

## Pulses imports

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India has witnessed a significant increase in the import of pulses in fiscal year 2024, reaching the highest level in six years due to **decreased domestic production** and **policy adjustments aimed at stabilizing market prices**.



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### **Overview of Pulses Imports:**

- India's pulses imports in fiscal 2024 **surged by a staggering 84% compared** to the previous year.
- Total imports reached **4.65 million metric tons**, marking the highest volume since fiscal year 2018.
- Import value also saw a significant increase, rising by **93% to \$3.75 billion**.

### **Reasons behind Surge in Imports:**

#### **Production Decline:**

- **Lower domestic production** of pulses compelled India to **boost imports to meet demand**.
  - The **Ministry of Agriculture estimates pulses production** in 2023-24 to be 234 lakh tonnes, which is lower than the previous year's production of 261 lakh tonnes.
- The **pulses sowing area** has **decreased by 16%** from 2021-22 to 2023-24.

#### **Policy Adjustments:**

- The Indian government **allowed duty-free imports** of specific pulses such as red lentils and yellow peas **further fueled the surge in imports**.
- Import taxes were removed as a strategy to **reduce market prices** ahead of upcoming elections
  - **Pulses inflation** stood at 17% in March 2024.

### **Key Import Trends:**

- **Red lentil imports**, particularly from **Canada**, more than doubled, surpassing 1.2 million tons.
- **Yellow peas imports** from **Russia** and **Turkey** witnessed a notable increase after duty-free imports were permitted.
- **Black gram imports** also saw a surge during the period.



**Impact on Global Market:**

- India's increased imports have **supported global pulses prices**.
- **Exporting countries** such as Canada, Australia, and Myanmar have benefited from reduced stocks due to India's higher demand.

**Mitigating Production Shortfalls:**

- To compensate for production shortfalls, India also imported **pigeon peas** and **chickpeas** from various countries.

**Historical Import Partners:**

- Traditionally, India imports pulses from countries like **Canada, Myanmar, Australia, Mozambique, Brazil, Tanzania, etc.**

**India's Status with respect to Pulses:**

- India is the **world's biggest importer, producer and consumer of protein-rich pulses**.
- India accounts for **35% of the global acreage** and **25% of the world's production**.
- The country also **consumes 27% of the world's pulses and imports 14%**.
- **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka** are the top five states in India for producing pulses.

**Why does India import pulses?**

- **High Domestic Demand:** India is the largest consumer of pulses in the world.
  - Pulses are a staple part of the Indian diet, serving as a primary source of protein, especially in vegetarian diets.
- **Insufficient Production:** Despite being one of the largest producers of pulses, India's production does not meet its domestic demand.
- **Price Stability:** Importing pulses **helps stabilize prices in the domestic market**.
  - During years of low yield due to poor weather conditions or other agricultural problems, prices of pulses can skyrocket.
- **Variety and Quality:** Imports also provide access to different varieties of pulses that may not be domestically produced in India.

**About Pulses:**

- Pulses are the **dry seeds of leguminous plants**, like **lentils, chickpeas, dry peas, and beans**.
- They are a **vital source of protein and amino acids** for people around the world.
- Pulses are grown in India during the **Kharif, Rabi, and Zaid** seasons of the agricultural year.
  - **Kharif:** Pigeon peas and other pulses are grown during this season.
  - **Rabi:** Chickpeas, lentils, lathyrus, field peas, and kidney beans are grown during this season.
    - Rabi pulses account for more than **60% of the total production**.

- **Zaid:** Cow peas are grown during this season.
- The **nitrogen-fixing properties** of pulses enhance soil fertility, leading to increased productivity of farmland.

### **Initiatives taken to promote Pulses:**

- **National Food Security Mission (NFSM):** It aims to **increase pulse production** through productivity enhancement and area expansion.
  - This program also includes restoring soil fertility, creating employment opportunities, and improving farm economy.
- **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY):** States can promote pulses with approval from the State Level Sanctioning Committee (SLSC).
- **Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PMAASHA) Scheme:** It aims to ensure MSP for farmers.
  - It includes procurement of Pulses and Copra under the Price Support Scheme.