

# Area under cultivation continues to shrink

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**New Delhi:** Cultivable land in India continues to shrink. It may not pose an immediate problem for the nation's food security but its long-term effect could be disastrous with the country needing more and more foodgrains to support its growing population.

Latest data from the agriculture ministry shows that as many as 20 states reported decrease in cultivable land to the extent of 790,000 hectares in four years from 2007-08 to 2010-11. The decrease is mainly attributed to diversion of cultivable land for non-agricultural purposes, including construction, industries and other development activities.

Since such diversion is inevitable, the government had in its National Rehabilitation

## STATUS OF FARMLAND

**Total area of cultivable land** (figures in hectares)

2007-08	2010-11	Overall decrease
<b>182.4 mn</b>	<b>182.0 mn</b>	<b>406,000 ha</b> 

- Decrease in 20 states, pegged at 790,000 hectares
- Increase in five states — Gujarat, Manipur, Mizoram, J&K and Arunachal — stood at 384,000 hectares
- Three states — Assam, Goa and Sikkim — reported status quo
- Delhi is the only UT, where there was a dip of 1,000 hectares

### 5 BIG GAINERS

Gujarat	<b>203,000</b>
Manipur	<b>113,000</b>
Mizoram	<b>44,000</b>
J&K	<b>20,000</b>
Arunachal	<b>1,000</b>

### 5 BIG LOSERS

Odisha	<b>260,000</b>
AP	<b>118,000</b>
Haryana	<b>65,000</b>
WB	<b>55,000</b>
UP	<b>53,000</b>



and Resettlement Policy (NRRP), 2007, recommended several measures to keep a tab on ever-decreasing cultivable land in the country.

But the data, shared by the agriculture ministry in response to a question in Lok Sabha on Tuesday, shows that only five states have taken some steps to increase the areas under cultivation and three others (Assam, Goa and Sikkim) have adhered to the policy of not tinkering with land which can be used for farming. Gujarat is the only big state, which increased the area of cultivable land during four years from 2007-08 to 2010-11. Manipur, Mizoram, Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh are the other states which reported increase during the period.

Haryana showed the

sharpest decline in area under cultivation. The small state, which has seen diversion of huge tracts of cultivable land due to boom in real estate, reported decrease of 65,000 hectares of agricultural land between 2007-08 and 2010-11.

Since land falls under the purview of states as per the seventh Schedule of the Constitution, it is for states to bring in suitable policy to prevent diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. The Centre had under its 2007 policy advised states to allow development projects to come up on wastelands. Under NRRP, states were advised that acquisition of agricultural land for non-agricultural use should be kept to the minimum, multi-cropped land should be avoided to the extent possible for such purposes.