

Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR & Adjoining Areas

PRESS BRIEF

Dated: 27th October, 2022

- Increased incidents of stubble burning this year in Punjab is a matter of serious concern.
- As per the satellite remote sensing data, up to 24/10/2022, only about 39% of sown area in Punjab had been harvested and thus rising number of fire events is an alarming situation.
- As per the Standard Protocol developed by ISRO for CAQM, for the period 15th September, 2022 to 26th October, 2022, total paddy residue burning events reported in Punjab are 7,036 compared to 6,463 for the same period during the last year i.e. a significant increase of about 9%.
- About 70 % of farm fires during the current paddy harvesting season were reported only from six districts namely Amritsar, Firozpur, Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Patiala and Tarn Taran. These Districts account for 4,899 cases as against a total of 7,036 incidents in Punjab.
- These traditional six hotspot Districts had also accounted for about 65% of the total burning incidents during the last year for the same period.
- Out of total 7,036 reported cases, 4,315 stubble burning incidences were reported during the last six days alone i.e. about 61%.
- Based on a broad framework developed by the Commission and learnings from the past paddy harvesting seasons, a comprehensive Action Plan was prepared by the State Government of Punjab, with following major pillars of action:
 - Diversification to other crops, diversification to low straw generating and early maturing paddy varieties;
 - *In-situ* crop residue management including bio-decomposer application;
 - *Ex-situ* crop residue management;
 - IEC activities;
 - Monitoring and effective enforcement;
- Statutory Directions were issued by the Commission for implementation of the State Specific Action Plan.
- The Commission has been regularly following up with the Government of Punjab, starting in February 2022, well before the paddy sowing season 2022, to sensitize the State Administrative machinery towards their preparedness to prevent and control the incidents of stubble burning.

- For effective implementation of the plan of action, the Commission also held consultative meetings with major Departments concerned of Government of Punjab like Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Environment, Power and Punjab Pollution Control Board.
- The Commission has held nine meetings with Officials of Government of Punjab from time to time regarding various issues related to stubble burning, including five meetings with Chief Secretary. Key areas and action points stressed upon during the meetings were:
 - Speedy procurement of additional farm machinery through fund allocations made by MoAFW under the Crop Residue Management (CRM) Scheme during 2022-23.
 - Mapping of available machinery in Custom Hiring Centres and cooperatives.
 - Optimised use of available CRM machinery including staggering harvesting schedule at village/ cluster level.
 - Expanding bio-decomposer application to supplement *in-situ* stubble management measures.
 - Facilitating robust supply chain towards *ex-situ* utilisation.
 - Intensifying campaigns and IEC activities against stubble burning.
 - Intensifying monitoring and enforcement actions.
- Review meetings were also held with all Deputy Commissioners with special focus on hotspot Districts, considering their critical role as assigned in the Action Plan of the State Government.
- Considering the present situation and spike in the stubble burning incidents, the Commission has again taken up with the Chief Secretary, Government of Punjab for effective implementation of Action Plan including all strategies for stubble management and appropriate actions in all reported cases of farm fires.
- ❖ In Haryana, the total number of farm fire events reported for the period 15th September, 2022 to 26th October, 2022 is 1,495 compared to 2,010 for the same period last year. There is about 26% reduction in paddy residue burning events in Haryana so far during the current year.
- ❖ In a review meeting held with Chief Secretary, Haryana and Deputy Commissioners last week, the Commission has advised to further intensify their efforts to control the farm fire events in the State of Haryana.
