Syllabus subtopic: e-technology in the aid of farmers.

Prelims and Mains focus: About the new Fund to be set up and its significance; about ICAR: role and mandate

News: A system will soon be put in place to scientifically validate, scale up and propagate the innovations of progressive farmers as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is poised to set up a Farmers' Innovation Fund (FIF).

What is it about?

• As part of this system, an innovation centre would be established in New Delhi where the innovations would be scientifically validated.
• Farmers would also be allowed to pursue research under the system.
• Though innovations of farmers were being documented by the Krishi Vigyan Kendras, the additional system would encourage farmers to continue their work.
• The intention was to link farmers and farming with science and to ensure that their farm practices were science-based.
• As part of efforts to encourage use of technology in the farm sector, a linkage had been created between 105 startups with farmers.

Why science is crucial for agriculture?

Agriculture is pure science. If we do not apply the principles of science to agriculture, then we will fail. Various revolutions in agricultural and allied sectors, including green revolution and white revolutions, happened because of scientific approach and use of technology.

About Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)

• It is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India.
Formerly known as Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, it was established on 16 July 1929 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 in pursuance of the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. The ICAR has its headquarters at New Delhi.

The Council is the apex body for co-ordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in the entire country. With 101 ICAR institutes and 71 agricultural universities spread across the country this is one of the largest national agricultural systems in the world.

The ICAR has played a pioneering role in ushering Green Revolution and subsequent developments in agriculture in India through its research and technology development that has enabled the country to increase the production of food grains by 5 times, horticultural crops by 9.5 times, fish by 12.5 times, milk 7.8 times and eggs 39 times since 1951 to 2014, thus making a visible impact on the national food and nutritional security. It has played a major role in promoting excellence in higher education in agriculture. It is engaged in cutting edge areas of science and technology development and its scientists are internationally acknowledged in their fields.

Mandate

The mandate of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is:

- To plan, undertake, aid, promote and coordinate education, research and its application in agriculture, agroforestry, animal husbandry, fisheries, home science and allied sciences.

- To act as a clearing house of research and general information relating to agriculture, animal husbandry, home science and allied sciences, and fisheries through its publications and information system; and instituting and promoting transfer of technology programmes.

- To provide, undertake and promote consultancy services in the fields of
education, research, training and dissemination of information in agriculture, agroforestry, animal husbandry, fisheries, home science and allied sciences.

- To look into the problems relating to broader areas of rural development concerning agriculture, including postharvest technology by developing co-operative programmes with other organizations such as the Indian Council of Social Science Research, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and the universities.

- To do other things considered necessary to attain the objectives of the Society.