



## PULSE PRODUCTION IN INDIA - GS III MAINS

Q. Despite being a self-sufficient nation in food production, India still imports the majority of the pulses for its consumption. Discuss and bring out the measures needed to enhance the pulse production in India. (15 marks, 250 words)

**News:** *India's FY24 pulses imports hit 6-year high as red lentil purchases jump*

### What's in the news?

- In fiscal 2024, India witnessed an 84% surge in pulses imports, marking a peak not seen in six years.

### Status of India's Pulses Production:

- India holds the position of the largest producer, consumer, and importer of pulses globally, with 25%, 27%, and 14% shares respectively.
- Pulses cover around 20% of the total foodgrains area and contribute 7%-10% to the overall foodgrains production in India.
- The top five pulses-producing states in India are Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka.

### Import Status:

- In the fiscal year 2023-24, India imported 4.65 million metric tons of pulses, marking a notable increase from 2.53 million tons in the previous year.
- The import value surged by 93% to USD 3.75 billion, with red lentil imports, primarily from Canada, doubling to 1.2 million tons.
- Duty-free imports starting from December contributed to heightened imports of yellow peas from Russia and Turkey.
- South Asian nations, including India, typically import pulses from countries such as Canada, Myanmar, Australia, Mozambique, and Tanzania.

### Characteristics and Significance of Pulses:

- Pulses thrive in temperatures ranging between 20-27°C, require rainfall of about 25-60 cm, and flourish in sandy-loamy soil.
- They serve as vital sources of protein in vegetarian diets and aid in soil fertility restoration by fixing nitrogen.
- These crops are cultivated throughout the agricultural year, with rabi pulses (contributing over 60%) including gram, chana, masoor, and arhar, and kharif pulses encompassing moong, urad, and tur.

### Initiatives to Boost Pulses Production in India:

#### 1. National Food Security Mission (NFSM)-Pulses:



- Operated in 28 states and 2 union territories, this initiative includes interventions such as farmer assistance, cropping system demonstrations, and seed distribution.

## 2. Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) Scheme:

- Launched in 2018, it consists of price support, deficiency payment, and private procurement components to bolster farmers' incomes.

## 3. ICAR's Role in Research and Variety Development:

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) focuses on basic and strategic research, collaborative efforts with State Agricultural Universities, and the development of high-yielding pulse varieties.

## Reasons Behind India's Dependence on Pulses Imports:

### 1. Shifting Cropping Patterns:

- Farmers have increasingly favored water-intensive cereals like rice and wheat over pulses due to consumption demands and government incentives.

### 2. Lower Profitability:

- Pulses often yield lower returns per hectare compared to cereals, dissuading farmers from their cultivation.

### 3. Climate Challenges:

- Erratic rainfall and droughts adversely affect pulse production, which predominantly relies on rain-fed agriculture.

### 4. Limited Technological Advancements:

- Research and development in pulses lag behind cereals, impacting productivity and susceptibility to diseases.

## Strategies for Ensuring India's Self-Sufficiency in Pulses:

### 1. Boosting Domestic Production:

- Providing competitive minimum support prices, subsidies, and crop insurance schemes tailored for pulses.

### 2. Promoting Crop Rotation:

- Encouraging farmers to reintegrate pulses into their cropping patterns for soil health and sustainability.

### 3. Developing High-Yielding Varieties:

- Investing in research for drought-resistant pulse varieties and promoting their adoption.

### 4. Improving Irrigation Infrastructure:



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- Expanding irrigation facilities and promoting water-efficient techniques like drip irrigation.

## 5. Mitigating Price Fluctuations:

- Enhancing storage facilities and streamlining supply chain management to stabilize prices.

## 6. Promoting Alternative Protein Sources:

- Encouraging dietary diversification by promoting protein-rich alternatives like lentils, millets, and eggs.

