

Rain ruins vegetable, fruit crops

BHANU P LOHUMI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, APRIL 3

Rain accompanied by thunderstorms has hit rabi crop prospects and vegetable crops alone have suffered damage to the tune of Rs 40 crore in the lower areas.

Major damage to vegetable crops occurred in Solan, Mandi, Sirmaur, Hamirpur and Kangra while the loss was negligible in Shimla and Bilaspur.

Capsicum and tomato, which were sown in mid-February, were ruined due to continuous rain and efforts of farmers to re-sow the vegetable crops were thwarted by recent rain, sources in the Agriculture Department said.

Wheat, which, was marginally hit in foothill areas of Nalagarh and Poanta Sahib, suffered further damage due to the ongoing spell of rain.

There was 38 per cent deficit in monsoon rain affecting the kharif target



A vegetable grower shows his damaged potato crop at Sakoh village on Friday. PHOTO: KAMALJEET

and the department, which was looking for good rabi crop for 2014-15, is keeping its fingers crossed.

In spite of humid weather, foggy conditions and low temperature, conducive for

occurrence of yellow rust in wheat crop, the situation is under control and barring reports of yellow rust at isolated places, the state was so far free from the disease as immediate remedial and

preventive measures were taken to contain the disease.

The stone fruit crop, which were at bud-break stage, also suffered damage and the Horticulture Department is making assessment of loss, Director, Horticulture, Gurdev Singh, said. The heavy rain and snow in December damaged to the tune of Rs 17 crore but there was no major damage to apple crop so far.

A silver lining was that the Centre took pro-active steps to assess the damage and teams of ministers were dispatched to rain-affected areas in the North to assess the situation and the government would submit a memorandum to the Union Government shortly after making a detailed assessment of damage to the crop. The relief to be given by the Centre will be in addition to the funds already allotted under the State Disaster relief Fund, a spokesman of the department said.