

PM Modi Receives FAO Agricola Medal, India's Agricultural Transformation

May 21, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the 2026 Agricola Medal by the Food and Agriculture Organization at its headquarters in Rome. The award recognises his leadership in advancing food security, sustainable agriculture, and rural development. The visit is also significant as it marks the first visit by an Indian Head of Government to FAO in nearly three decades, highlighting the growing importance of India-FAO engagement.

About FAO Agricola Medal

- The **FAO Agricola Medal** is the **highest honour awarded by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** to recognise outstanding leadership in global food security and agriculture.
- It is conferred upon national leaders who have made significant contributions to **eradicating hunger, reducing poverty, and promoting sustainable agriculture.**
- The award reflects efforts aligned with the FAO mandate and the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly Zero Hunger.
- The term "Agricola" is derived from Latin, meaning "farmer", symbolising the centrality of agriculture in human civilisation.

- The **medal has been awarded since 1977** to global leaders for contributions to agrifood systems and rural development.
- The award has earlier been given to prominent global leaders, including King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, former French President Jacques Chirac, former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, and **former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh**.

The medal was presented by **FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu** at a formal ceremony held at FAO headquarters in Rome.

- Prime Minister Modi dedicated the honour to Indian farmers, referred to as **“Annadata,”** and to India’s agricultural scientists, recognising their central role in ensuring national food security.
- He described the award as a reflection of India’s commitment to human welfare, sustainable development, and global food security.

Key Drivers of India’s Agricultural Transformation

India’s agricultural progress highlighted during the award ceremony is based on a multi-dimensional policy and technology framework.

- The **“Per Drop More Crop”** initiative focuses on improving water-use efficiency through micro-irrigation, helping farmers increase productivity while conserving water resources.
- The adoption of **precision farming techniques** enables efficient use of inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, and irrigation based on soil and crop needs, thereby reducing costs and improving yields.
- The expansion of **Digital Public Infrastructure in agriculture** is providing farmers with access to real-time information, weather forecasts, market prices, and government schemes.
- The **use of Artificial Intelligence-based advisory systems** is helping farmers make data-driven decisions related to crop selection, pest management, and productivity optimisation.
- The introduction of **drones and sensor-based technologies** is improving crop monitoring, soil analysis, and pesticide application efficiency, reducing manual labour and increasing accuracy.
- India has also developed nearly 3,000 **climate-resilient crop varieties** over the past decade, strengthening the ability of agriculture to withstand droughts, floods, and changing climate conditions.

India-FAO Engagement

- India is a **founding member of the FAO** and has maintained a long-standing partnership with the organisation in areas of food security, nutrition, and agricultural development.
- India has actively contributed to global initiatives such as the **International Year of Millets**, promoting nutritious and climate-resilient crops at the global level.
- Through its engagement with FAO, India has positioned itself as a key contributor to global discussions on sustainable agriculture, particularly for developing countries facing food insecurity and climate vulnerability.

FAO Agricola Medal (2026) Significance

- The Agricola Medal reflects international recognition of India's transformation from a food-deficit economy to a food-surplus and technology-driven agricultural system.
- Reinforces India's leadership in climate-resilient and science-based agriculture systems.
- Highlights India's contribution to global food security, particularly in the **Global South**.
- Strengthens India's position in multilateral agricultural and nutrition governance platforms.
- Validates India's farmer-centric approach combining traditional knowledge with modern agricultural technologies.
- Enhances India's global image as a key stakeholder in sustainable agrifood systems.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/pm-modi-receives-fao-agricola-medal/>

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