

Agri Dept to hold adalats for collecting farmers' complaints

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THE Agriculture Department will soon hold adalats in all rain-affected panchayats in the state to accept complaints from farmers who have reported crop loss, Agriculture Minister V S Sunil Kumar has said. The government order in this regard will be issued this week itself. The adalats are meant to forestall any delay that may occur in providing compensation and to ensure the speedy recovery of the farm sector.

"We can ascertain the actual loss

once flood waters recede. But as per the current estimates, 22,000 hectares of farmland have been affected in rain-related incidents in the state thus far. Of this, paddy fields alone account for 14,000 hectares," he said.

"In all, 32 types of crops have been affected. Paddy aside, cardamom and banana cultivation spread over 1,800 hectares of land each have been affected," Sunil Kumar said. The government has launched efforts to ascertain the actual loss to the farm sector before the inter-

ministerial team from the Centre visits the state in 10 days' time to assess the flood situation.

Preliminary figures have pegged crop losses at ₹220 crore. Add the losses to allied farm infrastructure, such as bunds, to this and the loss would go up to ₹420 crore, according to the minister.

Meanwhile, the department is also chalking out a strategy to ensure that the paddy production does not suffer this fiscal on account of the flood

situation in the paddy-rich districts like Alappuzha and Kottayam. According to the minister, the department will place heavy emphasis on the second crop of paddy cultivation to make up for the loss.

"We don't think production will take that big a hit. Fifty per cent of the 14,000 hectares that have been affected don't go in for the second crop cultivation. So once the water recedes, if we can provide the seed and other requirements on time, we can start the second crop cultivation by October," said Kumar.



IE 2/12/18