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Pusa 1509 to drive basmati output to a new high

Acreege hits a record 2.1 million hectares, say rice exporters

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Production of basmati rice is set to touch a new high this year with farmers in the key producing States such as Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhnad taking up cultivation of the new high-yielding variety Pusa 1509 in a big way.

Lured by high returns last year, farmers have planted the aromatic rice on a record area of 2.1 million hectares (mh), an increase of 31 per cent over last year's acreage of 1.6 mh. Bulk of this increase is driven by the Pusa 1509 variety.

The All India Rice Exporters Association, based on the latest acreage numbers, has pegged

the output at around 8.4 million tonnes (mt) against last year's 6.6 mt, said Rajen Sundaresan, Secretary of the exporters' body. The latest crop survey commissioned by AIREA, estimates the acreage under the popular variety Pusa 1121 at 1.16 mh, almost same as that of last year.

Adoption by farmers

However, the acreage of Pusa 1509, which consumes less water and has more resistance to pest attacks has seen a quantum leap. The acreage under 1509 has touched a little less than half-a-million, hectare at 4.92 lakh ha against last year's 5,000 hectares. "Even the traditional variety HBC 19 or Taraori Basmati and



Gaining aroma The cultivation of 1509 variety has come in handy for farmers in Haryana and Punjab, which are plagued by drought and declining water table.

CSR 30 that have higher aroma have seen a slight increase in area mainly in Haryana and Punjab," Sundaresan said.

The cultivation of 1509 variety has come in handy for farmers mainly in Haryana, which has faced a drought this year, and

parts of Punjab, where declining water table has become a major issue in recent years.

"The adoption has been pretty good this year and next year the acreage will further grow to about 8 lakh hectares," said AK Singh, main breeder of Pusa 1509 at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute.

Yield and prices

Arrivals of early planted crop have already begun in mandis of Haryana and Punjab, and the average yield levels are hovering around 24-25 quintals/acre against an average of 20 quintals/acre for the 1121 variety. Farmers are getting a price of about ₹3,200 a quintal and their realisations are around ₹90,000-1 lakh per acre, Singh added.

Anil Mittal, Chairman of KRBL Ltd, the country's largest exporter,

said that the crop is excellent this year and the quality has been better.

"We are expecting a 25-30 per cent increase in production this year," Mittal said adding that prices would come down in days ahead on increase in arrivals.

Exports

Basmati is the largest exported agri-commodity and the shipments last year stood at a record 3.75 million tonnes valued at ₹29,299 crore.

Meanwhile, shipments to Iran have been sluggish as the largest buyer of the Indian aromatic rice hiked the import duty to around 40 per cent from the earlier 22 per cent.

Last year, Iran accounted for over a third of India's basmati exports in value and about 40 per cent in quantity last year.

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- 1- निदेशक कार्यालय
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- 3- अधीक्षक/संयुक्त निदेशक (शिक्षा)
- 4- प्रभारी स्टेट
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