

Favourable weather condition boosts prospects of robust wheat harvest

SANDIP DAS
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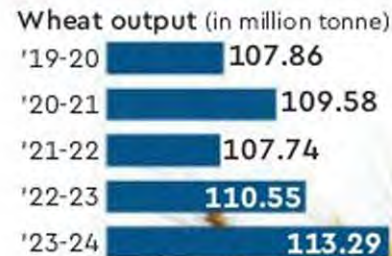
THE OUTLOOK FOR a robust wheat harvest, a key rabi crop, appears promising, provided favourable weather persists over the next four to six weeks, according to officials and traders. Higher output is expected to ease the domestic supply situation.

“Current crop conditions is conducive because of recent rains and cooler weather conditions helped higher tillering, leading to increase number of grain-bearing heads,” Ratan Tiwari, director, Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research, Karnal based institute under Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) told *FE*.

Tiwari also ruled out any reports of yellow or brown rust in the wheat crop so far. “Favourable weather conditions are supporting the vegetative growth and tillering of wheat,” noted an advisory issued by the institute to farmers.

Wheat sowing this season has increased to 32 million hectares (Mha) compared to 31.56 Mha last year and is higher than the average sown area of the past five years. How-

HOPEFUL OF BUMPER CROP



Source: agriculture ministry, crop year (July-June)



ever, wheat harvests over the past three years have faced setbacks due to excessive heat before harvesting and unseasonal rains in March.

Navneet Chitlangia, president, Roller Flour Millers Federation of India said while currently it's a 'lean' period in terms of supplies, there are ample stocks with the millers before new crops start arriving in the market by March.

“Given encouraging crop conditions so far due to conducive weather, wheat output is likely to be higher than the previous year,” Chitlangia said.

He also stated that current

mandi prices of wheat which are ruling around ₹3,100/quintal in Delhi are likely to decline once new harvest starts arriving in the market over the next six weeks.

“Mandi prices are likely to stabilize around ₹2,600 per quintal as states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have announced a bonus of ₹125 per quintal over the Centre's Minimum Support Price (MSP) of ₹2,425 per quintal for the 2024-25 rabi marketing season (April-June),” Chitlangia added.

The agriculture ministry estimates wheat output for the 2023-24 crop year (July-June) at 113.29

million tonne (MT), with the 2024-25 crop year estimate expected next month.

Currently, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) holds 17 MT of wheat stock, well above the buffer requirement of 13.8 MT as of January 1. Under the open market sale scheme (OMSS), launched last month, 0.9 MT of wheat has been sold to bulk buyers, including flour millers and processors, through weekly e-auctions.

The government has allocated 2.5 MT of wheat from central pool stocks to curb price spikes in the current fiscal year. FCI is offloading wheat at a price of ₹2,325 per quintal (excluding transportation costs), according to an official statement. In FY24, FCI achieved a record sale of 10 MT of wheat in the open market.

Wheat inflation stood at 7.84% in December 2024, remaining in single digits since August 2023.

Agriculture minister Shivvaraj Singh Chouhan recently reviewed rabi sowing progress, weather conditions, and pest surveillance through the National Pest Surveillance System.

“The overall crop coverage and condition are better than the previous year,” an official statement said.