



India targets slight increase in 2018-19 foodgrain output

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Highlights

- The Agriculture Ministry has set a foodgrain production target of 285.2 million tonnes for 2018-19, a marginal increase from the previous year's harvest of 284.8 million tonnes for Kharif season.
- Rainfall deficit during the current monsoon season is now at 10%, according to the Indian Meteorological Department.
- The 2018-19 targets for rice, at 113 million tonnes, and wheat, at 100 million tonnes, are marginally higher than last year's harvest.
- However, the targets for pulses, coarse cereals and maize are slightly lower.

'Balanced targets'

- Over the last two years of normal monsoons and record harvests, prices of several commodities have crashed, hurting many farmers.
- The government has ramped up procurement of pulses and oilseeds in an effort to ensure that more farmers receive the minimum support price (MSP) for these crops even as the market rates fall, but that has led to a shortage of storage capacity.
- 44 lakh tonnes of pulses, 57 lakh tonnes including oilseeds are held by National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)
- Warehouse capacity is making some States consider the new Central scheme to pay oilseed farmers the cash differential between MSP and market prices.
- Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat have expressed interest in opting for the scheme, which was approved by the Union Cabinet as part of a wider Rs.15,053 crore procurement policy.

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