

Gram price likely to remain firm, slight above MSP

Gram is widely grown in about 50 countries in the world. India is the largest chickpea producing country contributing about 70 per cent in world production. It is a protein-rich supplement to cereal-based diets. Though, gram occupies larger area in India, its production shows variations owing to rainfall pattern, unfavourable weather and disease incidence *etc.* In current year of 2023-24 the gram, acreage is estimated to decline to 104.74 lakh ha as against 107.90 lakh ha in last year and the production also slightly decline to 121.61 lakh tonnes (2nd Advanced estimate dt. 29-2-2024) as against 122.67 lakh tonnes in last year.

In current year in Gujarat, the area under gram is estimated about 6.96 lakh ha as against 7.64 lakh ha in last year and production is estimated about 13.23 lakh tonnes, (2nd Advanced estimate dt. 17-1-2024) *i. e.* slight higher over 12.98 lakh tonnes in last year.

At country level the total pulses production in current year is estimated low about 234.42 lakh tonnes (+ expected summer 20 lakh tonnes) as against 260.58 lakh tonnes in last year. It is slight low than our total pulses consumption requirement of around 255 lakh tonnes.

The gram import in India was declined to 0.63 lakh tonnes in 2022-23 as against 2.02 lakh tonnes in 2021-22 and exported 7.63 lakh tonnes pulses including 3.55 lakh tonnes gram. The import of total pulses in current year might about 30 lakh tonnes as against 25 lakh tonnes in 2022-23. Hence, the gram price that was ruling around Rs. 850 per 20 kg in September, 2022 in various markets of Gujarat steadily increased to about Rs. 950 per 20 kg in March, 2023 and remained around this level till July, 2023. Then after it steadily increased to Rs. 1080, per 20 kg in December, 2023 and currently in February, 2024 it is ruling around Rs. 1120, per 20 kg expected to remain upside at this level. The Government of India has fixed MSP of gram Rs. 1088 per 20 kg (Rs. 5440 per quintal) for current *rabi* season of year 2023-24 over Rs. 1067 in last year. In crop year 2022-23, total 22.26 lakh tonnes of gram was procured by NAFED in country including 3.27 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, 2024 at harvest, may remain in the range of Rs. 1100 to 1200 per 20 kg (5500 to 6000 Rs/qtl).** Hence, farmers are suggested to take note of the above situation and take their own decision to store gram and sell after April, 2024.

If Government policy of restricted quota of pulses import will be continued, there is some chance that gram prices may go slight up after the harvesting season is over.