

## Jharkhand Agro-Trade Fair-2026: A Milestone in Agricultural Innovation, Sustainable Development and Rural Entrepreneurship

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The Jharkhand Agro-Trade Fair 2026 served as a dynamic platform for promoting sustainable agriculture, agricultural innovation, and rural entrepreneurship. The three-day event brought together farmers, scientists, policymakers, agribusiness firms, startups, financial institutions, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), researchers, students, and entrepreneurs from Jharkhand and neighbouring states. The fair showcased modern farm machinery, improved crop varieties, organic products, climate-resilient technologies, precision farming tools, digital agriculture solutions, livestock and fisheries technologies, and food-processing innovations. Technical sessions, live demonstrations, interactive discussions, and buyer-seller interactions facilitated knowledge exchange, technology transfer, value addition, and stronger market linkages. Special emphasis was placed on women and youth entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, FPO development, and sustainable resource management. The fisheries component highlighted modern aquaculture practices and value-added fish products as opportunities for livelihood diversification. Overall, the fair demonstrated the importance of innovation, collaboration, market access, and institutional support in enhancing farm incomes and strengthening Jharkhand's rural economy.



**Keywords:** Agro-Trade Fair, Agriculture, Aquaculture, Technology-transfer, Livelihood, Entrepreneurship

### Introduction

Agriculture has long been the backbone of Jharkhand's rural economy, supporting the livelihoods of a large proportion (80%) of the state's population (Singh, 2020). Blessed with huge natural resources such as minerals, forests, horticulture, water resources etc. (Govt. of India, 2016), diverse agro-climatic conditions, and a vibrant tribal farming tradition, Jharkhand has immense potential for agricultural development (Choudhary, 2019). However, farmers continue to face several challenges, including fragmented landholdings, heavy dependence on monsoon rainfall, inadequate irrigation, limited mechanization, poor market access, low levels of value addition, and the growing impacts of climate change (Rayees, 2025).

Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative effort involving farmers, scientists, policymakers, entrepreneurs, financial institutions, private organizations, and rural communities. In this context, the Jharkhand Agro-Trade Fair 2026, held from 16 to 18 June 2026 at Morabadi ground, Ranchi, emerged as an important platform for bringing together different stakeholders of the agricultural sector. The fair featured seminar halls and two large exhibition halls with space for more than 200 stalls, representing government departments, universities, research institutions, agri-based industries, and private enterprises. Thousands of farmers from almost every district of Jharkhand, along with participants from neighbouring states, attended the event, creating a vibrant atmosphere of interaction and exchange. The fair was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Jharkhand, Shri Hemant Soren.

The three-day fair brought together farmers, scientists, policymakers, agribusiness firms, startups, financial institutions, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs), researchers, students, and entrepreneurs. It provided an opportunity to showcase modern agricultural technologies, exchange knowledge and experiences, explore business opportunities, and strengthen farmer-market linkages. The Agro-Trade Fair 2026 was much more than an exhibition of agricultural machinery and products. It became a lively platform for innovation, knowledge sharing, entrepreneurship, networking, and sustainable rural development, highlighting the potential of agriculture to generate employment, enhance livelihoods, and contribute to the economic prosperity of Jharkhand.

### A Vision for Transforming Agriculture

The primary objective of the Jharkhand Agro-Trade Fair 2026 was to strengthen Jharkhand's agricultural and rural business ecosystem by bridging the gap between traditional farming practices and modern agricultural technologies. The event brought together different stakeholders on a common platform to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and explore opportunities for sustainable agricultural development and economic growth. Such interactions help farmers make informed decisions regarding crop selection, mechanization, irrigation, soil management, pest and disease management, post-harvest processing, and marketing. The fair also highlighted how modern technologies and scientific interventions can transform rural livelihoods. By promoting value addition, agri-processing, branding, entrepreneurship, and market linkages, the event encouraged farmers to view agriculture as a profitable enterprise. These initiatives can enhance farm incomes, generate rural employment, and contribute to the overall economic development of Jharkhand.



### Showcasing Modern Agricultural Mechanization

The Agro-Trade Fair 2026 showcased modern agricultural machinery aimed at enhancing productivity and reducing labour requirements. Tractors, power tillers, seed drills, paddy transplanters, rotavators, multi-crop threshers, combine harvesters, laser land levellers, reapers, boom sprayers, and solar-powered irrigation systems were among the technologies showcased. Live demonstrations enabled farmers to observe their field-level performance. Special emphasis was placed on affordable, compact equipment suitable for small and marginal



farmers. Special emphasis was placed on compact, affordable, and user-friendly equipment suitable for small and marginal farmers. Experts highlighted the potential of mechanization to reduce production costs, save time, minimize post-harvest losses, and promote efficient and sustainable agriculture.

### **Advancing Scientific and climate resilient agriculture**

A major attraction of the Agro-Trade Fair 2026 was the display of improved crop varieties and agricultural inputs suited to the diverse agro-climatic conditions of Jharkhand. Public and private seed companies showcased improved varieties of paddy, maize, pulses, oilseeds, vegetables, millets, and horticultural crops. Agricultural scientists also sensitized farmers about scientific practices such as seed treatment, balanced nutrient management, soil testing, integrated pest management, and efficient water use to enhance productivity while maintaining soil health. The fair also highlighted the importance of climate-resilient agriculture in addressing the growing impacts of unpredictable rainfall, rising temperatures, droughts, and floods. Experts promoted practices such as rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, adoption of drought-tolerant crop varieties, and sustainable land management. The emphasis on scientific and climate-smart practices demonstrated the need to balance agricultural productivity, resource conservation, and long-term sustainability.

### **Organic Farming and Ecological Sustainability**

With growing consumer demand for chemical-free food and environmentally friendly farming practices, organic farming stalls attracted considerable attention at the Agro-Trade Fair 2026. Farmer groups and rural enterprises showcased organically produced vegetables, pulses, millets, spices, honey, medicinal herbs, herbal products, vermicompost, and bio-inputs. Experts also conducted training sessions on compost preparation, vermicomposting, bio-pesticides, and natural farming practices. These initiatives highlighted how organic farming can contribute to soil health, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource management while creating opportunities for premium markets and value addition. The fair also emphasized the potential of Jharkhand to expand its organic agriculture sector by promoting locally adapted, eco-friendly farming practices. Such initiatives can enhance farmers' incomes, strengthen rural enterprises, and support environmentally sustainable agricultural development in the state.

### **Crop Diversification for Income Enhancement**

The Agro-Trade Fair 2026 emphasized crop diversification as a strategy to enhance farmers' incomes and reduce production risks associated with climatic variability and local agro-ecological conditions. Exhibitors showcased a wide range of high-value horticultural products, including mango, guava, banana, papaya, dragon fruit, strawberry, litchi, mushrooms, medicinal plants, flowers, and spices. Experts highlighted the economic benefits of integrating horticultural crops with traditional cereal-based farming systems. Modern technologies such as polyhouses, shade-net structures, drip irrigation, and mulching were also demonstrated to farmers. These practices can enable year-round production, improve water-use efficiency, enhance productivity, and increase farm profitability. The emphasis on diversification reflected the growing shift towards market-oriented, high-value agriculture and the need to provide farmers with sustainable opportunities for income enhancement.

### **Integrating Livestock, Fisheries, and Allied Activities**

The Agro-Trade Fair 2026 highlighted the importance of integrated and diversified farming systems for sustainable rural development and livelihood security. Scientific practices related to dairy farming, goat rearing, poultry, piggery, duck farming, fisheries, and beekeeping were showcased through dedicated pavilions. Experts and veterinarians provided information on vaccination, disease prevention, balanced nutrition, breeding management, and hygienic livestock practices.

The fisheries pavilion was a major attraction, particularly for fish farmers and rural communities interested in aquaculture. It was supported by the Directorate of Fisheries, Ranchi; King Fisheries, Ranchi; College of Fisheries Science, Gumla, Birsa Agricultural University, Ranchi; ICAR–Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE), Mumbai; and ICAR–Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA), Bhubaneswar. The pavilion promoted modern aquaculture practices, improved fish breeding and seed production, water quality management, and disease prevention. Information on government schemes, incentives, and technical support for fish farmers was also provided. Freshwater pearl culture was showcased as an emerging enterprise with potential for income generation, value addition, and rural entrepreneurship.

The College of Fisheries Science, Gumla displayed value-added fish products, including fish paneer, fish papad, fish chakli, fish cutlets, fish samosa, fish momos, fish pizza, fish-scale ornaments, and liquid fish fertilizer. Some of these products were made available for sale at the JHASCOFED stall to promote awareness of fish-based value-added products. Fish pickle and fisheries-related booklets were also offered for sale, while leaflets, brochures, and newsletters were displayed and distributed. The participation demonstrated the potential of fisheries and allied activities to support livelihood diversification, food security, value addition, and rural economic development.



### Empowering Farmer Producer Organizations and Rural enterprise

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) played a dynamic role in the Agro-Trade Fair 2026 by showcasing the collective strength of organized farming communities. They displayed processed foods, spices, pulses, millet products, edible oils, honey, lac products, herbal items, handicrafts, and other agricultural products. The fair highlighted how collective procurement, processing, branding, and marketing can enhance farmers' bargaining power and incomes. Business interactions with retailers, wholesalers, exporters, and food-processing enterprises also created opportunities for partnerships, demonstrating the vital role of FPOs in strengthening rural economies and integrating smallholders into modern agricultural value chains.

### Women and Youth as Drivers of Rural Entrepreneurship

The active participation of women and youth was one of the most encouraging features of the Agro-Trade Fair 2026. Women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from different districts of Jharkhand showcased a diverse range of products, including millet and mushroom-based foods, pickles, papad, spices, herbal products, leaf plates, bamboo handicrafts, lac jewellery, processed fruits, and traditional tribal foods. The fair emphasized branding, packaging, quality certification, digital marketing, financial literacy, and enterprise management to strengthen women-led businesses. Their participation demonstrated the growing role of rural women as entrepreneurs contributing to household incomes and socioeconomic development.

The fair also encouraged educated rural youth to explore agriculture as a modern career and business opportunity. Experts highlighted prospects in food processing, mushroom cultivation, hydroponics, nursery management, protected cultivation, agricultural consultancy, digital services, seed production, organic farming, and agri-tourism. Success stories of young entrepreneurs further demonstrated how innovation, scientific management, and market-oriented approaches can transform agriculture into a profitable enterprise, inspiring youth to pursue entrepreneurship and leadership in the agricultural sector.



### Financial Inclusion and Institutional Support

Access to affordable credit, insurance, and institutional finance is essential for agricultural development. During the Agro-Trade Fair 2026, banks, cooperatives, and financial agencies provided information on crop loans, Kisan Credit Cards, agricultural machinery finance, livestock and fisheries finance, agri-infrastructure, warehouse financing, and crop insurance schemes. Farmers were also guided on government subsidies, financial planning, and digital banking services. These interactions improved awareness of available financial support and encouraged farmers to adopt modern technologies and strengthen their agricultural and allied enterprises.

### Knowledge Exchange through Technical Sessions

The educational component was a key feature of the Agro-Trade Fair 2026, with several technical sessions and seminars organized for knowledge exchange. Experts discussed climate-smart agriculture, integrated pest management, soil health, water conservation, precision farming, post-harvest technology, value addition, and sustainable natural resource management. Agricultural scientists, university professors, extension officers, experienced practitioners and successful entrepreneurs shared practical insights and region-specific solutions with farmers. These interactive sessions also encouraged farmers to exchange experiences, reinforcing the importance of capacity building, continuous learning, and knowledge sharing alongside technological advancement.



### Celebrating Jharkhand's Cultural Heritage

The Agro-Trade Fair 2026 also provided an opportunity to showcase the rich cultural heritage and diversity of Jharkhand alongside agricultural and trade activities. Cultural evenings featured talented artists from different parts of the state, presenting folk music, tribal dances, traditional arts and crafts, and regional cuisine. These performances not only enriched the event but also offered visitors a glimpse into Jharkhand's cultural identity and heritage, highlighting the close relationship between agriculture, indigenous knowledge systems, traditional practices, and rural livelihoods.

### Long-Term Significance

The Jharkhand Agro-Trade Fair 2026 demonstrated that collaboration among government agencies, research institutions, financial institutions, private enterprises, civil society organizations, and rural communities is essential for transforming agriculture and

strengthening rural livelihoods. The long-term significance of the fair lies in its potential to promote:

- Scientific and climate-resilient agriculture
- Access to modern agricultural technologies
- Appropriate mechanization for small and marginal farmers
- Stronger Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)
- Women's entrepreneurship and rural enterprises
- Youth participation in agribusiness and startups
- Financial inclusion and institutional support
- Market linkages and investment opportunities
- Sustainable management of natural resources
- Inclusive rural economic development

The knowledge, innovations, networks, and partnerships generated through the fair are expected to contribute to the sustainable transformation of Jharkhand's agricultural sector, enhance livelihood opportunities, and improve the socioeconomic well-being of rural communities.

## Conclusions

The Jharkhand Agro-Trade Fair 2026 emerged as a significant platform for connecting farmers with science, technology, markets, finance, and entrepreneurship. The event demonstrated that agricultural transformation requires more than increased production; it depends on innovation, value addition, diversification, sustainable resource management, and strong institutional support. The participation of various stakeholder such as farmers, researchers, entrepreneurs, government agencies, financial institutions, women's groups, and youth reflected the importance of collective action in building a resilient agricultural economy. By promoting modern technologies, climate-smart practices, market linkages, and rural enterprises, the fair provided a promising roadmap for enhancing livelihoods and accelerating inclusive and sustainable agricultural development in Jharkhand.

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