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AP tobacco farmers seek irrigation, financial aid as climate uncertainty raises cultivation costs

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Vijayawada: Tobacco growers have urged govt to protect their livelihoods from excessive taxation and international regulatory pressures. They warned that steep taxes on tobacco products could encourage illicit trade and hurt demand for legally grown tobacco. They also demanded a say in global policy decisions that affect cultivation.



Tobacco growers rally in Jangareddigudem on Wednesday

The demands were raised at a meeting held in Jangareddygudem of Eluru district on Wednesday to mark World Tobacco Growers' Day. Farmers said climate uncertainty and rising cultivation costs have added to their problems. They sought practical alternatives before being asked to shift to other crops.

"Tobacco supports our families and provides employment to agricultural labourers. Any move to restrict cultivation must consider farmers' incomes and local conditions," said tobacco grower P Narsareddy. Another grower, Vasamsetti Satyanarayana, said changing weather patterns had made farming more difficult. "Rainfall and temperatures have become unpredictable. Input and labour costs are also rising. We need irrigation facilities, technical guidance and financial support to protect our crops," he said. Pinnamaneni Srinivasa Rao said crop diversification would work only if alternative crops offered assured markets and good returns. "Farmers cannot shift crops based on advice alone. The govt must show that alternatives are viable. It should also ensure procurement and market support before asking growers to switch," he said.

Growers expressed concern over international measures under the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. They said global discussions on tobacco cultivation and crop substitution should include farmers and agricultural experts. They argued that policies must consider local soil conditions, employment and rural economies.

The farmers also sought support to deal with climate risks. They called for better irrigation, crop rotation and reduced chemical use. They said sustainable farming practices should protect both the environment and farmers' incomes.

Growers further warned that excessive taxation could push more tobacco sales into illegal channels. This could weaken the market for legally grown tobacco and affect farmers who depend on regulated trade. They called for stricter action against smuggling and counterfeit products. The growers said govts should balance public health objectives with the economic needs of farming communities. They urged authorities to consult farmers before taking decisions that could affect their livelihoods.

Farmers said sustainability should protect both the environment and rural livelihoods. They highlighted efforts to adopt drip irrigation, crop rotation, reduced chemical inputs and climate-resilient practices. They also opposed pushing farmers towards alternative crops without viable economic options, warning that such policies could threaten the livelihoods of millions of rural families and undermine their economic stability.

Source: *https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/ap-tobacco-farmers-seek-irrigation-financial-aid-as-climate-uncertainty-raises-cultivation-costs/articleshow/135274503.cms*