

Flood affects and Sowing Crops in Pakistan after flooding

The worst floods in **Pakistan's** history have swept through the nation's most important breadbasket provinces, destroying fruit orchards, cotton, sugarcane, corn, vegetables, wheat stocks and animal fodder and factually leaving millions of our country men in need of emergency food.

Floods have not only submerged an approx 17 million acres of **Pakistan's** most fertile crop land but have killed an estimated 200,000 head of livestock and have washed away massive amounts of grain. A major concern is that will the farmers will be able to meet the fall deadline for planting new seeds in 2010, which implies a massive loss of food production in 2011, and potential long term food shortages. The agricultural damages only are more than 2.9 billion dollars, according to recent estimates, which include over 700,000 acres of lost cotton crops, 200,000 acres of sugar cane and 200,000 acres of rice, in addition to the loss of over 500,000 tonnes of stocked wheat, 300,000 acres of animal fodder and the stored grain losses.

We have to fully realize and participate in the rehabilitation process, as well as for the revival of agricultural crops in order to get better GDP growth in the future and remember together only we can make the difference.

Now experts warn that the food crisis could expand into a long-term problem if farmers can't get the seeds, draft animals and irrigation repairs they need for the fall planting of wheat, the nation's most important crop. Much of the nation's farmland has been inundated, leaving crops destroyed and markets empty.

The floods in **Pakistan** also have destroyed the logistics and transportation systems that make it possible to get food to markets. Much of the stored wheat saved for seed or food stocks has rotted because it couldn't be kept dry. As we all know poor farmers have very little ability to store food in Pakistan. "They are completely vulnerable now."

The important cotton and wheat areas of Punjab and Sindh were prosperous agricultural areas, but the recent flood had devastated agriculture land of both the provinces.

Many areas are still under water, and it's not clear how much of the land will be ready to plant this fall. In southern Sindh, it could be six to eight weeks before the soil is fit for planting, probably by the time the best season will pass for sowing wheat crop.

The loss of draft animals will make it hard for farmers to get the fields ready. In some places, so much silt has been deposited that it's too deep to plow and machinery will be needed hence Agriculture Dept. of provincial Governments should provide tractors and seeds along with pesticides immediately. In the higher elevation areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the top layer of fertile soil has been washed away and what remains is barren so our Agri Engineers should come forward and volunteer their services at least during the season of 1st crop.

Some areas might have better soil after the floods, but the quality of the next wheat crop will depend on whether seeds, fertilizer and irrigation water will be available to farmers.

Much of **Pakistan's** agriculture depends on irrigation, and it's not clear how quickly the damaged canal system can be repaired. The floods damaged the irrigation systems extensively in all provinces so the canal irrigation departments of all provinces need to move very quickly to repair the banks of canals. Do remember if our farmers remain unable to plant on massive scale in 2010 then possibly long-term food shortages will be imminent. So Hurry up and lend your hands with all your expertise and whatever possible ways to save **Pakistan**.