



Much of India's corn acreage is in small peasant holdings with very low yields.

Other sectors of corn use — notably starch, food uses, packaging and textiles — could also grow much faster, according to Yusupov: "The effect on global food markets will be profound."

How soon Yusupov's predictions come true will depend in part on whether India continues to expand corn production.

As yet, only 60% of India's acres benefit from hybrid seed. Better genetics would improve yields, and adoption of genetically modified hybrids could mean even more gains. While not permitted yet for food production, biotech seed is used on 96% of India's cotton acres, and Sachdev believes Indian farmers see the technology as beneficial.

Other challenges that face India include high input costs, low technol-

ogy investment due to small farms and labor challenges.

While 65% of Indians are engaged in agriculture, a government guarantee of work in rural areas has reduced mass migration and made it harder to find farmworkers while increasing the cost of labor.

India's government has plans to diversify from rice to corn production as part of a self-sufficiency effort, but a new food security law commits the government to guarantee cheap grain to 67% of the population. That will create more pressure to cultivate wheat and rice, rather than corn, according to Sachdev.

"India could be a net corn importer by 2018-20," he concludes. **CSD**

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