

Source THE HINDU December 15, 2024

Extra long staple cotton imports rebound

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India's imports of Supima cotton, exported by the U.S., is rising following the withdrawal of import duty on extra long staple (ELS) cotton earlier this year.

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Marc Lewkowitz, president and CEO, Supima, told *The Hindu* this crop year (August to July), Indian imports had crossed one lakh bales. Export of Supima (a marketing brand of the U.S.-grown Pima cotton) by the U.S. to India had grown 'dramatically' in the last few weeks. India needs imports as it has a shortage of ELS cotton. India buys 60,000 to two lakh bales of Supima cotton annually, he said.

Farmers cultivating the Pima cotton in the U.S. are able to just break even or not able to meet the production costs at the current price levels, and the prices are likely to go up so that the area under cultivation does not decrease. "We are working with brands and retailers to give stability to value across the supply chain," he said.

As per William Bettendorf, director of Cotton USA Supply Chain, South Asia, Cotton Council International, India imported 1.2 million bales of U.S. cotton in 2019. In the last three to four years, share of the U.S. in India's cotton imports had come down since there were supplies from Australia, Brazil, and the west African countries.

"Though our sales has grown this year compared with last year, our share will dip," added Peush Narang, representative of Cotton Council International.

Published - December 15, 2024 12:26 am IST