



Sugar production may fall short of target in UP

Scientist for adopting new varieties

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Sugar production in the state may be slightly behind the target as 92 sugar mills are mulling to announce premature end of the current cane crushing season sometime next week. Sources in the Cane Development department said that the production of sugar was 748.65 lakh quintal on Thursday and only 25 sugar mills were still running to full capacity. He said the other 90 mills were not running to their full capacity and may announce the end of their current crushing season next week. In the beginning of the crushing season, the Cane Development department had fixed a target of about 840 lakh quintal sugar production but it would possibly not be achieved due to low recovery of sugar from cane this year. Currently the average sugar recovery is 8.99 per cent. With the mills making payments to the tune of Rs 15,782 crore to cane growers, the payment of cane arrears is about 70 per cent with Rs 6,200 crore still pending. The government has issued strict instructions for payment of cane arrears within the next 14 days. Meanwhile, IISR director S Solomon said the declining trend in sugar recovery from cane in UP was a serious cause of concern for

the sugar industry and it should be addressed with the combined efforts of policy makers, researchers, millers and farmers. He said that during the last six years, 0.1 unit decline in sugar recovery was recorded per year, reaching 9.1 from 9.7 six years back in the current crushing season (2012-13).

Solomon said this declining trend was posing a serious threat to the survival and sustainability of the sugar industry in UP.

"At present only 8-10 per cent cane area is under early sugarcane variety against the recommended 20-30 per cent. Almost 20-25 per cent cane area is under rejected cane variety which contributes most in keeping sugar recovery low.

Sixty per cent cane area is under the general variety. Farmers' mostly supply immature cane (8-10 month old) to mills and the halfway accumulated sugar in the harvested cane is crushed in mills. Supply of stale cane to mill is another factor contributing to low sugar recovery," the IISR Director said. Solomon said efforts were being made by the government to change the imbalanced plantation of cane varieties to balanced one. He also stressed on replacement of old varieties by new ones and increase in cane acreage under early variety. "The government should put in place a mechanism for production and mass multiplication of healthy seed materials of new varieties. For this,

incentives to farmers for producing seed cane may improve the situation. Millers should also come forward with promotional or incentive scheme to farmers for supply of fresh cane to the mills. They should revive the MHAT plant installed for treatment of seed material for planting," the Director said.