

Agricultural Situation In Assam Improves

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, Dec. 30.—The agricultural situation in Assam has improved, it was officially claimed here today. The production of food grain in the State has increased from about 2.4 million tons during 1979-80 to 2.7 million tons during 1980-81. It is likely to reach a record figure of more than 2.8 million tons during the current year in spite of the drought conditions in certain pockets. Krishi Bhavan said in an official release.

A task force appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture last year identified a number of programmes for development of agriculture, fisheries and animal husbandry in Assam. A number of programmes were drawn up by the Department of Agriculture and a special allocation of Rs 1.53 crores made for the promotion of improved varieties of paddy, fisheries, cross-breeding programme and development of cooperatives.

As a result, there is a phenomenal progress in the north east in growing wheat as a second crop on rice fallows, which used to be left uncultivated during the rabi season. The progress, it is claimed, is as good as the green revolution of Punjab.

Against 21,000 hectares of area under wheat 10 years ago, a second crop of wheat after paddy is being taken on 135,000 hectares this year and 200,000 hectares will be covered next year. This has been made possible by a large-scale popularization of short-duration paddy so that it can be harvested about a month before growing wheat.

The number of minikits of new varieties of paddy for this purpose was increased from 10,000 kits last year to 70,000 kits this year. This has also increased the per hectare yield of paddy from 880 kg per hectare two years ago to more than 1,100 kg per hectare this year.

The Centre is meeting the entire subsidy on improved variety of paddy at the rate of Rs 100 per

quintal. About 11,000 quintals have already been distributed.

Community nurseries are also being encouraged so that transplantation can be taken up immediately on the onset of the first showers of the monsoon, which helps in early harvesting of paddy. Against Rs 2 lakhs given for this purpose during 1979-80, the Centre's outlay this year is Rs 10 lakhs and Rs 15 lakhs are going to be spent next year.

Assam has been one of the States in the lowest bracket of fertilizer consumption. Against 118 kg per hectare of fertilizers used in Punjab and 32 kg per hectare being the national average, the consumption in Assam was hardly 2 kg per hectare until a few years ago. The consumption reached the 9,300-ton mark during 1980-81. The current year's target is 14,000 tons.

This increase in the consumption of fertilizers has been possible because of the efforts of the Centre to reach the stocks to the block level at Government expense, opening of new storage facilities in the interior, by intensive extension effort and opening of new sale points.

The short-term credit for fertilizers and other inputs given by the Centre has been increased from Rs 1 crore during 1979-80 to Rs 3.5 crores during the current year.

The Statesman
31/Dec/1981