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# Losses force Nellore tobacco ryots to reduce area of cultivation

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NELLORE: Change in climatic conditions and increase in cost of cultivation have forced farmers to decrease the area of cultivation of tobacco in Nellore district. Tobacco is being cultivated in upland mandals of the district including Marripadu, DC Palli, Atmakur, Varikuntapadu, Vinjamur, Kaligiri Seetharamapuram. Usually, farmers raise tobacco as per the directions of the Tobacco boards located in DC Palli and Kaligiri.



The boards direct farmers to cultivate tobacco based on the indent from the manufacturers and exporters during crop fixation period in July. The area of cultivation has gradually dropped to 6,305 hectares from 8,453 hectares from 2016 to 2021. The production of tobacco has decreased to 6.7 million kilos from 9.4 million kilos in the span of six years. In 2016, as many as 4,025 farmers in the district registered themselves with the boards for the cultivation of tobacco, but in 2021, the number reduced to 3,782.

“The cost of cultivation has increased in the last five years. I have cultivated the crop in around 60 acres for some time. There is no good price for tobacco in the market. I have faced losses in the last two years and decided to shift to other crops,” said P Mallikarjuna, a farmer from Kaligiri mandal. Farmers have to pay Rs 12,000 to the board every year for each registered barren land for renewing their licence.

“We are not in a position to fix the price of the crop and are forced to sell the tobacco based on the market price. There is no competition among the traders for purchasing the crop, which resulted in less price for the produce. I have faced losses for the last three years and decided to stop the cultivation of tobacco this year,” said K Narasapureddy, a farmer from Marripadu mandal. The climatic conditions are not favourable for the cultivation of tobacco this year.

“Crop damaged due to rainfall last year. Farmers have been facing troubles raising the crop this year also. We are expecting a good price for the tobacco in the market,” said Rajasekhar, auction officer, DC Palli Tobacco Board.

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