

## AGRICULTURE

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Robust growth in foodgrains production, despite below normal rainfall in some regions, characterised 1999-2000, yielding a record foodgrains output of 208.9 million tonnes which included 89.5 million tonnes of rice - a gain of 3.5 million tonnes over the preceding year's rice output and, 75.6 million tonnes of wheat which was 4.3 million tonnes more than the previous year. Commercial crops too did fairly well except oilseeds and cotton. Production of sugarcane which continued its high growth path reached a new high of 299.2 million tonnes compared to 288.7 million tonnes in 1998-99. Jute and mesta improved to 10.5 million tonnes, compared to 9.8 million tonnes achieved in 1998-99. Output of cotton at 11.6 million bales (170 kg each) was lower than 12.3 million bales achieved in 1998-99 but higher than the 10.9 million bales achieved in 1997-98. There was substantial fall in production of oilseeds in

1999-2000. Oilseeds output of 20.9 million tonnes was significantly lower than the 24.7 million tonnes produced in 1998-99. Bulk of the shortfall was due to large decline in groundnut production in Gujarat, adversely affected by weather conditions.

8.2 Whereas lower rainfall in 1999 may not have caused much decline in crop production due to residual moisture, deficient rainfall in 71 districts for the second year in succession in 2000, is bound to result in lowering this year's output in kharif foodgrains and oilseeds and possibly too in rabi 2000-01. Consequently agriculture together with forestry and fisheries is expected to grow only by 0.9 per cent as compared to 0.7 per cent in 1999-2000. Yet growth in crop agriculture (46 crops) is likely to show a 3.5 per cent decline because of lower foodgrains and oilseeds production.