

# 'India must step up pork meat output to meet growing demand'

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Changing trends in meat consumption across the globe, especially pork platters, is fast catching up in South Asian nations, including India.

However, supply has failed to meet the growing consumption of pork meat in India, which accounts for a small percentage of the meat demand in the country.

## **Consumption**

Across the world, pork is among the highest consumed meats, while its production in India is only 1.7 per cent of the total production of 4.1 million tonnes, said TP Sethumadhavan, former Director of the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University (KVASU), quoting statistics of the Department of Animal

Husbandry and Dairying. Pork meat consumption was 2.95 lakh tonnes in 2021. Of the total production, the north-eastern States consume the meat more than other States, he told *BusinessLine*, adding that the north-eastern states are now procuring piglets and pigs from the North Central and southern States.

The scarcity of piglets, coupled with lower productivity and rising demand, make the demand-supply situation complex. The need of the hour, is to strengthen pig production in the country in line with domestic demand, considering the nutritional, food security and livelihood issues, Sethumadhavan said.

According to him, Government projects such as the National Livestock Mission, cold

chain projects of the Ministry of Food Processing and Industries and Animal Husbandry Infrastructure development projects can pave the way for strengthening pig production programmes.

Sethumadhavan, who also works as a World Bank consultant, said pig production can create job opportunities and support the livelihood of millions of families. The thrust on pig production, including research, extension, genetics and nutrition will contribute to more than five per cent of agriculture GDP in the next five years.

However, he said the sector requires skill development programmes to improve integrated value-chain systems. Entrepreneurs should be given opportunities to invest in the

sector so as to strengthen the production, consumption, value addition and marketing of pork products.

Echoing the similar view, AS Bijulal, MD of the State-owned Meat Products of India Ltd, said the demand for pork meat is higher than supply. It will be difficult to get an exact production figure as most slaughterhouses are in the unorganised sector. But for MPI, 25 per cent of its yearly meat production of 700 tonnes constitutes pork.

Prior to Covid, there was good pork farming, especially in the hilly regions of Kerala. However, the majority of these were closed down in the absence of the required feed, mainly food waste, due to the closing down of hotels, catering units, and hostels during the lockdown.