

# Supply-demand gap in pulses may not narrow in coming years

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Successive years of bumper harvests have ignited calls for lifting a more than eight-year long ban on export of pulses, a demand, which experts said, overlooks the possibility of rising demand from domestic markets in the near future.

Most experts and analysts believe the government should not take any decision in haste, as there is every possibility that the domestic production growth is temporary and the demand-supply gap will not go away soon, but only widen in the coming years.

Their pessimism stems from the fact that output growth in pulses seen in the last three-four years has come largely on the back of area increase and not on any major technological advancement,

## NOT FEELING THE PULSE

Bumper harvest does not open the way for exports (in mn tonnes)

■ Production ■ Import



\*Estimated; Note: Pulses are produced both in kharif and rabi seasons and the year is from July to June  
Source: Department of Agriculture

which has its own limitations.

An analysis by a working group on the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-13 to 2016-17) shows that despite the rise in production, domestic demand will continue to be more than the

supplies in the next few years.

It shows that India is expected to produce around 18-21 million tonnes (mt) of pulses till 2016-17, while demand is projected to touch around 22 mt in the next few years.

"Our rising pulses production will only help in import substitution and from the current 3-3.5 mt of annual imports, it might come down by one-two mt. But, I don't think that it will lead to India becoming an export surplus country in the coming five-six years," said Ramesh Chand, director of National Centre for Agriculture Economics and Policy Research (NCAP) and chairman of the working group.

He said it is only because of high prices that domestic pulses demand has seen some moderation in the last few years otherwise it would have far outstripped even the increased supplies.

Production of pulses — a whole variety of which is grown in India such as gram, tur, masoor, urad, chick peas, rajma etc -- has been hovering around 11-15 mt since the late 70s.