

Maharashtra mulls FRP for sugarcane used in production of jaggery

Looks to bring its production units under provisions of Sugar Control Order, 1966



Officials say the government wants to ensure that sugarcane farmers who sell their produce to jaggery units get a fixed price consider bringing jaggery production units under provisions of Sugar (Control) Order, 1966. The committee will also make recommendations on sanctions and licenses for *khandsari* industries. The Sugar (Control) Order, 1966, provides the government the power to regulate sugar production, restrict its sale by producers, movement and quality, besides calling for information from producers or recognised dealers among other things.

The sugarcane FRP is fixed by

the government on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The FRP is based on the cost of production of sugarcane and an element of assured profit to cover the risk of sugarcane farmers.

Why FRP for jaggery?

Officials in the State say the government wants to ensure that sugarcane farmers who sell their produce to jaggery units must get a fixed price. As of now, the jaggery industry has no fixed rule for the payment of sugarcane.

However, sugarcane farmers' union leader Raju Shetti said many sugar mills in the State are expanding their crushing capacities and they want the diversion of sugarcane meant for jaggery to sugar mills. Shetti says government wants to put jaggery unit owners in a quandary by entangling them into FRP and other legal tangles. This will ultimately result in closure of jaggery units.

OUR BUREAU

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The Maharashtra government is considering a Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane used to produce jaggery (*gur*) after the record sugarcane cultivation and sugar production this season. As the sugar season is ending in Maharashtra, sugar mills have crushed 1,32.031 million tonnes (mt) of sugarcane to produce 13.728 mt of sugar. As per the estimates by experts, sugarcane cultivation will increase next season which will start in October this year.

The State Co-operative Department has asked the committee under Sugar Commissioner to