


# Cotton output target set at 15mln bales for FY2020

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ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday set a cotton production target of 15 million bales for the upcoming season as it hoped sufficient availability of water and fertiliser during the period to get bumper crop.

The Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA) in a meeting fixed cotton production target from an area of 2.895 million hectares in summer 2019/20. Cotton production from the previous season is lurking below 12 million bales, below the target of 14.37 million bales for 2018/19. Minister for National Food Security and Research Mahboob Sultan presided over the second biannual meeting of FCA. The committee was informed that sufficient water would be available in reservoirs during the season.

“For the year 2019/20, the water availability in canals head will remain 108.67MAF as against last year which was 88.04 MAF,” an official statement said. “At present all the provinces are getting their satisfactory supplies in the system.” Meteorological department said normal to slightly above normal rainfalls are likely to occur across the country in May. But, it recommended effective use of water stocks based on gradual increase in air temperatures.

The average temperature is likely to remain above normal throughout the country during the period. The expected rise in temperature during the next two months is approximately 1 to 2 centigrade. The rise in temperature will accelerate the snowmelt in the northern areas and subsequent increase in runoff in upper Indus region. The met department said the prevailing drought conditions over Tharparker region of Sindh may also sustain with variable intensity during April-May 2019, in line with seasonal rise in air temperatures. The committee was informed that supply position of urea would remain comfortable and diammonium phosphate would also remain at the satisfactory levels due to local production and available stocks.

The FCA set rice output target at 7.433 million tons over 2.880 million hectares. Sugarcane production target was fixed at 68.583 million tons over an area of 1.183 million hectares. The committee was informed that the availability of rice and maize seed would remain 121.28 percent and 112.83 percent higher, respectively, than the total seed requirements. The committee also reviewed the performance of rabi (winter) crops 2018/19. Wheat production, as on April 7, 2019, was estimated at 25.16 million tons from an area of 8.83 million hectares. Coupled with the last year's leftover stock of three million tons, the total availability of wheat will be about 28.16 million tons. Gram production was estimated at 439,000 tons from 943,700 hectares. A SBP representative said allocations of institutional credit for agriculture substantially increased to Rs1.250 trillion for 2018/19 and the disbursement up to February 2019 stood at Rs701.6 billion, which was 56.1 percent of the annual target of Rs1.250 trillion and 23.1 percent higher than the disbursement of Rs570.9 billion a year earlier.