

# Punjab popular for contract farming

**Vani Aseem Grover**  
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Taking the crop diversification programme in Punjab to the next level, many corporates are aggressively scouting for opportunities here and exploring the scope for contract farming ventures.

Elaborating plans of Pepsico India from Jallowal in Jalandhar, Abhiram Seth executive director, exports & external affairs, Pepsico India. The company conducted its last leg of trials across 20 acres of land for its

revolutionary, direct seeding technique, for paddy cultivation, which reduces dependence on water and fuel significantly.

"As the company is looking at sharing the results of the technique with a larger community of farmers in Punjab, the farmers could actually sign a contract under contract farming arrangement or they could associate with the company to know about the technique. The company targets to bring about 3,500 to 4,000 acres during the next fiscal in Punjab," said Seth.

## Among its initiatives, the PAFC began a crop diversification plan with hyola, sunflower, malting barley and maize

The company also plans to increase its basmati exports which would give a leg up to contract farming activities in the state. As for Pepsico India, this would only add to its existing portfolio of food exports. Talking about this Amit K Bose

executive vice president exports, Pepsi Foods Pvt Ltd said currently the company was exporting about 6,000 tonne of Punjabi basmati to Dubai and Western Europe and plans to increase it in the near future.

Further, Pepsico also plan to export citrus from Punjab to South East Asia and Europe by 2010. It is pertinent to mention that the company has the world's largest nursery of citrus fruits having 32 varieties of citrus fruits imported from US and Brazil at Jallowal.

"Due to the initiative of the

Punjab government, the corporate sector has started setting up their base in Punjab. To count a few Field Fresh (Bharti Group), Haryali Bazar (DCM), Reliance, ITC have taken initiatives in this direction," said RS Jaur vice chairman of Punjab Agro Food-grains Corporation (PAFC).

Among its initiatives, the PAFC started a crop diversification program in an area of 22,312 acres during rabi 2002 with hyola, sunflower, malting barley and maize. Later on basmati, menthe and potato seed were also added to the list.