

Cotton acreage likely to increase by 12% to 135 lakh hectares despite drop in North

Gujarat to see highest area expansion, says CAI

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Notwithstanding the marginal decline in cotton acreage in Punjab and Haryana, the area under the fibre crop is set to rise by 8-12 per cent this year to about 135 lakh hectares (lh) as farmers in western, central and southern zone are seen planting it more lured by higher prices this season to September.

The Cotton Association of India (CAI), the apex trade body, is bullish about the sowing prospects this kharif season.

“Sowing will increase by 12 per cent and go up to 133-135 lakh hectares from last year’s

120 lakh,” said Atul Ganatra, President, CAI. He further said the acreage expansion will be the highest in Gujarat, the No 1 producer, at around 20-25 per cent.

Cotton planting, which started mid-April in Punjab and Haryana, is complete and the acreage is lower than last year’s levels and much lesser than the targets fixed by these States for the year.

“There is a marginal decline in Punjab and Haryana due to issues such as water availability during the planting season. However, the overall cotton area in the country will definitely go up this year and there should be at least 7-8 per cent increase in the acreage because of high prices and short supply,” said YG Prasad, Director of Nagpur-based ICAR-Central Institute of Cotton Re-



search. Prasad further said most of the Central cotton growing regions have received rains and farmers are busy with sowing.

Area gains in South

In Karnataka, the area under cotton till June 10, had doubled to over 1.21 lh compared with 0.59 lh in the previous year. Karnataka has set a target of 7.28 lh this year. Andhra Pradesh has also sharply raised the cotton acreage target to 6.11 lh for

the current year over last year’s cropped area of 5.33 lh.

Tarun Satsangi, AGM Research, Origo e-Mandi, said the decline in Punjab and Haryana would be offset by increase in Gujarat and Maharashtra, the major producers, where sowing will start by end of this month.

While Haryana has seen a 3 per cent decline at 6.28 lh this year, in Punjab the acreage would be around 2.48 lh (2.51 lh). Punjab had set a target of 4 lh, while Haryana was targeting an area of 7 lh this year.

Though the acreage under the fibre crop in Rajasthan, which stood at 4.72 lh till recently, is seen catching up, the overall area would be around 7 lh (7.66 lh), Satsangi said. Rajasthan had set a target of 8 lh for the current year.