

Media Update-2

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FAO

PRESS RELEASE

Punjab Food Outlook Report for Kharif launched

Lahore: The Punjab Food Outlook report for Kharif season was launched in Lahore today. This first of its kind report for Kharif has been prepared in response to a request from Punjab government with the technical support provided by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), following the lines of FAO's Global Food Outlook.

The main objective of the report is to provide estimated gaps between consumption and production and provide information to Punjab government to take timely steps to address these within the province.

Following the first Punjab Food Outlook Report for Rabi 2018-19, the current report is prepared for the upcoming Kharif 2019-20 period for the crops of rice, cotton, maize (autumn), and sugarcane. These crops together make up 70% of the total area under cultivation during kharif season in Punjab. These reports will be instrumental in providing an outlook at the national level.

Minà Dowlatchahi, FAO Representative in Pakistan, in her remarks said: "It is important to review the findings of this report to help reach solutions based on evidence and better understand crucial factors such as area under cultivation, costs of production, impact of climate change, availability of agricultural inputs and other issues that small farmers face and their impact on the food outlook of Punjab. This work ties up with the setting up of the National Food Security and Nutrition Information System for providing an outlook and enhancing forecasting capacities at the national level to support evidence based policy making. It will eventually help reduce poverty and improve food security and nutrition in Pakistan."



Speaking on the occasion, Malik Nauman Ahmed Langrial, Minister of Agriculture government of Punjab termed the report as an impetus to agricultural development in Punjab and appreciated the efforts of FAO and IFPRI in the preparation of the report to help agriculture enter a new era of evidence based decision making.

According to the report, the area for cotton cultivation is predicted to increase by 3.85%; and the area under maize and rice overall to decrease by 5.85% and 1.06% respectively. Within the category of rice, basmati rice is expected to increase by 1.3% while area under irri-rice is forecasted to decrease marginally by 0.9%.

Analyzing these results purely on the basis of historic values, these estimations do not depict a drastic change from their previous trends. Over the past few years, some amount of area is shifted between cotton and maize depending upon the market situation. This can be seen in the forecasted values as well. For rice, expansion in basmati area is predicted to be driven by a higher export demand.

The report will also help strengthen national capacities for managing and utilization of food security related information.

A Food Outlook report describes the situation of different food crops and products within specific geographical boundaries. It shows trends, fluctuations in production, cropped area and yield, and predicts production and prices, thereby allowing farmers and other stakeholders and decision makers to make better and more informed decisions. When done well, a food outlook analysis is useful for preventive actions to anticipate upcoming shocks or take advantage of new or growing opportunities.

Mr Steve Davies from IFPRI and Mr Raza Khan from the ADU were also present at the launching ceremony.
