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Status of monsoon and contingency plans for deficit areas of the country

The SW monsoon hit Kerala on 5th June 2012 delayed by five days. By 10th June it covered entire Kerala, coastal Karnataka, Goa, parts of Konkan and north eastern states. However, by 10th June, it is supposed to cover entire southern peninsula, Maharashtra, parts of Orissa, West Bengal and Bihar. There has been a delay of one week in these regions. Currently the monsoon is weak and further delay of 2-3 days is expected for it to enter into AP, interior Karnataka and remaining parts of Tamil Nadu. The rains are also likely to be delayed in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Under this situation, the contingency plans for different states is described below:

Andhra Pradesh : Rains are already delayed by one week. Upto end of June, no change in crops or varieties is recommended in the state for any region. Farmers are advised to go for timely nurseries in paddy with ground water so that transplanting can be done in time by 15th July. For rainfed crops like cotton, maize, jowar, castor, groundnut, pigeonpea, green gram, sesame, pearl millet, greengram and blackgram, tillage may be carried out with pre-monsoon showers and land kept ready for sowing. If the rains are delayed beyond 1st July, sorghum crop is not to be planted. All other kharif crops can be planted upto 15th July by using short duration varieties which are listed in the district contingency plans and available with the State Department of Agriculture and ANGRAU.

Karnataka : Rains are delayed by one week in south interior Karnataka and North Karnataka but expected to pick in next 2-3 days. Finger millet, groundnut, maize are the major crops in south Karnataka where as pearl millet, red gram and green gram are key crops in north Karnataka. In South interior Karnataka, double cropping of cowpea/green gram-finger millet is common. Currently, due to dry spell, the cowpea/green gram crops have dried up. Cowpea may be harvested for green pods or used as a fodder. Upto 1st July, in south Karnataka, the same crops and cropping systems will be followed, beyond which, only medium duration finger millet is to be sown. In north Karnataka, no change in varieties is suggested upto 10th July in case of pearl millet and redgram beyond which medium duration varieties are suggested. Beyond 25th June, green gram and black gram are not to be planted. In north transition zone (eg. Dharwad), cotton is the main crop. If the rains are delayed beyond 1st July, cotton is to be replaced by maize, groundnut + pigeonpea intercropping (4:2). In Tungabhadra and Krishna command areas, paddy nurseries are to be raised with ground water so that timely transplantation can be done in July after release of canal water.

Kerala : Rains are in time and no contingency is suggested.

Tamil Nadu : Sorghum, groundnut, green gram , black gram, maize, pearl millet, finger millet and pulses are the major kharif crop in the south-west monsoon receiving regions of the state (Coimbatore, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Namakkal, Perambalur, Salem, etc.). Upto 1st week of July, no change is suggested in the above cropping pattern. Monsoon rarely gets delayed beyond this period in Tamil Nadu. In the Kaveri delta area, paddy nurseries are already in progress which need to be protected with irrigation so that transplanting can be done timely.

Maharashtra : By 10th June, monsoon should have covered most parts of Maharashtra. However, a delay of one week to 10 days is expected in view of the current status of the monsoon progress. In Marathwada, the major kharif crops are cotton, soybean, sorghum, greengram, blackgram and pigeonpea. Upto 1st July, the same crops and varieties are recommended. Beyond this period, sorghum, green gram and blackgram need to be replaced by pearl millet, pigeonpea, cotton, sunflower. For Vidharbha region, major crops are cotton, soybean, sorghum, pigeonpea and short duration pulses. Upto two weeks, no change in the crops and varieties suggested. Beyond 15th July, cotton and soybean may be replaced with pigeonpea or pearl millet. In madhya Maharashtra, sugarcane is the major irrigated crop and pearl millet is the major rainfed crop. Beyond 1st July, pearl millet + pigeonpea intercropping is suggested instead of sole crops. Konkan region is mostly a horticulture belt and it has already received rains.

For states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, since the normal date of monsoon is 15th June, we can wait for the progress of the monsoon as updated by IMD before recommending any contingency planning.

Note 1 : 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), for all states of peninsular India, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. These plans are placed in the website of the Ministry of Agriculture (www.agricoop.nic.in) and CRIDA. The details of all crops, short and medium duration varieties to be used in case of delayed onset along with management practices are available in these plans district wise.

Note 2 : In the recently launched National Initiative on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA), 100 KVKs and 23 AICRPDA centers are implementing technology demonstrations for variable climate. Under this program, all the Program Coordinators are alerted to procure seeds of alternative crops and varieties for delayed monsoon onset and take up sowing on farmers fields along with other recommended moisture conservation practices. During the season, the program of such real time contingency planning will be evaluated and farmers across these districts will be made aware of.

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