

# Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas

\*\*\*\*\*

17<sup>th</sup> Floor, Jawahar Vyapar Bhawan,  
Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110001

Dated: 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2023

## PRESS RELEASE

- Punjab submitted State Action Plan and District-wise Action Plans for tackling the problem of stubble burning to the Commission (CAQM) for the current paddy harvesting season;
- The Action Plans commit for an overall reduction of more than 50% in paddy stubble burning incidents this year as compared to 2022;
- The Action Plans also target elimination of farm fires in 06 Districts of Punjab;
- To finalize the action plans and review the preparedness and implementation of State and District Action Plans, four meetings have been held by CAQM with the Government of Punjab including with Chief Secretary and Deputy Commissioners of Districts.
- In the latest meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2023, CAQM reviewed the preparedness of Punjab Government to substantially bring down paddy stubble burning incidents in the State during the current harvesting season;
- About 20 Million Tonnes (MT) of paddy straw is estimated to be generated in Punjab during 2023 including 3.3 MT of Basmati straw.
- Out of this, the State envisages to manage around 11.5 MT of paddy straw through various *In-situ* management measures, 4.67 MT through *Ex-situ* management;
- Punjab currently has 1,17,672 CRM Machines and procurement of around 23,000 machines is underway;
- CAQM has reiterated to State Government of Punjab for efficient and optimal utilization of CRM machines through the 23,792 CHCs established for the purpose in the State;
- Statutory directions under the provisions of CAQM Act have also been issued to Govt. of Punjab to implement the Action Plan;
- In the last review meeting, CAQM further directed State Government including DCs concerned to ensure effective, intensified and strict enforcement of the State Action Plan and District Plans, with special focus on hotspot districts and keep a close monitoring on daily basis to reduce stubble significantly;

- Various IEC activities are being conducted in Punjab to spread awareness towards substantial reduction of paddy residue burning;

NEW DELHI:

With the aim of significant reduction in incidents of paddy stubble burning in Punjab through enforcement of the State and District Action Plans including effective utilization of the crop residue management (CRM) machineries, the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR & Adjoining Areas (CAQM), has comprehensively reviewed the preparedness of the Punjab Government on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2023.

During the latest meeting, State Government Secretaries In-charge of Departments concerned including Department of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) and District Collectors (DCs) concerned assured the Commission to take all necessary steps, actions and measures in right earnest to effectively implement the State Action Plan and District Action Plans to achieve significant reduction stubble burning incidents during the current paddy harvesting season. The State Action Plan envisages at least 50% reduction in fire counts in Punjab during 2023 compared to last year. The plan attempts elimination of paddy stubble burning cases this year in 06 Districts namely Hoshiarpur, Malerkotla, Pathankot, Rupnagar, SAS Nagar (Mohali) and SBS Nagar.

As per the State Action Plan of Punjab, the total area under Paddy is estimated to be about 31 lakh hectares and paddy straw generation is expected to be around 20 Million Tonnes (MT), this year. The paddy straw generation from non-basmati crop is about 16 MT. Efforts are being made to use the paddy straw for various industrial and energy generation projects. It is estimated that in 2023, State envisages to manage around 11.5 MT of paddy straw through *In-situ* management and about 4.67 MT of paddy straw through *Ex-situ* management. Sizable quantity of straw will also be used as cattle fodder.

The Commission asked for a detailed mapping of the available Crop Residue Management (CRM) machines and their optimal utilization and availability, particularly for small/marginal farmers. Punjab currently has 1,17,672 CRM Machines and around 23,792 Custom Hiring Centers (CHCs) have been established in Punjab. The State has further planned to procure more than 23,000 machines during 2023. Further, mobile apps like i-Khet (for facilitating farmers to have access to the agriculture machinery/ equipment for *In-situ* management of crop residue), and “Cooperative Machinery Tracker” are in place to ensure availability of CRM machines.

*In Ex-situ* management, the paddy straw generated is to be used in:

- Briquetting/ Pelleting plants [Punjab Govt. has issued notifications u/s 5 of Environment (Protection) Act for mandatory co-firing of 20% coal with paddy straw based pellets in Brick Kiln w.e.f. 01.05.2023];
- Bio-ethanol plants;
- Biomass based power plants;
- CBG Plants;

- Cardboard factories etc.

The State Govt. has also identified land parcels for enhancing straw storage capacity.

In the review meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2023, DCs of Punjab assured that mechanisms are in place towards management of straw in their respective districts through *In-situ* and *Ex-situ* management. State Govt. plans application of Bio Decomposer in 8,000 acres of paddy area.

Various IEC activities are being conducted in Punjab to spread awareness towards substantial reduction of paddy residue burning during the current harvesting season. IEC activities include painting of walls in the villages with slogans, print media advertisements, hoardings and panels at prominent places, publicity/ awareness message in the villages, awareness/ educative programs in schools, pamphlets and leaflets to farmers, awareness Jingles on Radio Channels, display boards, etc. Progressive farmers will also be felicitated and asked to sensitize other farmers to ensure 'no burning' of paddy straw.

As per the data of 2022, the five districts of Punjab where maximum crop burning incidents reported were Sangrur, Bathinda, Firozpur, Muktasar and Moga, which recorded about 44% of total fire counts of State.

Four meetings have already been held by the Commission to firm up the action plan and to review the preparedness and implementation of State and District Action Plans for the current paddy harvesting season. This year, CAQM has also sought specific District-wise Action Plans along with the State Action Plan. The Commission has also issued Statutory Directions for strict implementation of the Action Plans.

State Government representatives including PPCB and DCs have assured that all preparations are in place to bring down the cases of stubble burning in the State. With the State Action Plan for control on paddy stubble burning in place including dedicated District-level plans, it is expected that Punjab will witness substantial reduction in the paddy stubble burning cases 2023.

\*\*\*\*\*