

## Tobacco growers asked to stick to crop size

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Tobacco Board chairman Y. Raghunatha Babu inspecting a farm at Karumanchi village, near Ongole, on Wednesday.

### Production likely to touch 100 million kg against 86 million kg permitted

Amid indications that tobacco production may touch the 100 million kg- mark in the traditional growing areas in Prakasam and Nellore districts, the Tobacco Board has asked the farmers not to grow more than the authorised crop.

Board chairman Y. Raghunatha Babu, who visited the farms at Karumanchi village, near here, on Wednesday said that the farmers, in their own interest, should restrict themselves to growing the crop in the permitted acreage so that they could take advantage of the demand-supply situation at the time of marketing.

#### Word of caution

“Overenthusiasm now will mean that they will have to burn their fingers at the time of marketing and paying penalty for the excess crop,” he cautioned.

With no remunerative price for bengal gram, the other main commercial crop grown in the district, the farmers have taken to tobacco in a big way in the areas coming under the Southern Black Soil (SBS) and Southern Light Soil (SLS) auction platforms.

According to the Indian Tobacco Association sources, the crop may go up to 100 million kg against the authorised crop size of 86 million kg during rabi with the farmers, especially small growers, adding 1/2 to 1 acre more per barn taking advantage of the downpour in several spells.

## **Mechanisation**

Mr. Babu also wanted the farmers to go for mechanisation in view of labour shortage.

He suggested use of mechanised transplanters and solar-powered barns to improve efficiency during curing and avoid felling trees to the extent possible.

Following the directions from the board, the farmers had planted and nurtured 10 saplings each.

Tobacco crop has so far been raised in 17,571 hectares against the registered 22,519 hectares in the SBS region and in 20,195 hectares against the permitted area of 27,360 hectares in the SLS region, say sources in the board.

Mr. Babu also insisted that the farmers should come forward to earmark a cent of land for farm pond. Dovetailing with the NREGS, the board would facilitate digging of the farm ponds in their farms free of cost so that they could provide life-saving irrigation during drought. The Centre was keen on doubling the farmers' income by suggesting ways to cut down costs, he added.

**Source:** <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/tobacco-growers-asked-to-stick-to-crop-size/article30031486.ece>