

Tobacco farmers seek government intervention amid falling prices

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June 02, 2026 | Nellore



Farmers and traders participating in a tobacco auction at Throvagunta centre near Ongole in Prakasam district. | Photo Credit: KOMMURI SRINIVAS

Thousands of farmers in SPSR Nellore and Prakasam districts are concerned about the falling prices of Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco despite favourable weather and a good-quality crop this year. Currently, the procurement prices range between ₹190 and ₹260 per kilogram at major auction centres in both districts due to the sluggish international demand and over supply.

“The average price of A-grade tobacco has significantly dropped from ₹340 per kg during the previous years to ₹230 per kg this year. We have anticipated at least ₹300 per kg, but the companies are reluctant to offer above ₹250 per kg while buying the tobacco at the auction platforms,” said V.V. Prasad, a tobacco farmer from Ongole.

Meanwhile, a majority of the farmers are returning with their bales from the auction centres due to lack of remunerative prices. The farmers from Enikapadu and Konijedu villages in Prakasam district expressed fear that they would lose ₹5 to ₹6 lakh this year. Similarly, the farmers from D.C. Pally and Kaligiri villages in SPSR Nellore district also claimed that they are facing serious losses. They demanded the Central and State governments to respond immediately and support them in ensuring better prices.

Meanwhile, State Agriculture Minister K. Atchannaidu, Energy Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar, Social Welfare Minister Dola Sree Bala Veeranjanya Swamy and others have already brought the issue to the attention of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu.

Endowments Minister Anam Ramanarayana Reddy recently announced that the State government was considering the problems of the tobacco farmers on top priority. The Minister said that he will bring their problems to the attention of the Chief Minister and work towards resolving them. He assured that the government will stand by the farmers until they get remunerative prices.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Indian Tobacco Board chairman Ch. Yashwanth Kumar said that a meeting would be held soon with the representatives of tobacco farmers, buyers, traders, exporters, senior officials in the Agriculture Department and public representatives to discuss the issues comprehensively and find a solution.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/tobacco-farmers-seek-government-intervention-amid-falling-prices/article71053187.ece>