

Coffee Board pegs crop loss from heavy rains at 82,000 tonnes

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Highest loss in Karnataka, the largest producer

OUR BUREAU

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The State-run Coffee Board has estimated the crop loss caused by the excess South-West monsoon rain that lashed key growing regions in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in recent months at 82,000 tonnes for crop year 2018-19 (starting October).

This would mean that India's 2018-19 crop is likely to be at least 26 per cent lower than the current year's crop size of 3.16 lakh tonnes.

Based on a preliminary assessment of the affected regions, the Coffee Board said in a press release on Saturday that the highest crop loss has occurred in Karnataka, the largest producer of the commodity, followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu.



Huge drop The 2018-19 crop is likely to be at least 26 per cent lower than the current year's crop size of 3.16 lakh tonnes

The board said nearly 100 of its personnel have been working with the revenue administration assessing the damage caused by the rain in August.

The board has suggested that the Centre consider a special relief package for growers as it feels that the compensation paid under the Calamity Relief Fund, under the National Disaster Management Plan, would not be sufficient to

recoup the losses. The unusually heavy rains over the past couple of months in Kodagu, Chikmagalur, Hassan and Wayanad districts had triggered flooding and landslides, impacting the livelihoods of people who depend mainly on plantation crops such as coffee, pepper and arecanut.

Besides causing damage to the standing crop, the rains have also caused significant

damage to the property and infrastructure of the growers. Karnataka accounts for over 70 per cent of the coffee produced in the country, followed by Kerala, which produces around 20 per cent of the commodity.

Planters' demand

The Karnataka Planters' Association, the apex body of growers, has pegged the losses incurred by the growers at around ₹2,500 crore. Similarly, the coffee growers in Wayanad estimate the crop loss at around 25 per cent.

"The growers' associations have been requesting waiver of interest on coffee loans, rescheduling of outstanding loans, and reduction in interest rate on coffee loans to 3 per cent for loans up to ₹25 lakh, and 6 per cent for loans of more than ₹25 lakh in view of the severe calamity. The demand is justified, considering the unprecedented difficult times faced by the growers," the board said in the release.