



BASAI News Updates

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Dwarf disease hits paddy on 25K acres in Y'nagar

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

12.5% CULTIVATED AREA AFFECTED

YAMUNANAGAR, SEPTEMBER 4

About 25,000 acres of standing paddy crop has been hit by the dwarf disease in Yamunanagar district, leaving the farmers worried. As per claims made by farmers before the authorities of the Haryana Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, most of the incidents of stunted growth of paddy have been reported in Sawa-127, Sawa-7301, Shift Gold, Arize-6444, PR-114, Pusa-1509 and some other

■ Of the total 2,07,500 acres under paddy in Yamunanagar district this year, 12.5% hit by the dwarf disease

■ Jaswinder Singh, Deputy Director of Agriculture, has called for a special girdawari in Yamunanagar district

varieties. After getting complaints from a number of affected farmers, the Agriculture Department, Yamunanagar, has written to the higher authorities requesting for a 'special girdawari' so that the affected farmers could get compensation.

Jaswinder Singh, Deputy

Director of Agriculture, Yamunanagar, said he had written to the Director General of Agriculture Department, informing him that of the 2,07,500 acres under paddy in the district this year, 12.5 per cent of it (about 25,000 acre) had been hit by the dwarf disease.

Sources said a Central government team had also visited the district on August 24 to review the affected crop.

The Sadhaura, Bilaspur and Saraswati Nagar blocks of the district were the most affected, added the sources.

Farmers claimed the paddy crop had been hit 100 per cent in some areas. "My one and a half acres has been totally damaged due to the dwarf disease," said Vikas, a farmer of Sudhail village. Another farmer, Jagbir Singh, of

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Rulakheri village said, "I had planted paddy over 15 acres. The disease has affected the crop across 15 acres, but the damage in 6 acres is about 70-80%." He said this was a double blow as farmers were yet to recover from the loss incurred by the low wheat yield.

Meanwhile, the Punjab

Government on Sunday ordered a state-wide survey to assess the loss to the standing paddy crop due to the disease caused by the southern rice black-streaked dwarf virus (SRBSDV).

The order was issued by Agriculture Director Gurvinder Singh. Agriculture Joint Director (Plants Protection) Raj Kumar has conveyed to

all Chief Agriculture Officers (CAOs) in the state that the Agriculture Director has sought a detailed report from each district within 48 hours.

The latest survey conducted by scientists of Punjab Agriculture University on the dwarf disease has confirmed that stunted plants have been observed in rice and basmati fields in almost the entire state.

₹693 cr spent on checking farm fires, but menace on the rise

DEEPENDER DESWAL
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HISAR, SEPTEMBER 4

A sum of Rs 693.25 crore has been spent by the state government in its effort to check farm fires by way of crop residue management over the past four years.

The government supported the farmers in terms of subsidies on crop residue management as 31,466 custom hiring centres (CHCs) were set up, besides providing 41,331 individual farmers to provide machinery to adopt alternative practices of disposing off paddy straw.

However, the area under paddy straw burning has gone up over the years with the Agriculture Department data revealing 3.54 lakh hectare burnt area out of total 14.63 lakh hectares under rice cultivation in 2021. This is the highest over the past four

| CENTRAL FUNDS FOR MGMT OF CROP RESIDUE | | | SCAM SUSPECTED |
|--|------------|-----------------|---|
| Year | Grant | Utilised amount | “ I suspect a huge scam like the one detected in Punjab in the subsidies issued to the custom hiring centres (CHCs) for crop residue management in Haryana as well. Shockingly, there is no audit of these CHCs and subsidies. Dr Ram Kumar, AGRICULTURE EXPERT |
| 2018-19 | ₹137.84 cr | ₹132.86 cr | |
| 2019-20 | ₹192.06 cr | ₹101.49 cr | |
| 2020-21 | ₹170 cr | ₹205.75 cr | |
| 2021-22 | ₹193.35 cr | ₹151.39 cr | |

years as the burnt area in 2018, 2019 and 2020 was 2.45 lakh hectares, 2.37 lakh hectares and 2.16 lakh hectares, respectively.

The information procured via RTI from the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare revealed that the Centre released Rs 137.84 crore in 2018-19 of which Rs 132.86 crore was utilised. Similarly, Rs 192.06 crore was released in 2019-20 of which Rs 101.49 crore was utilised. Next year (2020-21), the Centre released Rs 170 crore, while Rs 205.75 was

spent. In 2021-22, Rs 193.35 crore was released and Rs 151.39 crore was spent.

Agriculture expert Dr Ram Kumar said the Agriculture Department seemed to be in a deep slumber as the paddy harvesting season was about a month away when the problem of straw burning was likely to create problems again.

“I suspect a huge scam like one detected in Punjab in the subsidies issued to the CHCs for crop residue management in Haryana as well. Shockingly, there is no audit of

these CHCs and subsidies. The implements procured by the CHCs by availing 80 per cent subsidies are not being utilised,” he said.

• Harpal Singh, sarpanch of Dharsul village in Fatehabad, said the farmers were not yet ready to adopt crop-residue management measures.

Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agriculture University (HAU) Vice-Chancellor Prof BR Kamboj said straw burning was a matter of concern not only in Haryana, but also in various parts of the Asia-Pacific region.



Farmers protest in Adampur in Hisar on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

Farmers seek dues for cotton crop loss

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HISAR, SEPTEMBER 4

Farmers of Adampur, Balsamand and Kheri Chopta today staged a protest and showed black flags to BJP MP from Hisar Brijendra Singh at the PWD Rest House in Adampur.

Farmers have been protesting at the tehsil office in Adampur for three months, demanding compensation for damage to their cotton crop.

The protesters confronted the MP and complained that the state government had not paid them the compensation for the 2020 and 2021 cotton crop damage.

A farm leader told the MP that farmers had been facing crop failure for the kharif sea-

son for last three years.

“The state government had sanctioned the compensation for 2020, but it has not been disbursed to the affected farmers to date. We have little hope of getting compensation of the three years. This year again, cotton has suffered heavy losses due to excessive waterlogging in many parts of the district,” the farm leader said.

The farmers said they had even met Agriculture Minister JP Dalal, Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa and other leaders regarding the payment of their compensation, but to no avail.

The MP said he had taken up the demand of the farmers with the state government earlier and would do so again.

The seed of knowledge grows

MANJIT S KANG

AFTER getting a bachelor's degree from Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, I left for further education to the US. During my doctoral studies at the University of Missouri, Columbia, I came across many legendary teachers and was taught by them. They were not only memorable and motivating because of their superb teaching, but also because of their humour in and outside of the classroom.

Gary F Krause was a brilliant statistician with a marvellous sense of humour. While explaining complex statistical formulas, he would say, 'Now, here comes the "Indian

trick".' He would then point out to the class the work of a famous statistician, CR Rao. A wall hanging in his office read, 'Today is the first day of the rest of your troubles.'

William Q Loegering, a geneticist, taught us 'Genetics of plant disease'. He had an unwavering, positive self-concept. In his office was a plaque with the inscription, 'Once I thought I was wrong, but I was mistaken.' Indeed, he was never wrong.

Another teacher, who motivated his students to think, was C Jerry Nelson. He taught us an advanced course in crop physiology. His pet phrase in the classroom was, 'Think and let your imagination go wild.'

My PhD adviser, Marcus S

Zuber, had a unique style of guiding his students. He would give us the latest research publication to read. After we had casually read it, he would come back and say, 'There are some interesting ideas in this paper for a couple of novel research projects.'

Zuber was a research leader (a renowned maize geneticist/breeder) with the US Department of Agriculture and never spent time on teaching during the day. He would teach us informally on Saturdays.

George P Redei taught us 'History of genetics'. He had fled Hungary after the communists took over the country. He was known among his colleagues as an encyclopaedia of genet-

ics, even before he had published a book titled *Genetics Manual: Current Theory, Concepts, Terms*.

In 1986, I joined the Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, as a professor of quantitative genetics. My next-door neighbour was a veteran professor, Joseph E Sedberry. Whenever a student brought to him a thesis to read at a short notice, his response always was, 'Poor planning on your part does not necessarily constitute an emergency on my part.' This philosophy of his was known to all students.

Abdul Kalam, too, can be added to the list as he was a motivating teacher. We should salute all teachers and remember that 'teachers plant seeds of knowledge that grow forever.'