

PRESS NOTE*

Dated: 15th September 2006

The National Conference on Agriculture for Rabi Campaign 2006-07 was held on 14-15th September 2006, at New Delhi. The Conference was chaired by Smt. Radha Singh, Secretary (A&C). The participants at the two-day Conference included Director General (ICAR), State Agriculture Production Commissioners, Senior Agriculture Scientists, Vice-Chancellors of State Agriculture Universities, Senior Scientists from ICAR, Senior officers from Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC), Planning Commission, Department of Food and Public Distribution and other institutions.

In her augural address, Secretary (A&C) emphasized the need for continuous vigilance regarding crop weather situation in view of the changing weather situation. Also, the need to be ready with contingency plans if weather aberrations manifested itself. The kharif season had been marked by high and deficient rainfall in several pockets despite which State Governments have been able to achieve a satisfactory area coverage. During Secretary (A&C)'s address, much emphasis was placed on the need for higher productivity in all crops with special focus on wheat and pulses. Both these crops had shown near stagnation over a period of time and it was imperative that wheat and pulse growing States took immediate steps/interventions to ensure that productivity and production levels were enhanced considerably. For this, interventions required were discussed at length with States suggesting several measures, in the short and medium term. Stating that diversification over the last five to six years has now begun to express itself, with 2.5 million hectare of area now having shifted from rice to oilseeds, pulses and cotton. This is a welcome development, especially in areas which were experiencing soil and water stress. But, the need for calibrating such diversification with higher levels of productivity was essential to ensure that the country had a stable foodgrain production and food balance situation. Thus, diversification efforts would need to keep in mind that the country itself requires a minimum threshold level of production of major foodgrains. For the Wheat growing States, the recent effort made by the Central Government to initiate a package of incentives was also mentioned and need for the state of preparedness to implement the package also re-emphasized.

An inter-active session with ICAR scientists and scientists/officers of State Agriculture Universities/Agriculture Departments of States was also organized. In this Session, the State officers raised problems being faced by them relating to rationalization of subsidy for fertilizers and weedicides, non-availability of temperature resistant varieties of wheat and short duration cotton varieties, occurrence of pests and diseases in certain horticulture crops; need for more research in Genetically Modified (GM) seeds etc. All the points made by the States were noted and responded to by the DG, ICAR and his team of scientists.



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In their presentations, individual States presented their area coverage and likely production estimates during 2006-07. Presentations were also made on Kisan Call Centre scheme, road-map for agricultural diversification consistent with food and nutritional security, terminal markets and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) for agricultural produce, organic farming and role of National Rainfed Area Authority to promote agriculture in rainfed areas and special focus on wheat crop in selected States.

Despite the inclement weather, the area coverage under kharif foodgrains 2006 has been satisfactory with area under foodgrains being 70.32 million hectares as against 70.12 million hectares, estimated last year. The crop-wise first advance production estimates for Kharif 2006-07 vis-à-vis Kharif 2005-06 are given in the Annexure. The state of preparedness for upcoming rabi-2006 was also deliberated in detail. The input requirements of all States were assessed. All States are confident about lining-up the required inputs in time for rabi operations.

Annexure

Production of Kharif foodgrains, oilseeds and commercial crops as per 1st advance estimates for 2006-07 vis-à-vis those for 2005-06

(Million Tonnes)

Crop	2006-07	2005-06	Change	
	(1 st Advance Estimates)	(1 st Advance Estimates)	Absolute (2-3)	%
1	2	3	4	5
Foodgrains				
Rice	76	74	2	2.7
Jowar	4	4	0	0.0
Bajra	8	8	0	0.0
Maize	11	12	-1	-8.3
Ragi	1	2	-1	-50.0
Coarse Cereals	25	26	-1	-3.8
Tur	2	2	0	0.0
Other Kharif Pulses	3	3	0	0.0
Total Pulses	5	5	0	0.0
Total Foodgrains	105	105	0	0.0
Oilseeds and Commercial Crops				
Groundnut	4	6	-2	-33.3
Soyabean	8	7	1	14.3
Total Oilseeds	13	15	-2	-13.3
Cotton #	18	16	2	12.5
Jute @	10	9	1	11.1
Mesta @	1	1	0	0.0
Sugarcane	283	258	25	9.7

Production in million bales of 170 kgs each

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