

# Potato growers to get compensation in Odisha

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**BERHAMPURL:** Potato growers in Odisha's Kandhamal district who suffered losses due to wilting of crops during last kharif, will get compensation.

Officials said the state government sanctioned a compensation amount of Rs 23,100 per hectare recently.

"The amount will be transferred to the bank account of each beneficiary. The potato growers have been asked to provide their bank account details," said Deputy Director of Horticulture (DDH), Sukanta Subudhi.

As many as 497 farmers of around 100 villages in Daringibadi and Tumudibandh blocks had cultivated the tuber on 137 hectares. They had raised potato on an experimental basis under the state government's Mission Potato. The farmers had got input subsidies and technical support from the horticulture directorate, officials said.

In a major jolt to the mission, almost entire crops in these two blocks had wilted within a month of the cultivation due to suspected sub-standard seeds, which had been procured from the National Seeds Corporation.

Even though the farmers applied pesticides according to advice of experts, the crops could not be revived. The farmers had demanded compensation.

The district administration had taken up the matter with the government with Kandhamal Collector Yamini Sarangi seeking compensation to the potato growers.

After prolonged discussion, the government released the amount. "We hope the amount will compensate the farmers' loss," said the DDH.

The farmers raised the crops taking loans from primary agriculture cooperative societies (PACSS). The administration had provided subsidised seeds at Rs 1,150 per quintal through PACSS, official sources said.

The amount needs to be raised to at least Rs 25,000 per hectare, said a farmer of Bhramarabadi in Daringibadi block. He had cultivated potato on one acre, but suffered huge loss as the crop withered away.

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