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Status of monsoon and contingency plans for some rainfall deficit areas

During 1st June to 1st August, the country as a whole experienced 21% deficit SWM rainfall. The rainfall was deficit by 34% over North-West India, 12% over Central India, 19% over Southern peninsula and by 26% over East and North-East India.

Gujarat

The rainfall over Gujarat region was deficit by about 23% and only 62% of the normal area is covered so far under various crops. In South and Middle Gujarat region avoid sowing of maize and bajra crops for grain purpose. In Saurashtra region, blackgram- cv. T-9, Guj. Udid-1; greengram-GM-4, K-851, Meha; Sorghum cv.CSH-6 and CFS-4 for fodder purpose; Guar-Guj. Gaur 1 and 2 specifically for Kutch region.

Maharashtra

In Madhya Maharashtra rainfall was deficit by 14%, in Marathwada by 59%, in Vidarbha by 18% and in Konkan & Goa by 9%. On the receipt of sufficient rainfall during first fortnight of August farmers may take up sowing of sunflower, red gram, horse gram and castor. Prefer intercrop combinations like sunflower + red gram and castor + ridge gourd. Avoid sowing of blackgram, greengram, pearnillet and soybean. In Marathwada region, after receipt of sufficient rains (75-100 mm) pigeon pea, Hy. Bajra, castor, ragi, sesamum may be sown. Intercropping systems like Hy. Bajra + Pigeon pea, castor + pigeon pea etc are recommended. Farmers may take up intercropping operations like weeding/hoeing in already sown cotton, soybean, pigeon pea crops. Staking should be done in one year old fruit orchards to avoid lodging due to high winds. Apply 500 gm Nitrogen per tree to citrus, lemon and sweet orange (Mrug Bahar) orchards and also provide protective irrigation.

Rajasthan

In west Rajasthan monsoon rainfall was deficit by 17% and in east Rajasthan by 23%. In maize crop, excess plants may be thinned out by keeping a plant to plant distance of 25 cm. Drain out excess rain water from fields where water logging conditions are prevailing due to heavy rainfall. In western parts (Jodhpur, Nagour, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Bikaner districts) and eastern parts (Jaipur, Alwar, Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Tonk districts), short duration varieties of bajra (HHB-67), Moth (RMO-40 and RMO-225), sesame (RT-125, RT-46), clusterbean (RGC-936) and fodder crop (Bajra) are recommended where sowings are yet to be completed.

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

In coastal area of Andhra Pradesh, rainfall was deficit by 33% and in Rayalaseema only by 21%. In Telangana rainfall deficit by 47%. Farmers are advised to take up gap filling in cotton and soybean and top dressing of fertilizers in cotton, maize and castor. Farmers of East and West Godavari, Krishna, Srikakulam, Warangal, Nizamabad, Mahabubnagar districts are advised to go for short and medium duration varieties of paddy instead of long duration varieties. In coastal AP farmers may transplant paddy up to 15th of August under canal commands. Direct seeding of rice can be taken up with short duration varieties under dry conditions and later converted to wet paddy after receipt of good rainfall. In NSP command areas of Nalgonda, Guntur, Krishna and Prakasam districts as there is less inflows into

reservoirs and no release of water in canals, farmers are advised to take up rainfed crops like maize, cotton, redgram, greengram. Farmers of Kadapa district are advised to sow contingency crops like redgram (60 x 20 cm spacing), maize, tomato, cowpea, fieldbean (TFB 5), sunflower in red soils and redgram, jowar and sunflower in black soils instead of groundnut apart from fodder crops like pillipesara, horsegram and sunhemp. In Krishna district, farmers are advised to go for sowing of cotton in heavy soils, rainfed crops like maize, greengram, redgram in light soils. Adopt closure spacing of 90 x 30 cm in heavy soils or 75 x 30 cm in light soils and top dressing of fertilizers at 20 days interval, when soil moisture is sufficient for application of fertilizers. In Prakasam district, farmers are advised to adopt closure spacing for cotton and redgram sole crops and form dead furrows for moisture conservation.

Karnataka

South Interior Karnataka received sufficient rains during the last week where as rainfall over coastal Karnataka was deficit by 23% and over north interior Karnataka rainfall deficit was 26%. In Northern Karnataka farmers are advised to concentrate efforts on soil moisture conservation practices in already sown crop, rather than take chances for any further sowing particularly in Zone 1, Zone 2 and Zone 3 during the next week. Crops/varieties with low water requirement in the establishment stage and fodder-based crops may be preferred. Farmers are also advised to keep the land fallow in areas where double cropping had been planned in medium to deep black soils. However, soil and moisture conservation techniques such as compartment bunding, ridges and furrows across the slope are suggested for medium and deep black soils spared for *rabi* sowings and it is advised to spare some land exclusively for fodder crops. In major parts of South & North Interior districts, sowings are delayed due to inadequate moisture and contingency crops and medium duration varieties like finger millet (Indaf- 5, PR-202, GPU-28 and HR-911), maize (Ganga, Deccan, Vijaya composite and Composite NAC) and sunflower (KBSH-42 and KBSH-44) are suggested up to August 15th. Farmers may spray 2% potassium chloride to crops experiencing moisture stress.

West Bengal

The rainfall over Gangetic West Bengal was deficit by 17%. Farmers are advised to avoid transplanting of paddy beyond 1st week of August as it would result in yield reductions. Provide drainage to vegetables and keep continuous vigil on disease infestation as prevailing warm and humid weather is very much congenial for disease growth. Take proper measures immediately if disease infestation is noticed. Vegetable and flower nurseries may be covered with polythene sheets. In Bankura and Purulia districts (Red & Laterite soils, undulated land, shallow to moderately deep coarse loamy soils) follow staggered dry nursery/adopt dry seeding or drum seeding of paddy.

Note: The above is a general overview for the states. However, ICAR (CRIDA) has prepared district level contingency plans (covering all farming situations within the district) and placed in the websites of the Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperation, Government of India (www.agricoop.nic.in) and CRIDA (www.crida.in) for further details.