***Roadshow in Hyderabad***

***Rajasthan Agriculture Minister Makes a strong pitch for ‘GRAM’ and Investment***

   Rajasthan seeks technology and investments to strengthen agri sector

   State to hold GRAM – a global agri-technology and business event in November 2016.

   Investment invited in the agriculture sector

**Jaipur, 01 August**: Rajasthan’s Agriculture Minister, Shri Prabhu Lal Saini today made a strong pitch for participation in ‘GRAM’ and invited investments in agriculture sector in Rajasthan. He was speaking at a Roadshow in Hyderabad today for the forthcoming ‘Global Rajasthan Agritech Meet-2016’ (GRAM 2016) to be held at Jaipur from November 9 to 11, 2016. The Minister highlighted the new regulations, grants and policies of the Rajasthan State in agriculture and allied sectors. He invited farmers/industrialists from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to partner with Rajasthan in agri and related sectors.

The Minister said that the Rajasthan Chief Minister, Smt. Vasundhara Raje has been relentlessly working with a single minded focus to take the state's agriculture sector into top gear and ‘GRAM’ is a major initiative. ‘GRAM’ will have exhibition, industry wise discussions on productivity, innovation etc. Rajasthan presents several opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors in agriculture sector.

Mr. Saini said that we have had several challenges in our endeavour to make Rajasthan a  top agriculture state but our state Government has taken upon these challenges head on and converted them into opportunities. Rajasthan has been working towards farm productivity enhancement despite the challenges of being a desert State. He further added that Rajasthan desert has been converted into an advantage by doing international standard date palm farming in the desert areas in the last two years and there has been good progress. The first olive refinery has come up in the State. Rajasthan is exporting milk products in the form of ‘paneer’ to Dubai and Singapore, he said.

Speaking on the occasion Mr Kuldeep Ranka said, the Rajasthan state has transformed in the last few decades. The State Government realised that Agriculture is singularly contributing to the state's GDP and employment, therefore the state has initiated GRAM, a first of its kind in the state. The general perception is of Rajasthan being a dry and desert state, the rapid strides made in the last few years has put it on a path of progress in Agriculture and today 39% of the cultivation is done under irrigation and several ambitious projects are in the pipeline. Unlike in many other states, land availability is not an issue in Rajasthan. The theme of the ‘GRAM’ is empowerment of farmers, it has several sessions devoted to technology, productivity etc. Over 50,000 farmers are expected to attend GRAM.

Mr. Devendra Surana, Chairman, Telangana State Council, FICCI said that today, Rajasthan has moved a long way from the era of population migrating to other regions to seek employment to generating employment. Last few years no people have been coming from Rajasthan, that's a testimony to the transformation of the state.

Mr Pramod Kumar Gupta,M.D., Musaddilal Projects Ltd., said, Rajasthan is second to none in the ease of doing business in the country.

Mr M Prabhakara Rao**,**Chairman, AP, FICCI State Council & MD, Nuziveedu Seeds Pvt. Ltd., narrating his own experience in doing business in Rajasthan, said, we sell seeds in Rajasthan and I see a big transformation in the last two decades in the agriculture sector and the state on the whole. The state looks much more green now, that shows the effort from the state government in its progress. The state produces vegetables not only to satisfy its needs but also to cater to the needs of Delhi. It can do even better with the kind of infrastructure it has, he said.

Focusing on technological innovations and high-yield practices in Agriculture and Allied Sectors, the primary objective of GRAM 2016 is to ensure the economic empowerment of the farmers through accelerated yet sustainable growth in agriculture and to double farmer’s income by 2022. Farmers here would be taught various new techniques to be used which would help them earn more yields. For example they will be educated about the methods of drip irrigation which will help them to overcome drought like situations.

Rajasthan shall showcase investment opportunities in the sector involving products like pressure irrigation, solar pumps, custom hiring of farm machinery & implements, farm mechanisation, agro-processing etc. The international event - with representations from Netherlands, Israel, Australia and Canada - will be attended by over 50,000 farmers.

This event will feature an Exhibition showcasing strengths of the Rajasthan agricultural sector, Live demonstrations of latest agro technologies and equipments, B2B & B2G meetings with national and foreign partners, Conference on knowledge sharing and best agri practices and a networking session between the agri industry, academia and policy makers including Government officials. It will provide a common platform for bringing everyone involved in the full value chain of agricultural ecosystem – farmers, academicians, scientists, technologists, agribusiness companies and policy makers.

Rajasthan is a strong performer in agriculture with ten agro climatic zones. Government of Rajasthan has initiated innumerable policy changes in agriculture in recent past that relates to technological and infrastructural interventions for sustainable enhancement of farm productivity, reducing post harvest losses and promoting farm based industries.

GRAM will also offer a platform for companies and service providers to showcase their latest offerings and global best-practices in farming & allied activities to over 50,000 agriculturists from Rajasthan. Investors from across the globe will be able to tap the scope and potential of doing business with over 50,000 farmers who are expected to attend this three-day meet.

GRAM 2016 – being organized in association with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) - is an attempt to make the farm sector to move up the value chain, attract Agri businesses, processing, packaging industries in the Agri and allied sectors.

For building up the main event, FICCI jointly with the Government of Rajasthan organized a roadshow at Hyderabad on 1 August 2016 at Hotel Taj Krishna with the objective of sharing the benefits of being part of GRAM 2016. Minister of Agriculture Shri Prabhu Lal Saini presided over the event. Mr Kuldeep Ranka, Secretary - Women & Child Development, Government of Rajasthan; said that the objective of the roadshow was to showcase investment opportunities in agribusiness & allied sectors in Rajasthan and position the State as a preferred investment destination.