

Skyrocketed prices of dry fruits in winter session

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Every passing day of winter dry fruits prices have increased. The shopkeepers are charging exorbitant rates, as there is no mechanism to control prices of such items.

Total imports of dry fruits during fiscal year 2013-14 climbed to 142,488 tonnes (\$104.5 million) as compared to 106,224 tonnes (\$82 million) in 2012-13, showing 34% jump in quantity and 27% in value. Per tonne average value in 2013-14 comes to \$729 as compared to \$771 in 2012-13.

The overall dry fruit import figures in the first four months of this fiscal year rose to 62,735 tonnes (\$34 million) in July-October 2014-2015 as compared to 32,967 tonnes (\$27 million) in same period last fiscal year. The increase in quantity was 90% while value rose by 26.5%. The average per tonne price in July-October 2014-15 comes to \$541 per tonne as compared to \$819 per tonne prevailing in the same period last financial year. Imports of dry fruits in Pakistan (Major items) are given in Table-1.

Pakistan export dry fruits to Europe, Russia, Central Asia, Gulf States, India

and Iran. Although American and Australian almond are of good quality and are available in abundant quantities but almond of Loralai region of Baluchistan are considered to be the highest quality almond across the world and have high demand in international markets. Because of its best quality, the Loralai's almonds are used in cosmetic manufacturing. Also Pine nut of Zhob districts of Baluchistan is used as an important ingredient in production of various drugs and is exported to China and India. Exports of dry fruits (Major items) are given in Table-2.

One of the drawbacks of exporting dry fruits at a large scale is that their prices are sky high in local markets and nowadays it is quite difficult for common people to purchase them. In last five years dry fruits exports of Pakistan has considerably increased as government has taken steps to initiate projects related to processing and drying of dates and apricots. Government has started encouraging the private sector to come forward and develop dry fruits processing units in northern areas.

Eating dry fruit is one of the favourite pass times of the people in winter they enjoy it while using dry fruits in daily diet is very healthful and energetic. Dry fruits are also used in making medicines Almonds which the often called the king of dry fruits is used in many medicines and almond oil is used for many hair treatments.

According to some doctors and experts dry fruits are beneficial in cold and extreme chilled weather as they create resistance and energy inside the body. Research reveals that walnut has the ability to reduce blood cholesterol levels. Almond, pine nut and walnut are said to be beneficial for heart and brain function.

Table 2: Exports of Dry Fruits From Pakistan (Major Items)

Quantity: Tonnes
Value: Rs. 000

Dry Fruits	2013-14		2012-13	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Almond in shell	23	6,871	72	24,941
Almond Shelled (Geri)	854	283,072	170	105,487
Hazel Nuts Shelled	4	835	1	58
Walnuts in shelled (Akhrote)	203	35,299	195	42,719
Edible nuts	70	30,167	53	25,184
Dates dried	15,708	7,507,270	146,343	6,657,175
Almond Shelled (Geri)	854	283	170	105
Walnuts in shelled (Akhrote)	203	54,269	195	42,719
Pistachio shelled	13	3,301	6	7,535
Arece (Betal nuts)	391	86,878	112	34,754

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan

Table 1: Import of Dry Fruits in Pakistan (Major Items)

Quantity: Tonnes
Value: Rs. 000

Dry Fruits	2013-14		2012-13	
	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
Dates Dried	237	37,641	324	33,979
Almond in shell	1,239	364,218	1,707	191,386
Almond Shelled (Geri)	1,814	490	1,062	260
Hazel Nuts (in shell)	1	190	1	220
Walnuts in shell (Akhrote)	82	2,431	4	917
Pistachio in shell	1,318	138,603	247	97,754
Arece (Betal nuts)	99,092	8,479,745	8,520	6,751,487
Edible nuts	90	7,628	60	12,433

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan

Exclusive on Dry Fruits

Dry fruits are also used as gifts in the winter and many people often pack them in beautiful packets along with some chocolates and gift them to their friends and relatives. Dry fruits are also used in weddings in some countries like Pakistan it is trend to distribute different dry fruits with sweets and chocolates among the guests.

Dry fruits are also used in many dishes. Especially in sweet dishes like cakes, pastries and in chocolates. It is also used in Arabian food in different gravies and rice. Many doctors and nutritionists give advice to their patients to use dry fruits for better and complete diet.

So winter is touching areas of Pakistan and it is usually the best time to enjoy delicious dry fruits and nuts. Pista (Pistachio), Kaju (Cashew), Badam (Almond), Akhroot (Walnuts) and Chilgoza (Pine nuts) are the best winter's companions.

Pakistan is very rich country in resources, as well as in seasons. Pakistan produces abundant quality dry fruits like almonds, figs, pistachio, walnuts, pine nuts, dates, raisins, dry apricots and peanuts. But its dry fruits exports have been far less for lack of standardised packaging, grading and value-addition and some other policy constraints.

Table-3 Production of Apricot ('000' Tonnes)

Year	Punjab	Sindh	KPK	Baluchistan	Pakistan
2005-06	0.2	--	18.3	178.7	197.2
2006-07	0.2	--	18.7	158.3	177.2
2007-08	0.2	--	19.7	220.3	240.2
2008-09	0.2	--	19.1	218.6	237.9
2009-10	0.2	--	15.2	178.5	193.9
5 - Years' Average	0.2	--	18.2	190.9	209.3
2010-11	0.2	--	14.0	175.9	190.1
2011-12	0.2	--	14.5	175.5	190.2
2012-13	0.2	--	15.9	179.3	195.4
2013-14	0.2	--			

Source: Agriculture Statistics of Pakistan - 2013-14 Government of Pakistan

Peshawar is famous for different kinds of fresh and tasty dried fruits, edible nuts market. Most of them are imported from Afghanistan through border line. Afghanistan, Turkey and Iran have the biggest production market in dried fruits and edible nuts.

In Pakistan, Peshawar and Baluchistan province have very good quality of dried fruits are available and people love to eat them on almost daily basis especially in winter seasons. Hunza valley in Pakistan has lot of dried fruits. Some biggest markets are in Gilgit, where these dried fruits are on the display. Production of Apricot and Dry Dates are given in Table-3 and Table-4.

Prices

Every passing day of winter dry fruits prices have increased. The shopkeepers are charging exorbitant rates, as there is no mechanism to control prices of such items.

The wholesale price of Indian peanuts is Rs107 per kg. The wholesale rate of Parachinar peanuts is Rs 175 per kg, same as of last year while the rate of Sukkur variety rose to Rs150 per kg from Rs118 per kg last year.

Normal quality Iranian pistachio (unsalted) carries a wholesale price of Rs1,050-1,150 per kg while good quality is available at Rs1,350 per kg. Its price has plunged by Rs50 per kg over a year and



Exclusive on Dry Fruits



may dip further by Rs50-100 per kg due to the devaluation of Irani rial.

American almond's wholesale price is pegged at last year's rate of Rs1,020-1,200 per kg. Wholesale price of chilghoza (pine nuts) came down to Rs1,600 from Rs 1,800-2,000 per kg last year. Around 75% of pine nuts are local while the rest is from Afghanistan. The price of pine nut fell down to Rs1,600 per kg in various markets from Rs2,000-2,200 per kg last year. Dried dates sell between Rs 140-160 kg almost same price of last year.

The wholesale price of Iranian kajoo (cashew nuts) ranges between Rs920-950 per kg while Vietnamese quality can be purchased at Rs1,050 per kg. The wholesale price of kishmish (raisins round) plunged to Rs262 from Rs287 per kg, Sundarkhani variety to Rs525 from Rs600 per kg last year. Raisins are also arriving from Afghanistan.

Wholesale prices of akhrot (walnuts) have been under pressure for the last three years due to its export to China from Gilgit. Three years ago, Peshawar walnuts was priced at Rs400-450 per kg as compared to current rate of Rs900-1,000 per kg while Rawalpindi/Kashmir variety is now available at Rs1,125-1,500 per kg as compared to Rs750-875 per kg three years back. Exports usually come to a halt when snowfall blocks the roads bordering China.

Salted Kajoo sells between Rs1,200-1,400 per kg while in Empress Market Saddar its price hovers between Rs1,000-1,100 per kg. Kajoo is arriving from India and Vietnam.

Walnut of high imported quality carries price of Rs2,000-2,200 per kg which as claim it as new arrival in the market, while local quality sells at Rs1,200-1,400 per kg. The price of wall nut is almost same as compared to last year. The price of pine nut has fallen to Rs1,600 per kg in various markets from Rs2,000-2,200 per kg last year. Iranian Salted pistachio is available at Rs1,300-1,600 per kg almost as of last year.

Witnessing no price change than last year, Raisin (Sundarkhani) is available at Rs2,800 per kg while round variety can be purchased at Rs1,200-1400 per kg.

Dried dates sell between Rs140-160 kg almost same price of last year. Peanut (Sukkur variety) is available at Rs240-300

per kg while retailers are charging Rs320-400 per kg for Parachinar variety. Low dollar value as compared to last year also brought down the cost of imports.

The sale of almond, pistachio, groundnuts, peanuts, cashew nuts, pine nuts and dates had considerably increased during the current

Session. The shopkeepers were worried over high prices of the dry fruits. Not only their profit margin has shrunk, but the number of customers as compared to last year has dwindled.

Last year, almonds were priced at Rs 600 per kilogramme in the peak season, but this year they are available at about Rs 1,000 at the onset of winter. Dried fruits were out of the reach of common people due to their high prices. It had even become difficult for them to enjoy munching peanuts, which used to be popular pastime in winter.

Sources:

1. Agricultural statistics of Pakistan- 2012-13.
2. International nut and dry fruits- Annual Report 2011-12.
3. Pakistan Bureau of Statistic, Government of Pakistan.
4. Trade Development Authority of Pakistan. ♦

Table-4 Production of Dates ('000' Tonnes)

Year	Punjab	Sindh	KPK	Baluchistan	Pakistan
2005-06	42.6	192.8	8.9	252.3	496.6
2006-07	43.2	201.0	10.0	172.1	426.3
2007-08	44.3	253.1	10.4	249.7	557.5
2008-09	44.6	262.0	11.3	248.6	566.5
2009-10	44.7	265.3	11.3	209.9	531.2
5 - Years' Average	43.9	234.8	10.4	226.5	515.6
2010-11	42.5	268.6	6.8	204.3	522.2
2011-12	44.3	261.3	8.5	205.6	581.7
2012-13	43.9	279.8	10.6	210.7	545.0
2013-14					

Source: Agriculture Statistics of Pakistan - 2013-14 Government of Pakistan