With 305 talukas declared drought-hit, Maharashtra launches 'Mission Murghas' to tackle fodder shortage

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News

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced on 14 Oct 2026 that 305 of Maharashtra's 358 talukas are drought-affected (265 at first, 40 more added after review). To prevent a fodder shortage for livestock, the State Animal Husbandry Department launched 'Mission Murghas' on 24 Oct 2026. In Marathi, 'murghas' (मुरघास) means silage – preserved green fodder. Farmers will get training and village-level demonstrations to cut, chop, press and store available green fodder airtight as silage; maize, jowar (sorghum) and Napier grass get priority. An additional ₹76.41 crore was sanctioned (₹66.41 crore District Annual Plan + ₹10 crore Vidarbha–Marathwada Dairy Development Project).

Key facts

Mission	Mission Murghas (Marathi: silage) – 24 Oct 2026
Implemented by	Maharashtra Animal Husbandry Department
Drought	305 of 358 talukas (declared 14 Oct 2026; CM Fadnavis)
Fodder crops	Maize, jowar, Napier grass
'Magel Tyala Murghas'	₹3/kg subsidy on silage purchase in 19 Vidarbha–Marathwada districts (DBT)

Fodder gap	Green fodder 22.79%, dry fodder 21.43% short (1 Oct 2026 estimate)

Background

- Drought declaration: the State Government declares drought using the 'Manual for Drought Management' (2016; revised 2020) of the Union Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. Three steps – rainfall deficit (first trigger), then impact indicators (area sown, vegetation index NDVI, soil moisture, water storage), and finally field verification.
- Relief funds: under the Disaster Management Act 2005, the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF – Sec 48) is used immediately; in severe drought, when it is insufficient, the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF – Sec 46) is released after a central team's visit and approval by a High-Level Committee chaired by the Union Home Minister. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- Science: silage is green fodder preserved by anaerobic fermentation by lactic acid bacteria; hay is fodder dried in the sun. Azolla is a floating water fern; the cyanobacterium Anabaena living inside it fixes atmospheric nitrogen – used as cattle feed and as a biofertiliser in paddy.
- Geography: Maharashtra's Marathwada lies in the rain-shadow of the Western Ghats on the Deccan Plateau and faces frequent drought. All 10 talukas of Latur district are drought-hit this time.

Tamil Nadu link: the Cumbu–Napier hybrid grasses CO (CN) 4 and CO (BN) 5, developed by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore, are grown across India as green fodder (CO (CN) 4 = CO 8 × FD 461). Veterinary education is led by the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (TANUVAS), Chennai.

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