The Centre has created a National Farmers' Database with records of 5.5 crore farmers, which it hopes to increase to 8 crore farmers by December by linking it to State land record databases, according to Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

Agriculture has to be linked with digital technology, scientific research and knowledge.

The national database was created by taking data from existing national schemes such as PM-KISAN, soil health cards and the insurance scheme PM Fasal Bima Yojna.

So far, 5.5 crore farmers had been identified in this manner.

The Minister urged the States to create their own databases using the national database's federated structure and also allow linkages to the land records maintained by the States.

With the help of State governments, a total of eight crore farmers would be included by the end of the year, he said.

He also urged them to study the Karnataka model for digital agriculture presented at the conference.

The database could be used “for targeted service delivery with higher efficiency and in a focussed and time-bound manner” and that it was the core for the proposed Agristack digital agriculture ecosystem.

Already, companies such as Microsoft, Amazon and Patanjali had been asked to develop technology solutions for farmers using data from the database.

Activists have raised privacy and consent concerns about using farmers' data in such a way.