

FAO forecasts Iran’s grain output at 21.6m tons in 2026

Economy Desk

Iran's grain production is expected to rise 11% in 2026 to 21.6 million tons, exceeding its five-year average, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said in its latest Crop Prospects and Food Situation report.

Iran produced 19.5 million tons of grain in 2025, while its five-year average stands at 21.4 million tons, according to the report.

Wheat production is forecast to increase by 1.7 million tons to 13.7 million tons in 2026, from 12 million tons a year earlier. Paddy rice production is expected to remain unchanged at 3.9 million tons, according to Eqtesad-e Moaser.

Production of other grains is forecast to rise by 400,000 tons to 4 million tons in 2026, from 3.6 million tons in 2025. FAO attributed the expected increase in Iran's grain production to higher rainfall, particularly from mid-December 2025 through February 2026, which increased soil moisture and improved crop quality.

Asia's third-largest grain stocks

Iran's grain stocks are estimated at 13.3 million tons in 2026, up from 12.4 million tons a year earlier, according to FAO estimates.

Iran ranks third in Asia by grain stocks,

behind China, with 416 million tons, and India, with 83 million tons. Pakistan, with a population of nearly twice that of Iran, has grain stocks of 3.1 million tons, about one-quarter of Iran's level.

Global grain stocks stood at 949 million tons this year, with Iran accounting for about 1.44% of the total.

Iran joins FAO's GPP-TAD program

Separately, Iran's permanent mission to FAO said Iran had officially joined FAO's Global Programme for the Prevention and Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GPP-TADs).

Transboundary animal diseases are increasingly threatening animal health, livelihoods and the stability of global food systems, particularly in areas where prevention and preparedness capacities remain weak, the mission said, IRNA reported.

FAO is calling on partners to work together on the prevention, preparedness and response to transboundary animal diseases.

Without rapid and coordinated action, the world faces a growing risk of recurring animal health emergencies, each potentially more severe and larger in scale, capable of spreading across regions and even globally, with a direct impact on food production and food



security. FAO has called for investment and participation to support rapid and coor-

ordinated prevention, preparedness and response efforts to reduce the negative impacts of such diseases and ensure

food for all. More than 100 FAO member countries have so far joined the program.

US-Iran trade rises 23% to \$22m in H1 2026



Economy Desk

Trade between the United States and Iran rose 23% in the first half of 2026 to \$22 million, according to the latest data from the US Census Bureau.

Trade between the two countries totaled \$17.9 million in the first

half of 2025, the data showed, as reported by Eqtesad Moaser.

US exports to Iran rose 25% in the first half of 2026 to \$21.2 million, from \$16.9 million in the same period a year earlier.

US imports from Iran, however, fell 20% to \$800,000 in the first half of 2026, from \$1 million in

the same period of 2025.

The value of US-Iran trade remained small compared with the two countries' overall trade with the world.

Iran ranked 174th among US export destinations and 200th among sources of US imports in the first half of 2026.

In June, the United States exported \$2.8 million worth of goods to Iran and imported \$400,000 worth of goods from Iran, compared with \$3 million and \$100,000, respectively, in June 2025.

Iranian news agency Tasnim, citing Census Bureau figures in late May, said trade dynamics shifted in March 2026, a month marked by the US-Israeli war on Iran that broke out in late February.

In March, US exports to Iran totaled \$1.2 million, down 64% from \$3.4 million in March 2025, while US imports from Iran rose to \$300,000 from \$100,000 a year earlier.

Iraq in talks with Iran on mechanism to facilitate oil exports, minister says

Economy Desk

Iraq is in talks with Iran on a mechanism to facilitate its oil exports, Iraqi Oil Minister Basim Mohammed Khudair said on Saturday.

The talks come amid the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which has affected Iraq's oil exports. Khudair said discussions had been held with Iran to allow Iraqi oil tankers to pass through the strait, but that the agreements had not yet been put into operation, Fars news agency reported.

"Talks have been held with Iran to allow Iraq's oil exports, but these agreements have not yet been put into operation," Khudair told reporters.

He did not provide details of the proposed mechanism, including the suggested route, potential export volumes or its timeline.

The Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy transit routes, has been at the center of contention between Iran and the United States since the latter waged a war of aggression with Israel against the Islamic Republic in late February.



Iraq's Oil Minister, Basim Mohammed Khudair speaks during a press conference in Baghdad, Iraq, August 8, 2026. ● REUTERS

In response, Iran closed off the strait and began talks with Oman to establish a joint mechanism for shipping arrangements.

Khudair said Iraq is currently producing about 2.7 million barrels per day of oil, about half of which is exported.

He said Iraq's oil export ceiling this month is between 1.5 million and 1.75 million barrels per day.

Iraq's oil exports have fallen by 75%, Khudair said.

Horticultural exports rake in \$4.3b: Deputy minister

Economy Desk

Iran's horticultural exports rose to \$4.3 billion from \$2.9 billion since July 2024, Deputy Agriculture Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Boroumandi said on Saturday.

Iran's exports of horticultural and greenhouse products and foreign exchange revenue from these products have risen to \$4.3 billion from about \$2.9 billion at the start of the current government in July 2024, Boroumandi said, according to the Mehr news agency.

Boroumandi said one of the key achievements in the sector had been an improvement in the foreign exchange balance of agricultural products.

He said at a meeting on Saturday that, based on data registered in the Beneficiary Information System, Iran's horticultural production stood at 24.7 million tons at the start of the current government in July 2024 and had risen to 26.9 million tons.

Despite problems and constraints in the energy



and water sectors, horticultural production is expected to reach 27.6 million tons in the current year, which began on March 21, 2026, he said.

Provincial estimates also point to production growth of about 12% in the sector.

Boroumandi, who oversees horticultural affairs at the Agriculture Ministry, pointed to plans to expand tropical fruit production.

"One of the Agriculture Ministry's key plans has been the development of tropical crops," he said.

The area under banana cultivation has in-

creased to about 14,200 hectares from 12,400 hectares at the start of the government, he said.

"Banana production has also risen from about 23,000 tons at the start of the government to about 36,100 tons, and we expect this to increase to about 44,000 tons going forward."

"During this period, the country's greenhouse area has increased by about 600 hectares, while greenhouse production has risen from 3.2 million tons to 3.9 million tons."

Boroumandi also pointed to expanded international cooperation in the horticultural sector, saying cooperation with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other relevant organizations had increased and that good progress had been made in products including saffron, pistachios and dates.

"Joint projects with FAO have been carried out in the horticultural sector, and in some areas, long-standing cases dating back several years have also been resolved, including the issue of tea. Overall, production in these sectors has gained momentum," he said.

Mecca Pact signals ...

But Israel attacked six of its neighboring countries over the past year, while the United States, as the purported ally of the Persian Gulf states, demonstrated that it clearly prioritizes Israel's interests and, in some cases, even sacrifices its own national security for Israel's security.

Therefore, such a pact also reflects a deeper consideration of US alliances with regional countries. Israel, for example, attacked Qatar and assassinated Hamas leaders there while the US did nothing.

However, there is a serious question mark over how far these regional pacts will

actually move into a serious operational phase.

Russia, for example, has a similar pact with countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, but none of them entered the war in Ukraine. Even Russia, as a member of such a pact, did not take serious action in Armenia's defense when Azerbaijan attacked Armenia.

Therefore, countries will never put their core economic, political, social and geopolitical interests on the line for the sake of such pacts.

These agreements certainly have their own benefits for the countries involved and send specific signals, but they should not be taken too seriously.