

## EXTENSION FOR TOBACCO GROWER - ECONOMY

**NEWS:** The Government of India has amended the **Tobacco Board Rules, 1976**, extending **Virginia tobacco grower registrations and barn licenses** from **1 year to 3 years**, easing compliance for farmers starting the **2025-26 crop season in Andhra Pradesh**.

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

#### Tobacco Board of India – Overview

1. **Establishment:** Constituted in **1976** under the **Tobacco Board Act, 1975**, by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, Government of India.
2. **Headquarters:** Located in **Guntur, Andhra Pradesh**, one of the key regions for **Virginia tobacco cultivation** in India.
3. **Primary Mandate:** Responsible for the **regulation, promotion, and development of the tobacco industry**, especially **Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco**, which is a key export product.
4. **Key Activities:**
  - **Grower registration and licensing of barns** (curing infrastructure).
  - Facilitating **export marketing and quality certification**.
  - Providing **price support mechanisms** and **market intelligence** to farmers.
  - Promoting **research in tobacco farming**, including sustainability and productivity enhancements.

#### About Tobacco Farming

1. **Origin and Diversity:** Tobacco is **native to South America** and comprises over **60 known species** cultivated for commercial use worldwide.
2. **Ideal Agro-Climatic Conditions:**
  - **Temperature:** Optimal range is **20°C to 27°C**.
  - **Rainfall:** Requires at least **500 mm annually**.
  - **Soil:** Grows best in **sandy or sandy loam soils** with good drainage.
  - **Frost-Free Period:** Needs **90–120 days** of frost-free weather for proper maturation.

3. **Crop Duration:** Typically harvested within **90 to 150 days** depending on the variety and region.

**Status of Tobacco Production in India**

1. **Global Position:**

- India is the **2nd largest producer** and **4th largest exporter** (in value terms) of **unmanufactured tobacco** globally as of 2023.

2. **Export Earnings:**

- In **FY 2024–25**, India earned around **USD 1979 million** (approximately **₹16,728 crore**) from tobacco exports.

3. **Major Producing States:**

- **Gujarat** – contributes nearly **30%** of India’s total tobacco production.
- Other major states include **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar**.

**Varieties of Tobacco Grown in India**

Category	Tobacco Variety	Regions Grown	Characteristics / Use
Non-FCV Tobacco	FCV Tobacco	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana	Cured using heat; primary variety used in cigarettes.
	Bidi Tobacco	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka	Used in traditional Indian bidis.
	Chewing Tobacco	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal	Includes khaini, zarda; consumed by chewing.
	Hookah Tobacco	Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan	Flavored, moist tobacco used in hookahs.
	Snuff	Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra	Finely powdered, inhaled nasally.

Category	Tobacco Variety	Regions Grown	Characteristics / Use
	Burley Tobacco	Andhra Pradesh	Air-cured; used in cigarette blends.
	Oriental Tobacco	Tamil Nadu	Sun-cured; valued for aromatic flavor in blends.
	HDBRG (Hunsur Dark Fire-Cured)	Karnataka	Fire-cured; used in chewing tobacco and snuff.

### Significance of Extended Registration Validity

#### 1. Policy Reform:

- Validity of **registration and barn licenses** for FCV growers extended from **1 year to 3 years**.

#### 2. Impact:

- Benefits around **83,500 FCV tobacco farmers** and **91,000 barn operators** in **Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and Odisha**.

#### 3. Ease of Doing Business:

- Reduces **administrative burden and compliance costs**, allowing farmers to focus on **productivity, quality enhancement, and market readiness**.

#### 4. Long-Term Planning:

- Encourages **investment in infrastructure** and better **cropping practices**, contributing to **rural economic stability** and **export competitiveness**.

### WHO's Global Actions to Address Tobacco Farming

#### 1. Promoting Crop Alternatives:

- WHO advocates **transition to sustainable crops**, supporting farmers in moving away from tobacco dependency.

- Example: **Tobacco-Free Farms Programme** launched in **Migori County, Kenya (2021)** and later expanded to **Meru, Busia, Bungoma (Kenya)** and **Eastern Province (Zambia)**.

## 2. Policy Advocacy:

- WHO works with governments to **discourage tobacco cultivation** through supportive **regulations and economic policies**.
- Encourages inclusion of **tobacco farming alternatives** in national agriculture and health strategies.

## 3. Health and Environmental Awareness:

- Conducts awareness campaigns to highlight the **health risks of tobacco cultivation**, including exposure to **nicotine, pesticides, and green tobacco sickness**.
- Emphasizes the **environmental degradation** caused by deforestation and chemical use in tobacco farming.

## 4. Livelihood Support:

- Partners with development organizations to build **income-generating programs** for farmers transitioning out of tobacco.
- Focuses on **skills development**, access to **markets for alternative crops**, and **social protection mechanisms**.

## 5. Encouraging International Cooperation:

- Promotes global exchange of **knowledge, funding, and technical expertise** to reduce tobacco farming.
- Works through forums like the **WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC)** to coordinate global actions.

## 6. WHO FCTC:

- A legally binding international treaty that aims to **reduce both the demand and supply of tobacco** through public health policies and agricultural reforms.

Source: <https://www.herald.co.zw/tobacco-farming-registers-success-in-matabeleland/>