

# Field spice crop prospects look bright this season

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Good monsoon and higher acreage, supported by favourable weather conditions, have brightened crop prospects for key field spices - grown on the field and not on the plants - including cumin seed (jeera) and coriander seeds (dhana), among others.

The Federation of Indian Spice Stakeholders (FISS) on Sunday released its crop estimate for jeera with 29 per cent jump in crop size from last year, from 4,16,600 tonnes in 2019 to 5,35,500 tonnes this year.

## Higher acreage

The total area under jeera has increased by about 25 per cent at 10,25,600 hectares. Gujarat and Rajasthan are the two jeera growing States, where the acreage has seen 40 per cent and 16 per cent jump from last year, respectively, to 4,39,830 hectares and 5,85,770 hectares. The over-

Spice variety	Production estimate (in tonnes)		% Change	Acreage (in hectares)		% Change
	2019	2020		2019	2020	
	Cumin seed	4,16,600	5,35,500	29	8,21,000	10,25,000
Coriander seed	2,47,310	3,83,060	55	2,03,800	3,00,310	47
Fenugreek	1,25,270	1,65,810	32	94,100	1,22,010	30
Fennel seed	75,710	89,870	19	71,160	78,130	10

Source: Federation of Indian Spice Stakeholders

all yield is estimated to be in the range of 522 kg per hectare with a marginal increase of 3 per cent over last year.

"After a good monsoon, favourable weather conditions have supported the crop. However, there are some concern for the next 2-3 weeks as most of the crop is still standing in the fields and any climatic disturbance at this stage may adversely affect the crop," said Ashwin Nayak, former chairman, Federation of Indian Spice Stakeholders (FISS), after the industry meet in Udaipur on

Sunday. The industry is concerned about the price outlook amid the global coronavirus scare and increased crop estimates. China and Europe are the major destinations for jeera exports. With uncertainty over exports and increased output estimates, prices are likely to get a hammering both in spot as well as futures. The spot prices have already fallen to ₹13,903.55 a quintal, which is ₹600-700 fall within a month. Jeera futures for March contract on NCDEX was also down at ₹13,605.

Coriander seed is also likely to see a sharp 55 per cent jump in the overall output supported by a steep 275-per cent surge in acreage in Gujarat at 1,14,320 hectares this year as against 30,500 hectares last year. The crop size in Gujarat is expected to be higher by 293 per cent to 1,52,770 tonnes for the year.

While Madhya Pradesh is set to see a modest rise in the output with 25 per cent jump, Rajasthan will see a fall of about 8 per cent in the output over last year. Higher crop prospects has also brought down coriander seed futures on NCDEX which fell from ₹7,548 per quintal in January 2020 to ₹5,835 for the April contract.

The other major field spices crops, fennel seed and fenugreek, FISS has estimated an increase in output by 19 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. Fennel seed crop is estimated at 89,970 tonnes, while fenugreek output is projected at 1,65,810 tonnes for 2020.