

IPGA urges govt to replace tur dal with other pulses in mid-day meal project.

Last fiscal, India had imported 850,000 tonnes of tur (pigeon peas) to meet domestic demand. The Centre has also extended the import of tur and urad pulses under the 'free category' till March 31, 2024. "We have urged the government to float tender for 5 lakh (500,000) tonnes for other pulses," Bimal Kothari, chairman of IPGA, said. "Now the government only floats tender for tur pulses for its mid-day meal scheme. If this happens then prices of tur will soften."

With tur prices rising by 10% in a month, the India Pulses & Grains Association (IPGA) has urged the government to replace the tur dal served in the government's mid-day meal project with other pulses like lentils, masoor and chana.

Tur dal production is expected to be lower in the current crop year (July-June) due to unseasonal October rains in Maharashtra and Karnataka. This has pushed up the price of the commodity.

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As per the second advance estimate for food grain production for the 2022-23 crop year, tur production was estimated at 3.66 million tonnes (MT), a decline of 13% from 4.22 MT estimated in the 2021-22 crop year. India imports tur pulses from Myanmar and east African nations like Tanzania, Mozambique and Sudan.

India's pulses production in FY23 has been to the tune of 27 million tonnes, Kothari said. "There is huge scope for increasing pulses exports from India," Kothari said. "We have asked the government for cash incentives and fresh subsidy to increase exports of pulses from 5 lakh (500,000) tonnes in FY23 to 10 lakh (1 million) tonnes in FY24."

However, the pulses industry is worried over the prospect of an El Nino in the country. Though the Indian Meteorological Department has predicted a normal monsoon, the chances of an El Nino are yet to be ruled out. "We are hoping that the monsoon will be good and kharif pulses production will not be impacted," Kothari said.

The main kharif pulses crop are moong, tur among others.