

Standing Committee Report Summary

Production and Availability of Oilseeds and Pulses in the Country

- The Standing Committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Processing (Chair: Mr. Charanjit Singh Channi) presented its report on ‘Production and Availability of Oilseeds and Pulses in the Country’ on March 27, 2026. Key observations and recommendations are as follows:
- **Reducing import dependence:** In 2023-24, India imported 56% of its edible oil needs (15.7 million metric tonne) and 2-3 million metric tonnes of pulses. The Committee noted that such import dependence has strained India’s foreign exchange reserves and exposes farmers to global price volatility. It recommended expanding oilseeds and pulse procurement under PM-AASHA from current 25% of the total production to 100%. The Committee suggested imposing a 20% safeguard duty (or any other rate) on imports of palm oil if the global oil prices fall below USD 800 per tonne or any other rate fixed by the government.
- **Urgent need for a new Seeds Bill:** The Committee observed that the Seeds Act, 1966 must be reviewed comprehensively to reflect the needs of the modern oilseeds and pulses sector. It noted that many provisions of the Act have become outdated with regard to oilseeds and pulses. The Committee recommended bringing a new Seeds Bill to ensure timely access to high-quality seeds, mandatory certification, and revised standards of production and quality control in the industry.
- **Price ceiling for seeds:** The Committee recommended setting up of a National Commission/Regulatory Body to fix an upper ceiling for prices of seeds in the country. It suggested adopting a consultative and transparent process to fix the price ceiling reflecting the true cost of seeds. This body should have representatives from state governments, industry associations, and farmers.
- **Seed technology:** The Committee observed a yield gap in terms of oilseed and pulses productivity as compared to other countries. It attributed this gap to low adoption of high-yielding variety seeds and an inadequate seed replacement rate (SRR) in many states. SRR measures how much of the total cropped area is sown with certified seeds in comparison to farm saved seeds. The Committee recommended developing climate-resilient, high-yielding, and pest-resistant varieties by investing in bio-technology for seed development. Further, it recommended setting up at least one Seed Hub in every district by 2030 for production of breeder and foundation seeds. These Seed Hubs will target 100% SRR. It also recommended completely subsidising breeder seed purchases by farmers.
- **Improving irrigation infrastructure:** The Committee noted high dependence on rainfed cultivation for about 70% of oilseeds and 75% of pulses production. It recommended the following measures to mitigate risks associated with rainfed cultivation: (i) expansion of per drop more crop scheme to all rainfed oilseeds and pulse producing areas over the next five years, (ii) increasing subsidies on drip and sprinkler systems for small and marginal farmers, (iii) annual training for farmers on micro-irrigation techniques, and (iv) piloting of soil-moisture sensors and weather-based irrigation scheduling in districts under the current schemes.
- **Curbing imports of genetically modified (GM) seeds/food:** The Committee noted the illegal imports and sales of GM foods in the country and its negative impact on human health. To address this, it recommended strict enforcement of laws, upgradation of lab infrastructure at ports, higher surveillance, and mandatory labelling of food to detect GM ingredients informing consumer choices.
- **Seed Distribution:** The Committee observed that Seed Authentication, Traceability & Holistic Inventory (SATHI) Portal can evolve into a national seed grid for the country. SATHI is a centralised portal which automates the entire seed supply chain. 25 states in the country have onboarded their seed supply chain on the platform. The Committee recommended onboarding the remaining states and Union Territories and all regulatory bodies on the platform. It recommended adoption of a ‘One Nation, One License’ model for seed registration and digital traceability of seeds. To ensure widespread adoption, the Committee has recommended training at least 5,000 extension workers per district per year until 2030.

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