

Cane crop under water

RAHUL WADKE

Mumbai, August 13

Floods in Sangli, Satara and Kolhapur districts, the sugar belt of Maharashtra, have affected six per cent of the standing crop.

Data collected from the office of the Sugar Commissioner of Maharashtra and the State Agriculture Department suggest that 50,000 acres out of 8,30,274 (8.30 lakh) acres of sugarcane in the three districts have been impacted.

Crop damage

Torrential rains in the last one week have wreaked havoc in the three western districts, with 4.7 lakh people being shifted to relief camps.

The estimated acreage of sugarcane damage by flood waters could change in a few days with the waters receding and the State machinery carrying out more detailed survey of the fields.

Sugar Commissioner Shekhar Gaikwad told *BusinessLine* that based on preliminary reports, 50,000 acres in seven taluks of the three districts were affected by floods. The sugarcane crop, which is more than six months old will suffer only marginally as it is a



Representational image. Heavy rains in western Maharashtra over the last week have wreaked havoc

sturdy crop. But sugarcane planted in the last six months will start rotting in flood waters, he said.

Gaikwad pointed out that the crop older than six months could grow much more rapidly because of the presence of flood waters and it will not require water from irrigation systems.

Sugar crushing

For the sugar crushing season of 2018-19, which commenced on October 20 last, about 952.11 lakh tonnes of sugarcane was crushed and 107 lakh tonnes of sugar was

produced. From the three districts about 7,93,208 (7.93 lakh) acres of sugarcane was planted, which led to 301 lakh tonnes of sugarcane being crushed and 36 lakh tonnes of sugar being produced.

The Maharashtra State Cooperative Sugar Factories Federation Ltd (Sakhar Sangh), which is the apex body of cooperative sugar mills, is also trying to assess the crop loss in the state.

Managing Director of Sakhar Sangh Sanjay Khatal said the farmers are still in the process of rebuilding their lives. Finding food and shelter is their priority.

Hindu Business Line
14/8/19

