

Bigger lentils crop weighs on prices

PROBLEM OF PLENTY. Availability of large quantity in other major producing countries such as Australia too affect rates

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A bigger lentils (masur) crop, estimated at a five-year high, is seen weighing on the prices, which are ruling below the minimum support prices (MSP) levels across various mandis in the key producing regions. MSP for masur in the 2023-24 rabi marketing season is ₹6,000 per quintal.

Modal prices of lentils, a rabi season crop, are ranging between ₹4,910-5,620 per quintal in various mandis of Madhya Pradesh, the largest producing State. In Uttar Pradesh, the second largest producer of masur, the modal prices are ruled in the range of ₹5,300-7,100 on Friday.

As per the second advance estimates, production of masur is seen higher at 15.99 lakh tonnes



HUGE YIELD. As per second advance estimates, production of masur is seen higher by 26% over the previous year at 15.99 lt

(lt) in 2022-23, about 26 per cent higher than the previous year's 12.69 lt. This rebound in output is on account of higher area.

SELLING FLAT

"The arrivals are good for our own lentils crop in several

mandis and prices are trading below MSP in the range of 5,400-5,700 per quintal, all depending on the quality," said Harsha Rai, Vice-president, Sales at Mayur Global Corporation, a pulses broker. Demand for processed pulses, especially lentils, is very slow, she added.

Rising trend (in lakh tonnes)

Year	Production	Imports
2022-23	15.99	*7.7
2021-22	12.69	6.7
2020-21	14.94	11.2
2019-20	11.03	8.5
2018-19	12.28	2.5

Source: Agriculture Ministry, DGCIS *likely

The procurement of lentils under the price support scheme by Nafed is very slow. As per the procurement data, about 523 tonnes of masur has been procured, so far.

FACTORS

"Masur is selling flat around MSP. Except for tur and urad, prices of all other pulses are either at MSP or below MSP," said Bimal Kothari, Chairman, India Pulses and Grains Association.

Factors such as a higher domestic crop and availability of large quantity in other major producing countries such as Australia and Canada are seeing weighing on the masur prices. "Masur prices will be remain range bound and unlikely to move up because of the international market. Australia and Canada have ample availability of lentils" said Rahul Chauhan of IGrain India.

India, the largest producer and consumer of pulses, is also the largest importer of pulses. India also imports sizeable quantity of lentils to meet its growing demand. India had imported 6.7 lt of lentils valued at 3,900 crore during 2021-22. In fact, the imports of lentils had come down from previous year's 11.2 lt, while in the financial year-ended March 2022, the imports are estimated to have risen to over 7.7 lt.