

Will El Nino impact sugarcane harvest?

With plantings over, it could impact yield and sugar recovery

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Sugarcane planting for the 2014-15 sugar season starting October is almost complete in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu; while in UP and other parts of North India the planting will continue till late May.

The total water requirement for sugarcane is 80-100 BCM (billion cubic meters) during the season, which is about 8-10 per cent of the total water requirement for all the irrigated crops, grown during same duration.

In sub-tropical region, sugarcane requires 1,500 mm water for a hectare, out of which about 600 mm is met through rain water, while the rest through irrigation.

In tropical zone, the average requirement is 2,000-3,000 mm, out of which 600 mm is met through rain water. It is one of the reasons why we require about 10 irrigations in sub-tropical and 25 irrigations in tropical zones.

Over 60 per cent of ground water irrigation is through deep wells. Therefore, for both rains and irrigation, monsoon is cru-

a good monsoon. The second set of planting happened during mid-October to mid-December, when Konkan and Madhya Maharashtra together received normal rainfall in 2013 as well as in 2012.

The third set of planting happened during January-March (Suru) 2014 for which plantings are going on in some places. Usually, the plant: ratoon ratio is 60:40, but in 2013-14 it was estimated to be 45:55, and looking at the monsoon trends, it is assumed that during 2014-15 it will be in the ratio of 65:35.

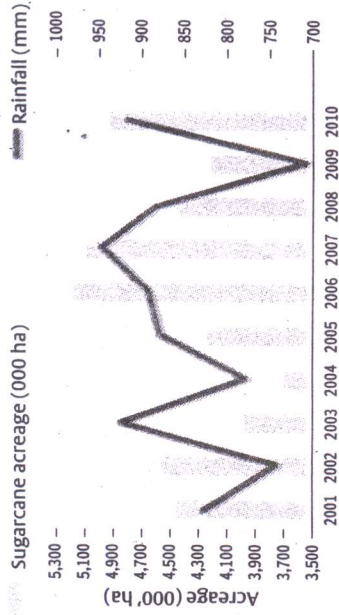
Normal ratio of *Adisali*, pre-seasonal and *Suru* is 20:45:35, which is estimated to be 27: 55:18 in 2014-15 season. With good S-W monsoon, reservoirs in the 12 States are having more water compared with 2012.

Karnataka and UP

In north Karnataka, it is stated a majority of the plantation is done in October-December (Pre-seasonal) and the rest in January-March. In south Karnataka, it is done as *Eksali* in January-March (12-month crop).

In Karnataka, water level in reservoirs/dams such as Almatti Dam/Bagalkot, Ghataprabha and Malaprabha/Belgaum, Narayan-

Impact of South-West Monsoon



the tropical Pacific Ocean has warmed up substantially recently. It is predicted that the tropical Pacific is likely to continue to warm up in the coming months, with most metrological models showing surface temperatures either approaching or exceeding El Niño thresholds by August.

Although, Indian Metrological Department hasn't yet officially announced any impact of El Niño on S-W Monsoon, a few symptoms support the El Niño impacting countries such as Australia.

Apart from impacting monsoon and climatic patterns, sugarcane planting in the country depends on lot other socio-economic-political factors, including cane price arrears. ISMA, like every year, starts conducting satellite mapping from June-July to assess the actual position on ground and estimates the sugarcane crop acreage.

Moreover, by that time major planting would have been completed, so any impact of El Niño can be only be seen on the yield and recovery in 2014-15 season.

The author is with Indian Sugar Mills Association. Views are personal and might differ from factual positions.

Late planting also happens due to wheat harvesting from April onwards.

El Niño and cane

A good monsoon in 2013 has given a boost to planting but any setback on the S-W monsoon this year may impact cane yield, particularly in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

The good rainfall experiences in the last two years can be impacted with onset of climatic patterns such as El Niño.

Currently, the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is neutral for India.

However, the sub-surface of

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