

CMFRI identifies 342 sites for large-scale seaweed farming

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Kochi, July 29

The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has done geo-referencing of 342 farming sites in the country over 24,167 hectares of seaweed cultivation. These sites have the potential to produce 9.7 million tonnes (wet weight) of seaweed per year.

According to A Gopalakrishnan, Director, CMFRI, India cultivated around 34,000 tonnes of seaweed in 2021 and this needs to be scaled up.

At a national campaign on 'non-conventional aquaculture systems' organised by CMFRI as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (75th year of Indian Independence), he said, referring to the global production, which is 35 million tonnes worth \$16.5 billion in so far in 2022., that India is far behind in terms of seaweed production."

Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), the government has earmarked ₹640 crore for a targeted production of more than 11.2 lakh tonnes of seaweed by 2025, he said.

Integrated aquaculture

The CMFRI has standardised the practice of integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA), which enables cage farming or bivalve farming along with seaweed farming in coastal waters, Gopalakrishnan said, adding that this would help popularise and boost seaweed farming in coastal states.

On the inherent environmental benefits, he said seaweed farming can earn carbon credits by, for instance, replacing fodder with value-added seaweed products to reduce methane emission by cattle.