

# AIR QUALITY PANEL EXPECTS REDUCED STUBBLE BURNING

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Pollution - Air, Water, Soil & E-waste

A farmer engaged in stubble burning in Karnal district of Haryana. File Photo MOORTHY RV

A reduction in the area under paddy cultivation in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, as well as a shift away from paddy varieties that take long to mature, could see a reduction in stubble burning this year, the Centre-constituted Commission for Air Quality Management said in a statement on Friday.

The total paddy area in Haryana, Punjab and the eight NCR (National Capital Region) districts of Uttar Pradesh has reduced by 7.72% during the current year as compared to last year. Similarly, total paddy straw generation from the non-basmati variety of rice is likely to be reduced by 12.42% during the current year as compared to the previous year. It's the non-basmati variety of rice, whose stalk remains, that is usually burnt off by farmers ahead of sowing wheat.

The Commission said: "Both Central and State Governments of Haryana, Punjab and U.P. have been taking measures to diversify crops as well as to reduce the use of PUSA-44 variety of paddy. Burning of paddy straw from the non-basmati variety of crops is the prime concern. Crop diversification and moving away from PUSA-44 variety with short duration High Yielding Varieties are part of the framework and action plan for control of stubble burning."

Data from Haryana, Punjab and U.P. suggests total paddy straw generation is likely to come down by 1.31 million tonnes (from 20.05 million tonnes in 2020 to 18.74 million tonnes in 2021) in Punjab; by 0.8 million tonnes (from 7.6 million tonnes in 2020 to 6.8 million tonnes in 2021) in Haryana; and by 0.09 million tonnes (from 0.75 million tonnes in 2020 to 0.67 million tonnes in 2021) in the eight NCR districts of U.P. this year.

The total quantity of straw generated by the respective States was 28.4 million tonnes in 2020, which is now expected to come down to 26.21 million tonnes in 2021. The decrease in non-basmati variety is expected to be even higher.

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