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## MAJOR STEP

# Haryana begins export of potatoes to Malaysia

CHANDIGARH: Haryana government on Saturday began the export of potatoes to Malaysia. Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda flagged off the first consignment of potatoes for Malaysia from Kisan Bhawan in Panchkula near here. Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board (HSAMB) will export one lakh metric tonne of potatoes to Malaysia. Hooda also inaugurated the first two-day Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board's fruit, vegetable and flower festival at the same venue. Hooda evinced keen interest in the different varieties of flowers, fruits and vegetables displayed there at various stalls. A large number of farmers from the state are participating in this festival. Hooda, while speaking on the occasion, said: "This festival would not only provide useful information to the farmers but would also prove to be a milestone in increasing their income." He urged the farmers to adopt latest technique of cultivation and also divert to the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, dairy farming and bee keeping.

He said: "The conventional technique of cultivation has now reached the optimum level and continuing with the same would not help in increasing production." "The land holding of the farmers were also reducing in size. Therefore, the farmers would maintain their interest in agriculture only if it yields maximum return," added Hooda. While urging the farmers to adopt vertical farming in place of horizontal farming to increase their production from the available limited resources, he said that today when the land holding and availability of water were limited, this technique of farming could prove beneficial for the farmers. "Similarly, farmers should make more use of liquid fertiliser instead of manure."

Chief Minister said that the state government has taken a number of steps in the interest of the farmers. "A centre of excellence for vegetables has been set up at Gharaunda in Karnal district in collaboration with Israel," he said. He said: "Due to the concerted efforts of the state government the area under horticulture crops has increased from 2.47 lakh hectares in the year 2004-05 to 4.15 lakh hectares in the year 2010-11." To popularise the drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation, the state government was providing 90 per cent subsidy to the farmers. Referring to the Chief Ministers' Working Group on agriculture production headed by him, Hooda said that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had constituted a committee on agricultural production as well.