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Rajasthan to seek Centre relief for crop damage

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Rajasthan could be the first state in the country in the current rabi season to formally seek assistance from the Centre for damage to the standing crop due to untimely rains. The state is preparing to send a formal memorandum soon.

A senior state government official said preliminary estimates show that in some areas, 10-20 per cent of the standing crop has been damaged, while in others, the damage is to the tune of 20-30 per cent. Most of the damage was in four districts of the state,

including Jodhpur and Bikaner, which received hailstorm during the recent bout of unseasonal rains.

"Our teams are in the field taking stock of the situation. A final figure would be known around April 15 when the survey teams return," said a senior official with the state agriculture department.

He said once the extent of damage is known, only then would a formal memorandum be sent to the central government.

Senior officials with the Union agriculture ministry confirmed they have received information that Rajasthan is planning to send a memorandum on crop loss. "We are ready and as soon

as we receive a formal memorandum, we would send our teams to assess the situation," said an official.

States can avail compensation for crop loss under the laid-down provisions after making an assessment of the extent of damage and sending a memorandum to the Centre in a prescribed format.

Before sending a memorandum, it has to first notify the disaster in the state gazette. In the first and second weeks of March, unseasonal rains accompanied by isolated incidents of hailstorms impacted parts of northern and western India.

Officials said although the impact was spread over six states, it was not severe

anywhere except for parts of Rajasthan, where the assessment is on.

In Punjab and Haryana, some standing crop was impacted in the districts of Ludhiana and Patiala, while in Haryana, some damage was seen in Hisar, Sirsa, Jind, Bhiwani, Sonapat, Fatehabad, Karnal and Rohtak. However, nowhere was it very widespread or severe. In Madhya Pradesh also, some damage was seen in around 20 districts mainly in the wheat crop.

In 2015, the standing rabi crop in 19 million hectares of land was affected due to unseasonal rains, which pulled down the final harvest.



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