

# Foodgrain output seen to be a tad down

**DESPITE RECORD WHEAT, RICE OUTPUT.** Lower harvest of pulses, maize and oilseeds a drag

**Prabhudatta Mishra**

New Delhi

India's foodgrain output in the current crop year (July 2023-June 2024) has been estimated at 328.85 million tonnes (mt), a tad lower from 329.69 mt in the previous year as pulses and maize production dipped by over 6 per cent. However, production of rice, wheat and nutri-cereals such as millets and jowar is expected to increase from last year.

On Tuesday, the Agriculture Ministry released the third advance estimate of crop output for 2023-24, which includes harvest from kharif, rabi and zaid season. Pulses production is projected to have dipped 6 per cent to 24.47 mt from 26.06 mt in 2022-23. The lower output further reinforces the apprehension of the trade and industry of a big setback in pulses due to deficient monsoon in key growing States of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

In the current round of estimates, the government has revised upwards wheat production to record 112.92 mt from 112.02 mt announced in the second advance estim-

Production dips			
	(million tonnes)		
	2022-23	2023-24	% Change
<b>Foodgrains</b>	<b>329.69</b>	<b>328.85</b>	<b>-0.3</b>
Rice	135.76	136.7	0.7
Wheat	110.55	112.93	2.2
Maize	38.09	35.67	-6.4
Nutri cereals (Shree Anna)	17.32	17.41	0.5
<b>Pulses</b>	<b>26.06</b>	<b>24.47</b>	<b>-6.1</b>
Tur	3.31	3.39	2.4
Gram	12.27	11.58	-5.6
<b>Oilseeds</b>	<b>41.36</b>	<b>39.59</b>	<b>-4.3</b>
Soybean	14.99	13.05	-12.9
Mustard	12.64	13.16	4.1
<b>Sugarcane</b>	<b>490.53</b>	<b>442.52</b>	<b>-9.8</b>
<b>Cotton*</b>	<b>33.66</b>	<b>32.52</b>	<b>-3.4</b>
<b>Jute**</b>	<b>9.39</b>	<b>9.26</b>	<b>-1.4</b>

\*million bales of 170 kg each; \*\*million bales of 180 kg each

ate. Due to a bumper yield in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, wheat output was expected to cross the government's target of 114 mt. The previous highest was 110.55 mt in 2022-23. Rice production is estimated to rise to 136.7 mt in 2023-24 from 135.76 mt in the previous crop year.

## SOYABEAN DOWN

Tur output is pegged higher at 3.39 mt from last year's 3.31 mt, lentil at 1.75 mt from 1.56 mt in the previous year. However, urad production is estimated to have

dipped to 2.3 mt from 2.63 mt, moong to 2.91 mt from 3.68 mt and other pulses to 2.56 mt from 2.61 mt.

Production of all oilseeds has dipped 4 per cent to 39.59 mt from 41.36 mt. Soybean production is estimated to have dipped at 13.05 mt against 14.99 mt in the previous year, while rapeseed and mustard may rise at 13.16 mt from 12.64 mt.

Cotton production has been estimated at 32.52 million bales of 170 kg each from 33.66 million bales while sugarcane output is pegged at 442.52 mt against

490.53 mt. Jute and mesta production has been estimated at 9.26 million bales of 180 kg each from 9.39 million bales.

## NEXT SEASON'S TARGET

The government has already set the foodgrains production target at 340.40 mt during the 2024-25 crop year, which includes 159.97 mt from the kharif season, 164 mt from rabi season and 16.43 mt from zaid (summer) season. In the current year the foodgrains output of the zaid season has been estimated at 14.48 mt which includes 8.97 mt of rice, 2.52 mt of maize, 1.66 mt of moong and 1.10 of bajra.

According to the target fixed by the government after consulting with States, total production of rice has been set at 136.30 mt, wheat at 115 mt, pulses at 29.90 mt, oilseeds at 44.75 mt and coarse cereals including Shree Anna at 59.20 mt.

The production target of maize has been fixed at 38.85 mt and that of barley at 2.25 mt. Both these crops comprise coarse cereals. On the other hand, Shree Anna production comprising jowar, bajra, ragi and other millets

has been aimed at 18.10 mt, out of which major 14.37 mt is targetted for kharif season while 2.6 mt from rabi and 1.13 mt from zaid season.

In pulses, the target for tur crop has been fixed at 4.50 mt, that of urad at 3.05 mt, moong at 4.25 mt, chana at 13.65 mt and masur at 1.65 mt. The government plans 9.5 mt of pulses from kharif and 18.15 mt from rabi.

Overall rainfall as well as its geographical and periodical distribution during the monsoon season, which has 70 per cent share in the country's annual rainfall of 116 cm, are key to achieve the production target of different crops since 45 per cent of the agricultural land is rainfed.

IMD has predicted this year's rainfall to be above-normal, quantitatively 106 per cent of its long period average (LPA) of 87 cm with a model error of (+/-) 5 per cent during the June-September monsoon season. Last year, despite pan-India monsoon being close to normal at 94 per cent of its LPA, several States like Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra faced drought-like conditions.