

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURE CODE

### Why in News?

THE BUREAU of Indian Standards (BIS) has begun the process of formulating a National Agriculture Code (NAC), on the lines of the existing National Building Code and National Electrical Code.

### What is the NAC?

- The BIS is the national body which sets standards for different products across various economic sectors.
- In agriculture, it has already set standards for machinery (tractors, harvesters, etc.) and various inputs (fertilisers, pesticides, etc.) However, many areas are not covered under BIS standards.
  - ✓ For example, there is no standard for practices like the preparation of fields, micro irrigation or water use.
- The NAC will cover the entire agriculture cycle, and will also contain a guidance note for future standardisation.
- It will serve as a guide for farmers, agriculture universities, and officials in the sector.

**The code will have two parts.**

1. **The first will contain general principles for all crops, and**
2. **The second will deal with crop-specific standards for paddy, wheat, oil seeds, and pulses.**

### What will the NAC cover?

- In addition to standards for agriculture machinery, the NAC will cover all agriculture processes and post-harvest operations, such as crop selection, land preparation, sowing/transplanting, irrigation/drainage, soil health

management, plant health management, harvesting/threshing, primary processing, post-harvest, sustainability, and record maintenance.

- It will also include standards for input management, like use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides, and weedicides, as well as standards for crop storage and traceability.
- The NAC will cover new and emerging areas in agriculture such as the use of Internet of-Things (IoT).
- Essentially, it is a network of physical objects—“things”— that are embedded with sensors, software, and other technologies for connecting and exchanging data with other devices and systems over the internet.
- In agriculture, this would include technologies like precision farming, in which farmers get real-time soil, crop, and weather information that can be used to adjust their inputs.

## What are the stated objects of the NAC?

According to the BIS, the objectives are:

- To create an implementable national code covering recommendations for agriculture practices taking agro climatic zones, crop type, socio economic diversity of the country and all aspects of agri food value chain into consideration;
- To act as an enabler of quality culture in Indian agriculture by providing the required reference to policy makers, agriculture departments and regulators for incorporating the provisions of NAC in their schemes, policies, or regulations;
- To create a comprehensive guide for the farming community to ensure effective decision making in agricultural practices;
- To integrate relevant Indian Standards with recommended agricultural practices.
- To address the horizontal aspects of agriculture such as SMART farming, sustain ability, traceability and documentation; and

- To aid in the capacity building program organized by agriculture extension services and civil society organisations.

## What is the proposed time line?

- The BIS has already formulated a strategy to standardise practices.
- It has formed working panels for 12-14 specifically identified areas, which will include university professors and R &D organisations.
- These panels will draft the code, with a tentative deadline for the NAC set as October 2025.
- After this, the BIS plans to provide training to farmers on the NAC and its standards.

## What are Standardised Agriculture Demonstration Farms?

- ✓ Apart from drafting the NAC, the BIS has also taken initiative to setup 'Standardised Agriculture Demonstration Farms' (SADFs) in selected agriculture institutes in the country.
- ✓ SADFs will serve as experimental sites for testing and implementing various agricultural practices and new technologies, in accordance with the NAC.
- ✓ For the development of these specialised farms, the BIS plans to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with premier agricultural institutes.