

FOODGRAIN PRODUCTION SET TO TOUCH A RECORD HIGH

Relevant for: Indian Economy | Topic: Issues of Buffer stocks and Food Security

Total foodgrain production is projected to scale an all-time high of almost 292 million tonnes in 2019-20, propelled by record production of both rice and wheat, according to the Agriculture Ministry's second advance estimates released on Tuesday.

Production of several crops, including rice and major pulses, was lower than targeted in the kharif or the monsoon season. However, the abundance of late monsoon rains resulted in cumulative rainfall that was 10% higher than the long-period average for the season.

This helped farmers rake in rabi or winter harvests that were larger-than-expected in almost all crops.

Thus, the estimate for total foodgrain output of 291.95 million tonnes is more than six million tonnes higher than the 285.21 million tonnes produced in 2018-19.

Higher rice output

The Agriculture Ministry expects rice production to reach 117.47 million tonnes, slightly higher than the 116.48 million tonnes produced in the previous year. Wheat, which is only grown in the rabi season, will see a major surge in production at 106.2 million tonnes in the current year, from the 103.6 million tonnes in 2018-19.

Despite the government's drive to encourage millets and nutri-cereals, production failed to match targets this year, with the estimate pegged at 45.24 million tonnes.

Pulses production was also estimated to come in lower-than targeted 23 million tonnes, although it was still higher than the previous year's harvest. Most pulses are dry land crops, grown on land without irrigation and the delay in monsoons in many areas hit kharif harvests although rabi production improved.

It was a similar story with oil seeds. Production was estimated at almost 342 million tonnes, higher than last year but still lower than the target for this year. Sugarcane is the only major crop where this year's estimated production of 3,538 million tonnes was significantly lower than last year's output of 4,054 million tonnes.

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