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## Timely, welcome showers for crops

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The summer rains of the last two days over Tamil Nadu have come as a major relief to farmers across the State.

The standing crops, including sugarcane and paddy, which are in early stages of planting will benefit.

### Paddy area

Paddy transplanting in major production areas and sugarcane planting for the 2016-17 crushing season (October-September) have been done. This sprinkling of summer rains will help establish the crops well, say farmers.

Prior to the rains, the temperatures had hit a high during the summer and in tandem with the chronic shortage and erratic supply of power, even farmers with groundwater were uncertain of irrigation. Now this takes care of water for the next few days.

### Power supply issues

By June, wind energy production kicks in and this augments the power supply in the State. The rains spell good news for the farmers.

Summer rains normally account for about one-sixth of the States average rainfall of about 920 mm annually. But in recent



**Sweet prospects** A sugar mill preparing for crushing operations in Dharmapuri district, Tamil Nadu. The recent spell of rains will help some of the mature crops recover and support the young crop in the field for the coming season

years rains in summer have been scarce and the spell over the last couple of days was sorely needed.

S Radhakrishnan, a paddy farmer in TVPuthur Village, Cuddalore district, who finished transplanting a short term three-month paddy crop last month, is happy. While there is no groundwater shortage in his area, power to the pump sets could not be taken for granted. Now the rains over the last couple of days have ensured his crops get adequate water.

K Venkatesan, a farmer in Cuddalore, said the rains over most of central and southern districts have covered the paddy areas extensively.

### Cane crop gains

Sugarcane farmers and sugar millers are also a relieved lot. According to sugar industry sources,

sugar recovery rate in recent weeks had hit a low of less than eight per cent sugar on every tonne of cane crushed.

This spell of rains will help some of the mature crops recover and arrest the deterioration even if at the fag end of the crushing season over the next few days and support the young crop in the field for the coming season.

Sugar production this year is slightly higher than that of last season at about 9.91 lakh tonnes (9.27 lakh tonnes) as of April and mills have crushed about 111 lakh tonnes of cane (103 lakh tonnes).

According to industry estimates, there is about 1.86 lakh acres (1.92 lakh acres) of standing crop in early stage, planting done around January onwards, for the private sector mills which account for the major portion of crushing.

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