

Wheat procurement tops 11 mt as grains flood *mandis*

GATHERING PACE. Centre has fixed a target of 34.15 mt for purchase this year

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Wheat procurement in the current season was 11.14 million tonnes (mt) as of April 19, up by 12 per cent from 9.98 mt in the corresponding period last year as higher purchases were recorded in Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The procurement in Punjab, the largest contributor to central pool stock, is lower so far, which may pick up after cover and plinth (CAP) storage has been allowed.

Nearly 12 lakh farmers have benefited so far from the ongoing procurement season that started on April 1, with the expected outflow of ₹23,663.63 crore at the minimum support price (MSP) of ₹2,125/quintal.

As the harvesting started late this year due to unseasonal rains, farmers started bringing the crop only after it dried in the field, reducing moisture to normal, officials said.

As Punjab has always seen arrivals improving after *Baisakhi* festival (April 14), this year, too, the daily arrivals which were 0.64 mt on April 16 increased to 0.72 mt on April 19. Millers said it would very soon go up to 1.5 mt per day.

The Centre has fixed a target of 34.15 mt for wheat procurement this year which includes 13.2 mt from Punjab, 7.5 mt from Haryana, 8 mt from Madhya Pradesh and 3.5 mt from Uttar Pradesh

PROCUREMENT IN STATES

Wheat procurement in Madhya Pradesh was up 67 per cent at 3.2 mt from 1.92 mt, Haryana reported at 21 per cent rise at 3.87 mt from 3.21 mt and Uttar Pradesh



Rising procurement

	million tonnes*		
	2023	2022	% Chg
All India	11.14	9.98	11.6
MP	3.20	1.92	66.7
Haryana	3.87	3.21	20.6
UP*	63,029.00	42,616.00	47.9
Punjab	3.99	4.82	-17.2

Source: FCI *Quantity in tonnes, *As of April 19

reported a 48 per cent increase at 63,029 tonnes as on March 19 from 42,616 tonnes in the year-ago period.

On the other hand, procurement in Punjab was down 17 per cent at 3.99 mt from 4.82 mt, according to official data.

Among other States, the government so far bought 6,938 tonnes in Rajasthan and 6,011 tonnes in Chandigarh. It is yet to procure any quantity in Bihar and Gujarat.

Data show that as much as 45 per cent of the total arrivals got procured as of April 16. But, the share of procurement in the arrivals has increased to over 75 per cent as of April 19, officials said adding most of the piled-up

grains in *mandis* were procured over the last few days after CAP storage was permitted to keep the grains as rakes availability was inadequate.

However, rains lashing some parts of Punjab and Haryana resulted in gunny bags containing wheat getting drenched. Last year, the Centre said it had begun the process of modernising food-grain storages where it said CAP would be avoided. Probably, the infrastructure in agricultural produce marketing committee (APMC) yards should have been improved with covered platforms, said a comment on social media.

Due to higher export demand and shrivelled grains last year, the government could procure only about 18.8 mt of wheat against the target of 44.4 mt.

It resulted in an unprecedented price rise in the grain to over ₹30/kg at *mandi* level, prompting the government to announce on January 26 open market sales of 5 mt through auction and direct allocation.

Finally, prices were down to lower than minimum support price (MSP) level.