

## After cotton, chilli production may also dip in Telangana

Telangana horticulture officials said that preliminary data received from some districts so far shows that area under chilli cultivation has reduced by 20% in 2017-18

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According to data from the horticulture department, chilli was sown in an area of 12.43 lakh hectares in Telangana last year, which gave a yield of about 48.29 lakh tonnes. Photo: Reuters

Hyderabad: After witnessing a dip in cotton produce due to an attack by the pink bollworm pest and unseasonal rains, Telangana is bracing itself for lower production of chilli, another major crop in the state.

State horticulture department officials said that preliminary data received from some districts so far shows that the sown area has reduced by 20% in 2017-18.

Lower production will have some impact as chilli is an important crop in Telangana, said a senior official from the department, on condition of anonymity.

According to data from the horticulture department, chilli was sown in an area of 12.43 lakh hectares in Telangana last year, which gave a yield of about 48.29 lakh tonnes.

“Given that cotton production has been impacted, this year’s reduction of the chilli crop will bring down the state’s agricultural production to some extent. We will know how much of the yield has reduced only after the crop is harvested later from February onwards,” the horticulture department official said.

He added that apart from the local market rates, prices in neighbouring states and bordering countries of India also play a major role in the fixing of market prices.

Unseasonal heavy rains in the first two weeks of October 2017 wreaked havoc on cotton fields and damaged the cotton crop in some areas in the state, which was followed by the pink bollworm attack.

Agricultural experts monitoring the situation have estimated a decline of between 15 and 20% in cotton yield for this year.

According to data from the agricultural marketing department, 6.5 lakh metric tonnes of cotton had reached agricultural markets until mid-December, lower than what was expected, as the crop was sown on 49% of the state's total cultivable area.

Cotton cultivation touched nearly 19 lakh hectares this year, 50% higher than the previous year's 12.4 lakh hectares.

“The Telangana government or the Horticulture department should be prepared for these kind of situations in advance. Many of the chilli farmers in the state had shifted to cotton last year (due to the price crash) and opted for it because its market rate was good then. Now they are facing problems,” said Kiran Vissa from Rythu Swarajya Vedika, a farmer organization which works on agricultural issues in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Vissa pointed out that last year the Andhra Pradesh government had stepped in and purchased chilli from farmers when prices were low. He added that the same should be done if a similar situation arises in Telangana this year.

**Source:** <http://www.livemint.com/Home-Page/eghLlueWrPY2nrfHt1IC9H/After-cotton-chilli-production-may-also-dip-in-Telangana.html>