

Tobacco Board pitches for mechanisation

- ◆ Chairman Raghunath Babu says farmers have to go for use of machines in view of growing shortage of agriculture labourers due to urbanisation
- ◆ Observes working of machine used for planting of saplings at Jangareddygudem
- ◆ Says the Union govt is providing 50% subsidy for purchase of planters besides loans from banks

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Vijayawada: Mechanisation has many advantages in the field of agriculture and farmers in Andhra Pradesh are adopting it for a long time in cultivation of crops like paddy, sugarcane. Now, the mechanisation has made its entry into tobacco cultivation also.

Due to shortage of agriculture labourers in rural areas, farmers are giving priority for mechanisation for cost effective cultivation as well as to save the valuable time. A planter machine for sowing of tobacco saplings has been introduced by a progressive



Tobacco Board chairman Yadlapati Raghunatha Babu interacting with media persons in Vijayawada on Monday

farmer in Jangareddygudem in West Godavari on Sunday. Initially, plantation will be taken up in 50 acre on experimental basis and its results will come out in three months.

Tobacco Board chairman Yadlapati Raghunatha Babu, who is trying to promote mechanisation in tobacco cultivation, visited Jangareddygudem and personally observed the functioning of the planter machine and spoke to the farmers.

Interacting with a section of media here on Monday, Raghunatha Babu said due to unavoidable circumstances, the

farmers have to adopt mechanisation for survival. He said there were many advantages with mechanised farming. The Tobacco Board chairman said the availability of labourers for agriculture works was declining in the state due to increasing urbanisation. He said the cost of production would come down and output would increase with planting of saplings in a scientific manner using a planter, which is attached to the tractor. He said the Union government would sanction subsidy and encourage bankers to sanction loans to the farmers to buy planters for cultivation of tobacco.

He said tobacco was one of the important crops in Prakasam and West Godavari districts and many farmers choose tobacco due to scarcity of water. He further said the mechanisation can be introduced in curing of tobacco too wherein loose leaf can be cured instead of traditional curing system in the barns. He said farmers can use manure properly, reduce utilisation of water and get more output with planters. Each planter costs Rs 3 lakh and the Union government provides a subsidy of Rs 1.50 lakh and bankers will render assistance in the form of loans, said the chairman.