



“ Skills are the foundation of modern life. They are the driving force behind successful careers and companies, thriving industries, and economies. Skills keep the world working. Through efforts of Skill India, we are certain to achieve a better socio-economic condition for today’s youth by making them more productive and addressing unemployment and underemployment in a way”

**Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey**  
Hon’ble Minister, Ministry of Skill  
Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)



“ We have seen great potential, great energy & enthusiasm in the youth of the country & how they are adapting to new age skills, transforming their lives & contributing to the new India. If the program has been able to transform lives, it is because of the passion & grit with which the youth is participating in it. We are working closely with the States, Department and Industry to ensure a robust skill ecosystem which would empower the youth and create opportunities of employment for them”

**Shri. R K Singh**  
Hon’ble Minister of State, Ministry of Skill  
Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE)



*“Sowing skills...  
...harvesting opportunities”*

## Message From CEO

This issue of the ASCI newsletter is focused on economic recovery in the wake of the Coronavirus crisis and the performance of the agriculture sector. As is said, agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy. The role of the agriculture sector is crucial not only for the workers who are directly or indirectly dependent on this sector for their livelihood but also for the revival of overall economic growth, boosting the country’s export, and poverty alleviation. Even amid COVID related economic downturn, the agriculture sector has shown remarkable resilience, vitality, and robustness. For the current fiscal year, experts have forecast a record food grain production depending upon the normal monsoon, which certainly puts agriculture in the driver’s seat in our pursuit of post-crisis economic recovery. The recently announced much-needed market reforms in agriculture have also fuelled expectations from the sector. For many reasons, these reforms are hailed as a bold and visionary step that will lead to the realisation of higher-income by the farmers. For example, the new ordinances to facilitate barrier free interstate trading, e-trading, and higher engagement of farmers with processors, aggregators, organised retailers, and others will be beneficial in terms of access to know-how, risk mitigation, assured returns, and quality standardisation. The ‘Vocal for Local’ campaign and associated measures for strengthening of FPOs, SHGs, Cooperatives, and MFEs aiming at seizing the untapped export markets for the Indian products presents a new ray of hope for export of high-value agricultural produce. The infrastructure development fund created for building a modern and efficient supply chain infrastructure has promises to improve the operational efficiency of the food value chain. Not only traditional farming but opportunities for the new-age entrepreneurs are also rising in horticulture, fisheries, dairy, agri.-logistics, and commodity management. However, skilled labour is at the core of all successful initiatives of enterprise creation and availing benefits of any radical reforms. Hence, the country now has a greater and urgent responsibility of skill building of the youth in agriculture in order that all these initiatives become fruitful and the sector can rightfully claim its place as a lifeline of Indian economy.

**Dr. Satender Arya**

# Post-COVID Lockdown recovery of Indian economy: The role of Agriculture and Skilling



**Dr. Anupam Sarkar**  
Head-Research  
Agriculture Skill Council of India

**A**mid widespread economic recession, job loss, and unemployment the only silver lining is the performance of the agricultural sector. When agencies like International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB) have predicted a contraction of the overall economy by 4-4.5 percent in 2020-21, agriculture is likely to grow at 2.5 during this fiscal year. During the lockdown period, the sector has shown remarkable resilience. The supply chains and markets have bounced back to normal operations overcoming the few initial days of disruption. Harvesting and procurement operations of rabi season crops are completed as also much of the land preparation and sowing of the next crop. This year's procurement of wheat has been higher than the last year's levels. The country also expects a bumper kharif crop based on a good monsoon and increased acreage under rice and other crops. The labour supply situation is mixed. Parts of the country like Punjab has witnessed a shortage of labour to carry out paddy transplantation. In other parts especially in Eastern India, there is an increase in the availability of family labour due to reverse migration.

**T**he unemployment situation in urban India continues to be worrisome. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the urban unemployment rate in the week ended 28th June was 10.69 percent. As per the latest available data on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), there is a decline in the IIP of 34.7 percent of industrial output in May 2020 as compared to May 2019. Some of the worst affected sectors are manufacture of motor vehicles (80.5 %), manufacture of other transport equipment (83.5%), manufacture of computer, electronic, and optical products (78.4%), manufacture of electrical equipment (70.9%), and manufacture of textiles (72.8%). As against this, agriculture has clocked a robust growth rate of 4 percent of gross value added in 2019-20.

During the period of lockdown, amidst the news of initial disruptions of harvest operations, closure of mandis, wastage of perishables there were some silver linings too, like the rapid digital transformation of agriculture which saw Indian farmers turning to tech-enabled platforms. There are also reports of State governments, farm aggregates, agritech startups, organised retail chains that are undertaking innovative means to ensure smooth operations of supply chains. There were relaxations given to farmers to sell their products anywhere and extension of the period of procurement. As a result of these, the food grain stocks are at comfortable levels, prices are stable and supply of agri-commodities to mandis has remained normal barring a few days of initial disruptions. However, on the flip side of it is still high unemployment in rural areas. Although the rural unemployment rate which peaked at 22.89% in April 2020 has come down to 10.52% in June 2020 (CMIE) it is still higher than the pre-lockdown period 8.44 % in March 2020.

It should be noted that the same database reveals rural unemployment had been on the rise in the months running up to the COVID outbreak and ultimate lockdown in March 2020. News has been flashing in media that many reverse migrants unable to secure a livelihood in rural areas are returning to cities.

In urban areas, these circular migrants constitute the most vulnerable urban population. They are mostly landless and have limited livelihood opportunities in rural areas. In urban areas also they lack access to fundamental civic rights or basic social security. The majority of them are engaged in the informal sector, construction, or self-employed in petty business; often live in the worksites or under the open sky. Srivastava (2020) estimated the number of short term circular migrants in urban areas to be 44 million. There is a need to check this unhealthy trend of distress migration by understanding the push factors behind migration and creating avenues for gainful employment in rural areas.

This calls for looking beyond the immediate relief packages and a comprehensive strategy for capacity building and job creation in rural areas. Recently the Government of India has announced Atmanirbhar Bharat Package with an aim to making India a self-reliant nation. As a country we are self-reliant and much of the food requirement is met through domestic production. The focus, hence, must be on to raise agricultural productivity, enhance farmers' income, and creation of gainful employment opportunities. Identification of sector-wise growth and employment potential, diversification of agriculture, skill mapping and capacity building of the workforce for the new or sunrise sectors within the agriculture industry is of most importance.

As part of the relief package, some drastic measures have been announced and ordinances promulgated subsequently to reform agricultural marketing and provide a range of choices to the farmers in the agribusiness marketplace. These ordinances are the Essential Commodities Act amendment ordinance, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, and the Farmers Trade and Produce (Promotion and Facilitation) ordinance. The intent of these reforms is to remove the barriers in agricultural marketing, building an efficient supply chain, ensuring price stability and better returns for the farmers, minimise market risks and protect farmers' interest in any forward-looking contract with private parties.

There are also announcements of a package to promote organic farming and cultivation of medicinal plants; encouragement of fisheries and aquaculture through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY); boosting of animal husbandry through setting up of special funds for infrastructure development, the special allocation for disease control, and extending benefits of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme to livestock farmers; assistance in the inter-State transport of horticulture produce by extending coverage of TOP (tomato, onion, and potato) scheme to TOTAL (all fruits and vegetables). Supply chain infrastructure also has got a shot in the arms with the announcement of the creation of one lakh crore fund for farmgate and aggregation point infrastructure.

The lessons learnt in the lockdown period has given us an opportunity for mending the raptures and building an efficient agricultural supply chain. The announcements of reforms, the stimulus package, increasing digital transformation, and participation of a broad range of players in the agribusiness and marketing will create more job opportunities in the supply chain, agri logistics, and commodity management.

The importance of animal husbandry, dairying, and fisheries have been over the years. Nearly one-fourth of agricultural GDP comes from the livestock sector. In the near future, there will be employment opportunities in fisheries and aquaculture based on scientifically proven methods of running water aquaculture (RAS), cage culture, mariculture, ornamental fisheries, cold water fisheries, bio floc farming, broodstock cultivation, fish waste management, etc. There is a need for special training and handholding in new methods of farming.

In agriculture also there will be a rise of farm mechanisation and demand for associated job roles of custom hiring, tractor mechanic, etc.

which are skilled occupations. Till now there has been an uneven growth of farm mechanisation. However, the demand for the use of machinery has been on the rise even in eastern and southern parts of India and we can expect viable models of machinery rental services will emerge in these areas too. Even in the western States government has been encouraging custom hiring of machiner to avoid overcapitalisation of farms.

A major component of the scheme Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation is subsidy for setting up of custom hiring centres. Hence, we can expect that will be more demand for tractor drivers and mechanics.

Diversification of agriculture especially in the regions where water and land resources are in severe stress in the need of the hour. Few examples are Punjab, Haryana, and Western Uttar Pradesh where paddy and wheat cultivation has detrimental effects of groundwater tables. Thus, there is a need for capacity building of the farmers for diversification to horticultural crops especially fruits and vegetables which are less water consuming and fetch a higher value.



The importance of agri-information management has increased over the years and especially so after private agri input companies flooding the space of agricultural extension, and inventing new models for sales and marketing. Now extension and advisory services are sometimes a part and parcel of the sale of inputs to farmers. Thus an increasing need will be felt for skilled professionals in this field.

Last, but not the least, organic farming has a huge scope for domestic and external markets. However, the farmers are often unaware of the process of certification, knowledge of scientific methods of cultivation, marketing opportunities. Since organic products fetch a higher price and have high export potential it should be encouraged through proper training of farmers.

## State Engagement

- ASCI organized a webinar for Training Partners - East Zone on 5<sup>th</sup> Jun'2020 wherein 100 Training Partners participated from the states of Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh. The webinar mainly focused on skilling opportunity in Agriculture and allied sector in the zone, which is now witnessing Third Green Revolution, Blue revolution and Rainbow revolution. The webinar also addressed the myths in pertaining to agriculture wage employment wherein numerous opportunities are present in Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Farm Mechanization segment to provide ample opportunity in wage employment.



**Training Partners Meet - East Zone**



**Training Partners Meet - North Zone**

- Webinar for Training Partners - North Zone organized on 29<sup>th</sup> May'2020 wherein 92 Training Partners of various schemes viz. Prathan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, State schemes, NULM and DDUGKY participated. The webinar focused on changes in National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, Training of Trainer programs, effects of Covid 19 on skilling system, and other issues concerning training partners.



**Trainer's Meet for Punjab School Education Board**

- Trainer's Meet for Punjab School Education Board was held on 17<sup>th</sup> Jun'2020 wherein Agriculture trainers from 108 schools along with Training Partner coordinators participated. The agenda of the meet was orientation of new Job roles in state, Tools & Equipment availability, Content Development and National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme available for school pass outs.



**Training Partners Meet - West Zone**

- ASCI hosted Webinar for Training Partners - West Zone on 20<sup>th</sup> Jun'2020 for Government & Private Training Partner for exploring opportunities in Agriculture Skilling in state. The event saw participation of Mr. Deepender Singh Khushwaha, CEO, Maharashtra State Skill Development Society (MSSDS), Mr. Deepak Desai, Director, Goa State Skill Mission. Discussions were done about the hygienic norms to be followed for registration of Training Centre under State Skill Mission, upcoming skilling opportunities in horticulture, Coconut and Farm Mechanisation segment.

- ASCI organized a Webinar for Training Partners- North East Zone on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020 wherein more than 50 Training partner participated from the states of Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland , Manipur Mizoram & Sikkim. Dr. Satender Singh Arya, CEO, ASCI addressed the participants and briefed them about the scope of Skill development in Agri and allied sector with special emphasis on livelihood of migrant workers due to COVID-19.



**Training Partners Meet- North East Zone**

- Webinar for Training Partners- South Zone organized on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in which more than 270 existing and potential training partners participated from the state of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamilnadu and Kerala. The event was chaired by Dr. Shrikanth Arja ( MD & CEO, APSSDC), Shri Vishnu Venugopalan (MD, TNSDC) and Capt. Kaustav Nath (SEO, NSDC) and guided the participants for state initiatives for skill program. Participation of 270 participants of existing TPs and Potential TPs.



**Training Partners Meet - South Zone**

- Discussion held with various companies viz. Ovo Farm Pvt Ltd, Minerva Poultry Pvt. Ltd., Guru Krupa Chicks, Pasupati Agrovet Pvt. Ltd. on engaging apprenticeship in poultry sector under Layer Farm Worker and Broiler Farm Supervisor.

## Engagement with Ministry of Agriculture

In this quarter, ASCI has successfully enrolled 3,400 candidates under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

During Unlock period in Covid times, as per Govt. notification for Green zones, assessments have been organized wherein 220 candidates assessed in states like Odisha, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. ASCI is planning to conduct assessment for remaining completed batches as per state and district COVID-19 Advisory in coming days.



**Assessment at KVK Kaushambi**

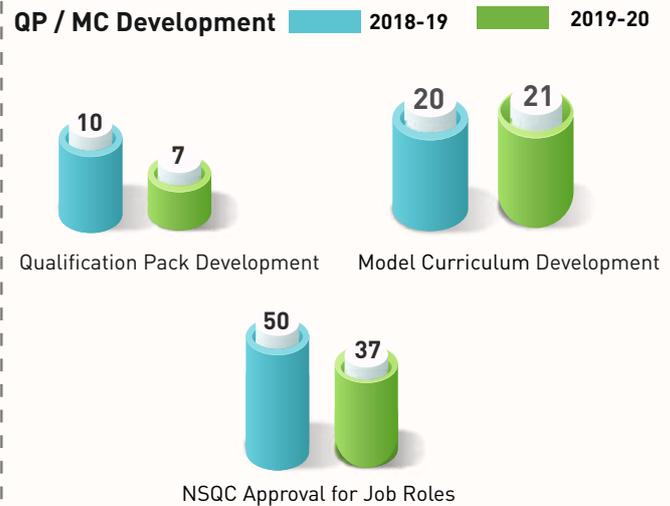


**Assessment at KVK Mandla**

## QP & NOS Development

In this quarter, ASCI got approved 6 QPs and Model Curricula in the Captive and Small Animals' segment, through the QRC. Total QRC Approved QPs now stand at 182.

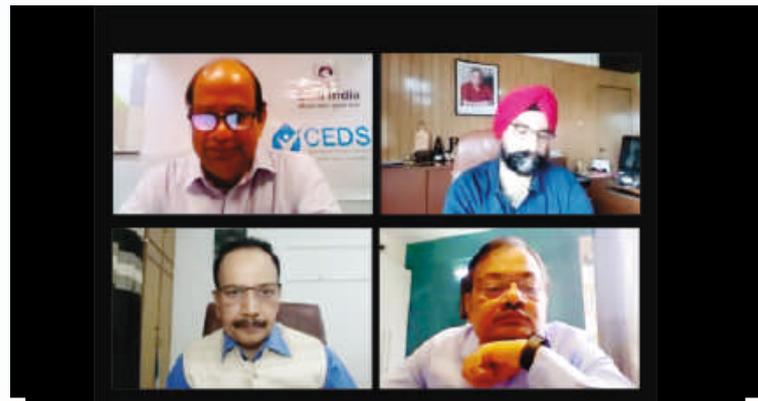
S.No.	Qualification Pack Title	QP Code	NSQF level
1.	Canine Breeder	AGR/Q4601	6
2.	Canine Trainer and Handler	AGR/Q4602	5
3.	Companion Animal Groomer	AGR/Q4603	4
4.	Zoo Animal Keeper	AGR/Q4604	4
5.	Stray Animal Catcher	AGR/Q4605	3
6.	Laboratory Animal Attendant	AGR/Q4606	4



## Centre of Excellence

ASCI's CoE, Centre of Excellence on Dairy Skills in India (CEDSI) conducted webinar on Emerging Dimensions for a profitable Dairy Business: "Market, Technology & Innovation" on 4th Jul'2020. The panel of prominent speakers included Mr. R S Sodhi, Managing Director GCMF, Mr. Rahul Kumar, Managing Director, Lactalis India; Dr. A.K Srivastava, Former Director and VC, NDRI, Member ASRB and Mr. Sanjeev Asthana, Chairman, ASCI.

The webinar touched a wide range of topics like the pace of structural changes in the dairy sector and significant factors such as market, technology, and innovation. Smart tech and rapidly changing market dynamics transforming the industry along with access to skills and new competencies required to remain employable with changing industry needs and issues prevailing to dairy productivity. The webinar was attended by Dairy Entrepreneurs, Members of Dairy Cooperatives, Dairy Researchers and academia.



Launch Webinar of CEDSI

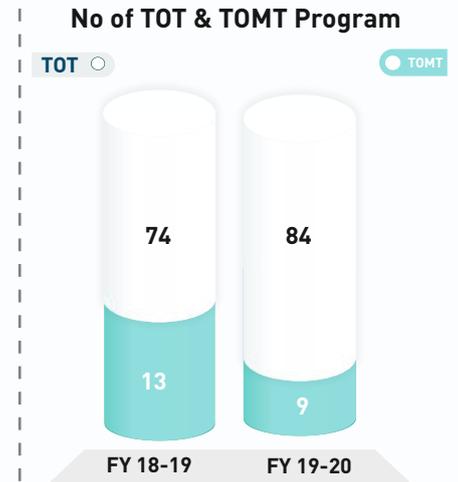
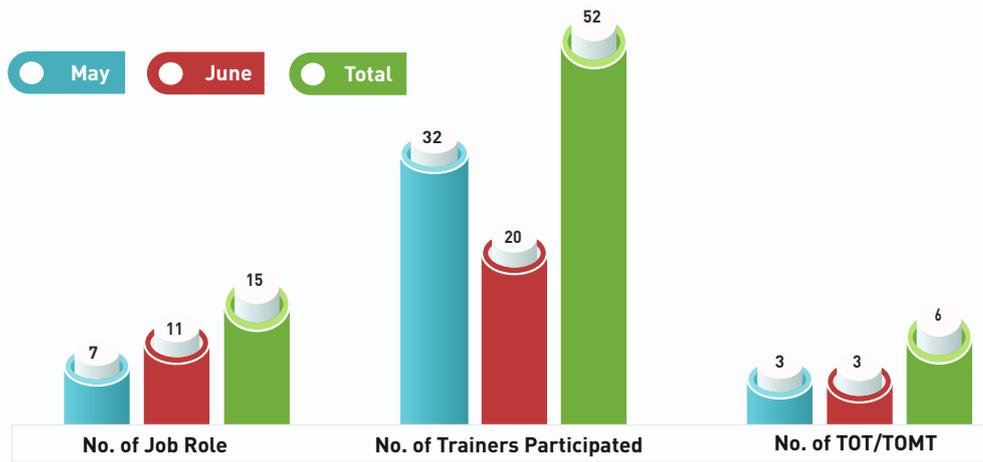
## Training Partners on Board

ASCI has affiliated 5 Government institutes i.e. Integrated Beekeeping Development Centre, Kurukshetra in Beekeeper job role, Horticulture Training Institute, Karnal for job role of Gardener and Organic Grower, Center of Excellence for protected cultivation and precision farming on vegetables Gujarat, Sabar Kantha for job roles of Greenhouse Operator and Nursery worker, Center of Excellence for mango Gujarat, Somnath for job role of Mango Grower and ICAR-Directorate of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Research for job role of Gardener under MIDH.

# Training of Trainer & Master Trainer

Total 52 Trainers participated in 6 online ToT/ToMT Program during Apr – Jun'2020

1. KVK, West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya on 14<sup>th</sup> May'2020
2. SIMACES Learning LLP on 26<sup>th</sup> May'2020
3. Aashirbad Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. on 27<sup>th</sup> May'2020
4. HTI Karnal Haryana on 17<sup>th</sup> Jun'2020
5. Aashirbad Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. on 15<sup>th</sup> Jun'2020
6. Aakash Agri System, Maharashtra on 17<sup>th</sup> Jun'2020



ToT for Amenity Horticulture segment



ToT for Agri Crop Production segment



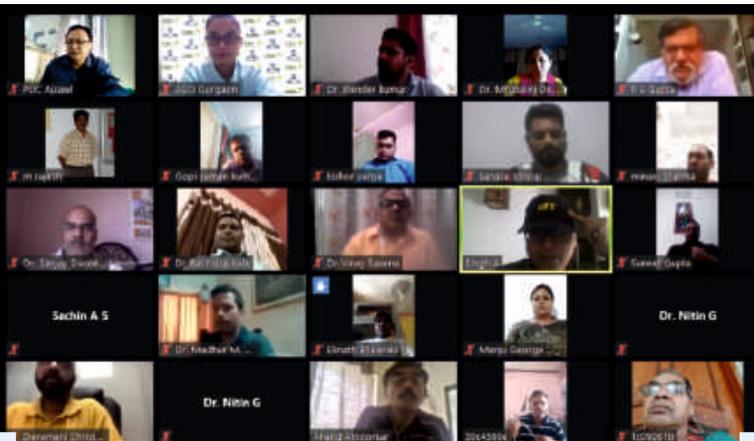
ToT for Horticulture segment



ToT for Dairy segment

## Engagement with UGC approved Institutes

ASCI organized 6 workshops for UGC affiliated Colleges & Universities for various segments viz. Forestry, Fisheries & Aquaculture, Horticulture, Agriculture, Farm Mechanization and Animal Husbandry. Discussions held for the availability of new courses, placement opportunities, entrepreneurial opportunities, loan availability options after 3 year for certified candidates, etc.



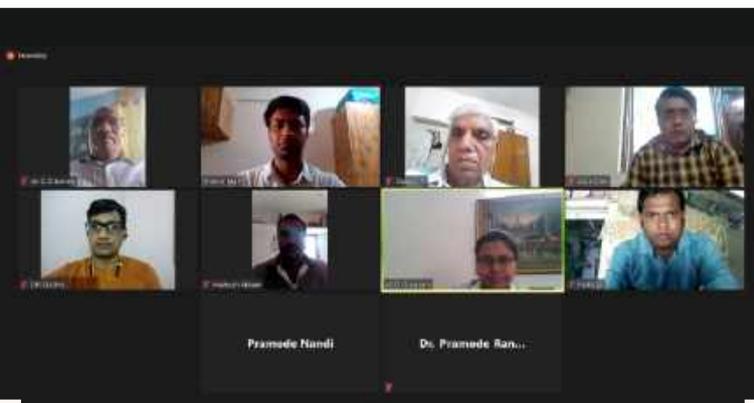
Agriculture Workshop



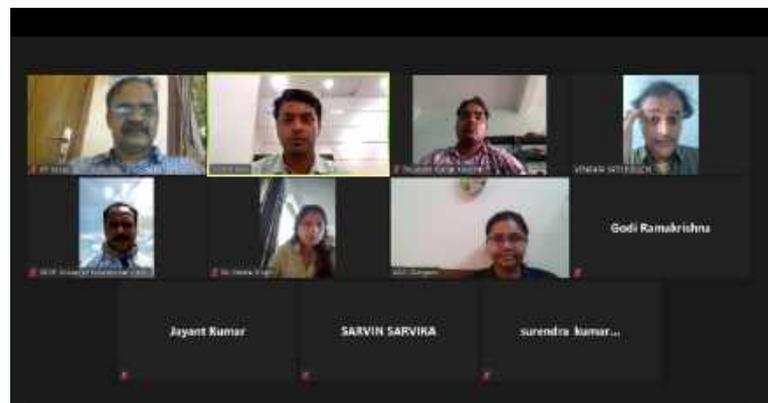
Farm Mechanization Workshop

## Training of Assessor (ToA)

ASCI conducted two online ToA program for existing assessors across various segments viz. Veterinary, Poultry, Dairy, Crop Production and Horticulture. The selected job roles were Dairy Farmer, Dairy Worker, Animal Health Worker, Small Poultry Farmer and Broiler Farm worker, etc.



ToA for Dairy and Animal Husbandry segment



ToA for Agri Crop Production segment

## Agriculture Skill Council of India

6<sup>th</sup> Floor, GNG Building, Plot No. 10, Sector - 44, Gurugram, Haryana - 122 004

Tel.: 0124 4670029/ 4814673/ 4814659

Email: ceo@asci-india.com | Web: www.asci-india.com

Follow us on Twitter  
@ASCI\_AgriSkills

Follow us on Facebook  
@ASCI.INDIA/