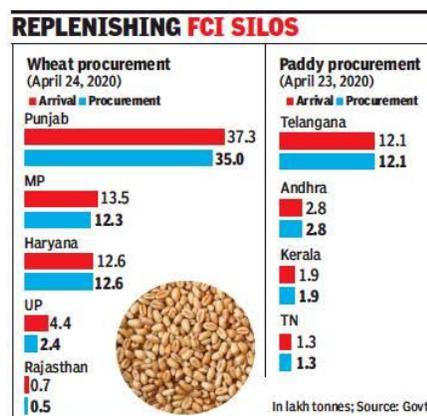


National Scenario, April 2020

Cereals

- Basmati prices up 5% during 21-day lockdown even as exports take a huge hit.
- Top selling pusa basmati variety (PB1121) is currently trading at about Rs 65 a kg, up Rs 3-4 a kg since March 15, 2020.
- After witnessing strong growth of 25 per cent in 2017-2018 and 22 per cent in 2018-19, basmati exports moderated in 2019-20 owing to weak offtake across key markets like Iran.
- The value of exports fell sharply from \$4.37 billion (at Rs 75/dollar) in 2018-19 to \$2.79 billion in 2019-20. The exports are estimated to have further moderated in Q4 of 2019-20, with the covid-19 outbreak.
- Amid the ongoing lockdown, nearly 90% of the wheat arriving in mandis has been procured by government agencies, while the entire paddy crop in southern states has been purchased, as part of an attempt to ensure that farmers do not face hardship, while also replenishing stocks in Food Corporation of India silos.
- Foodgrain stocks in the Central pool stood at 73.85 million tonnes (24.70 mt of wheat and 32.24 mt of rice) and three-and-a-half times the minimum operational-cum-strategic reserve requirement of 21.04 mt. In addition, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and state government agencies were



holding 25.24 mt of un-milled paddy, whose rice equivalent, at an out-turn ratio of 67 per cent, worked out to 16.91 mt.

- The government has allocated 12 MT of rice and wheat under the corona package while additional 15 MT can be distributed under regular NFSA quota by June-end.
- The country's wheat production is set to surpass the rice output for the first time this year with an expected production 118.41 million tonne, 11.5% higher than the estimate of the agriculture ministry.
- The government has set a target of producing a record 298.3 million tonnes of food grain in the crop year that begins in July. It is aiming for an output of 149.92 million tonnes in the kharif, or summer-sown crop, and 148.4 million tonnes for the rabi, or the winter-sown crop. The target is over 2% more than the last year's estimated production of 292 million tonnes.

CENTRAL POOL STOCKS AS ON APRIL 1			
(LAKH TONNES)			
	Wheat	Rice*	Total
2010	161.25	267.13	428.38
2011	153.64	288.20	441.84
2012	199.52	333.50	533.02
2013	242.07	354.68	596.75
2014	178.34	305.52	483.86
2015	172.21	238.20	410.41
2016	145.38	288.11	433.49
2017	80.59	297.84	378.43
2018	132.31	300.43	432.74
2019	169.92	398.16	568.08
2020	247.00	491.49	738.49

**Includes rice equivalent of un-milled paddy.*
Source: Department of Food & Public Distribution.

Commodity	Target production (MT) in 2020-21
Rice	117.5
Wheat	106.5
Pulses	25.6
Oilseeds	36.64
Cotton	36 (Million bales)

Oilseeds & Pulses

- Increase in daily purchase limit of oilseeds and pulses to 40 quintals per farmer a day, from the existing 25 quintals.
- Grant of blanket approval by the agriculture ministry's to 13 states i.e Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal to immediately start procurement of chana (gram) and masoor (lentil), the two big pulses grown during the rabi season. The purchases will be made under various existing central schemes, including PM-AASHA (Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan), of which price support scheme is a part.
- NAFED has procured 1,24,125 metric tonnes of pulses and oilseeds on minimum support price, worth over Rs 606 crore, during the lockdown which has benefited 91,710 farmers.
- The total rabi chana production in 2019-20, is projected to be 11.28 million tonnes (mt), while masoor output is projected at 1.39 mt, and the Centre will assist states in purchase up to 25 per cent of that, according to guidelines.

Castor

- The country's total castor crop estimate has been revised downwards to 19.52 lakh tonne from 20.36 lakh tonne estimated earlier in February 2020.
- The total area under castor seed cultivation in India for 2019-20 is estimated to be 9,92,000 hectare, as per the government's estimates

against 2018-19 estimate of 7,69,570 hectare, which has increased by 29% compared to the previous year.

- India's average castor seed productivity for 2019-20 has been slightly revised down to 1,968 kg/ha against earlier estimate of 2,052 kg/ha,
- The total seed production in India is estimated to be 19.52 lakh tonne in 2019-20 against the previous estimate of 20.36 lakh tonne.

Onion

- Wholesale prices of onions have dropped to Rs 5-8 per kg due to lockdown

Cotton

- The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has resumed procurement of the commodity and it has bought around 25,000 quintal of cotton from farmers in the last 10 days, top officials of the corporation CCI has procured 85 lakh bales. The minimum support price for the medium-staple variety of cotton is Rs 5,255 per quintal and that for the long staple one is Rs 5,550 per quintal this year.

Others

- According to Think tank NITI Aayog, the agriculture sector, is likely to see a near-normal growth rate of at least 3% in 2020-21, despite the COVID-19 crisis. The farm sector grew at a rate of 3.7% in the last fiscal year. Despite the shutdown of large parts of the industrial and services sectors, agricultural growth will ensure that the Indian economy does not shrink this year and predicted that at least 0.5% GDP growth would

come from agriculture alone, refuting international predictions of a negative GDP growth rate.

- Centre to hike MSP for Minor Forest Produce By 16-30%
- The Rubber Board of India has proposed a Rs 1,000-crore rehab package for the natural rubber sector to offset the losses due to the lockdown to the Union commerce ministry.