

Sell gram upon harvest at MSP

Gram is a major pulse crop in India, widely grown for centuries and accounts for nearly 40 per cent of the total pulse production. India is the largest gram producing country and there has been a steady increase in the area under gram in the last decade from 83 lakh ha in 2011-12 to 114 lakh ha in 2021-22. However, its production shows variations owing to rainfall pattern, unfavourable weather and disease incidence *etc.* In current year of 2022-23 the gram acreage is estimated to decline to 112 lakh ha; however, the production (136 lakh tonnes) will be same as last year.

In current year, India is likely to produce record pulse crops of 278 lakh tonnes (2nd Advance Estimate dt. 14-2-2023), which is about 5 lakh tonnes more as compared to last year (273 lakh tonnes). It is quite higher than our total pulses consumption requirement of around 250 lakh tonnes. In current year in Gujarat, the area under gram is estimated about 8 lakh ha as against 11 lakh ha in last year and production is also estimated lower about 15.5 lakh tonnes, *i.e.* about 5.5 lakh tonnes less as compared to last year (21 lakh tonnes) as crop condition remained poor due to wilt problems in some districts.

The gram import in India was declined to 2 lakh tonnes in 2021-22 as against 2.95 lakh tonnes in 2020-21 and also exported 5 lakh tonnes pulses including 1.8 lakh tonnes gram. The import of total pulses in current year might be less about 19 lakh tonnes as against 25 lakh tonnes in 2021-22. Hence, the gram price that was ruling around Rs. 1000 per 20 kg in September, 2021 steadily decreased to about Rs. 900 per 20 kg in March, 2022. Then after it remained around this level with slight ups and down till current February, 2023 in various markets of Gujarat, now expected remain slight upside at this level with starting of procurement at MSP. The Government of India has fixed MSP of gram Rs. 1067 per 20 kg (Rs. 5335 per quintal) for current *rabi* season of year 2022-23 over Rs. 1046 in last year. In crop year 2021-22, a total of 25.55 lakh tonnes of gram was procured by NAFED in country including 5.36 lakh tonnes from Gujarat (*i.e.* about 25% of total production).

Considering all these the research team of Department of Agricultural Economics, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, analysed the historical monthly price data of gram collected from Dahod Regulated Markets. Based on the econometric analysis and production reports, it is concluded that **the prices of gram during March to April, 2023 at harvest, may remain in the range of Rs. 920 to 1020 per 20 kg (4600 to 5100 Rs/qtl).** Hence, keeping above situation in view, farmers are suggested to sell gram upon harvest at MSP centers (in APMCs), without going for storage, taking their own decision.

Owing to higher production of total pulses, particularly gram in country; there is less chances for gram price to go up in future. However, MSP will provide good support to market.