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U.S. help in agri research sought

To tap potential in horticulture

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: In order to facilitate agriculture growth and market access under the WTO regime, India said on Tuesday that it was looking for collaboration with U.S. universities and research laboratories to tap potentials in horticulture and food processing.

"We, through the Indo-U.S. agriculture initiative, are exploring possibilities for collaboration with U.S. research laboratories, universities and even corporates, to help us in agriculture research and tackle all issues relevant under the WTO to enter European markets," Planning Commission Deputy Chairman and co-chair of the Indo-U.S. Business Dialogue, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, said at a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) meet here.

India, he said, needed to give

big thrust on agriculture research and the initiative included a huge research agenda.

"It will go into issues like post-harvest technology, food processing and preservation and the whole range of sanitary and phytosanitary issues related to the WTO."

On the Indo-U.S. CEOs' Forum, he said Indian CEOs would meet on September 9 and he expected them to present a short "laundry list", including the critical policy issues that needed focussed attention to boost bilateral trade. The issues would then be discussed at the CEOs' Forum meeting likely to be held next month.

In fact, he wanted the working groups on energy and the CEOs' Forum to come up with some doable suggestions by this year-end so that inter-governmental discussions could be held before the visit of the U.S. President scheduled for early next year.