

# Crop disease deals a double blow to peasants

A SATISH@Palakkad

POST the devastating floods, the paddy farmers, who lost a substantial part of the crop, are now encountering leaf blight disease. Consequently, this could be one of the lowest procurement figures for the first crop ever since the state-run Supplyco and cooperatives were entrusted with the procurement process.

"The leaf blight disease inflicted severe damage on paddy crops. It is the crop grown using an overdose of nitrogen fertilisers which had been affected the most as the

bacterial disease will be more virulent. The joint inspection with the Agriculture Department in several blocks found it were the crops which reached the booting and flowering stage which have been affected due to flooding. These crops were nearing harvest and it could turn into chaff. Even in the crops which survived the vegetative phase, the yield could be very low," said M C



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In areas like Kuttanad, there has been more of physical damage. Their season is different from the kole fields in Thrissur and Palakkad. In Kuttanad it is the standing crop which has been damaged along with seed nurseries and beds, he said.

When paddy crops remain sub-

merged in water for more than 36 hours, there is chance of de-nitrication and leaching loss. When there is nitrogen deficiency, the leaf could turn yellow. It could be supplemented by foliar application of fertilisers. When the disease is in its initial stage, cow dung slurry and application of bleaching powder are found effective, he said.

"The rice from the areas affected by the leaf blight disease will be broken and the hay will also be in truncated form," said Muthalamthode Mani, Desiya Karshaka Samajam state general secretary.

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