

Wheat crop robust, output to hit record 112 MT: Govt

No big adverse impact of rains on output, but lustre loss seen

SANDIP DAS
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THE GOVERNMENT ON Thursday stated it is hopeful of a record wheat production of 112 million tonne (MT) in the current crop season (July-June), while ruling out any major reduction in grain output from recent unseasonal rains in key states. "Because of the inclement weather in the last two weeks, there has been some damage to the wheat crop. But the production loss will be minimal," Sanjeev Chopra, secretary, department of food and public distribution, said.

The agriculture ministry in February had projected a record wheat output of 112.18 MT in the 2022-23 crop year. In the 2021-22, wheat output had declined marginally to 107.74 MT from 109.58 MT in the previous year due to the heatwave in March which resulted in shriveled grains in few states.



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SANJEEV CHOPRA,
FOOD SECRETARY

Earlier in the week, an agriculture ministry official had said that about 8-10% of the wheat crop is estimated to have been damaged due to recent untimely rains and hailstorms in producing states, but better yield prospects in late-sown areas are expected to make up for the production loss. The government, earlier, relaxed the quality norms for wheat procurement for the 2023 season (April-June) in Madhya Pradesh due to lustre loss in the grain and it would soon take a call on relaxing quality norms for wheat purchase from farmers in Punjab

and Haryana soon.

"While Punjab and Haryana governments have requested for relaxing the norm for wheat purchase impacted by recent rains, our teams are visiting the two states to assess the situation," Chopra said, adding that the target for wheat procurement of 34.2 MT for the current season (April-June) will be achieved.

Despite the recent surplus rains in key wheat growing states, agriculture commissioner PK Singh had stated that the country's total wheat production will touch a record 112.2 MT.

The FCI and state agencies till Wednesday purchased 0.63 MT of wheat since the minimum support price (MSP) operations for the current season officially commenced from April 1. According to official data, most of the wheat purchased from farmers in the current marketing season (April-June) have been reported from Madhya Pradesh while a small quantity of grain has been procured in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The volume of wheat procurement is marginally higher than the same period last year. Officials said that arrivals and procurement of wheat were expected to gather momentum by middle of this month as unseasonal rainfall since mid-March in key wheat growing states caused damages to crops in some places besides delaying harvest.

The food ministry last week relaxed procurement norms, by allowing purchase of grains with lustre losses above 10% from farmers in Madhya Pradesh with a marginal value cut of only ₹5.31/quintal against the minimum support price (MSP) of ₹2,125/quintal for the current season.