

Tobacco planting begins in Karnataka

Our Bureau

Bengaluru

Amidst patchy rains, farmers in Karnataka have begun planting tobacco, a major commercial crop grown largely in Mysuru district. For the 2023-24 season, the Tobacco Board has fixed a crop size of 100 million kg, same as the 2022-23 season for Karnataka.

Farmers' interest in the current cropping season is high on account of better prices last year. The average auction prices were higher at around ₹228 per kg against ₹185 per kg a year ago, as per the Tobacco Board data.

"Rainfall has been inadequate so far. In several areas, farmers have started planting tapping groundwater, while many are waiting for the rains. Tobacco planting is almost complete in about 40-50 percent of the areas," BV Javare Gowda, President, Federation of Karnataka Virginia Tobacco Growers Association.

The flue-cured virginia tobacco was grown on about 60,782 hectares during 2022-23. The acreage is expected to be the same this year. Against a crop size of 100 million kg fixed by the Tobacco Board, the actual production in Karnataka was lower at 59.78 million kg.



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Continuous rains during June and July impacted the crop, resulting in lower output. As a result, average auction prices were higher last year.

EXCESS RAINFALL

According to the IMD, the pre-monsoon season till date in Mysuru district is about eight per cent above normal. Rainfall during March 1-May 3 has been 96.4 mm against the normal of 89.2 mm.

The Virginia tobacco, the main variety produced in the southern parts of Karnataka, is branded as Mysuru tobacco and has export demand. The Mysuru tobacco is used for blending with any other tobacco in the world as its chemistry is good and it has less nicotine, less tar and less sugar, Gowda said.