

Peanut Blog

An ounce of information



Unseasonal rains devastate Gujarat farmers after Diwali

Groundnut, cotton crops damaged across Saurashtra, experts warn of sharp rise in edible oil prices

In Gujarat, the days following Diwali have brought a situation locals describe as 'Haiyaholi', a state of distress and disorder. Unseasonal rains that began soon after the festivals have left farmers in despair, damaging ready-to-harvest crops across the state. The impact, experts warn, will not remain confined to the farmlands, consumers, too, could soon feel the strain in their pockets. Typically, the end of October and early November mark the harvesting period for major crops, such as groundnuts, cotton, and paddy, in Gujarat. But this year's untimely downpour has flattened fields and ruined standing crops, particularly in Saurashtra. The destruction threatens to trigger a sharp rise in edible oil prices in the coming weeks.

Prices of Groundnut oil may rise

The edible oil market is already showing signs of pressure. Groundnut oil trader Bhavesh Popat from Rajkot said branded groundnut oil currently sells between ₹2,380 and ₹2,430 per 15 kg tin. During Diwali, prices had peaked at ₹2,475 before dropping to around ₹2,350 during New Year sales. However, with the latest spell of rain and uncertainty over crop arrivals, prices have once again firmed up to ₹2,430. According to Popat, 'Groundnut arrivals will take at least 15 more days. Those who buy oil for the whole year usually start purchasing after 15 November. If rains continue to affect the harvest, prices will rise further.' He added that current groundnut oil prices are the lowest in the past five years. 'Whether they remain low depends on the volume of groundnuts arriving in the markets,' he said.

Gujarat's groundnut belt faces major setback

Twelve districts in Gujarat, mostly in the Saurashtra region, dominate groundnut production. Government data shows that in the past five years, farmers have increasingly shifted towards groundnut cultivation due to better yields and flexibility in crop rotation. This year, the Rajkot district agriculture officer, Truptiben Patel, reported a notable increase in cultivation—from 2.68 lakh hectares last year to 3.29 lakh hectares in 2024–25. Farmers had turned to groundnuts because it allowed them to grow additional crops within the year. Expectations were high for a bumper yield, until the rains struck.

Farmers suffer double blow

The unseasonal rain has not only destroyed crops but also crushed prices. Kishore Viradiya, President of the Saurashtra Oil Mill Association (SOMA), said large-scale damage has occurred in Saurashtra. He explained that prices were already under pressure because NAFED had released its old stock before Diwali, and cash-strapped farmers were forced to sell their new groundnuts cheaply. The situation of groundnuts today is like roasted papads that have become soggy and useless,' he lamented. The government's decision to purchase groundnuts at minimum support prices offers little relief, as the harvested produce is now wet and unfit for procurement. Viradiya has urged the Centre to increase import duty on edible oils to protect local farmers. 'Due to rising imports, farmers producing groundnut and cottonseed oil are not getting fair prices,' he said. 'Three years ago, the rate was ₹1,400–₹1,500 per maund; now it has dropped to ₹800–₹1,000.' He also appealed for the procurement date to be postponed, giving farmers time to dry their produce. Immediate financial assistance, he said, is vital to help them recover from losses.

Cotton farmers also in trouble

The cotton crop, too, has suffered serious damage. Continuous rains over a week have caused plants to collapse and the cotton to rot, even before harvesting began. Kanubhai Karapada, a farmer from Surendranagar district, said, 'Our cotton has turned black and is now of inferior quality. We need government help—loan waivers, relief in power bills, and quick compensation, to take the next crop.' Another farmer, Umedbhai, added that the timing of the rain ruined everything: 'It rained just when we were about to pick the cotton. Now it will be sold as kardado—low-grade cotton that fetches poor prices.'

Climate change behind frequent unseasonal rains

Unseasonal rainfall during late October is no longer a rare event. In the last seven years, Gujarat has witnessed such rain five times in the final week of October, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2024, and now 2025. Meteorologists attribute this shift to increased climatic disturbances over the Arabian Sea and changing weather systems. Typically, the southwest monsoon retreats by late September or early October. Any rain after that period is considered unseasonal, known locally as Mavathu. Such rain invariably causes agricultural losses, especially when it coincides with the harvesting period. This year, the rainfall has been particularly damaging because it was heavy and widespread, unlike the lighter, scattered showers of previous years.

Rising prices likely in coming months

With large areas of groundnut, cotton, and paddy affected, the state's agricultural economy faces a major setback. Market analysts expect the prices of groundnut oil—and possibly other edible oils—to rise significantly. Currently, the average groundnut price is around ₹1,200–₹1,300 per maund, but it may climb to ₹1,400–₹1,600 if the damage estimate worsens. As production falls and supply tightens, consumers across Gujarat could soon face a fresh wave of price hikes in essential commodities. For farmers, meanwhile, the rains have once again turned a season of harvest into a season of loss.

Source: <https://www.bhaskarenglish.in/local/gujarat/rajkot/news/unseasonal-rains-devastate-gujarat-farmers-after-diwali-groundnut-cotton-crops-damaged-oil-prices-expected-to-rise-136315080.html>