Karnataka's first Farmer Producer Organisation to produce seeds in Dharwad

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By Arunkumar Huralimath
Express News Service

HUBBALLI: To be self-dependent, a group of farmers from Navalgund in Dharwad district has made a company to produce seeds. If everything goes according to their plan, the farmers will get their own company seeds by the next monsoon.

Farmers have formed Kalmeshwara Farmer Producer Company in Navalgund. This is the first Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) in the state. University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka State Seed and Organic Certification Agency, NABARD bank, and Deshpande Foundation has facilitated seed production activity.

There are 20 farmers in the company who are shareholders too. All together they will grow green grams in 50 acres of land. They are expecting about 200 quintals of production which will be used for seed production. Experts from the varsity,
state seed agency will be visiting the fields during the cultivation. After the crop, it will be tested for germination and other processes at the varsity. Once it gives expected results, the varsity will help to produce the seeds which can be used for sowing in the next monsoon.

A seed expert said, nowadays farmers are not storing their own seeds as compared to older generations of farmers who used to store the best seeds for next sowing. Because of these practices, the future of agriculture with a high dependency on seed companies and other institutions is bleak, farmers have to develop self-dependence.

Praveen Sherewad of Ballarawada village, who is a farmer and also vice president of Kalmeshwara Farmer Producer Company, said he has completed the sowing of green grams at four acres of land for seed purpose. All 20 farmers have completed sowing as per the direction of experts from the varsity and state seed agency. "We all are happy that we have formed the state's first FPO which will produce our own seeds for farmers. We will produce good quality seeds which will be given to farmers at low cost," he added.

Chandrasekhara Swamy M T, Programme Manager, FPO, Deshpande Foundation, during the monsoon, farmers will be having confusion over different companies and the trust of the seeds. If the farmers produce their own seed with the help of varsity and other experts, farmers will have confidence in such seed and the varsity will keep updating technology and seed too.

"As a pilot project, the farmers have been growing green gram, after its success, there are plans to produce seeds of onion, groundnut, millets, bengal gram, vegetable seeds and more," he added.

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