Indian Economy · GS - III

What is Integrated Farming System? How is it helpful to small and marginal farmers in India?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2022	GS - III	Indian Economy

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

An Integrated Farming System (IFS) combines complementary farm enterprises such as crops, livestock, fisheries, poultry, horticulture and agroforestry. Recycling by-products, diversifying income and spreading production risks can improve resource efficiency and resilience, making IFS particularly useful for small and marginal farmers with limited land and capital.

Model Answer

Introduction

An Integrated Farming System is a coordinated combination of agricultural and allied activities in which the output or waste of one enterprise becomes an input for another.

Benefits for Small and Marginal Farmers

1. Income Diversification: Combining crops with dairy, poultry, fisheries or horticulture creates multiple income streams and reduces dependence on a single harvest.

2. Resource Recycling: Crop residues can feed livestock, while dung can produce manure or biogas. Pond water and organic waste may support other farm activities.

3. Higher Productivity: Complementary enterprises improve the use of land, labour, water and farm resources throughout the year.

4. Risk Reduction: Diversification limits the impact of crop failure, pests, drought or price fluctuations on total household income.

5. Employment and Nutrition: Allied activities create year-round rural employment and improve access to milk, eggs, fish, fruits and vegetables.

6. Sustainability: Organic manure, efficient water use and nutrient recycling can reduce dependence on costly external inputs.

Challenges and Way Forward

IFS requires initial investment, technical knowledge, market access and suitable local planning. Extension services, affordable institutional credit, farmer training, producer organisations and region-specific models can improve adoption.

Conclusion

IFS offers small and marginal farmers a practical route towards diversified income, resource efficiency and climate resilience. Its success depends on adapting enterprise combinations to local ecology, skills and market demand.

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