

SUGAR

Karnataka: Cultivation of crops other than paddy, sugarcane to get a push

The authorities will promote alternative crops to paddy and sugarcane in areas where agriculture is supported by canal irrigation system in the district in view of the State government's decision not to release water for crops owing to poor storage in major reservoirs of the region.

Focus will be on crops such as maize and ragi, apart from horse gram etc., which may not be commercially lucrative but are less water-intensive and will help farmers tide over the unfolding crisis.

Joint Director of Agriculture Mahanteshappa told The Hindu that there was no alternative to shifting to alternative crops consequent to poor rains and equally bad storage situation.

“The department is preparing a blueprint as to how to go about promoting the alternative crops and would reach out to such farmers who are yet to take up sowing,” he added. Both paddy and sugarcane are water intensive crops and with thrust on storing water in the reservoir for primary requirements of drinking, farmers who have already completed sowing will feel the brunt.

The cumulative rainfall in Mysuru district is 350.02 mm against the average rainfall of 454.2 mm for the period January to August 11.

Kurubur Shanthakumar, president, Sugarcane Farmers Cultivators Association, said farmers who had already pledged their land, gold and other personal valuables to avail themselves of loan will sink and the onus would be on the government to bail them out. Besides, sugarcane was not covered under crop insurance as it was a commercial crop, he said.

However, agriculture in Mysuru district takes place mostly under rain-fed conditions and hence will escape the full brunt of the government's decision not to release water. The area under crop cultivation in Mysuru district is around 4,02,320 hectares of which agriculture on 2,86,220 hectares takes place under rain-fed conditions. Only 1,16,100 hectares is under irrigation and even here most of the land is irrigated by the Kabini reservoir and not KRS. Only a small fraction of agriculture land, mostly in T. Narsipur taluk and parts of Mysuru taluk is irrigated by the Cauvery.

While sowing has been completed on 77 per cent of the land where agriculture is practised under rain-fed conditions, only 6 per cent sowing has taken place in farms under canal irrigation and hence the impact of the government decision will be minimal, at least in Mysuru district.

(Source- <http://sugarnews.in/karnataka-cultivation-of-crops-other-than-paddy-sugarcane-to-get-a-push/>, published on 16th August, 2016)

UP sugar mills clear all dues to cane farmers

UP's twenty-four cooperative sugar mills have managed to pay all the dues to the farmers of the state, reports Times of India.

Sources say this is a rare achievement. Of the total, six mills are in the west UP, 13 are in central UP and five in east UP.

The six mills together had to make a payment of Rs 618.23 crore, while the 13 in central part had to pay Rs 975.60 crore. Likewise, the five in east UP paid dues of Rs 218.09 crore.

UP Cooperative Sugar Mills Federation Managing Director BK Yadav said " the payment was made in July. This year the sugar production had been good. We have put our produce on the market and received good revenue" he said.

(Source- <http://sugarnews.in/up-sugar-mills-clear-all-dues-to-cane-farmers/>, published on 16th August, 2016)

UP: Industry expects UP to raise state advised price of sugar

The sugar industry in Uttar Pradesh expects the Akhilesh Yadav government to increase the state advised price of sugarcane ahead of next year's assembly election, in the first revision in three years. The state advised price, which is usually higher than the fair and remunerative price fixed by the Central government, was last revised in 2012-13.

"Increase in sugar recovery of the state by almost 1%, improvement in sugar prices and an election year mean that the state government will definitely increase sugar prices," said an industry executive, who did not wish to be identified. At the same time, the central government, trying to present its pro-farmer policies to rural voters, has been trying hard to contain any increase in retail sugar prices as retail inflation hit a 23-month high of 6.07% in July.

The governments will have to balance all the concerns, executives said. "UP will be the country's largest sugar producer in 2016-17 as production in other states is likely to decline. Introduction of a new sugarcane variety with higher yield and recovery as well as well distributed rainfall will help UP become top sugar producer," said Tarun Sawhney, president of Indian Sugar Mills Association. "At this time, I hope the policies of the central and the state government balance all the concerns," he said.

(Source- <http://sugarnews.in/industry-expects-up-to-raise-state-advised-price-of-sugar/>, published on 15th August, 2016)

Monsoon raises hopes for sugar output in Maharashtra

Above monsoon rainfalls in Maharashtra have raised hopes for a revival in sugar output for the ensuing crushing season beginning October.

Data compiled by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) showed Maharashtra, the second largest sugar producing state in India, has received normal to excessive rainfalls across all meteorological sub-divisions or districts barring Dhule. Especially in major sugar cane growing regions including Solapur, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara, Pune etc have received almost above normal monsoon rainfalls this season after two preceding years of drought.

Last two years of deficient rainfalls had prompted state agriculture department to forecast almost 45 per cent of decline in sugar output this year at 5.2 million tonnes for the upcoming season beginning October 2016 against 9.2 million tonnes of sugar output reported in the 2015-16.

“Sugarcane growing regions in Maharashtra have received normal to above normal monsoon rainfalls this season. Since the reservoirs in these regions have also received good storage level, we are expecting better yield this season than last year. Thus, sugar output might be revised upwards for the crushing season 2016-17 in Maharashtra,” said a senior sugar industry official.

IMD sources said that rainfalls during the current season till date have been three per cent of above the 50-year average in Maharashtra. Also, above normal rainfall activity is likely over many parts of India.

“July – September is the grand growth period for standing cane crop for which rainfall remains crucial. Excessive rainfalls during this period helps raise sucrose formation in the standing cane crop resulting into higher yield and sugar output,” said Abinash Verma, Director General, Indian Sugar Mills Association (Isma).

Following two subsequent years of drought, industry body Isma predicted India's sugar output at 23.26 million tonnes for the crushing season 2016-17, less than the current 2015-16 sugar season production of around 25.10 million tonnes.

Maharashtra's cane area has declined in 2016-17 sugar season, which is mainly due to the drought like situation last year, poor rainfall and lesser water availability for irrigation.

As against the cane area of 10.5 lakh hectares in 2015-16, the cane area is expected to come down to 7.80 lakh hectares in 2016-17. Sugar production is, therefore, estimated to be around 6.15 million tonnes in crushing season 2016-17, as against 8.41 million tonnes produced in the season 2015-16.

“Above normal rainfalls will certainly benefit standing sugarcane crops for the current season. But, the actual assessment is yet to be done on its impact on sugar output. There are some regions in which monsoon rainfalls have been average. In some part of state, yield will improve only 2-5 per cent,” said Sanjeev Babar, Managing Director of Maharashtra State Federation of Sugar Factories.

With an estimated opening balance on October 01, 2016 of 7.1 million tonnes, and estimated production of 23.26 lakh tonnes, sugar availability during the 12 months of next season will be 30.36 million tonnes, enough to meet the domestic sugar consumption requirement of 26 million tonnes in season 2016-17.

(Source- <http://sugarnews.in/monsoon-raises-hopes-for-sugar-output-in-maharashtra/>, published on 16th August, 2016)

Co-gen/Power

Tata Power Solar commissions India's largest solar plant in Andhra Pradesh

Tata Power Solar, one of the largest integrated solar company, has successfully commissioned a 100 MW solar project for NTPCBSE -0.25 % in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh.

"This is the biggest solar project commissioned using domestically manufactured solar cells and modules. The plant is expected to generate nearly 160 million units of energy per year and help offset approximately 110,000 tonnes of CO2 in the first year," claimed Tata Power Solar in a statement made on Tuesday.

Tata Power Solar delivered the project in record 80% of stipulated timelines, and nearly 3 months ahead of schedule. Key highlights of the project were the innovative design of Balance-of-System (BoS) and cabling, along with optimized selection of evacuation systems.

Ashish Khanna, chief executive officer, Tata Power Solar, said, "Today, pace of delivery and quality have become crucial benchmarks in the industry and we have delivered a project of this scale in record time. By bringing together our core strengths in domestic manufacturing and EPC services over the last 25 years, this 100 MW plant is the largest project commissioned by us to date. We hope to continue to build on our capabilities and deliver over expectations to proficient customers like NTPC."

Built over a 500 acres, the land contained natural streams and hillocks which were untouched by the plant to maintain the natural ecosystem. Tata Power Solar delivered the plant with a robust safety management system and 1.3 million safe man hours put in. Apart from a highly experienced team at Tata Power Solar, more than 50 local people were provided employment at the site.

A.K. Jha, director technical, NTPC said, "Given our ambitious target for green power, we were aware that our requirement of rigorous timelines and cost-efficiency was a challenging one."

With over 25 years of experience, Tata Power Solar has commissioned over 250 MW of ground-mount utility scale projects across India. Their partnership with NTPC too has been long-term, having delivered their 50 MW flagship project using domestically made cells and modules in Rajgarh, Madhya Pradesh in 2014.

(Source-<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/tata-power-solar-commissions-indias-largest-solar-plant-in-andhra-pradesh/articleshow/53721882.cms>)

India gauges auctions for wind power to maximize investment

India is working to raise the share of green power from all the states' grids as it prepares to tender 10 gigawatts of wind power by 2019

India's preparing to tender 10 gigawatts of wind power by 2019 in auctions intended to help meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious clean-energy targets.

The first 1GW tender is planned for October, Varsha Joshi said in an interview with Bloomberg News. She's joint secretary at India's ministry of new and renewable Power, the agency tasked with realizing Modi's goal of increasing clean energy almost fourfold by 2022, to 175GW from 45GW now.

India will encourage bids by increasing the quota for clean energy that utilities are required to purchase, according to Joshi. The government is working to raise the share of green power from all the states' grids over the next three years.

"We're still chalking out a road map for wind auctions in order to enable states to fulfil the upcoming new purchase obligations and are thinking of around 10 gigawatt capacity to be tendered by 2019," Joshi said.

The quota, requiring states to source a percentage of energy consumption with clean sources, is called the Renewable Purchase Obligation, or RPO. It may be increased to 17% by 2019, up from 5% to 7% currently, according of the joint secretaries at the ministry, Tarun Kapoor.

Investments at risk

The auction format being developed will allow wind-poor states to source clean energy from windier ones, Joshi said. The Indian wind industry is banking on auctions to maintain growth after state utilities put investments at risk by holding back millions of dollars in payments for nearly a year.

"Once reverse bidding comes then over the next two to four years you will see something similar to solar," said Rahul Munjal, chairman and managing director at Hero Future Energies Pvt., which will commission more than 950 megawatts of wind and solar capacity by March 2017.

Once the auction rules are established and power tariffs become realistic, Munjal expects state-power retailers to be more enthusiastic about the programme.

Equipment costs

According to India's Wind Independent Power Producers Association, most of India's seven states have slowed power-purchase agreements, a sign they're expecting auctions to reduce tariffs paid for power.

"Equipment costs have to come down" for the wind industry to survive, said Sunil Jain, the association's president. Otherwise, "states can buy cheaper solar power to fulfil their purchase obligations".

Turbine manufacturers are wary of the switch from the existing format that awards feed-in-tariffs.

"Globally, feed-in tariffs have been more successful for wind and in India also," Suzlon Energy Ltd. founder Tulsi Tanti said in an interview. "I'm not in favour of the bidding process."

(Source- <http://www.livemint.com/Industry/jLFyO25j9PYiRk0MIFdnN/India-gauges-auctions-for-wind-power-to-maximize-investment.html>)

Quote of the day

'Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.' -Albert Einstein