

Cotton production falls

KARACHI: The country produced 10.772 million bales up to April 1 recording a shortfall of 6.90 per cent over the corresponding period last year, according to the figures released by the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) on Wednesday.

Punjab recorded a fall of 9.50pc to 6.622m bales as against 7.317m bales produced in the same period last year. Sindh too witnessed a fall of 2.45pc to 4.149m bales compared to 4.263m bales. Ginners are currently holding 809,195 unsold cotton stocks compared to 486,963 bales held in the same period last year.

The textile spinning industry purchased less cotton during the period under review at 9.963m bales as against 11.084m bales last year while exporters also booked smaller quantity of cotton at 102,330 bales as against 216,615 bales in the last season.

Stakeholders say the government needs to come up with an incentives package urgently for motivating growers to shift back to cotton crop by fixing indicative price for phutti (seed cotton).

For the last six years cotton crop has been a victim of neglect on part of successive governments particularly when cultivation area of the crop rapidly shifted to sugarcane farming.

Cotton growers have been using uncertified seed and poor quality pesticides which eventually led to reduced per acre yield. The huge import bill which has swelled over \$1.2 billion could only be reduced once domestic cotton production has increased, cotton analyst Naseem Usman said.

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