

Potato cultivation is going on with risk in Thakurgaon

Shamsul Alam, Thakurgaon- Potato cultivation is going on with risk in Thakurgaon. Potatoes are cultivated every year in advance in Thakurgaon in the hope of increased profit. In 5 upazilas of the district, planting and threshing of Ropa Aman paddy has not been completed yet. However, the farmers are spending their busy time cultivating potatoes in advance in the newly vacant lands. But this time the farmers are going into potato cultivation with some kind of risk due to additional production cost. They are taking risks with great hope as they got a good price of potatoes last year. Early varieties of potato called Diamond, Asteric and Cardinal have been cultivated throughout the district. These three types of potatoes are ready for sale after 55-60 days of planting. In the current season, the target of potato cultivation has been set on 27,500 hectares of land in the district. So far advance cultivation has been done in 2 thousand 700 hectares of land. It is known that this year farmers are buying potato seeds from outside at 80-85 taka.

Which has increased by Tk 25-30 compared to last year. This price is more than double from a season ago. Apart from this, the price of fertilizer has increased up to Tk 200 per bag. Production costs are abnormal due to excessive irrigation and pesticide costs. Earlier, production cost was 40 thousand rupees per bigha. That cost has increased to 70 thousand rupees per bigha now. This time the potato seeds are being supplied by the government; The potato seeds have been fixed from 57 to 66 taka per kg depending on the variety. But the seeds are insufficient compared to the demand. According to sources, BADC produces 20-25 percent potato seeds. The rest of the potatoes are kept by farmers in their homes and produced by various private NGOs and institutions. Farmers are forced

to buy at higher prices as government potato seeds are not enough. Last year, he was able to buy potato seeds for Tk 50-60. Which was 30-35 rupees in the previous season.



But that seed has to be bought up to 80-85 taka this time. Regarding fertilizers, dealers buy Triple Super Phosphate (TSP) at the official price of Tk 1250 but sell it at Tk 1350. Di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) is sold at Tk 1050 even though the official price is Tk 950. Murate of Potash (MOP) is being sold at Tk 1000 even though the official price is Tk 900. Urea is sold at the farmer level at 1350 taka even though the government price is 1250 taka. But the farmer has to buy Tunisian Triple Super Phosphate (TSP) at Tk 1700 and domestic Tk 2200, Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) Morocco at Tk 1100 and Tk 1500, Murate of Potash (MOP) Canada at Tk 1200 and Russia at government prices. Also no dealer is giving vouchers. Many farmers said that they are not giving fertilizer if they want vouchers. Farmers say that they are taking the risk of increased production costs this year after seeing the good price of potatoes in the last two seasons. However, if they get seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at government rates, it would be possible to reduce their production cost. If you don't get the right market price, you will lose capital. Badirul, a farmer of Akhanagar Union, said, "Last year, the

cost of potato seeds, fertilizers and pesticides increased and the cost doubled. But this year the cost has increased further. If we don't get the same price as last time, then this time we will have to die on the field. Akcha Union's Sohél Rana said, 'Last year even before the 50th century, potatoes cost 30-40 thousand taka. Last year it increased to 50-55 thousand taka. However, this year the cost of the same land has increased to 70 thousand rupees. I grow potatoes every year. I did it this time as well. I am very worried about the good market. However, the Agriculture Office says that there is a possibility of good prices for potatoes. Also, if there is no major natural disaster, the agriculture department is optimistic about the good yield of potatoes this season. Acting Deputy Director of Thakurgaon Agricultural Extension Department, Krishivid Mocha. Nazma Akhter said, "We regularly go to the field level and give various suggestions to the potato farmers. The soil and nature of Thakurgaon is quite suitable for potatoes. But this time the cost of production is higher. We hope that the farmers will be able to raise the cost through the correct market price.