

Assam records highest rice output in 57 yrs



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The Assam could record the highest rice production in 2008-09 fiscal, for a period of 57 years since 1951. This has also helped it attain a surplus of 1.78 lakh MT in matters of rice, against a requirement of 38.92 lakh MT, in that fiscal. The field data of this record rice production have been compiled only recently by the official circles.

Official circles here said that the State produced a total of 40, 69, 986 MT of rice during the said fiscal. This included 3, 74,010 MT of autumn rice, 29, 24, 223 MT of winter rice and 7, 71,753 MT of summer rice.

Significantly, this amount of rice produced by the State last fiscal, was grown on an area of 24.84 lakh hectares of paddy field, against the 39.98 lakh MT of rice grown in an area of 26.46 lakh hectare of paddy field in 2000-2001.

Till the other day, the total quantity of rice produced in 2000-2001 by the State was regarded to be its highest record of rice production in a period of 50 years, since 1951-52.

The area covered to produce 40.70 lakh MT of rice by the State in 2008-09 is also remarkable. It signifies the growing productivity of the paddy fields for various reasons, said the sources.

The State could produce 5.58 lakh MT of autumn rice on an area of 5.40 lakh hectare in 2000-2001. The same year, it could produce 27.60 Lakh MT of winter rice on an area of 17.77 lakh hectare, while the area required by it during that year to produce 6.80 lakh MT of summer rice, was 3.29 lakh hectare.

But, last year, the State used 3.51 lakh hectare of paddy field to produce 3.74 lakh MT of autumn rice, 17.73 lakh hectare of farmland to produce 29.24 lakh MTS of winter rice and 3.60 lakh hectares of farmland to produce 7.72 lakh MT of summer rice.

Here, it is pertinent to mention that a change is taking place in the approach of the State Government towards autumn rice. Since the quantity of autumn rice produced by the farmers is not encouraging, the State Government has now laid more emphasis on using the autumn rice areas for growing summer rice and vegetables. For, summer rice and vegetables are economically more beneficial, said the sources.

From the point of productivity also, summer rice is more productive. The normal productivity of autumn rice in the State is 896 kg per hectare, while it is 1,482 kg per hectare in the case of winter rice. But, in the case of summer rice, the State has attained a normal productivity rate of 1,965 kg per hectare, as per the official data compiled on the basis of the achievements made between 2005-06 and 2007-08.

Then again, the normal productivity average recorded by the State in the case of vegetables is 16,482 kg per hectare, said the sources.

No doubt, the State could raise the all time high productivity rate of autumn rice to 1,084 kg per hectare in 2008-09 from 1,000 kg in 1997-98. Similarly, the productivity of winter rice was also raised from 1,439 kg per hectare in 1997-98 to an all time high of 1,674 kg in 2008-09 and the productivity of summer rice could also be raised to 2,142 kgs per hectare in 2008-09, from 1,797 kg in 1997-98.

The efforts taken under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM) has thus paid off. However, the Central Government granted the Mission initiatives only for 13 districts of the State, that too on rice. The State is trying to prevail upon the Central Government to extend the Mission initiatives to the remaining 14 districts also.

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BY MOWSAM HAZARIKA

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