



COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS
RESPONSE

AGRICULTURE &
FOOD SECURITY



Vol.6
Issue- 6
June 2020

Agricultural Production and Market Outlook

The Rising Agriculture....

Covid19 and Agriculture in Gujarat

Agriculture



Due to lockdown, agriculture sector has affected very acutely in Gujarat. The lack of transportation facilities, reduction in consumptions, less operating times for shops and markets, lead the lower demand for harvested produce that of the small and marginal farmers. During lockdown1 period, the rabi crop harvest season was on peak. The major rabi crops grown are wheat, cumin and coriander. Gujarat has reported produced 4.03 million tons of wheat during the year 2019-2020. This year, due to lockdown, the wheat prices has declined. As on 18th February, in Rajkot market, rate for a quintal of wheat was quoted of Rs. 2200 which has come down during lockdown Rs. 1742 per quintal (20% drop in one month) and the price is likely to go still down further. The government is helpless reporting lack of demand and consumption by individuals and commercial buyers and supply disruption as the causes for the declining prices.

Chairman
Prof. Shirish R. Kulkarni

Chief Editor
Dr. S. S. Kalamkar

Associate Editors
Dr. H. P. Trivedi
Dr. Kinjal Ahir

Managing Editor
Dr. Hemant Sharma

Subject Editors
Dr. S. R. Bhaiya
Dr. Vijay S. Jariwala
Shri Manish. C. Makwana

Circulation Incharge
Dr. Deep K. Patel

Publisher
Agro-Economic Research Centre
Sardar Patel University
Vallabh Vidyanagar 388120
Anand, Gujarat

Email : aerc@spuvvn.edu
director.aerc@gmail.com

Web : http://www.spuvvn.edu/academics/academic_centres/agro_economic_centre/

Though data provided by the state government revealed that over 5.45 lakh farmers sold their 91.67 lakh quintals of agricultural produce at APMCs and earned Rs 3,702 crore between March 24 and June 1, and around 10.89 lakh farmers sold an additional 84.01 lakh quintals of fruits and vegetables for about Rs 1,742 crore during the same period, farmer bodies said that not only the agricultural transactions were lesser compared to previous years, the farmers also sold their produce at lesser prices.

Scarcity of Labour :



The non-availability of labour has hurt operations in many parts. The migration of workers from few parts to their native places has also triggered panic buttons, as they are crucial for both harvesting operations and post-harvest handling of produce in storage and marketing centers. No labour to harvest rabi crops (wheat, rice, pulses, fruits, flowers). Govt. has notified to exclude movement of farmers, farm laborers and harvesting and sowing-related machines from the purview of lockdown. Shortage of drivers/operators for these harvesters has also been reported. As machine repair shops are closed and mechanics become unavailable for work, spare parts are not easily available, leading to many machines being left unused

Dairy sector

In Dairy sector, annually Gujarat produces 10.3 million of milk, creating a livelihood for three million people. Milk procurement hasn't come down as the dairy cooperatives were forced to adhere to the government notification of not meddling with the livelihood of farmers despite the demand



dipping. While virus has taxed dairy farmers in a number of ways, the first being management of dairy animals and second the marketing and sale of milk and other by-products. Due to the lockdown, all eateries and sweet shops are closed, leading to low demand for milk and other dairy products. It is reported that local officials and police have been stopping sale of ice-cream and soft drinks alleging chilled products spread the virus, at a time when the lockdown has already wrecked sales. Amul has written to the central government requesting clarifications on claims made by local authorities, and even some factions of the Gujarat government, that consumption of chilled products like ice-cream spread coronavirus.

Fishery sector



Gujarat has one of the richest fishing grounds in India with most important commercial varieties of fish (such as pomfret, hilsa, bombay duck, ribbon fish, catfish, rays, cuttle fish, shrimps, etc). The state has a long coastline extending to 1600 km accounts for 19.70 per cent of the total coastline of the country and about 46 per cent of the western coastline of India. The outbreak of COVID-19 and the resultant total lockdown in India has greatly affected the livelihoods of fishing communities. Because of the lockdown, several fishing activities have been non-

operational. Those fishermen, who were in the sea before imposing the lockdown, could not monetise their catch and had to abandon it. The distributional impacts of this could be felt more by coastal communities, women, children, and families who are wage earners, migrant labourers, and regular fish consumers. The fishing and related activities in Gujarat with 7.8 lakh tonnes marine seafood production in 2018 have been hit severely. China is the major export market for Gujarat and the trade was affected by January when the Covid-19 virus infection affected China. It is estimated that there will be a 40 per cent reduction in the catch during this year. Many of the importing countries, hit by the pandemic, have cancelled orders and this has resulted in an uncertain export market.

Locust Attack



Banaskantha, Palanpur and some part of Kachh region of Gujarat have been affected by locust attack. In Banaskantha, standing summer crops of millet, groundnut, sweet potato, fruit, and vegetables have destroyed.

Covid19 and Agriculture in Rajasthan

Agriculture

During the First lockdown (21 days) period in Rajasthan, major rabi crops like mustard, wheat, chickpea and lentil were either at harvestable stage or almost at maturity stage. Due to complete lockdown, unavailability or scarcity of farm labours significantly increased the daily wages during the harvesting operations of above mentioned crops. Since the crop harvesting operations in Rajasthan are heavily depends on mechanical power, thus due to non availability of same has hamper the harvest.

Small land holders harvested their crops manually either by themselves or through mutual agreement with each other. Large land holders faced tough time because they did not have enough man power. Thus, they were forced to pay high price for harvesting operation either by manually or through harvester what is ever is available. Matured crops were logged in the field due to amalgamation of high rainfall or hail with high wind velocity and leads to heavy crop damage. Complete restrictions imposed by Lockdown1 have tremendously affected harvesting operations in majority of rabi crops.

Labour

Curtailed of labour migration from one state to another state or one place to another place has drastically affected the harvesting of these crops which were more dependent on migrant labours. Shortage of labour at peak time of harvesting of vegetables and fruits has also significantly increased daily wages.

Farm Implements and repairs



Agricultural implements such as sickle (daranti), hoe and thresher or combined harvester are essential and basic input to complete crop harvesting operation. During the lockdown-1 period, shops involved in selling of farm implements were completely closed and farmers could not purchase new farm implements for harvesting.

They used their own old implements but got worse when either they were broken or their sharpness declined. The farm implement repairing centres were either completely closed or open for specific period and severely affected harvesting operation. It was one of the main reasons for crop loss at farm field during pandemic.

Storage and Mandis



It was reported that Farmers were forced to sell their produce to middlemen at low price because they do not have storage facility or have to pay debt, taken from either landlords or banks in the form of crop loan. Migration of skilled workers from working places to their native places triggered panic because they were crucial not only for harvesting operations but also for post-harvest handling of produce in storage and marketing centres such as Mandis for food grains, fibre, food and vegetables.

Dairy Sector

Although, there was least impact on fodder production and animal health but milk supply chain was interrupted due to less demand on area of

production and restrictions on the inter and intra-state movements of transportation. Due to the lockdown, all eateries and sweet shops are closed, leading to low demand for milk and other dairy products. Milk prices have fallen, putting further stress on farmers

Poultry Sector

Poultry farmers have been badly hit due to misinformation on social media, that chicken are the carrier of disease, and also transportation restrictions.

Locust Attack



Locust Control team at Anupgarh in Rajasthan

Since April 2020, around [25 swarms of locusts](#) have entered India from Pakistan and have wrought havoc on cotton cultivation in Rajasthan. Out of 33 districts, 24 have been affected. Locusts destroyed [cotton crops](#) in Sri Ganganagar (4,500 hectares), Hanumangarh (9,000 ha), Nagaur (70 ha) and Bikaner (830 ha) districts in April and May 2020.

Book Post

To,

From:

DOI : 15-02-2021

Agro-Economic Research Centre

For the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan

(Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)

H.M. Patel Institute of Rural Development,

Opp. Nanadalaya Temple, Post Box No. 24,

Sardar Patel University

Vallabh Vidyanagar 388120, Anand, Gujarat

Ph.No. +91-2692-230106, 230799, Fax- +91-2692-233106

E-mail : director.aerc@gmail.com

Website: www.aercspu.ac.in

Acknowledged the information used/taken from the public domain