

## Tobacco growers face huge losses in Guntur

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**GUNTUR:** With auctions being cancelled as part of containment measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, tobacco farmers fear that most of their quality leaf bales are likely to get spoiled resulting in huge losses.

Growers of Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) variety in the state are on verge of facing unrecoverable damage as they were unable to sell their harvest. If the produce goes unsold for a little longer, it will cause devastating losses for lakhs of farmers, farm labourers, and their dependants. Moreover, lack of proper storage facility will result in early damage.

Experts say that the tobacco industry and the government should extend support to these growers in such times. “The industry must open processing facilities and the government should allow the tobacco board to reopen auctions centres immediately, under the relaxations granted for the agriculture sector,” said an exporter on conditions of anonymity. He added that following social distancing norms at auction platforms will not be difficult as tobacco is a regulated crop.

“We can’t repay loans or pay wages if the auctions do not resumed immediately,” said Ch Venkateswara Rao who has crop in Tangutur of Prakasam district.

Meanwhile, YSRC MLA Sudhakar Babu demanded that the tobacco board chairman resume auctions immediately and BJP leader Raghunatha Babu should urge the Centre to compensate the growers.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/tobacco-growers-face-huge-losses/articleshowprint/75055558.cms>