

Potato price forecast at harvest for the year 2020-21

Potato is a major food crop that is grown in over 100 countries across the world. Asia alone accounts for half of the world's potato production, with China and India accounting nearly 38% of that production. In case of potato consumption, India's domestic demand has slowly increased over the last few decades.

During 2019-20 in India, potato occupied about 21.58 lakh ha area and production was about 51.30 MT against 21.73 lakh ha area and 50.19 MT production in 2018-19.

In Gujarat, the area under potato is reported 1.25 lakh ha in the year 2020-21 (Second Advance Estimate, Directorate of Agriculture, Gujarat) as against 1.18 lakh ha in the year 2019-20 (Final Advance Estimate, Directorate of Agriculture, Gujarat). Production was estimated to be 38.96 lakh MT in the year 2020-21 as against 35.78 lakh MT in 2019-20.

In the year 2020, potato prices were in favour of farmers because of lower plantings and production, which was impacted by adverse weather during the harvest season in the potato-growing zones. Besides this, corona pandemic condition also influenced the whole supply chain and buying behavior of people. During the year 2020, the prices of potato in February and March was Rs. 1105 and Rs. 1250, respectively. Up to end of January-21, competitive prices of potato was prevailed in the market due to shortage and demand in Gujarat markets. However, from mid February-21 and up till harvesting period, there will be arrival of the new crop in the market so prices may influence.

Government of India has allowed the import of 10,00,000 MT fresh and chilled potatoes from Bhutan without any license, up till January 31, 2021 (Economic times). Due to corona pandemic, export has not clutched its pace right now. This will ultimately influence the prices of potato in our domestic markets.

Considering all these available information and traders reviews on the same, the research team of NAHEP-CAAST, IABMI, Anand Agricultural University, Anand analysed the historical monthly price data of potato collected from major market of Gujarat. The econometric analysis revealed that the prices of potato during February - March 2021 *i.e.* at harvest may remain in the range of **Rs. 130 to Rs. 160 /20 kg. (Rs. 650 to Rs. 800 per quintal).**