. This program was conducted by the Department of Agriculture, Government of Karnataka, under the 'Karnataka Raitha Samruddhi Yojana', in collaboration with the Centre of Excellence for FPOs.

The training was specifically designed for the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and Board of Directors of FPOs. Its primary objective was to strengthen their organizational capacity in adopting certification systems, improving quality standards, and enhancing market readiness.

Strengthening the Certification and Quality Ecosystem

The primary objective of the programme was to build awareness and technical competency among participants regarding certification systems, quality assurance, and compliance mechanisms. It also aimed to enhance understanding of postharvest management practices, food safety standards, traceability systems, and digital tools for branding. Furthermore, the programme focused on enabling participants to develop actionable strategies and roadmaps for implementing certification and improving market access within their respective FPOs.

Leadership Towards Transformation

A total of 47 representatives from various districts of Karnataka participated in this training program. They represented diverse agricultural sectors, including crop production, horticulture, animal husbandry, and fisheries. This diverse participation provided a platform for a meaningful exchange of experiences and insightful discussions across various products and regions.

A Fusion of Theory and Practice

This training program followed a practical learning approach involving expert lectures, interactive sessions, group discussions, and field visits. The methodology was carefully designed to maintain a balance between conceptual understanding and practical application. To enhance learning outcomes, audio-visual media, case studies, and real-world examples were extensively utilized.

Foundation of Certification and Strategy

The program commenced with an inaugural ceremony in the presence of distinguished dignitaries. **Dr. Rupa A. N.**, Joint Director of the Department of Agriculture, emphasized the importance of certification and quality standards in facilitating market access and enhancing farmers' income.

Presiding over the event, **Dr. Seetharamu G. K.**, Director of the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations, highlighted the role of quality compliance in strengthening the sustainability of FPOs. **Dr. Mahantesh Shirur**, Principal Scientist at NAARM, shared valuable insights on institutional strengthening and value-chain development. **Dr. Sadananda G. K.**, Deputy Director of the Centre of Excellence for FPOs, detailed the objectives and structure of the training program.



Certification Consultant **Mr. Siddhartha S.** provided comprehensive information on organic certification processes, Internal Control Systems (ICS), and the essential documentation required for FPO clusters.

Following this, **Mr. Shivakumar N.**, Assistant Manager at Mother India Farms, explained various certification standards such as GAP, INDGAP, Rainforest Alliance, and Fair Trade, along with their market significance. Additionally, he guided participants on preparing step-by-step action plans to implement these certifications within their organizations.

Practical Experience: Learning Through Field Visits

The session was dedicated to a field visit to 'Sahaja Organics'. During the visit, participants observed certified organic farms, packhouses, warehouses, and market operations. This field-based learning provided practical insights into organic production systems, grading and sorting processes, post-harvest management, and supply chain management. The interaction with the host organization helped participants understand successful business models, branding strategies, and the development of certification-based value-added chains.



From Compliance to Competitiveness

Dr. Sadananda G. K., Deputy Director of the Centre of Excellence for FPOs, conducted a session on post-harvest management practices for both perishable and durable produce, emphasizing techniques to minimize losses and improve quality.

In a special session on MSME schemes and enterprise development, **Dr. Satish B. C.** (IAS), Director of MSME, Government of Karnataka; **Dr. H. R. Arun Kumar**, Managing Director of KCTU; and Mr. Sandy T. S., Director at KPMG India, participated. They provided detailed information on Udyam registration, the RAMP program, funding opportunities, and the infrastructure support essential for FPO enterprises.

Furthermore, Dr. Debi Sharma, former Director of IIHR, led a session on food safety standards and Maximum Residue Limits (MRL). This session highlighted regulatory requirements and buyer expectations in both domestic and export markets. Mr. Nikhil Bhardwaj from Scalion Commerce Pvt. Ltd. introduced participants to digital traceability tools such as QR coding and blockchain technology, explaining how they help enhance transparency, branding, and consumer trust.



The Way Forward

This program has played a crucial role in empowering FPO leadership with the essential skills and knowledge required to adopt certification-based approaches, improve product quality, and strengthen market linkages. Continuous support, advanced-level training, and infrastructure development will further enable FPOs to transform these learnings into sustainable business growth and improve the livelihoods of farmers.

She Innovates:

Empowering Women Farmers and Entrepreneurs for a Sustainable Future



The 'She Innovates' workshop, organized on October 31, 2025, marks a significant step toward recognizing and strengthening the role of women in agriculture and rural entrepreneurship. Held at the Centre of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO) in Bengaluru, this program was a special initiative conducted in collaboration with the Bangalore Bio-Innovation Centre (BBC) and the University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot. Organized in honor of National Women Farmers' Day, the workshop served as a platform to celebrate the innovation, leadership, and achievements of women in the agricultural sector.

Special Program for Empowering Women Farmers and Entrepreneurs: Emphasis on Innovation

Chief Guest Smt. G. Padmavathi asserted that women's roles are critical in shaping a sustainable rural economy and emphasized the need to provide them with appropriate institutional support. The program, which began with an opening speech by Ms. Sneha Wali, was meaningfully inaugurated by 'watering a plant,' symbolizing the growth of women's entrepreneurship. Delivering the introductory remarks, Mr. Deena Dayalan S. K. stressed the importance of building a platform of equal opportunities for women farmers.

Dr. Sitaramu G. K., Director of the CoE-FPO, and Mr. Dileep Shankar participated in an extensive discussion regarding the startup ecosystem and the adoption of technical innovations in the agricultural sector. Experts opined that if technology, finance, and market facilities are made easily accessible to women farmers, it will not only improve rural livelihoods but also enhance agricultural productivity. This session, driven by ideas of collaboration and inspiration, added a new dimension to women's empowerment.



Women's Participation in Agriculture and Entrepreneurship: A Thematic Workshop



The workshop, organized to bring women into the mainstream of agriculture and entrepreneurship, featured several key thematic sessions. Mr. Dileep Shankar, explaining the functioning of the BBC (Bangalore Bio-Innovation Centre) Women Entrepreneurship Cell, provided detailed information on government schemes, incubation centers, and various financial facilities available for women-led startups.

Furthermore, Dr. Lakshmi Gangavaram spoke on the "Role of Women in Agriculture," using statistics to explain how women are evolving from being mere laborers to innovators and key decision-makers in the sector. Subsequently, speaking on the topic "Farm to Market," Dr. Usha Ravindra shared deep insights into how ensuring food safety, adhering to quality standards, and focusing on value addition can lead to sustainable profits in women-led food enterprises. These sessions served as a guiding light for the future of women farmers and entrepreneurs.

Priority for Rural Development and Climate Resilience

The workshop sessions focused on the critical themes of rural transformation and tackling the challenges of climate change. During these sessions, Dr. Shweta B. S. explained how women can achieve economic self-reliance through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and bring about change in rural areas through collective leadership.

In the same context, Ms. Surabhi Rajagopal introduced 'Climate-Smart' agricultural practices, calling upon women entrepreneurs to increase productivity by adopting eco-friendly and innovative methods.

Dr. Shivalila V. B. and Ms. Nalini shared inspiring success stories of rural women who built successful enterprises by adopting modern farming techniques. These stories stood as a testament to how incredible transformation is possible when local knowledge is paired with determination and innovation. This experience-sharing session instilled a renewed sense of hope and confidence among the participating women.



The 'She Innovates' workshop, conducted with the hope of knowledge exchange, mutual collaboration, and sustainable growth, emerged as a powerful platform toward women's empowerment. Speaking at the conclusion of the program, experts emphasized the need to jointly address the challenges faced by women in agriculture and entrepreneurship. By bringing policymakers, agricultural scientists, entrepreneurs, and grassroots beneficiaries under one roof, this program witnessed a profound dialogue on women-led holistic development.

This workshop was not limited merely to a showcase of achievements; it formulated a clear roadmap conducive to future capacity building, innovation, and institutional support. It reiterated that empowering women farmers and entrepreneurs through the encouragement of ideas, availability of necessary resources, and organized efforts is the guiding light for rural transformation. All these active discussions and collaborative thoughts inspired hope for giving new momentum to the state's inclusive economic growth.

We believe that the empowerment of women farmers and entrepreneurs is the foundation for holistic economic growth. Therefore, the Center of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations will continue to stand as a constant support to women's agri-business dreams by organizing dozens of such training and capacity-building programs in the coming days.



Foundation and Governance

The Agraganya Farmer Producer Souharda Cooperative Society was established on July 9, 2024, in Nanikatta, Siddapur Taluk, Uttara Kannada, under the 10K FPO Scheme and the Karnataka Souharda Sahakari Act.

The society operates under the guidance of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), Delhi, as the implementing agency, and the Center of Excellence for Farmer Producer Organizations (CoE-FPO), Bengaluru, as the mentoring institution. Currently, the FPO has 302 members and has mobilized ₹6,04,000 in share capital, with a matching equity grant of ₹6,04,000 received from the government.

Known for its unique operational style, the society maintains a deep and inseparable bond with its farming community.

PROSPERITY THROUGH COOPERATION: AGRAGANYA FPO OF SIDDAPURA



A Milestone in Arecanut Processing

Since the majority of the society's members are areca nut growers, a large-scale processing unit was established in collaboration with the Tyagali Seva Sahakari Society to enhance their economic returns. This facility, which provides comprehensive services including peeling, boiling, and drying, processed over 1,000 quintals of raw areca nut in the 2025-26 season, marking it as the first cooperative-run areca processing unit in Siddapur Taluk. Additionally, the society handles Chali (white) areca nut processing; while 650 quintals were peeled in 2024-25, the current 2025-26 season employs both machinery and a dedicated team of 25 women, thereby creating significant local employment opportunities.

The society further supports its members by supplying customized nursery saplings and producing value-added goods such as high-quality Malnad honey and premium banana and jackfruit chips, which offer additional entrepreneurial avenues for women. Furthermore, the production of eco-friendly areca leaf plates in various sizes provides farmers with a golden opportunity to strengthen their financial stability through sustainable practices.

Farmer-centric services and training

The society has launched a CSC (Common Service Centre) to provide a comprehensive range of online services, significantly reducing farmers' dependence on urban centers and bringing essential facilities to their doorstep. To further empower the community, various information workshops are organized based on the farmers' specific needs and interests.

Looking ahead, the society has designed programs to implement value-addition for a wider variety of crops while actively encouraging multi-cropping practices for better yield. Committed to the holistic development of agriculture, the society prioritizes eco-friendly farming to protect nature and promotes sustainability to ensure a healthier future for all.

Vision and Future Outlook

The primary objective of the society is to prioritize eco-friendly agriculture while providing profitable markets for farmers through value addition of their crops. The society is actively working toward maintaining the financial sustainability of farmers and building a healthy future by conserving nature. In the coming days, the society aims to facilitate the holistic development of farmers by expanding value-addition initiatives to more crops.





FROM MIDDLEMEN TO OPEN MARKETS: SHRI AMARANARAYANA FPO'S JOURNEY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

In the agricultural lands of Chintamani, the future of small-scale farmers is taking on a new form through the efforts of 'Shri Amaranarayana Horticulture Farmer Producer Company Limited.' Established on February 16, 2016, under the Companies Act, this Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) has emerged as a powerful farmer-led institution working toward increasing income, sustainability, and resilience in horticulture-based farming practices.

Strong Institutional Foundation

With the support of the Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka, and in collaboration with the Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC), this FPO operates with a robust governance structure. Led by a committed Board of Directors and a professional management team, the organization ensures transparency, accountability, and farmer-centric decision-making.

The institution boasts a membership of over 1,000 farmers, of which 60% are small-scale and 30% are medium-scale farmers.



Extensive Operations and Crop Diversity

This FPO spans 23 villages, covering approximately 3,295 hectares of cultivable land. Farmers cultivate a variety of crops, including tomatoes, onions, beans, bottle gourd, cabbage, cauliflower, and leafy vegetables, alongside fruits such as mango, guava, jackfruit, and pomegranate. This diversification not only mitigates risks associated with market fluctuations and climate variability but also ensures a steady, continuous income for the growers.

Integrated Business Model and Services

The organization has developed a multidimensional business model that integrates input supply, production support, and marketing:

- **Input Supply Chain:** By partnering with reputed companies such as Yara, Bayer, and Tata Rallis, the FPO ensures that high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides are delivered directly to the farmers' doorsteps.
- **Procurement and Marketing:** Farmers' produce is collected, graded, and sold through organized retail networks and exporters, effectively eliminating the exploitation of middlemen.
- **Primary Processing Infrastructure:** Collection centers located near APMC markets provide essential facilities for the cleaning, grading, and packaging of produce.
- **Custom Hiring Services:** To enable small-scale farmers to use modern agricultural equipment without heavy investment, machinery is made available on a rental basis.
- **Financial Inclusion:** The institution facilitates credit linkages with organizations like SBI and NABKISAN, while also providing crop and health insurance services.
- **Capacity Building:** Through regular training programs and exposure visits, farmers are kept informed about modern agricultural practices and innovations.

Market and Institutional Linkages & Development

By establishing direct market linkages with major retailers like Reliance Fresh and BigBasket, this FPO has demonstrated remarkable financial resilience, achieving a turnover of ₹6.93 crore in 2019-20. The organization has been instrumental in reducing cultivation costs and maximizing profits for its members, while simultaneously fostering women's empowerment and encouraging agricultural interest among the younger generation.

Looking ahead, they aim to further strengthen its infrastructure by establishing cold storage and advanced processing units. As a model for rural transformation, the organization proves that combining collective bargaining power with technical expertise can provide small-scale farmers a secure path toward economic self-reliance.

STRENGTHENING CHILLI VALUE CHAIN IN BALLARI

-Vikram M Nimbal,
Program Manager, CII Foundation

Strengthening India's Agricultural Competitiveness through Institutional Support and Chilli Value Chain Development in Ballari

Agriculture continues to be a vital pillar of India's economy, supporting more than 58% of the population and contributing significantly to national GDP. However, the sector faces persistent challenges such as fragmented landholdings, low productivity, inefficient supply chains, and inadequate post-harvest infrastructure. These constraints not only limit farmer incomes but also restrict India's ability to compete effectively in global agricultural markets. Strengthening value chains, improving quality standards, and enhancing market linkages are therefore critical to transforming the sector into a more resilient and competitive system.

In this context, the Confederation of Indian Industry Food and Agriculture Centre of Excellence (FACE) plays a crucial role in driving innovation and capacity building across the agriculture and food processing sector. FACE works with farmers, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), private sector stakeholders, and government institutions to improve productivity, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and strengthen end-to-end value chain linkages. Through its focus on research, training, consultancy, and policy support, FACE contributes to building efficient, quality-driven, and market-oriented agricultural systems.



Improving Farmer Livelihoods: Partnership Between CII Foundation and Orkla India

The CII Foundation, as the development arm of CII, complements these efforts by implementing field-level interventions that directly benefit farmers and rural communities. With support from Orkla India and technical guidance from FACE, targeted programs are being implemented to strengthen commodity-specific value chains and improve farmer livelihoods through structured and scalable models.

Red Chilli Cultivation in Ballari: Challenges and Opportunities for Development

Ballari district in Karnataka is an emerging production hub for red chilli cultivation and an important livelihood source for small and marginal farmers. However, the sector faces several challenges, including high pest and disease incidence, inconsistent adoption of good agricultural practices, improper input usage, and post-harvest losses due to inadequate drying, grading, and storage infrastructure. Limited awareness of food safety standards and market requirements further restricts farmers' ability to access high-value domestic and export markets. At the same time, the region presents significant potential to develop organized, traceable, and quality-driven chilli supply chains through Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).



To address these challenges and unlock this opportunity, the CII Foundation, with support from Orkla India and technical guidance from the CII Food & Agriculture Centre of Excellence, is implementing a program in Ballari aimed at strengthening sustainable spice value chains through FPOs.

Project Milestones: Success in Sustainable Farming Practices and International Standards



The program currently engages 6 FPOs across 37 villages, mobilizing over 1,500 farmers and covering approximately 8,855 acres under structured agronomic advisory. Through targeted capacity-building interventions, farmers are being supported to adopt; Integrated Pest Management (IPM), responsible input usage, aflatoxin prevention practices, and improved post-harvest management, including scientific drying, grading, and hygienic storage.

Ballari Chillies on the International Stage: Achieving EU Quality Standards

Food safety and residue compliance are key focus areas of the initiative. As part of this effort, MRL testing has been undertaken through accredited laboratories to assess alignment with export market standards. Of the samples tested so far, 6 out of 10 lots have met EU compliance parameters, demonstrating the potential of the production system to meet international quality requirements.

Going forward, the program will focus on expanding adoption of safe cultivation practices, strengthening traceability and quality monitoring systems, and enabling FPOs to aggregate produce and build stronger linkages with premium markets.



A participating farmer shared, “Through the training and guidance provided, we are learning better cultivation practices that will help us produce safer, higher-quality chilli and improve our market opportunities.”

FOOD SAFETY AND MAXIMUM RESIDUE LIMITS (MRLS): BUYER REQUIREMENTS, LAB TESTING, AND COMPLIANCE



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Food safety has emerged as one of the most critical dimensions of the modern agri-food system, driven by rising consumer awareness, global trade requirements, and stringent regulatory frameworks. Ensuring that food is safe for consumption is not merely a regulatory obligation but a fundamental responsibility across the entire value chain—from farm to fork. The increasing incidences of contamination, adulteration, and food fraud have further intensified the need for robust food safety systems.

Concept and Importance of Food Safety

Food safety refers to the handling, preparation, and storage of food in ways that prevent foodborne illnesses and ensure that food remains safe and wholesome for human consumption. In India, food safety governance is institutionalized through the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which led to the establishment of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. This act consolidates various food-related laws and provides a scientific basis for setting standards across the food sector.

The key objectives of food safety regulations include:

- Establishing science-based food standards
- Regulating manufacturing, storage, distribution, and sale of food
- Ensuring availability of safe and nutritious food to consumers

Food safety is closely linked with public health, trade facilitation, and economic growth. A failure in maintaining food safety standards can result in severe consequences, including export rejections, financial losses, and damage to brand reputation.

Types of Food Contaminants

Food contamination can be primarily classified into chemical and biological hazards:

1. Chemical Contaminants

Chemical hazards enter food through environmental influence, agricultural practices, or food processing methods. The most significant among these include:

- **Heavy Metals:** Toxic elements such as arsenic, lead, mercury, and cadmium.
- **Residues:** Traces of pesticides and veterinary drugs that remain in food products.
- **Environmental Pollutants:** Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) such as dioxins and PCBs.
- **Processing By-products:** Contaminants like acrylamide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons produced during the heating or drying of food.

2. Biological Contaminants

Biological hazards are mainly related to microorganisms and include the following:

- **Bacteria:** Pathogens such as E. coli, Salmonella, and Listeria.
- **Viruses:** Highly contagious agents like Norovirus and Hepatitis A.
- **Parasites:** Organisms like Giardia that cause damage to the digestive system.
- **Fungi:** Molds or fungi that produce toxic by-products known as Aflatoxins.

Additionally, food allergens (e.g., gluten, peanuts, dairy products, and shellfish) are strictly regulated because they can cause severe and sometimes life-threatening allergic reactions.

Understanding Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)

A central concept in food safety, especially in international trade, is the Maximum Residue Limit (MRL). MRLs refer to the highest level of pesticide residue legally permitted in food or animal feed, typically expressed in mg/kg.

MRLs are:

- Based on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
- Designed to ensure safe levels of pesticide exposure
- Established by national authorities or international bodies like Codex Alimentarius

MRLs serve as trade standards, meaning that food products exceeding these limits may be rejected in export markets. Notably:

- Different countries have different MRLs for the same pesticide-crop combination
- In India, MRLs are set by FSSAI
- If no national or Codex MRL exists, a default value (0.01 ppm) is applied
- For spices, a slightly higher default (0.1 ppm) is permitted

This variation creates challenges for exporters, as compliance with one market does not guarantee access to another.

Buyer Requirements for Food Safety

Compliance

Modern buyers, especially in international markets, impose stringent requirements to ensure food safety and quality. Key expectations include:

1. Certifications and Licensing

- Mandatory food safety licenses (e.g., FSSAI in India)
- International certifications like ISO 22000

2. Traceability and Transparency

- Full traceability across the supply chain
- Ability to track food from farm to consumer

3. HACCP Implementation

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) systems help identify, monitor, and control food safety risks.

4. Hygiene and Sanitation

- Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)
- Good Hygiene Practices (GHP)
- Staff training, sanitation protocols, and pest control

5. Quality Management Systems (QMS)

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Continuous monitoring and quality checks

6. Supplier Audits and Documentation

- Regular audits of suppliers
- Maintenance of detailed records for compliance verification

Role of Laboratory Testing in Food Safety

Laboratory testing is essential to verify compliance with food safety standards and ensures that products are microbiologically, chemically, and physically safe before reaching consumers or export markets. It is mandatory that these tests be conducted in NABL-accredited laboratories to guarantee technical accuracy, while export-oriented products must specifically be verified through APEDA-approved laboratories. These facilities must possess a testing scope that aligns precisely with the relevant regulatory requirements for the specific food category. Although testing turnaround time and costs are significant practical considerations, this rigorous process remains the most critical step in safeguarding public health and maintaining the integrity of the supply chain in both domestic and international markets.

Global Variations and Trade Challenges

One of the major challenges in food safety compliance is the variation in regulatory standards across countries. For example:

- **The European Union** has extremely stringent MRLs for contaminants like aflatoxins
- **The United States** allows relatively higher limits
- **Asian countries** differ widely in pesticide residue thresholds

Such disparities often lead to rejection of export consignments. For instance, increased cases of aflatoxin detection in rice exports to the EU highlight the importance of adhering to strict international standards.

Similarly, controversies such as the use of ethylene oxide (EtO) in spices demonstrate how regulatory differences can affect trade. While some countries allow its use within limits, others impose near-zero tolerance, creating compliance complexities for exporters

Organic Food and Residue Standards

Certified organic food follows stringent guidelines under systems like:

- NPOP (National Programme for Organic Production)
- PGS-India (Participatory Guarantee System)

Organic standards prohibit pesticide use, and residue levels must typically be at or below the limit of quantification (0.01 ppm). This makes organic certification both a challenge and an opportunity for exporters targeting premium markets.

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FPO COMPLIANCE AND STATUTORY CALENDER

DATE	JANUARY-26	DATE	FEBRUARY-26	DATE	MARCH-26
07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) / Tax Collected at Source (TCS) for the month of December 2025 Deposit of Equalization Levy for the month of December 2025 	07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) / Tax Collected at Source (TCS) for the month of January 2026 Deposit of Equalization Levy for the month of January 2026 	07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) / Tax Collected at Source (TCS) for the month of February 2026 Deposit of Equalization Levy for the month of February 2026
11	Filing of Monthly GSTR-1 (Return of Outward Supplies) for the month of December 2025	11	Filing of Monthly GSTR-1 (Return of Outward Supplies) for the month of January 2026	11	Filing of Monthly GSTR-1 (Return of Outward Supplies) for the month of February 2026
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Monthly GSTR-6 (Input Service Distributor Return) for the month of December 2025 Filing of Quarterly GSTR-1 (Return of Outward Supplies) for the period October–December 2025 	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Monthly GSTR-6 (Input Service Distributor Return) for the month of January 2026 Filing of Monthly IFF (Invoice Furnishing Facility) for the month of January 2026 for QRMP taxpayers 	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Monthly GSTR-6 (Input Service Distributor Return) for the month of February 2026 Filing of Monthly IFF (Invoice Furnishing Facility) for the month of February 2026 for QRMP taxpayers
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of Provident Fund (PF) and Employee State Insurance (ESI) contributions for the month of December 2025 Filing of Quarterly TCS Statement for the period October–December 2025 Professional Tax of employees for the preceding month 	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of Provident Fund (PF) and Employee State Insurance (ESI) contributions for the month of January 2026 Issuance of TDS Certificate (other than salary) for the period October–December 2025 Filing of Employees' Professional Tax (PT) return for the preceding month 	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deposit of Provident Fund (PF) and Employee State Insurance (ESI) contributions for the month of February 2026 Deposit of 100% of Advance Tax for the Financial Year 2025–26 Filing of Employees' Professional Tax (PT) return for the preceding month
20	Filing of GSTR-3B (Summary Return) for the month of December 2025 – For taxpayers with an aggregate turnover of more than ₹5 crore in the preceding financial year	20	Filing of GSTR-3B (Summary Return) for the month of January 2026 – For taxpayers with an aggregate turnover of more than ₹5 crore in the preceding financial year	20	Filing of GSTR-3B (Summary Return) for the month of February 2026 – For taxpayers with an aggregate turnover of more than ₹5 crore in the preceding financial year
22	Filing of GSTR-3B (Summary Return) for the period October–December 2025 – For taxpayers with an aggregate turnover of up to ₹5 crore in the preceding financial year and registered in specific 14 States/Union Territories	25	Filing of PMT-06 Challan for GST payment by taxpayers with an aggregate turnover of up to ₹5 crore in the preceding financial year, in cases where sufficient Input Tax Credit (ITC) is not available for the month of January 2026	25	Filing of PMT-06 Challan for GST payment by taxpayers with an aggregate turnover of up to ₹5 crore in the preceding financial year, in cases where sufficient Input Tax Credit (ITC) is not available for the month of February 2026
24	Filing of GSTR-3B (Summary Return) for the period October–December 2025 – For taxpayers with an aggregate turnover of up to ₹5 crore in the preceding financial year and registered in specific 22 States/Union Territories			31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Form CMP-02 to opt for the Composition Scheme for the upcoming Financial Year 2025–26 Filing of Form RFD-11 (LUT) for the upcoming Financial Year 2025–26
30	Issuance of TCS Certificate for the period October–December 2025				
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filing of Quarterly TDS Statement for the period October–December 2025 Filing of Form No. 3CEAC by an Indian resident entity in cases where the parent entity of the international group is a non-resident (considering the parent entity's accounting year as April 2024 – March 2025) 				

Annual General Meeting (AGM) compliances as per the Companies Act, 2013:

1. Last date for Annual General Meeting – 30 September 2025
2. Filing of Form AOC-4 with Registrar of Companies (annual report including balance sheet and profit and loss statement): Within 30 days of Annual General Meeting. Filing of Form MGT-7 with Registrar of Companies (annual return): Within 60 days of the Annual General Meeting

Disclaimer: The above information are some key compliances under the Income Tax Act, 1961, the GST Act, the Companies Act, the Provident Fund Act, the ESI Act, etc. The information contained in this document have been compiled from published sources believed to be reliable. The information is only for general guidance and is not meant to be a substitute for professional, technical or legal advice in any manner.

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