

Vegetable exports from Pakistan

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After growing at a steady rate in the last decade, Pakistan's vegetable exports have suffered volumetric year-on-year decrease of 40.4% in 2011-12. The drop in vegetable exports is a consequence of natural disasters, unfair profiteering by middlemen and a change in supply and demand dynamics in the foreign markets. The significant drop in vegetable exports is mainly because the onion crop was destroyed by floods.

Pakistan fetched \$180.2 million by exporting edible vegetables in fiscal 2011-12. Their exports increased at 39% annually between 2007 and 2011, as per the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Notably, the rise in the country's vegetable exports between 2010 and 2011 alone was a staggering 122%. Export of vegetables from Pakistan is given in Table 1.

One of the reasons for the unprecedented hike in vegetable exports in 2010-11 was the shortage of potato in Russia. Major items exports of vegetables are given in Table 2, however, country wise export of vegetables from Pakistan are given in Table 3.

Pakistan exported 125,000 tonnes of potato to Russia in 2010-11. The figure dropped to 15,000 tonnes in 2011-12, a decrease of well over 88%.

Besides a change in supply side of the Russian vegetable market, another reason for Pakistan's low vegetable exports in 2011-12 is an exorbitant profit margin by middlemen and growers.

On the other hand situation is slightly better in Pakistan's fruit export market, as it grew by 8.1% between 2010-11 and 2011-12. However, one of the highest exported fruit - that is mango reported a production drop of 1.3 million tonnes in the most recent season, as compared to last year's production of 1.8 million tonnes, representing a decrease of 38%.

Low mango production was followed by low volume of mango exports to the United States in the ongoing season, which is about to end in a month. Pakistan's mango exports to the United States were 80,000 tonnes last season. In this context, there are some serious logistical issues, such as Pakistani mangoes are supposed to go to Chicago first, so that they can be treated in accordance with American food laws.

Major international markets for Pakistani fruits are Russia, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Muscat, UK and Iran. Out of the mango export target of 150,000 tonnes for the current season, approximately 30,000 tonnes were supposed to go to Iran.

However, Pakistan's fruit exports to Iran have so far been zero, because of the trade restrictions recently imposed on Iran by international financial institutions.

Table 1: Export of Vegetables from Pakistan

Year	Quantity (000 Kg)	Value (US \$ 000)
2006-07	217,380	54,547
2007-08	222,984	56,390
2008-09	424,790	72,919
2009-10	456,461	120,648
2010-11	856,853	268,203
2011-12	150,228	180,163

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan.

Vegetable seed production

Vegetables offer good value in terms of nutrients and therefore, less developed countries, especially South Asian States have vegetable dietary habits. Hence these poor countries grow and consume much more vegetables for their main food requirements.

Pakistan has greater opportunities, being a centre for vegetable production and can export fresh and canned vegetables in most of the Asian countries to earn foreign exchange. At present, mostly the growers depends on imported seeds, but it is true that many jobs farm of labourers, could be created by growing vegetables for seed production, seed trade and export business may also increase, which reduce annual import costs on vegetable seeds.

Farmers prefer to grow vegetables due to short plantation duration and it is considered as the low delta crop. The vegetables can play great role in boosting the economy of the country, due to the fact that this sector has not been explored to earn more income through exports to other countries.

Table 2: Major Items Exports of Vegetables Value US \$ 000

Item	2011-12	2010-11	2009-10
Potato Fresh	75,985	99,318	51,466
Other Vegetables Fresh	44,476	53,142	7,482
Onion	7,691	48,293	23,718
Mushroom	1,444	1,245	3,214
Garlic	876	137	75
Other Vegetables	49,671	66,068	343,328
Total	180,163	268,203	120,643

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan.



Pakistan has majority of urban and rural population surviving on vegetables, which is relishing food due to nutritive value such as vitamins, proteins, Calcium,

Phosphorous, Iron, water and mineral salts. etc. In its varying climatic conditions, the vegetables grown may vary from leafy to cole crops, root vegetables to bulb or tuber crops, flower vegetables to immature fruit vegetables, which are grown in different parts of the country. The area under vegetable cultivation excluding potato and sweet potato but including onion, garlic, chillies was 0.381 million hectares (about 1.67% of the total cropped area), producing about 4.06 million tonnes of vegetables.

There is increasing demand of vegetables from rural to urban areas due to domestic consumption directly in food either in raw or cooked form. But, vegetables have variety of uses in the preparation of pickles, chutney ketchup, soups, sauces, salads, etc. except their edible usage for cooking purposes.

The vegetable cultivation in Pakistan is most probably done in different parts of the country. There is great variety of vegetables along with their edible parts such as roots, tubers, bulbs, Rhizomes, leaves, flowers and immature pods, fruits and seeds. The low quality seed is one of the major yield constraints in vegetables grown in Pakistan. The seed producing agencies and growers both suffer a lot due to timely production and availability of vegetable seed in the market during season.

In different parts of the country, vegetables are grown in Kharif or summer and Rabi or winter seasons of the year. The Rabi vegetables are grown in cool climate of winter season, which complete their life cycle and mature seeds in beginning of summer. Thus, the seed of Rabi vegetables is produced at the maturity time i.e., the months of April and May. whereas, the Kharif vegetables mature their seeds in the months of September and October while Kharif vegetables are grown in warm climate of summer. The vegetables of both Rabi and Kharif season are shown along with their edible parts are shown in Table 4.

Table 3: Country wise Exports of Vegetables (Major Countries)
Value US \$ 000

Country	2011-12	2010-11	2009-10
Afghanistan	132,680	154,174	57,579
Sri Lanka	10,462	33,151	21,928
Russian Fed	5,253	24,572	218
U.A.E	8,328	18,805	13,735
Malaysia	5,508	10,633	10,750
India	828	3,444	144
U.K	3,375	2,880	2,284
Saudi Arabia	2,086	2,031	1,408
Qatar	1,393	1,375	870
Bahrain	650	1,297	613
U.S.A	2,205	963	655
Kuwait	775	895	303
Iran	436	682	2,213
Egypt	10	563	706
France	1,337	559	1,778
Canada	1,238	894	703
All others	3,599	11,285	4,756
Total	180,163	268,203	120,643

Source: Trade Development Authority of Pakistan

Future Prospects

The exporters of \$70 million worth of fruit and vegetable products to Russia have warned the Ministry of Commerce that they would not be able to export any product to Russia this season (December 2012 to March 2013), as the Russian authorities have imposed a condition on export.

Majority of orchards and fruit processing factories were in total conformity with the required international standard but members of the delegation during recent meeting decided to declare mandatory certification of exported items by a private Lahore-based laboratory, Green Foundation.

The condition was disapproved by majority of exporters, which also informed Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and Russia Plant Protection Department about the emerging situation, which may hamper fruit and vegetable export process to Russia from the current year. The exporters have serious objections over selection of private laboratory by the Russian delegation specially existing standard of testing facilities.

Exporters are of the view that majority of fruit and vegetable exporters of the country are carried from Karachi and it

Table 4 : Vegetables Seed Yield

Rabi Vegetables	Seed Yield	Kharif Vegetables	Seed Yield
Onion	80-120	Okra	200-240
Garlic	600-800	Chillies	240-320
Cabbage	600-800	Brinjal	40-60
Cauliflower	1400-1600	Squash melon	4-5
Tomato	5-10	Bitter gourd	40-60
Peas	240-280	Sponge gourd	40-60
Radish	40-60	Round gourd	40-60
Carrot	80-120	Pumpkin	40-60
Turnip	240-280	Cluster bean	200-240
Spinach	160-200	Cow peas	280-400

would be very time consuming for them to send samples of exportable items to Lahore-based laboratory, which may also push overall export cost of all items.

The Russian delegation had made it categorically clear that non-implementation on the protocol condition would entail strict quarantine checking of all exported items and in case of any anomaly or substandard export consignment of all kinds of items may be completely banned.

A leading exporter of fruits and vegetables claimed that this year Pakistan potato export is likely to surge manifold in view of forecast of extreme winter season in Russia, which may affect local yield of the vegetable.

There is great scope in enhancing the productivity and reaping the export potential of vegetables in Pakistan to eradicate poverty in rural areas. Optimal use of various critical inputs like FYM, fertilizer, plant protection measures is utmost important to achieve higher productivity. ♦



Exclusive on Vegetable

Table 5 : Area, Production and Yield per Hectare of Citrus Fruits in Pakistan

Year	Punjab	Sindh	Khyber Pakhatoon Khwa	Baluchistan	Pakistan
Area in "000 Hectares					
2000-01	187.6	3.9	4.8	2.4	198.7
2001-02	183.2	4.1	4.5	2.4	194.2
2002-03	170.8	4.1	4.3	2.4	181.6
2003-04	166.6	4.1	4.4	1.3	176.4
2004-05	173.9	4.2	4.4	1.3	183.8
2005-06	182.1	4.4	4.4	1.3	192.2
2006-07	183.3	4.5	4.1	1.3	193.2
2007-08	189.2	4.5	4.4	1.3	199.4
2008-09	189.8	4.5	4.2	1.4	199.9
2009-10	188.2	4.5	4.3	1.4	198.4
2010-11	181.0	4.5	4.3	1.4	199.2
2011-12	189.3	4.5	4.3	1.4	199.6
Production in "000 Tonnes					
2000-01	1780.8	30.9	40.2	13.6	1865.5
2001-02	1751.0	28.1	37.5	13.7	1830.3
2002-03	1623.6	27.7	38.0	13.1	1702.4
2003-04	1688.7	28.6	37.2	5.9	1760.4
2004-05	1872.2	28.6	36.8	6.0	1943.6
2005-06	2385.1	29.5	37.5	6.1	24.58.3
2006-07	1400.7	31.5	34.4	5.8	1472.4
2007-08	2219.3	30.9	35.9	8.4	2294.5
2008-09	2059.5	30.5	33.9	8.4	2132.3
2009-10	2077.5	30.5	35.1	6.9	2150.0
2010-11	2070.0	30.5	34.2	6.8	2141.5
2011-12	2078.0	30.6	35.2	6.9	2150.7
Yield Per Hectare in KGs					
2000-01	9493	7923	8375	5667	9389
2001-02	9558	6854	8333	5708	9425
2002-03	9506	6756	8837	5458	9374
2003-04	10136	6976	8455	5438	9980
2004-05	10766	6810	8364	4615	10575
2005-06	13098	6705	8545	4692	12790
2006-07	7642	7000	8390	4462	7621
2007-08	11730	6867	8159	6462	11507
2008-09	10851	6778	8071	6000	10667
2009-10	11039	6778	8163	4920	10837
2010-11	11040	6780	8165	4980	10840
2011-12	112105	6781	8060	4985	10880

Source: Federal Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan.