

# Prospects of tobacco growers may be hurt by excess rain in Karnataka

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Excess rain this monsoon is seen hurting the prospects of tobacco growers in South Karnataka, amidst an uptrend in global prices due to a production shortfall.

Growers said excess rain during June-July had impacted their prospects, resulting not only in crop loss and but also leading to quality deterioration.

BV Javare Gowda, President, Federation of Karnataka Virginia Tobacco Growers Association, said the rain had been unprecedented this year, resulting in crop loss as high as 30-40 per cent this year. Growers across all the key growing areas of South Karnataka have been impacted and should be compensated for crop loss from the Tobacco Board's Growers Welfare Fund, Gowda said.



Tobacco is grown in parts of Mysuru, Hassan and Chamarajanagar districts in South Karnataka.

## **CROP SIZE**

For the 2024-25 season, the Tobacco Board had fixed the crop size for Karnataka at 100 million kg, similar to the last year's crop size.

Officials at the Tobacco Board said the excess rain during the second half of July led to water saturating in the fields, resulting in lack of aeration for the plant roots. It

led to premature yellowing of leaves. This will lead to production of more off-grades as the quality is affected, they said.

"There will be some reduction in yield but it is too early to quantify the losses. Also, there will be some quality deterioration," an official said. "Now that the rain has ceased, there will be some growth."

Growers also suffered due to excess rain in the last week of May and in early June, where the planted seedlings were washed away in several areas. The Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco is largely grown in areas around Mysuru and has a good export demand as it can be blended with any other tobacco in the world as it has less nicotine, less tar and less sugar. "About 80-90 per cent of the FCV tobacco produced in Karnataka is exported," Gowda said.