

**EIMA Agrimach India 2011**  
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**Speech of Mr V Venkatachalam, Special Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture**

Dignitaries on the dais, distinguished guests and invitees, delegates and participants from India and abroad, members of the press, my dear farmers, agriculturists and friends

I extend a warm welcome to all of you to the second edition of EIMA AGRIMACH INDIA, 2011. I congratulate FICCI, UNOCOMA, Italy and Ministry of Agriculture for organizing this International Exhibition and Conference on Agriculture Machinery and Equipments. I am confident that these three days will unfold immense opportunity to farmers, service providers and industrialists to see, collaborate, discuss and share experiences in the areas of latest technology in Farm Mechanization and Agro Processing Industries. The outcome, I believe, will go a long way in bringing the much desired growth in agricultural mechanization in India.

At the very beginning, let me acknowledge that because of continuous efforts of our farming community supported by Government initiatives and stakeholder's participation, foodgrain production has reached a record level of 241.6 million tonnes in 2010-11. Production of wheat, pulses, oil seeds and cotton have also been the highest ever during 2010-11. I congratulate all of you for this great achievement.

While I see more encouraging results in the near future, a lot still needs to be done. Demand of food grains will grow rapidly in next few decades not only due to growing population but also due to rise in per capita income and various governmental interventions to ensure food and nutritional security to less advantaged people. Thus, we have to put more emphasis on enhancing agricultural production for ensuring food and nutritional security of our nation.

However, increased focus on enhancing agricultural production has its own challenges. There will be more pressure on land and water, in view of the progressive fragmentation of land holdings, degrading natural resource base and emerging concerns of climate change. We also have to look for sustainable agricultural growth against the backdrop of limited availability of natural resources especially cultivable land. Thus, increase in agricultural production would have to come mainly from enhancement in farm productivity in the existing cultivated area.

Farm mechanization, as we all know, has immense potential for improving farm productivity. Appropriate crop and region specific agricultural equipments enable efficient utilization of farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, plant protection chemicals

and water for irrigation, in addition to alleviation of drudgery associated with various farm operations, making farming an attractive enterprise.

Though we are witnessing considerable progress in farm mechanization, its spread across the length and breadth of our country still remains uneven. Our farm power availability is at present 1.66 Kw /ha which is much lower as compared to Korea (+7 kw/ha), Japan(+14kw/ha), USA(+7kw/ha). In order to attain the projected demand of 280 million tonnes of foodgrains by the year 2020-21, we need to scale up our farm power availability to at least 2.0 Kw/ha by the end of XIIth Plan. For achieving this we need an inclusive growth of farm mechanization.

So far in our country, 'Tractor' has been the major driver for agriculture mechanization. Designers and manufacturers have been relying on tractor as a major source of farm power and thus we see that the majority of the commercially available farm implements are tractor driven.

However, as we all know, Indian agriculture is dominated by small and marginal farmers, whose smaller landholding and weaker economic status render them 'economically unviable' for single ownership of many of the high-value agricultural machinery and equipments especially tractors.

Therefore, I urge all of you to have a 'relook' and 'reengineer' farm mechanization so that we can effectively bring small and marginal farmers in the fold of mechanization. I believe that the future of farm mechanization in India lies in the success of design, development and easy availability of low-cost agricultural machineries and equipments that would not only suit the requirements of our diverse natural resources but also match the economic strength of the large and relatively low productive 'bottom of the pyramid' Indian Agriculture.

As you are all aware, Agriculture Ministry is already promoting farm mechanization through various schemes and programmes. But in order to lay a special emphasis on farm mechanization and to bring more inclusiveness, we have proposed a dedicated National Mission on Agricultural. Mechanization for the XIIth Plan which not only includes the traditional component of training, testing, demonstration of agricultural machinery and procurement subsidy but also includes-Farm Machinery Banks for Custom Hiring, Hi-Tech High Productive Equipments Centres on custom hiring model, and Farm Mechanisation in selected villages for enhancing productivity and creating ownership of appropriate farm equipments among small & marginal farmers.

While we will put our whole hearted efforts to promote accelerated farm mechanization in every farm, in every corner of our Country, I would also urge my friends from Industry to collaborate with us so that the benefit of farm mechanization reach all categories of farmers. I appreciate the excellent work done by the Industries for promoting farm mechanization in India. The Industry has been showing tremendous innovation and zeal in bringing and developing appropriate technologies, creating awareness and making farm equipments more affordable to

end users. I request you to consider supporting or franchising rural entrepreneurs for establishing custom hiring or farm service centers all over India so that farmers, especially small and marginal farmers, can benefit from capital intensive equipments such as tractors, combine harvesters, sugarcane harvesters, cotton pickers etc. I strongly feel that only through the approach of custom hiring, we shall be able to accelerate farm mechanization in the country. Agriculture Ministry will lend its full support to Industries willing to work on such farmer friendly models.

I am aware that the Industry faces delays in getting their machinery and equipments certified by FMTTI' s. We have been working on this issue in the last one year. I am happy to inform you that we have designated 24 Agricultural Universities/Institutions and some of the State Government run Testing Centres for testing and certifying agricultural equipments and implements. We have also designated CIAE, Bhopal and Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana for conducting performance testing for bigger machines such as Combine Harvesters etc. I hope this will significantly lower the downtime in getting agricultural machinery tested and certified.

Before I conclude, I once again congratulate the organizers and participants of this event and hope that this will bring all Stakeholders on a single platform for exchanging ideas and developing business relations in a mutually beneficial manner.

I wish EIMA AGRIMACH 2011 a great success.