

Cotton acreage trails as farmers shift to other crops

Our Bureau

Bengaluru

The acreage in cotton in the current kharif cropping season is down by around 9 per cent till August 12 at 110.49 lakh hectares (lh) over 121.24 lh in the same period last year.

The Cotton Association of India (CAI), the apex trade body, expects the acreage to be around 113 lh this year as compared to 127 lh in the previous year.

Addressing the southern cotton trade recently at Coimbatore, CAI President Atul Ganatra said, "This season, we have noticed that cotton farmers are shifting to other crops mainly due to lower yields and as cost of production for Indian farmers is very high."

CHANGING PATTERN

Regarding the crop outlook



GOING SOUTH. CAI expects the acreage to be around 113 lh this year against 127 lh in the previous year

for the upcoming 2024-25 season, Ganatra said, "It is too early to predict anything because in last two years the rain pattern has changed and monsoon only starts from July instead of June and rain continues till October-end."

"Also, due to global warming, variability in the rain pattern has increased. This is the main reason that affects cotton yield, which has already come down from 600 kg to 410 kg per hectare," Ganatra said.

Further, the CAI president said the cotton balance sheet for next year's opening stocks will be a little tight on higher exports to Bangladesh. "This year unexpectedly, cotton export increased from 15 lakh bales to 28 lakh bales due to good demand from Bangladesh."

During 2023-24, India's cotton production and consumption has been the same at around 325 lakh bales.

India's cotton exports will be 28 lakh bales while imports will be 13 lakh bales. The gap of 15 lakh bales will be reduced from last year's stock, he said.

AVAILABILITY

As per CAI estimates, spin-

ning mills are now having 25 lakh bales stock, while ginners are holding some 15 lakh bales stock and the Cotton Corporation of India some 20 lakh bales. Another 10 lakh bales arrivals are expected during August-September.

"So a total of 70 lakh bales are available for cotton consumption up to September 30 for the mills. If the new crop is delayed, then the situation would get a little tight for covering cotton for the mills," he added.

Cotton consumption in north Indian States is 90-95 lakh bales. In south India, the consumption is around 125 lakh bales and in Central India, the consumption the offtake is 145 to 150 lakh bales.

Total consumption is about 360 lakh bales. Since mills are running at 90 per cent capacity, consumption can be taken at 325 lakh bales.