

# GM Mustard will Reduce Dependence on Imports, Say Edible Oil Companies

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**New Delhi:** Edible oil companies from Adani, Cargill to Noble Agri feel the commercial release of the genetically modified mustard will reduce edible oil import. The demand for edible oil in the country is rising on the back of rise in per capita consumption and pegged at 21-22 million tonnes with imports at 14 million tonnes.

"With India importing 60-70% of its edible oil requirement (palm and soybean oil), an increase in domestic production of mustard through genetically modified technology will slightly ease our import dependence," says Siraj Chaudh-

ry, chairman of Cargill India, who felt that the country can be self-sufficient in edible oil as it did in 1991-92, when the yellow revolution was implemented. Cargill sells edible oil under the NatureFresh,

Gemini, Sweekar and Leonardo olive oil brands.

**India spends ₹65,000 crore per year on edible oil imports**

India annually spends ₹65,000 crore to import edible oil. The annual production of mustard oil in the country is 2-2.5 million tonnes, out of the total domestic edible oil production of 7-8 million tonnes, making it a major contributor after soyabean oils, said Atul Chaturvedi, CEO

of edible oil company Adani Wilmar, which sells edible oil under the brand name Fortune. "The increase in crop yield will benefit farmers and boost domestic oil production," he said.

The mustard crop, grown on around 6-7 million hectares of land during the rabi season (October to March) in the north west part of the country, gives a total production of 6-6.5 million tonnes. Scientists feel that the yield of mustard must be raised from current national average of 1.2 tonne per hectare to at least 2 tonne per hectare in the next 10 years. This will require productive hybrids, yield stabilisation through developing disease-resistant varieties and hybrids, they say.