

Agriculture Information just a call away! Kisan Call Centres launched

Farmers can dial a toll free number 1551 from any part of the country and get access to agricultural information.

The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India launched Kisan Call Centers on January 21, 2004 across the country to deliver extension services to the farming community. The purpose of these call centers is to respond to issues raised by farmers, instantly, in the local language. These call centers are expected to handle traffic from any part of the country. Queries related to agriculture and allied sectors are being addressed through these centers. They would provide answers to questions from farmers in their local language.

To begin with, Kisan Call Centers have been initiated at 8 premier institutions of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation on a pilot basis for meeting the requirements of different states. The eight centers are in Mumbai, Kanpur, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Delhi and Kolkata. These call centers are manned by Agricultural graduates at the 1st level. They receive the telephone calls from the farmers and respond to a certain extent. At the second level 3-6 subject matter specialists (SMSs) are positioned as a team who would be able to answer most of the queries directed here.

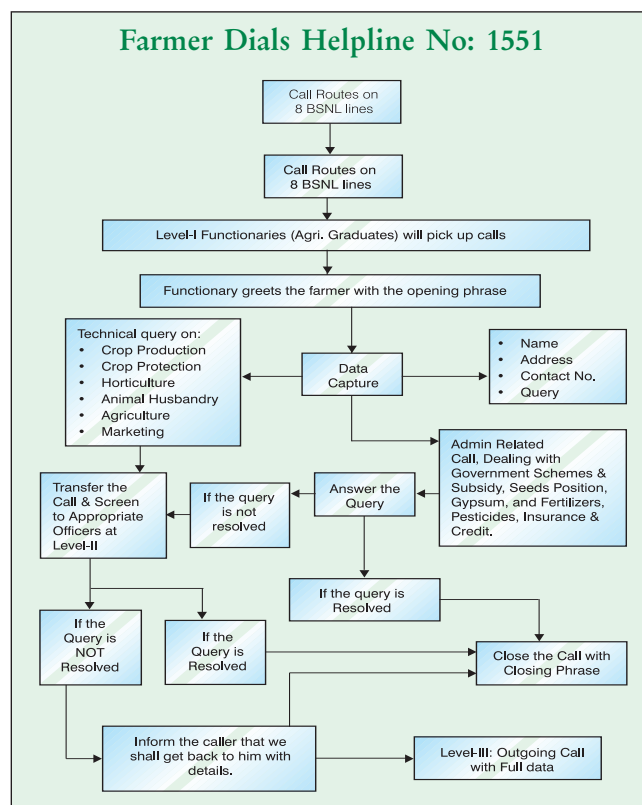
It was proposed to take advantage of the professionally managed Call Centre mechanism and dovetail it with the specialized Subject Matter Specialists knowledge of Agricultural Scientists and Extension Officers, so as to facilitate its reach to the farming community. The existing specialized infrastructure of Call Centers is being utilized and this communication backbone made available to the Subject Matter Specialists of Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Marketing and other related areas. The Kisan Call Center, consists of three levels:

Level-I. The call coming to the call center is picked up by an operator (level-I functionary) who after a short welcome message takes down the basic information and the query of the caller, along with the question being asked by the farmer. These details are fed into a computer by the operator. The first level operator is an agricultural graduate with a rural background and knows the local language. They are expected to answer a majority of the questions asked by the farmers.

Level-II (Subject Matter Specialists on concerned important crops and enterprises, connected through good bandwidth telecom and computer connectivity) Level-II has Subject Matter Specialists (SMS) who are

at their respective place (Research Stations, ATICs, KVKs, Agricultural colleges) of work. In case the first level operator is not able to answer the question, the operator forwards the call (in call sharing mode) to the concerned Subject Matter Specialist. Over 70% of the questions from the first level get answered at this level. In case, it is not possible to answer, there is a system to revert back to the caller by post / fax / e-mail or by telephone in 72 hours.

Level-III (the Management Group to ensure ultimate resolution of all the farmers' queries which are not resolved at Level-II, connected on off line mode). Level-III consists of a dedicated cell located at the Nodal Office. This receives the questions that have not been answered at the first and the second levels as well as IVR (interactive voice recording) calls. Appropriate replies to these questions are framed in consultation with the concerned specialists available within or outside the State, by the nodal cell. The replies are sent to the farmers promptly by post/e-mail/fax/ telephone etc. within 72 hours of receipt of the question.



The list of Administrative Directorate for each state /UT is given here.

Sl. No.	Location of the Call Center	States covered	Corresponding Institutions Level III
1.	Mumbai	Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa & Diu & Daman	Dr. A.K. Barik, Director In-charge Directorate of Cotton Development, 14, Ramjibhai, Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate, P.B. No. 1002, Mumbai - 400 038 Fax : 022-22611449. Ph: 022-22611964/65
2.	Kanpur	Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh Uttar Pradesh & Uttaranchal	Dr. A.K. Tiwari, Director In-charge, Directorate of Pulses Development, Vindyachal Bhawan, Bhopal Fax : 0755-2571678. Ph: 0755-2571678, 2416589 Shri Dinesh Rai, IAS, MD National Cooperative Development Corporation, Hauz Khas, New Delhi. Fax : 011-26962370. Ph : 011-26510314, 26515917
3.	Bangalore	Karnataka Kerala & Lakshadweep	Director Coconut Development Board, Regional Office-cum-Technology Center, Hulimavu, Bannerghatta Road, Besides Horticulture Farm, Govt. of Karnataka, Bangalore South, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560 076. Telefax : 080-5522747 Director Coconut Development Board, Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India, Khera Bhavan, SRVHS Road, Cochin, Kerala -682 011 Fax : 0484-2377902 Ph : 0484-2377267/2362237/2369248
4.	Chennai	Tamil Nadu and Andaman & Nicobar	Shri K.V. Subramanian, Director Coconut Development Board, Regional Office, AF 6/2204, 7 th Street, 11 th Main Road, Annanagar, Chennai - 600 040 Fax : 044-26286732. Ph : 044-26286640
5.	Hyderabad	Andhra Pradesh	Shri. A.K. Goel, Director General, National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030. Fax : 040-24015388. Ph : 040-24015253.
6.	Chandigarh	Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab	Dr. G.K. Choudhary, Director, Directorate of Wheat Development, C.G.O. Complex-I, 3 rd Floor, Kamala Nehru Nagar, Ghaziabad-201 002. Fax : 0120-2711380. Ph : 0120-2710897
7.	Delhi	Rajasthan Haryana, Delhi	Shri Ajoy Mehta, Director General, National Institute of Agricultural Marketing, Kota Road, Bambala, Near Sangener, Jaipur-303 906 Fax : 0141-2771858 / 2770051. Ph : 0141-2771858 Shri Alok Kumar Jain, IAS, Managing Director, National Horticulture Board, Plot No. 85, Sector - 18, Institutional Area, Gurgaon-122015, Harayana Fax : 0124-2342991. Ph: 0124-2342992
8.	Kolkata	West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Jharkand Assam, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura	Dr. S.K.Biswas, Director, Directorate of Jute Development, Nizam Palace Campus, 234/4, Acharaya J.C. Bose Road, Kolkata - 700 020 Fax : 033-22479521. Ph : 033-22479337/22479465 Shri G.S. Dutt, IAS, Managing Director Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC), NCUI Building, 5th Floor, August Kranti Marg, 3, Siri Institutional Area, Hauz Khas, New Delhi - 100 016 Fax : 011-26862367. Ph : 26862365

MANAGE has been identified for capacity building of Subject Matter Specialists who would manage Kisan Call Centres at level II in days to come. In this connection, an orientation programme was organized for level II functionaries of the proposed Kisan Call Centres (KCC), at MANAGE during January 2nd and 3rd 2004. Around 83 officials participated in the programme.

National Workshop

Narrow Casting on Doordarshan - Learning from each Other

The project on “Mass Media support to Agricultural Extension” is a new initiative under the 10th Five Year Plan. The primary objective of this project is to use television and radio to reach a wide audience, for delivering farm level extension services. As a part of this project a two-day workshop on ‘Narrow Casting on Doordarshan – Learning from each other’ was organized at MANAGE during January 2-3, 2004.

The objectives were to:

- Develop a common understanding among the delegates about the project “ Use of Media in Agricultural Extension” with a focus on Narrow Casting.
- Share experiences related to the use of mass media particularly television for reaching the farming/rural community
- Identify and network with media related human resources within and outside the public domain and learn from each other



- Work out a plan for content creation, delivery and coordination mechanism between the stakeholders at the local level.

Around 38 participants representing the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, Doordarshan, District Administration, Department of Agriculture and Media experts participated in the workshop. Senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Shri. Sudeep Banerjee, Additional Secretary, Shri. A.K. Agarwal, Joint Secretary and Mrs. Ranjana Dev Sarmah, Deputy Secretary, Government of India, New Delhi participated in the workshop deliberations.

There were presentations on Narrow casting in India, case studies of narrow casting and sharing of experiences by the participants. Shri. R.C.A. Jain, Secretary, Agriculture, mentioned that launching a separate channel for agriculture broadcasting can be an effective measure for disseminating the technologies to the farmers. Shri. Sudeep Banerjee, Additional Secretary, mentioned that TV and radio are powerful media in agricultural extension and narrow casting area specific programmes, focusing on local needs will make this initiative successful. Shri. A.K. Agarwal, Joint Secretary (Extension), stressed the need for a coordinated effort at the district level to make the programme successful. Shri K.S. Sarma, Chief Executive Officer, Prasar Bharati, New Delhi reiterated that it was time for media, extension functionaries and the scientists to join hands and work in synergy to help the farming community.

Success Story under Agrilclinic and Agribusiness Centres Scheme

Sree Maa Guru Gramodyog Samsthan, Varanasi

Sree Maa Guru Gramodyog Samsthan, a voluntary organisation based at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh is a recognized training centre under the Agrilclinic and Agribusiness Centres Scheme. In the first batch itself, the organisation has facilitated establishment of 33 Agrilclinics and Agribusiness Centres thus providing self-employment opportunities to 33 Agri graduates and providing value added extension services to thousands of farmers.

Strict screening of the candidates, ensuring the support of family members of candidates, farmers of

the surrounding areas, bankers and agriculture department officials, ensuring bankable projects and arranging security contributed to the success of this scheme. Honorable Union Agriculture Minister Shri. Rajnath Singh distributed the loans to the agriculture graduates in the presence of 5000 farmers and Director General, ICAR, Dr. Mangala Rai and Director General of MANAGE Shri. A.K.Goel. The Union Bank of India has financed all the projects. MANAGE congratulates Sree Maa Guru Gramodyog Samsthan and Nodal Officer Shri. S.P. Singh on this grand success.

Training Programme

Private-Public Partnership in Agricultural Extension Management

A banner programme on “Private-Public Partnership in Agricultural Extension Management” was organized by MANAGE, Hyderabad in partnership with United Phosphorus Ltd., Vapi, during January 6 to 10, 2004 at Vapi, Gujarat. Thirty three officers representing 10 states participated in the programme. The participants represented Agri-business companies, Non-Governmental

Organisations, Agriculture Universities, ATMA’s, State Agriculture and line departments, Krishi Vignan Kendras, Banks and Media.

The programme was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To orient to the concept of private extension



(l to r) Dr. Agnibotri, Director, Jai Research Foundation, Vapi, Dr. M.H. Mehta, Former Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat Agriculture University, Anand, Dr. Yoseph Elkana, World Bank Consultant, Israel, Sri Rajjubhai Shroff, Chairman, United Phosphorus Limited and President, Pesticides Association of India, Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Faculty, MANAGE, Hyderabad and Dr. Patel, Director of Extension, GAU, Anand.

2. To learn from national and international private extension experiences
3. Understand the role of private extension and to learn from the innovations
4. To workout private extension approaches and their linkage with the public extension system to formulate models for private-public partnership in agricultural extension management.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr. Yoseph Elkana, World Bank Expert (Extension) from Israel in the presence of Sri. Rajjubhai Shroff, Chairman of United Phosphorus Limited., and Dr. M.H. Mehta, Former Vice-Chancellor, Gujarat Agriculture University at Jai Research Foundation, Vapi. Experts from MANAGE, Agribusiness companies, Public institutions, Farmer organizations, NGO's and Agriculture Universities provided the inputs for the programme.

DAESI in Coimbatore

DAESI - A one-year Diploma Course, in a distance education mode, in agricultural extension services for input dealers of Ranga Reddy District in Andhra Pradesh was launched by MANAGE on July 1, 2003. The DAESI programme has now been replicated in Coimbatore by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) in collaboration with MANAGE.

The course was inaugurated in February 2004 by Dr. C. Ramasamy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. Inaugurating the programme, the Vice Chancellor mentioned that the scope for agricultural input dealers to serve as extension agents for giving proper recommendations to farmers was great. Nearly 90% of the input dealers do not have any formal agricultural education and DAESI imparts formal agricultural education to these input dealers.

Dr. M.N. Reddy, Director, MANAGE during his address, informed that DAESI aims to train input dealers, who are the main source of information to farmers, so that they can couple their business with extension services. He expressed happiness over the institutionalization of the DAESI programme through an organization like TNAU, which would serve as a role model for the entire country. Twenty-four input dealers registered for the course.

Placements 2003-2004

The Post Graduate programme on Agri Business Management has evoked a very good response from agriculture graduates and the Agri Business sector. The placement of PGPABM 2002-2004 began with pre-placement talk on November 25th 2003, and 100% placements were achieved within the designated week for final placement. The sectors where students are placed include input companies, food and retail sector, banking, consultancy services and agri-export. The companies where students have been placed are ITC-IBD, ITC-ILTD, Dabur, ICICI Bank, De-Nocil, Advanta, VKL Spices, Coromandal Fertilizers, Global Trust Bank, Wockhardt, J.K. Seeds, DSCL, Tata Rallis, DS Group Tinnu Oils and Chemicals, AFCL, Commodity India, UPL, Tata Chemicals and Radha Krishna Food Land.

MANAGE wishes them all success.



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