

Supply of pulses continues to lag demand despite record output.

Source: [Business Standard](#)

Pulses constitute an essential part of the Indian diet. The country produces a quarter of the world's pulses, accounting for the largest share in world production, but the demand-supply gap has pulses flagged as one of the prime drivers of food inflation in recent years. The average yield per hectare of total pulses has grown by less than one per cent annually, on average, since the fifties. This has naturally been outstripped by population growth.

There has been a concerted effort through a variety of programmes — National Food Security Mission on Pulses (NFSM-Pulses), Integrated Scheme of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oilpalm & Maize, macro-management of agriculture, integrated development of 60,000 pulses villages in rainfed areas and so on. These appear to be making a slow headway towards addressing the issue, yet despite the record output of 18.09 million tonnes in 2010-11, imports continue to be necessary.

Over six decades, neither acreage nor yield witnessed a significant change. The area under pulses production remained almost stagnant at 21.7 million hectares, but it rose to a record 26.28 million hectares in 2010-11; this trend needs to be maintained at the very least. One of the most crucial constraints to higher output is the availability of water — almost 85 per cent of cultivation of pulses is in rainfed areas.

In 2009-10, the top four states producing pulses were Madhya Pradesh (29 per cent of total production), Maharashtra (16 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (13 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (10 per cent). Together with Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Orissa and Tamil Nadu, these states account for 96 per cent of the total production of pulses and form the focus of the government's pulses programmes. Looking at average productivity in two five-year periods 2000-01 to 2004-05 and 2005-06 to 2009-10, two of the major pulses producing states had impressive growth of more than 33 per cent in the average yield per hectare — Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. But Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Tamil Nadu saw a decline in the average yield per hectare by seven to eight per cent.

### STANDING CROP

Time period

Average area under pulses in million hectares

Average pulses production in million tonnes

Time period	Average area under pulses in million hectares	Average yield per hectare in Kg/hectare	Average pulses production in million tonnes
1951-52 to 1960-61	22.40	10.90	485.00
1961-62 to 1970-71	22.99	11.01	479.00
1971-72 to 1980-81	22.78	10.88	476.70
1981-82 to 1990-91	23.30	12.52	536.90
1991-92 to 2000-01	22.28	13.11	588.15
2001-02 to 2010-11	22.96	14.22	617.43

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation

The average yield per hectare in Karnataka grew by 22 per cent, while in Maharashtra and Orissa, the rise was to the tune of around 20 per cent. In Madhya Pradesh, the main source of pulses in India, the average yield per hectare rose by nine per cent over the two periods.

The average yield per hectare is, of course, highest in small states where pulses production is very low — Delhi, Nagaland, Goa, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh, all produce more than 1000 kgs per hectare. Among the major pulses producing states, Maharashtra has a significantly lower yield per hectare at 634 kgs than Madhya Pradesh at 764 kgs.

## Pulses of the nation

Indicus Analytics

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Pulses remain the primary source of protein for the majority of Indians. However, the trend in the production and yield of pulses indicates that supply continues to lag demand. While exports of pulses have been banned since 2006, imports have been quite high, averaging 3 million tonnes a year, making India the biggest importer of pulses. This year's output is slated to be lower than last year's record, putting the pressure back on households.

*Indian States Development Scorecard, a weekly feature by Indicus Analytics, focuses on the progress in India and across the states across various socio-economic parameters.*