

India's wheat exports to top 10 mt this fiscal: USDA

US agency raises rice, maize shipments estimate in view of record production

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India will export a record 10 million tonnes (mt) of wheat during the current fiscal, but its rice shipments could be lower this calendar year and corn (maize) sales abroad might also dip during the season to September, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has said.

In the "Grain: World Markets and Trade" report brought out by its Foreign Agricultural Service, the USDA said India's wheat exports this fiscal would be 10 mt against last fiscal's 3.58 mt. In the

case of rice, exports would be 20.5 mt against 21.19 mt last calendar year.

Corn shipments would be lower for the current marketing season (October 2021-September 2022) at 2.8 mt against 3.67 mt last season. However, the USDA has raised the export estimates for rice and corn by 0.5 mt and 0.3 mt, respectively, in the current outlook compared with last month in view of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine that has stalled shipments from the Black Sea region.

'Demand accelerating'

The USDA said it had raised its wheat exports forecast for India by 3.0 mt in view of demand accelerating after the Russian troops entered Ukraine. "In the new marketing year 2022-23 beginning in April, fresh supplies will be available in addition to the



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exceptionally large stocks in the country," it said.

While New Delhi tended to supply wheat to neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh besides West Asia, the country would find buyers across Africa and other parts of the Gulf region. The transit time to West Asia will be longer compared to Black Sea exporters "but India is well-positioned to step in as a low-cost

supplier," the USDA said.

A Commerce Ministry statement on Monday said the value of wheat exports had grown 387 per cent during the April-January period of the current fiscal to \$1.74 billion against \$358 million in the year-ago period.

Data from the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) showed that during April-Decem-

ber of the current fiscal the volume of wheat shipments had increased to 5.04 mt against 1.07 mt in the year-ago period.

'Attractive' pricing

"Notwithstanding the conflict in Ukraine, tightening global supplies and high prices from major exporters have made Indian wheat competitive for the first time in several years. After five consecutive record crops and rising government wheat inventories, India has ample exportable supplies," it said. The US agency said Indian wheat export prices averaged an "attractive \$312/tonne" in January and enjoyed the advantage of low freight rates to markets in West and South Asia. Currently, while Indian wheat export prices are hovering around \$350, prices of the grain from the US, Argentina and Europe are all quoted above \$425.