Uttar Pradesh is the most populous and one of the main foodgrain producing states of the country. It occupies 9.2 per cent of the total area of the country. Net cultivated area of the state is 17.2 million hectares. Besides, 2 million hectares of land generally remains fallow and approximately 2.7 million hectares of waste land is under 'usar' and 'ravine'. The cropping intensity in the state comes to 146, which means 54 per cent of the farms are not sown more than once, although three crops per year can be easily grown in irrigated areas.

The state contributes 20 per cent of the total foodgrain production of the country. The foodgrain production in the state during the year 1992-93 was 362.49 lakh metric tonnes. State's contribution in national kitty in respect of pulses and oilseeds is 19 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively. The contribution of crop production accounts for about 80 per cent, in which cereals contributes 34.2 per cent, pulses 5.48 per cent, oilseeds 3.94 per cent, sugarcane 18.14 per cent, potato 2.88 per cent and other fruits and vegetables 1.31 per cent. Thus, cereals and sugarcane dominate the agriculture production in the state. Under the cereal crops, wheat and rice are the most widely cultivated crops of the state, which has increased the agricultural production i.e. 493 per cent in wheat and 315 per cent in rice.

The state of U.P. has wide range of soils. Though, they are potentially fertile, yet their current productivity has been low. However, this can be improved through proper soil and water management practice. The soils in the state are hill (14.33 %), 'Bhabar' (2.00 %), 'Tarai' (5.73 %), 'Alluvial' (61.78 %), 'Vindhyan' (5.10 %), 'Bundelkhand' (10.85 %) and 'Aravali' (0.21 %).
of the total area.

Uttar Pradesh is covered under 4 Agroclimatic zones. Agroclimatic Zone -I consists of 8 hill districts and Agroclimatic Zone-IV consists of 15 districts of Eastern U.P. Agroclimatic Zone -V covers the highest number of 35 districts of U.P. mainly from North-West, South-West and Central U.P. plains. Agroclimatic Zone-VIII also called as Hill and Central Plateu covered the Jhansi division districts.

It is evident from the previous discussions that U.P. has diverse soil and climatic conditions which determine the crops to be raised and practices to be followed. The Department of Agriculture, U.P. is responsible for transfer of improved agriculture technologies to the farmers and also assist them in timely availability of agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, fungicides etc. With a view to demonstrating the technical feasibility, economic viability and social acceptability of location specific agrotechniques to the farmers, it has established 186 agricultural farms popularly known as seed multiplication farms in different Agroclimatic regions of the state.

Of the 186 Govt. Agril. Farms, 92 farms are continuously running on marginal profits, 44 farms are continuously running on losses and remaining 50 farms are those, which exhibit profit and loss in cycles. The triple purpose of (1) production of improved seeds (2) training of farmers and extension workers and (3) creating centre of Agril. excellence in the district has not been fully realized and the performance of the farms has been dismal and also a point of criticism by the people.

Of the 1,19,298.4 metric tonnes of improved seeds distributed annually to the state, the Govt. Agril. farms produced 5,463.40 metric tonnes of improved seeds which comes to 12.96 per cent in the year 1991-92. Thus, 87.04 per cent of the seed distributed in the state is either to be produced by the
U.P. Seeds and Tarai Development Corporation or on farmers' fields or different Departments of the State Government purchase seeds from Government and non-Government organizations. Thus, quantitatively contribution of Government Agricultural farms in the production of improved seeds is not significant. If analysed cropwise, insignificant quantities of pulses, soybean, sunflower, cotton, 'jowar', 'bajra'; maize, lentil, linseed etc. are produced and mostly improved seeds of these crops are always purchased by the Department of Agriculture, U.P. to distribute the farmers. Thus, it appears that production strategies on these Government Agricultural Farms are not in tune with the requirement of the seeds.

As regards profitability of Government Agricultural farms, 71 per cent (132 farms) are running on profit and 29 per cent (54 farms) are running on losses, 49 per cent (2366.14 hectares) of the cultivated area of these farms is giving profit and 51 per cent (2,452.66 hectares) is giving loss, which is distributed to 'usar', 'ravinous', 'flood affected', 'pathars'. Farms situated in hills and other farms are affected by undulating terrain and special techno-economic and management problems. 132 farms are giving a net profit of Rs.1,925 per hectare per annum over the year 1986-87 to 1991-92. However, if profit and loss per ha per annum is calculated of all the farms together, the average profit comes to Rs.292.68 per hectare per annum which is quite low over the years 1986-87 to 1991-92.

As regards the demonstration of Agro-techniques, the productivity of wheat of 46 farms is below district average and productivity of rice on 51.28 per cent farms is also below the district average.

Realizing the poor performance of the Government Agricultural farms in relation to the objectives setforth, U.P. State Government in 1986-87 got an enquiry conducted by the State Planning Institute and similar enquiry was conducted by the same institute on the regional agricultural testing and demonstration
farms in the year 1987-88. Unfortunately both of these studies focussed only on administrative and financial aspects of farm management and techno-economic analysis was not at all undertaken. Realizing the incompleteness of the previous farm studies, State Govt. asked Uttar Pradesh Council of Agricultural Research to initiate a broad based study covering techno-economic and administrative aspects of farm management so that techno-economic and administrative variables affecting farm efficiency and their inter relationships are fully covered to prepare a comprehensive farm production policies.

Keeping in view the above observations a study, "An Appraisal of Government Agricultural Farms of the Department of Agriculture U.P." was initiated in U.P. in the year 1994-95 with the following objectives:

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the farm structure of the Govt. agricultural farms in U.P.

2. To examine the cropping pattern, resource use and productivity of the sample Govt. Agriculture farms in U.P.

3. To workout the economics of production of main crops of different sample Govt. Agricultural farms of U.P.

4. To analyse the processing and disposal of crop output on the sample Govt. Agriculture farms.

5. To find out the constraints in the production of different crops on the sample Govt. Agricultural farms in U.P. and to suggest suitable measures to overcome them.