

## Paddy cultivation picks up as rains recede in Bihar, Odisha & Karnataka

NEW DELHI: Receding waters in flood affected regions of Bihar, Odisha and Karnataka have helped in recovering area under paddy cultivation, narrowing from last week's shortfall of 1.75 million hectare to just one million ha. Farmers in these areas planted short-duration varieties of paddy to compensate for crop damage due to the floods. As sowing recovered



after the flood, the acreage under kharif crops has almost touched last year's levels of around 103 million ha. "The recovery is fast. We expect more areas to be covered next week. We don't see any drop in acreage. There is an overall deficit of 0.61 million ha as against last year, but when we compare with the average

of the last few years, there is an increase of 0.69 million ha this year," said a senior agriculture department official. Agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar said there would be no shortfall in production. "There is no threat to crops. We don't expect any shortfall in food grain production," he said. The government expects to meet its food grain production target of 291.1 million tonnes for this year. In 2018-19, output was pegged at 284.95 million tonnes, according to its fourth advanced estimates.

According to the latest data on crop sowing, rice planting is down by 2.78% from last year, while overall sowing is lagging by less than 1%. Planting of pulses is down less than 2%, while the acreage under oilseeds and coarse cereals, including jowar, bajra and maize, has touched last year's mark. The sowing of cotton, however, has risen 6.5%, raising hopes of a good harvest. Cumulative rainfall this season as on Friday was on par with normal rainfall despite a relatively dry spell over the last few days. Due to heavy rain in August, major reservoirs are brimming with water, at about 109% last year's levels, allaying fears of a shortage for irrigation and drinking. "Due to late surge in rains, the moisture-content in soil looks healthy. While there doesn't seem to be any drop in kharif output, rabi production, too, looks promising with filled reservoirs," said PK Joshi, Fellow, National Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

Source: Economic times, September, 07, 2019 (verbatim reproduced)