GIEWS Country Brief
India

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**FOOD SECURITY SNAPSHOT**

- Planting of 2019 wheat *Rabi* crop supported by favourable supply of water for irrigation
- Aggregate paddy output in 2018 forecast at record levels
- Total cereal exports in 2018/19 forecast below average
- Prices of rice stable, while those of wheat increased slightly in November
- Overall food security stable but concerns remain for flood-affected populations

**Placing of 2019 wheat *Rabi* crop supported by favourable supply of water for irrigation**

Placing of the 2019 wheat *Rabi* crop started two weeks behind schedule, in mid-October, due to the late withdrawal of the 2018 Southwest monsoon and it is expected to finalize by the end of the year. The Minister of Agriculture reported that plantings are progressing at an average pace and, as of 30 November, about 15.3 million hectares have been planted with wheat. Overall, plantings are expected to expand from last year’s average level due to ample irrigation water availabilities and the Government’s intention to raise the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for *Rabi* crops.

Similarly, planting of the 2018 secondary *Rabi* paddy crop started late, in mid-October, and is expected to finalize by end of January. Total sown area is projected to mark an annual increase due to good availability of water for irrigation in main reservoirs.

**Aggregate paddy output in 2018 forecast at record levels**

Harvesting of the 2018 paddy *Kharif* crop, to be finalized in January 2019, started with some delay in mid-October due to the late withdrawal of the 2018 Southwest monsoon. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Southwest monsoon rains were spatially and temporally well distributed from June to September in northwest, central and most southern states, while they were erratic in some northeastern states as well as in northern Karnataka, Telangana and southwest Andhra Pradesh, registering some dry spells in July and August.

The 2018 aggregate paddy output, including the 2018 *Kharif* crop and the 2018/19 *Rabi* crop, to be harvested by June 2019, is forecast at a record of 173 million tonnes, 7 percent above the
five-year average reflecting expanded Kharif and Rabi plantings and favourable weather conditions in main producing areas throughout the Kharif season.

The 2018 maize aggregate output is forecast at 28.5 million tonnes, 13 percent above the five-year average and similar to last year’s high level. The positive performance is due to an expansion in Kharif plantings that more than offset lower season’s yields owing to dry spells during the critical crop development stages in July and August in Karnataka, Telangana and Southwest Andhra Pradesh.

The 2018 wheat crop, harvested by May 2018, is estimated at a record of 99.7 million tonnes, 7 percent above the five-year average due to higher yields supported by ample availabilities of irrigation water in reservoir storage.

Aggregate 2018 cereal production is forecast at a record level of 319.5 million tonnes, 7 percent above the five-year average.

**Total cereal exports in 2018/19 forecast below average**

Aggregate cereal exports in the 2018/19 marketing year (April/March) are forecast at 14.2 million tonnes, close to last year’s below average level.

Rice exports in the 2018 calendar year are forecast at 12.2 million tonnes, 9 percent above the five-year average and close to last year’s record level, reflecting bumper availabilities and steady demand from the country’s main buyers.

**Prices of rice were stable, while those of wheat increased slightly in November**

Retail prices of rice have been generally stable since March 2018 in most markets, as the downward pressure due to ample supplies from the 2018 crops was offset by large Government purchases. By contrast, prices of wheat increased slightly due to the large Government procurement and the announcement, in early October, of an increase of 6 percent in the Minimum Support Prices for the 2019 winter Rabi crop.

**Overall food security stable but concerns remain for flood-affected populations**

The overall food security situation in the country is stable due to ample food stocks and the distribution of subsidized cereals to households falling below the poverty line through Government programmes, mainly the National Food Security Act (NFSA), deployed since 2013. The NFSA reaches out to about 75 percent of the rural population and 50 percent of the urban population in the country. In addition, it delivers assistance to pregnant women and children up to 14 years old.

However, some concerns remain on the complete restoration of the food security conditions of populations in the southern State of Kerala that were affected by severe floods last August.
India

Retail wheat prices in major cities

Indian Rupees per kg

Source: FAO/GIEWS Food Price Monitoring and Analysis Tool.