

CCI to continue cotton purchase at MSP from farmers despite coronavirus fears

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has stated that cotton procurement at MSP will continue across markets. However, farmers are still holding onto their crops seeking better prices and also due to the directives issued by the district collectors to avoid crowds, senior industry people said. P Alli Rani, CMD, CCI, said that no such directives have been received from the government and therefore, cotton purchase from farmers shall continue. As long as the Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) run, we shall continue to purchase cotton from farmers, she said. Till date, the CCI has purchased some 80 lakh bales. Most APMCs in Maharashtra are still running normally since they are located in rural areas and the coronavirus impact is largely being seen in urban areas so far, Jaydutta Holkar, former chairperson, Lasalgaon APMC, said. Atul Ganatra, president, Cotton Association of India (CAI), said that around 60% of the cotton has already arrived in the market till date. Daily arrivals are to the tune of 1.30 lakh bales and the arrivals are gradually reducing. Farmers who have around 30% of the produce are holding onto their crops seeking better returns, he said. The coronavirus fears, however, have impacted the international market which, in turn, has had an impact on the domestic prices, he said. Cotton prices are in the range of Rs 38,000 per candy to Rs 38,500 per candy for good quality cotton, from Rs 40,000-42,000 per candy nearly 10 days ago, he said. Cotton exports from the country are still good, he said, adding that nearly 30 lakh bales have been exported to various countries so far of which 50% is to Bangladesh, which has been the biggest buyer this season, he said. In Jalgaon, a major cotton and ginning belt in Maharashtra, the picture is very different with farmers, ginners and traders getting into a panic mode, said Pradeep Jain, president Khandesh Gin/Press Owners & Trade Development Association. Prices have come down and due to market speculation that the CCI may not purchase cotton till March 31 and directives from district collectors to avoid crowds, farmers are avoiding markets, he said. Cotton purchases may dwindle in the next 15 days, he said. Ginning units are functioning on a skeletal basis and only as per need, he said, adding that trade could come to a stand-still in a few days.



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