

Potato price likely to remain stable in 2016-17

Potato is an economical food, as it provides a source of low cost energy to human diet. For vegetable purposes, potato has now become one of the most popular crops in India and cultivated in almost all states and under very diverse agro climate conditions. The states of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Bihar and Gujarat accounted for more than 80 per cent share in total production. At world level, China, India, USA, Ukraine, Germany and Poland shared more than 62 per cent of total global production potato. India ranks second, next to China in global production of potato.

During the last year in 2015-16, the area under potato was increased marginally to 21.34 lakh ha area in the country as against 20.76 lakh ha in previous year, but production was decreased to about 438 lakh tonnes as against 480 lakh tonnes in 2014-15 due to large scale damage by 'late blight' diseases in West Bengal. Hence the potato price was ruling around Rs. 700 per quintal in February, 2016 increased about Rs. 1000 in April, 2016 and further to Rs. 1300 per quintal in July, 2016 and currently ruling around Rs. 900 per quintal. The export of potato was decreased from 3.06 lakh tonnes in 2014-15, to 1.81 lakh tonnes in 2015-16 due to higher prices in domestic markets in the country.

In Gujarat, potato is mainly cultivated in North Gujarat in Banaskantha, Sabarkantha and Mehsana districts occupied 1.10 lakh ha in 2015-16 as against 0.98 lakh ha in previous year and production was estimated about 29 lakh tonnes same as in previous year. This year, the area under potato may increase slightly as farmers obtained remunerative price in last year.

With this back up and reviewing other reports, the research team of Department of Agricultural Economics, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, analysed the historical monthly price data of potato collected from Deesa APMC. The econometric analysis revealed that **the prices of potato during February to March, 2017 i. e. at harvest may remain in the range of Rs. 150 to 190 per 20 kg (750 - 950 Rs/qtl).** Hence, farmers are suggested to take their own decision keeping above price level in view and decide the area under potato as per their convenience.