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Diageo India launches regenerative agriculture programme

Implemented in partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, the programme will work with over 220 farmers from 15 villages in Telangana

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Diageo India (United Spirits Ltd.), among the country's leading beverage alcohol companies today announced the launch of a regenerative agriculture programme with rice farmers in Telangana, as part of its efforts to reduce carbon emissions and water use in its supply chain. Implemented in partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, the programme will work with over 220 farmers from 15 villages in Telangana, covering over 500 hectares of land in the first year. The initiative is hoped to be further scaled in the coming years.

Reports highlight that 17 per cent of India's agricultural Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are generated during rice production. With broken rice being a key raw material in the company's supply chain, promoting sustainable rice farming methods will further help Diageo India in reducing its Scope 3 emissions.

The rice regenerative agriculture programme will support small-holder farmers by equipping them with training on sustainable rice production, soil health management, and efficient water management, and help build economic and environmental resiliency within local communities. To reduce scope 3 emissions, the company has identified and mapped key areas from where it sources broken rice. In addition, it has conducted lifecycle assessments to calculate emission factors and has begun implementing regenerative agricultural practices like alternate wetting and drying (AWD), direct rice seeding, and a system of rice intensification. For example, implementing AWD practices can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 39 per cent and irrigation water usage by 342 per cent. Additionally, adopting such practices will not only reduce scope 3 emissions but also help improve soil health, enhance biodiversity and reduce the use of synthetic fertilisers.

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