

Heavy rain affects wheat production in China

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Due to continuous rainfall, China's winter wheat production may affect around 30 million metric tonnes this year. China's wheat imports may soar this year. China's wheat imports have already increased by 80 per cent in the first four months of 2023

China's wheat-producing province Henan hit by heavy rain in the last few days. Henan grows one-third of wheat out of the total production of China. Henan's rain-affected area produces 11 million tonnes of wheat which is around 30 per cent of the overall wheat production of the province.

In some places, humidity has resulted in mildew and caused the wheat to sprout, and wet soil has made it difficult for harvesters to operate. The Henan government is urging insurance providers to cover early sprouting damage and quickly settle claims, according to the Agriculture Ministry.

Henan is expected to cultivate around 38 million of wheat in 2023 which is around 28 per cent of China's total production. Henan province has completed wheat harvesting, according to the province's Bureau of Agriculture and rural affairs. Agriculture Ministry has asked to speed up the wheat harvest by using more farm machines, draining farmland and extending the working hours for harvesters. The provincial government has allocated an emergency fund of 200 million yuan (\$28 million).

Around 75 million mu (5 million hectares) of winter wheat has already been harvested, accounting for more than 20 per cent of winter wheat planted in the country, the ministry noted in an online statement, adding that agricultural authorities are working

with transport and meteorological authorities and oil companies to guarantee the smooth movement and operation of harvesters.

Continuous rainfall has been affecting Huanghuai, a major wheat-producing area between the Yellow River and the Huai River, since late May, just as winter wheat crops were beginning to ripen.

According to China Dialogue, despite not historically being prone to heavy rainfall, Henan has experienced multiple extreme rain events in recent years. In 2021, torrential downpours flooded central Henan, resulting in over 300 fatalities and direct economic losses of 120 billion yuan (\$16.5 billion). A subsequent study by Chinese scientists revealed that human-caused climate change amplified rainfall during floods by 7.5 per cent.

According to Grain Central, China's wheat imports increased by 80 per cent in the first four months of 2023 on the back of falling international prices relative to domestic values. China's ports discharged almost 6 metric tonnes of wheat from January to April, equal to 60 per cent of total 2021-22 wheat imports. April imports alone jumped 141 per cent yearly to 4.7 metric tonnes.

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