

Crop Prospects — 2000-01

Foodgrains

8.15 The Ministry of Agriculture puts the kharif foodgrains production for the year 2000-01 at 102.7 million tonnes compared to last year's production of 104.9 million tonnes (Table 8.6). The shortfall in production by 2.2 million tonnes, is primarily due to drought conditions prevailing in 71 districts not only in 1999 but also in 2000, that is, for two successive years. Production of kharif rice, estimated at 74.1 million tonnes, would be lower by about 2.6 million tonnes compared to last year's record production of 76.7 million tonnes. Kharif pulses, estimated at 5.5 million tonnes, is somewhat better than last year's production of 4.9 million tonnes. Production of kharif coarse cereals, despite more area coverage, is estimated at 23.1 million tonnes, marginally lower than last year, due mainly to lower productivity on account of deficient rainfall in some areas.

8.16 Rabi crop prospects also do not appear to be satisfactory. As already stated earlier, the post-monsoon rainfall has been inadequate. Consequently, area sown under rabi crops has been lower this year. Preliminary estimates indicate that rabi foodgrains (where wheat dominates) may at best reach 96.3 million tonnes which represents a sharp decline of 7.7 million tonnes over last year rabi foodgrains output of 104 million tonnes. Expected wheat production of 70 million tonnes would be 5.6 million tonnes lower compared to last year. Whereas Punjab and Haryana may reap a normal wheat crop because of assured irrigation, decline in wheat production would be

mainly in M.P., Rajasthan, Gujarat and U.P.

8.17 Total foodgrains production in 2000-01 is thus likely to be a low of 199 million tonnes compared to 208.9 million tonnes in the preceding year. This represents a fall of nearly 10 million tonnes (4.7 per cent drop). The effect of this large decline is not worrisome as the country sits on a very large public food stock of over 43 million tonnes.

Commercial Crops

8.18 Amongst major commercial crops; cotton, jute/ mesta, and sugarcane are kharif crops whereas oilseeds are produced both during kharif and rabi seasons. The latest estimate for the current year points to an improvement in production of two of these crops, that is, sugarcane and cotton; whereas it predicts a fall in the other two, that is, oilseeds and, jute/mesta (Table 8.7).

8.19 Sugarcane is likely to reach a new peak of 300.6 million tonnes in the current year compared to 299.2 million tonnes achieved last year. The current year's expected cotton output of 13.2 million bales is an improvement over last year's 11.6 million bales, despite shrinkage in area.

8.20 The decline in output of oilseeds has continued for the second successive year. The current year's oilseed output at 18.6 million tonnes, is lower by 2.3 million tonnes compared to 20.9 million tonnes achieved in 1999-2000. Soyabean output would be lower by 1.6 million tonnes compared to 6.8 million tonnes achieved last year. Rapeseed/mustard output too would be lower by 1.7 million tonnes to reach 4.3 million tonnes compared to last year's output of 6 million tonnes. Production of jute and mesta has been fluctuating between 8 and 10 million bales. During the current year, production of jute and mesta is likely to be 9.9 million bales, marginally less than last year's 10.5 million bales.

TABLE 8.6
Foodgrains Production
(Million Tonnes)

Crop	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-2001*
Rice	81.7	82.5	86.0	89.5	86.8
Wheat	69.4	66.3	71.3	75.6	70.0
Coarse Cereals	34.1	30.4	31.2	30.5	29.9
Pulses	14.2	13.0	14.9	13.4	12.3
Foodgrains	199.4	192.3	203.5	208.9	199.0
Kharif	103.9	101.6	102.8	104.9	102.7
Rabi	95.5	90.7	100.7	104.0	96.3

* Estimated.