

Cotton availability will be adequate, says ICF

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Coimbatore: The availability of cotton in the country would be comfortable in the 2018-19 season (October-September), according to the Indian Cotton Federation (ICF).

The area under cotton has been pegged at 122.38 lakh hectares as against 122.53 lakh hectares reported during December 2017 as per the first advance estimates released by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.

“The area is expected to increase by few more lakh hectares and the country would have higher acreage under cotton than the previous year.

The favourable monsoon weather conditions and preventive action taken to control the pink boll worm and other pest attacks is expected to result in higher production and better quality of cotton,” said J Thulasidharan, president, ICF.

“As per field information, the availability of cotton in terms of quantity and quality would be much better than 2017-18 (season) during the current season,” he said. Cotton production for the 2017-18 season is estimated to be around 373 lakh bales (a bale is 170 kgs), an 8.11% growth compared to the previous season.

Cotton production had increased due to the rise in area under cultivation by almost 13% i.e. from about 108.5 lakh hectares around to 122.5 lakh hectares. Though in certain areas damages have been reported due to pink boll worm, the ICF president said that the impact would be much lower when compared to the last year. Certain states like Maharashtra had taken measures to control pink boll worm and advocated late sowing, he said. “Prices would further taper down once the arrival picks up,” Thulasidharan stated. He however said that the arrival might be delayed due to late sowing. Taking advantage of 26% to 28% increase in the minimum support price announced by the union government for the 2018-19 season and favourable monsoon conditions, farmers have sown more cotton. Pointing out that the trade had projected very tight closing stock for the 2017-18 season, but in reality the industry had comfortable stock position, which helped cotton prices to decrease from Rs 48,500 to Rs 46,500 per bale during the end of the season, he said that textile mills should not panic over the stock situation.

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