

# Farmers prefer paddy to cotton and pulses, set to produce record 120 mt rice this kharif season

Our Bureau

New Delhi

India's rice production in 2024 kharif season is estimated at 119.93 million tonnes (mt), which shows the output has jumped by 30 mt in the past decade alone. The rice output in the last kharif season was 113.26 mt. This reflects farmers' growing preference for the paddy crop when there is uncertainty over yield and prices of other crops, experts said.

According to the Agriculture Ministry, which released the first advance estimates of kharif crops on Tuesday, the area under paddy this year surged to a record 43.37 million hectares (mh) from 40.73 mh year-ago. Though the last weekly update on September 27 showed acreage at about

41 mh and a jump of only 1 mh from year-ago, the latest data showed the gradual shifting of the government towards technology infusion in collating crop data.

## DIGITAL SURVEY

*businessline* last month reported how a digital survey threw up an unusual increase of over 6.5 mh in paddy area this year.

The Agriculture Ministry data showed that maize output is estimated at an all-time high of 24.54 mt for the 2024-25 kharif season against 22.25 mt a year ago. The Ministry pegged the kharif season's foodgrain (rice, pulses, nutri cereals and maize) production at 164.71 mt for 2024-25 from 155.77 mt in 2023-24.

Among other crops, pulses output is expected to remain almost flat at 6.95 mt against

6.97 mt whereas oilseeds production may marginally rise to 25.74 mt from 24.16 mt.

India has been trying to become self-sufficient in pulses and edible oils as it is either the top or the second largest importer of these two commodities in the world.

At a time when the sugar industry has been seeking permits for export, the Ministry's sugarcane production estimate will be a setback for the mills as the government may not take a risk when cane output has been projected to fall to 439.93 mt from 453.16 mt. Cotton output is estimated lower at 29.93 million bales (of 170 kg each) against 32.52 million bales, while jute and mesta production may fall to 8.46 million bales (of 180 kg each) from 9.69 million bales.

## Kharif crops production

(million tonnes)

	2023	2024	% Change
Rice	113.26	119.93	5.9
Pulses	6.97	6.95	-0.3
Nutri-cereals	13.29	13.28	-0.1
Maize	22.25	24.54	10.3
Foodgrains	155.77	164.71	5.7
Oilseeds	24.16	25.74	6.5
Jowar	1.51	2.20	45.7
Bajra	9.66	9.38	-2.9
Ragi	1.67	1.39	-16.8
Tur	3.42	3.50	2.3
Urad	1.60	1.21	-24.4
Moong	1.15	1.38	20.0
Soybean	13.06	13.36	2.3
Groundnut	8.66	10.36	19.6
Castorseed	1.96	1.55	-20.9
Sunflower	0.06	0.06	0.0
Sugarcane	453.16	439.93	-2.9
Cotton	32.52	29.93	-8.0
Jute & mesta	9.69	8.46	-12.7

Source: Agriculture Ministry; Note: Data for the year 2023-24 is of final estimate, for 2024-25 first estimate; # Cotton Production in Bales, 1Bale=170 Kg \*\* Jute&Mesta in Bales (1Bale=180 Kg);