

Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Punjab Development Statistics (50 Years) Foodgrains



PRESS RELEASE

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Punjab Government Wheat Procurement Doubles Per Capita from 17 kg to Over 33 kg per Resident Over Five Decades

Islamabad, May 4th, 2026

Over the past five decades, Punjab's wheat procurement system has evolved into a large-scale public mechanism for maintaining food security and stabilizing grain markets. Data from the Bureau of Statistics show that procurement volumes, public wheat releases, and government grain reserves all increased substantially between the early 1970s and 2020–21. The expansion reflects the growing role of the Punjab Food Department and the Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) in purchasing wheat from farmers, maintaining strategic reserves, and supplying wheat to markets through public distribution systems. When adjusted for population growth, government wheat procurement increased from approximately 17 kilograms per resident in 1971–72 to about 33 kilograms per resident by 2020–21, highlighting the growing scale of public intervention in grain markets over the past five decades.

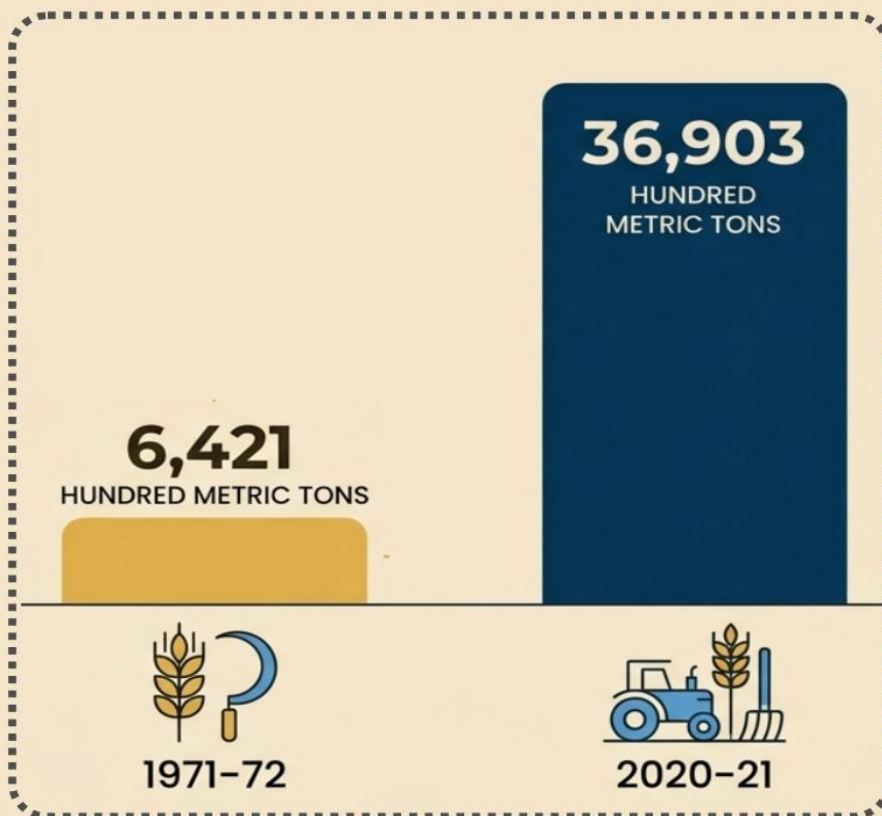
What is the Big Data Analysis Series by Gallup?

Gallup Pakistan's Big Data series was initiated by Bilal I. Gilani, Executive Director of Gallup Pakistan. As he explains: *"Pakistan does not suffer from a lack of data, but from limited accessibility and weak translation of numbers into understanding. Gallup Pakistan bridges this gap by analyzing large, often under-used datasets — from PSLM and Labour Force Surveys to Economic Surveys and National Census data — so these statistics can meaningfully inform policy and public discourse."*

What data points this current edition covers:

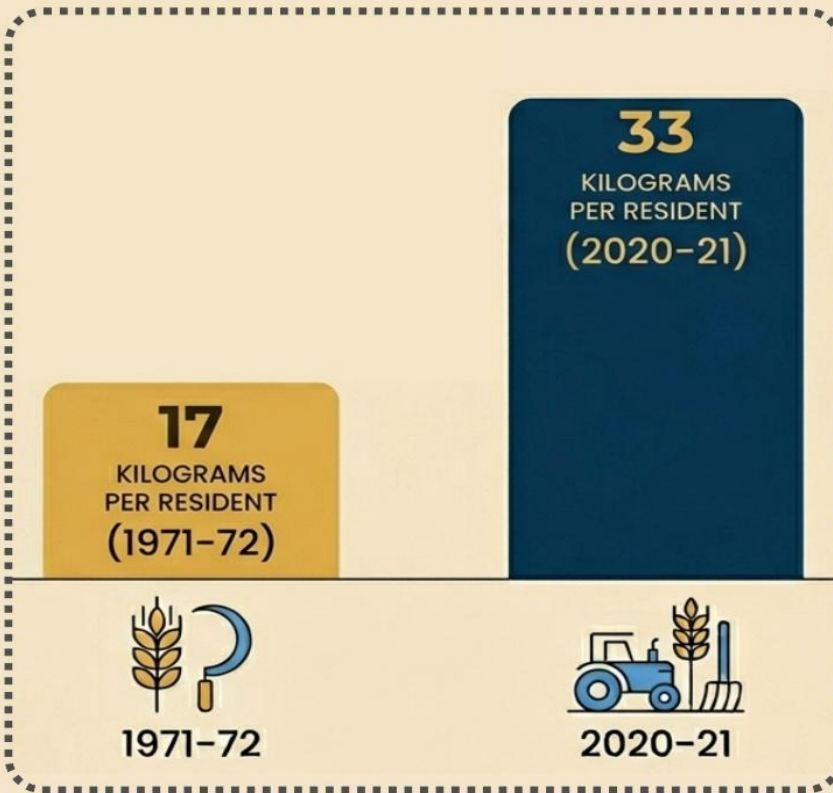
This analysis uses long-term data from the *50 Years of Punjab Statistics* report covering 1971–72 to 2020–21. Tables used include: Table 7.1 – 7.3. Indicators analyzed include: i. Wheat procurement volumes ii. Wheat releases to markets iii. Institutional procurement by PASSCO and the Food Department iv. Monthly government wheat reserve levels.

Punjab Government Wheat Procurement Doubles Per Capita from 17 kg to Over 33 kg per Resident Over Five Decades



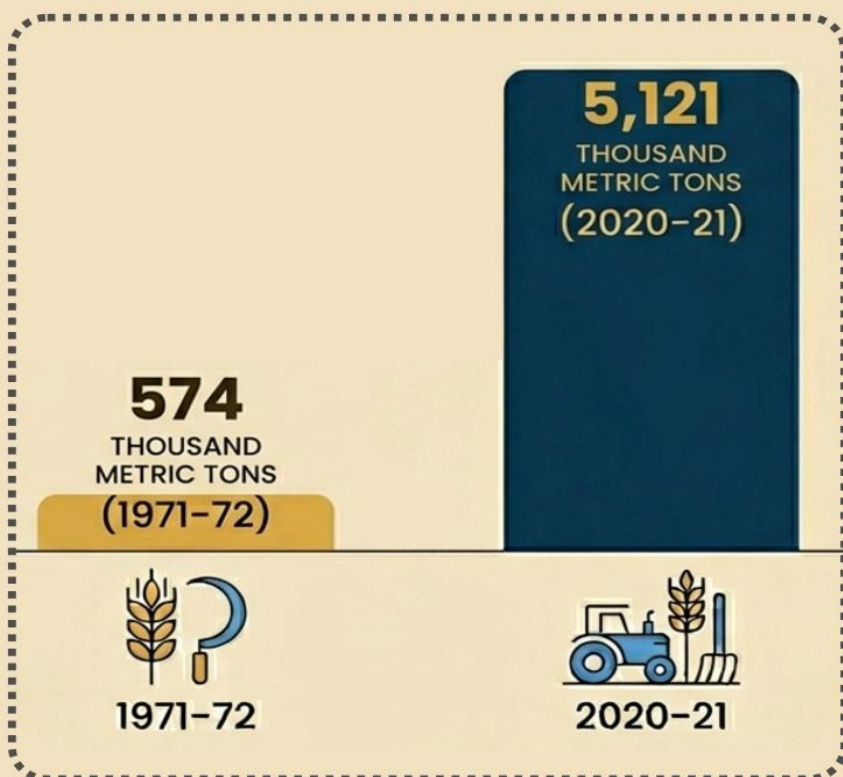
Wheat procurement by the Punjab Food Department increased from **6,421** hundred metric tons in 1971-72 to **36,903** hundred metric tons in 2020-21.

Wheat Procurement Increases Nearly Six-Fold Over Five Decades



When adjusted for population growth, government wheat procurement increased from approximately **17** kilograms per resident in **1971-72** to about **33** kilograms per resident in **2020-21**, indicating that procurement expanded faster than population over the long term.

Public Wheat Releases



Government wheat releases to markets rose from **574** thousand metric tons to **5,121** thousand metric tons over the same period.

Combined procurement by the Punjab Food Department and PASSCO reached **45,044** hundred metric tons in 2021.

The Punjab Food Department accounted for 36,903 hundred metric tons compared with 8,141 hundred metric tons by PASSCO.

Key Findings:

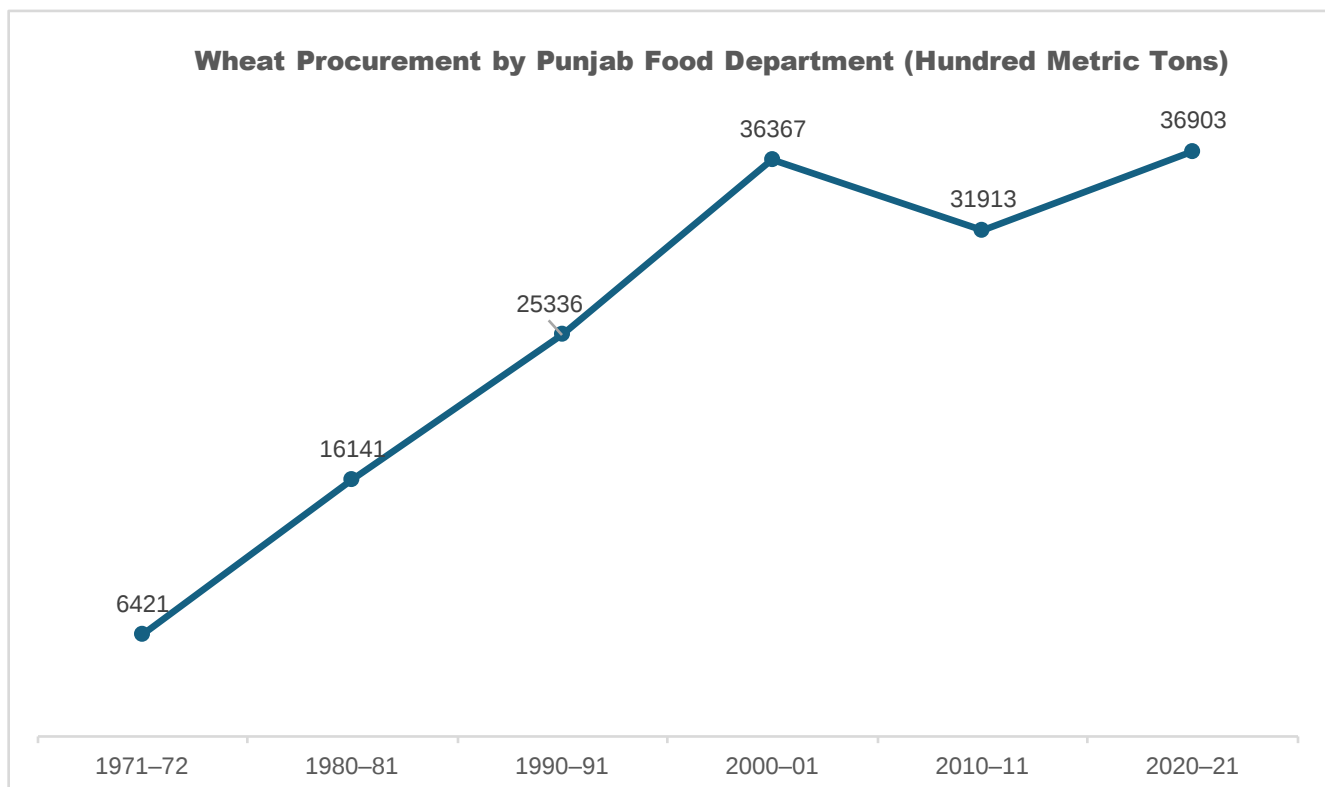
1. Wheat procurement by the Punjab Food Department increased from 6,421 hundred metric tons in 1971–72 to 36,903 hundred metric tons in 2020–21.
2. When adjusted for population growth, government wheat procurement increased from approximately 17 kilograms per resident in 1971–72 to about 33 kilograms per resident in 2020–21, indicating that procurement expanded faster than population over the long term.
3. Government wheat releases to markets rose from 574 thousand metric tons to 5,121 thousand metric tons over the same period.
4. Combined procurement by the Punjab Food Department and PASSCO reached 45,044 hundred metric tons in 2021.
5. The Punjab Food Department accounted for 36,903 hundred metric tons, compared with 8,141 hundred metric tons by PASSCO.
6. Government wheat reserves expanded significantly, with monthly stocks exceeding 6.8 million tons in 2018–19.

1. Wheat Procurement Increases Nearly Six-Fold Over Five Decades

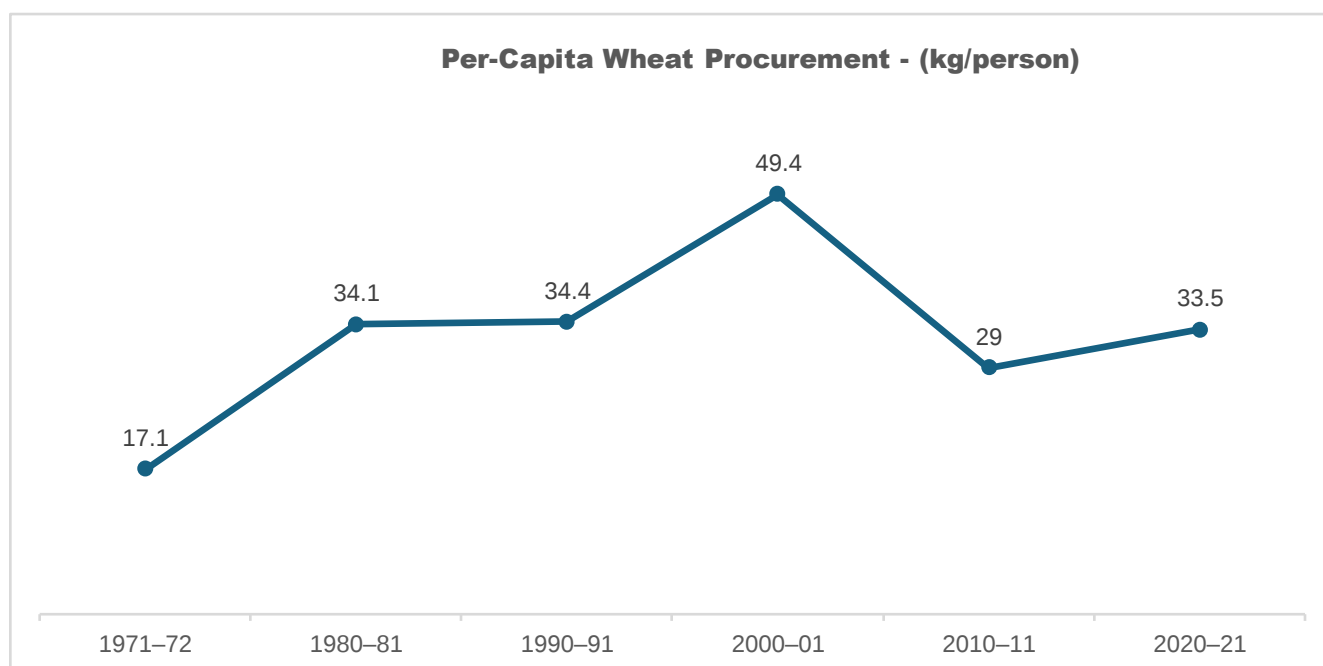
Government procurement of wheat expanded dramatically over the past fifty years. According to official data, wheat procurement by the Punjab Food Department increased from 6,421 hundred metric tons in 1971–72 to 36,903 hundred metric tons in 2020–21.

Procurement levels rose gradually during the 1970s and 1980s but began expanding more rapidly in the 1990s and 2000s as the government intensified market stabilization policies. For example, procurement reached 25,578 hundred metric tons in 1998–99, before rising further to 36,367 hundred metric tons in 2000–01 and remaining consistently high in subsequent years.

The sustained increase in procurement volumes reflects the expanding scale of government intervention in grain markets, allowing the state to purchase large shares of wheat output from farmers in order to maintain stable prices and ensure adequate reserves.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

Adjusting procurement volumes for population growth provides additional insight into the scale of government intervention in wheat markets over time. In 1971–72, the Punjab Food Department procured 642,100 tons of wheat, equivalent to roughly 17 kilograms per resident, based on the Punjab population of 37.6 million recorded in the 1972 Population Census. By 1980–81, procurement had risen to 1.61 million tons, corresponding to about 34 kilograms per person, using the 1981 census population of 47.3 million. Procurement continued to expand through the following decades, reaching 3.64 million tons in 2000–01, equivalent to nearly 49 kilograms per resident when calculated against the 1998 census population of 73.6 million. Despite continued increases in procurement volumes, rapid population growth moderated per-capita levels in later years: 3.19 million tons in 2010–11 translates to about 29 kilograms per resident, while 3.69 million tons in 2020–21 equals roughly 33 kilograms per resident, both calculated using the 2017 census population of 110.01 million.

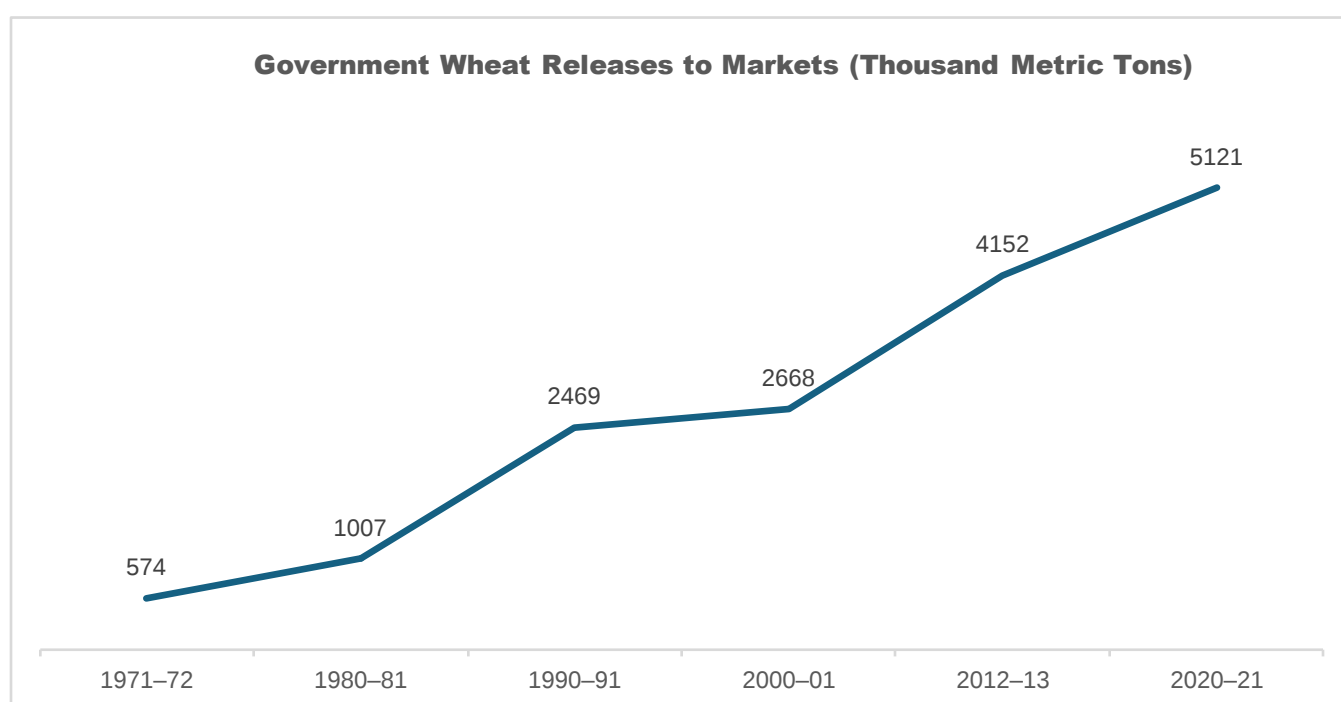
Per-capita procurement was calculated by converting procurement volumes reported in hundred metric tons into kilograms and dividing the total by the corresponding Punjab population for the closest available census year. Because procurement statistics are reported for fiscal years while population data are available only from census benchmarks, the nearest census year has been used to approximate population for each procurement year. Wheat procurement figures are drawn from Table 7.1 of *Punjab Development Statistics: 50 Years (1972–2021)* published by the Bureau of Statistics, Government of the Punjab, while population figures are taken from the Pakistan Population Censuses of 1972, 1981, 1998, and 2017 published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

2. Public Wheat Releases Rise from 574 Thousand Tons to Over 5.1 Million Tons

Alongside procurement, government wheat releases to markets also increased substantially. Wheat off-take rose from 574 thousand metric tons in 1971–72 to 5,121 thousand metric tons in 2020–21.

Public distribution expanded particularly during periods of higher procurement and stock accumulation. Releases exceeded 3 million tons in several years during the 2000s and 2010s, including 3,537 thousand tons in 2006–07, 4,152 thousand tons in 2012–13, and 5,165 thousand tons in 2014–15.

The growth in wheat releases suggests increasing reliance on government-managed grain supplies to support flour markets, stabilize prices, and ensure the availability of wheat during periods of market fluctuations or supply shortages.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

3. Food Department Dominates Procurement While PASSCO Plays Complementary Role

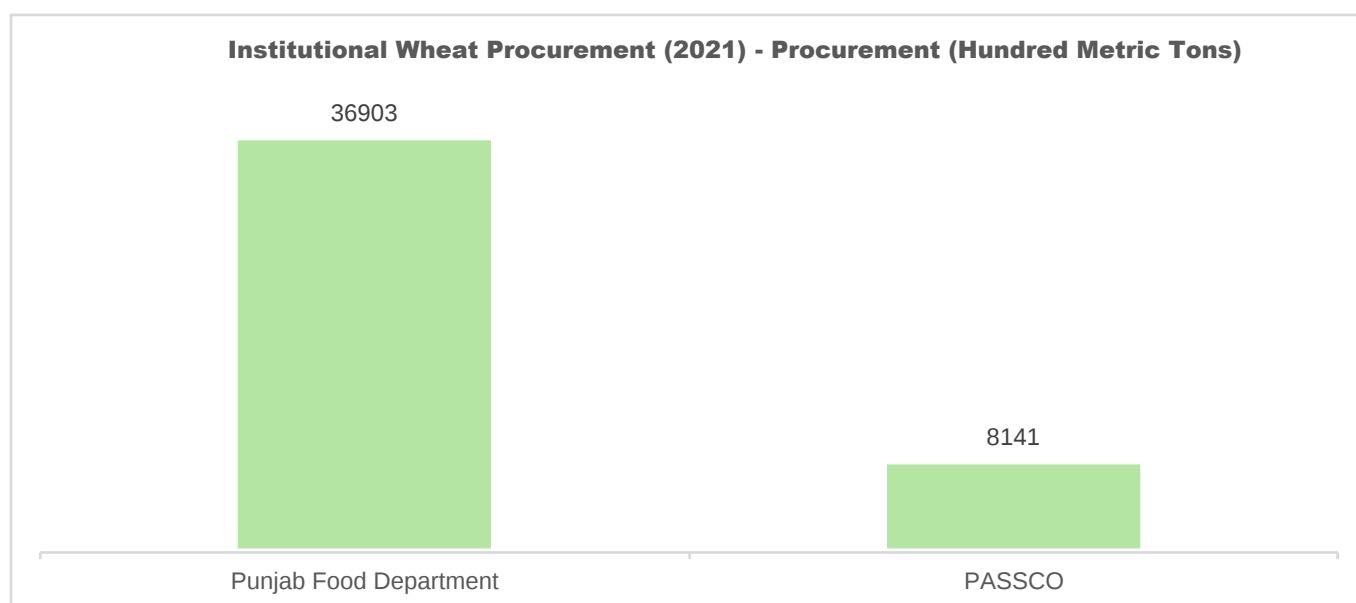
The Punjab Food Department accounts for the majority of procurement in most years, while PASSCO provides complementary procurement support.

Data show that total procurement under government schemes reached 45,044 hundred metric tons in 2021. Of this total:

- 36,903 hundred metric tons were procured by the Punjab Food Department
- 8,141 hundred metric tons were procured by PASSCO

Historically, the Food Department has consistently accounted for the majority of wheat procurement. For example, in 1990–91, the Food Department procured 25,336 hundred metric tons, compared with 11,684 hundred metric tons by PASSCO.

The division of roles reflects a coordinated system in which provincial procurement remains dominant while PASSCO provides additional purchasing capacity to support national food security objectives.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

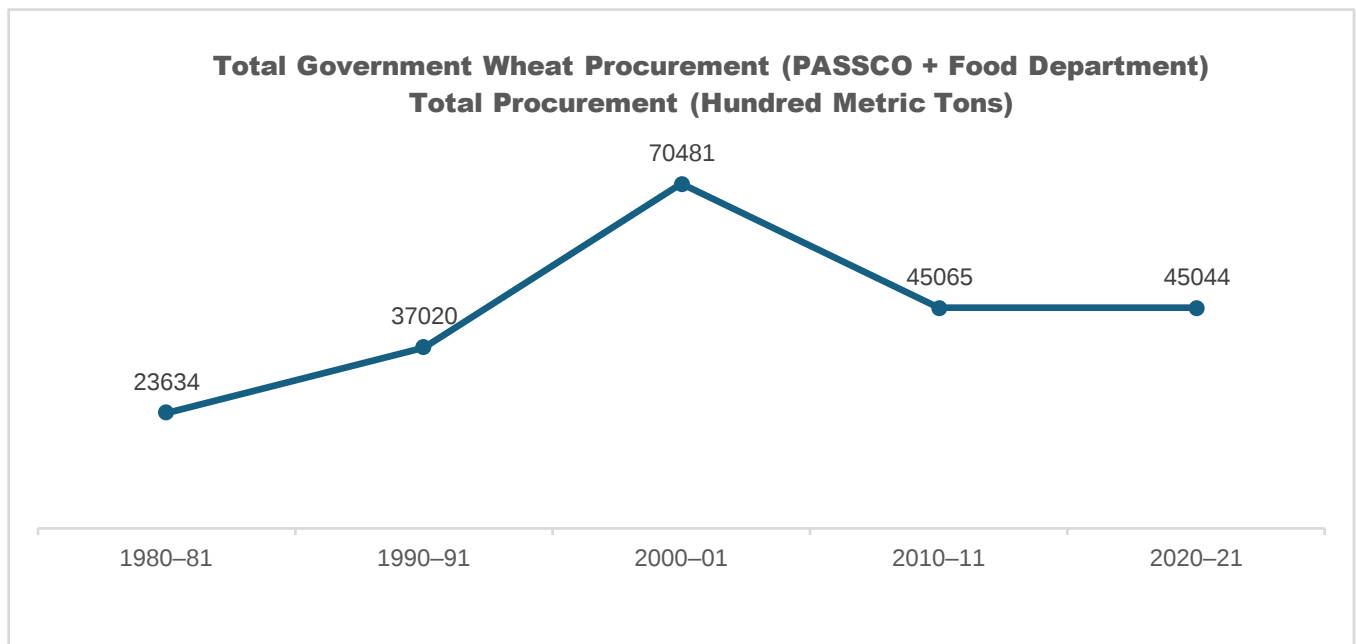
4. Government Wheat Stocks Expand to Support Strategic Grain Reserves

The expansion of procurement has been accompanied by a substantial increase in government wheat reserves. Monthly stock data show that government reserves grew significantly over time, reaching several million tons in recent decades.

For example:

- Wheat stocks stood at 186 thousand metric tons in June 1971–72.
- By 2000–01, stocks had increased to 4,843 thousand metric tons in June.
- In 2018–19, monthly reserves exceeded 6.8 million tons, reaching 6,865 thousand metric tons in June and remaining above 6,600 thousand tons in several subsequent months.

These large reserve levels indicate the government's growing capacity to maintain strategic grain stocks that can be released into markets during shortages, seasonal supply gaps, or price volatility.



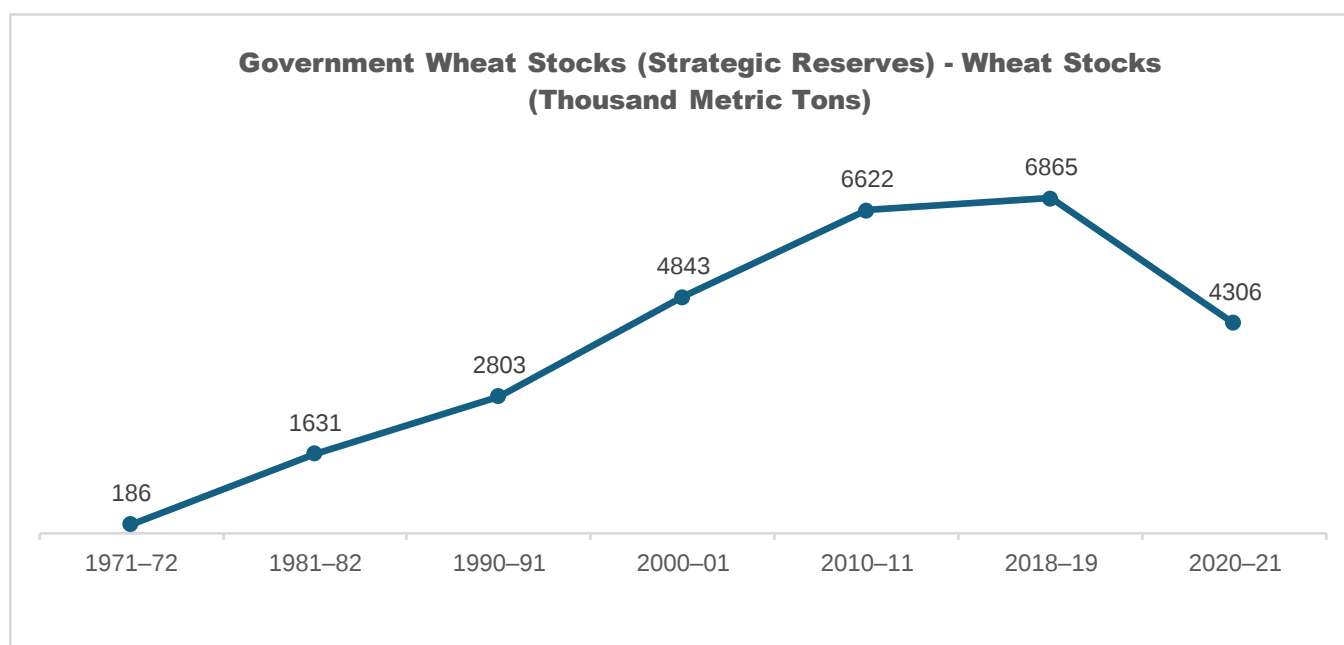
Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

5. Wheat Procurement System Becomes a Central Pillar of Food Security

Taken together, the long-term data illustrate how Punjab’s wheat procurement system has evolved into a comprehensive public food security mechanism. Over the past five decades, the system has expanded from relatively modest procurement and storage operations into a large-scale program combining procurement, stock management, and public distribution.

Through the coordinated roles of the Punjab Food Department and PASSCO, the government has developed the capacity to purchase millions of tons of wheat annually, maintain strategic reserves exceeding several million tons, and release wheat to markets when needed.

This expansion highlights the central role of public procurement and reserve management in stabilizing wheat markets and supporting food security in Pakistan’s largest agricultural province.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).

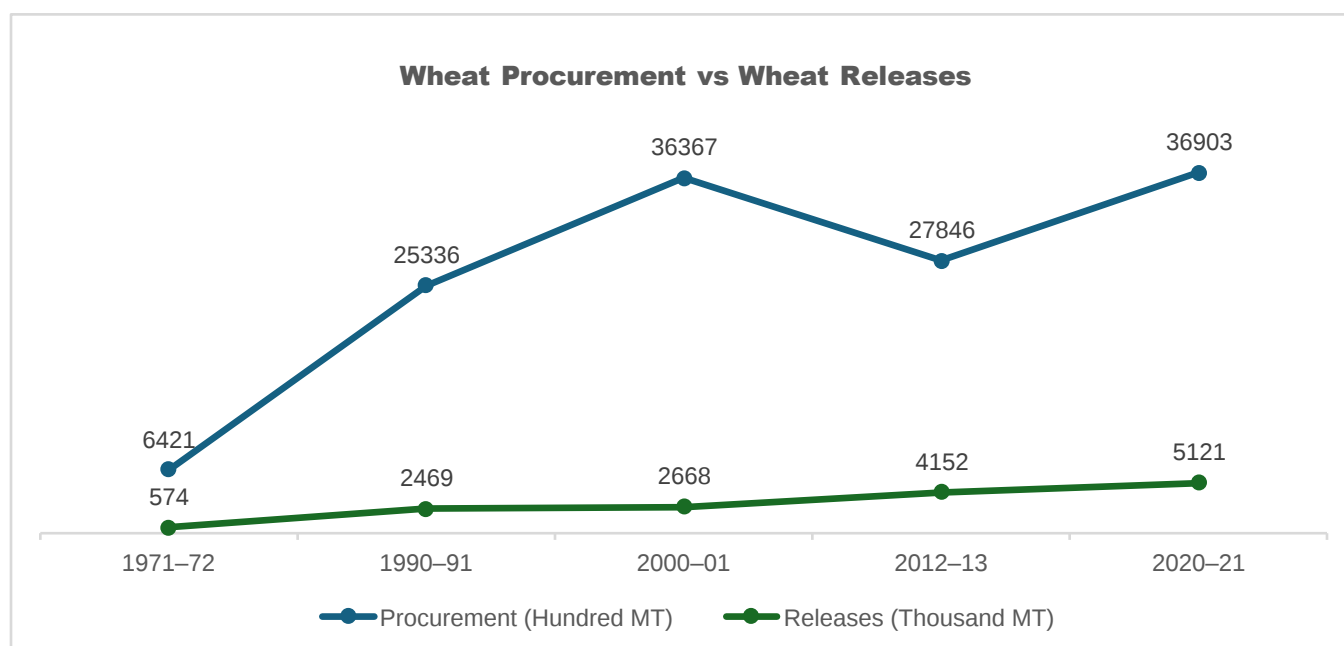
6. Procurement–Release Gap Widens as Government Expands Strategic Wheat Buffer System

A comparison of wheat procurement and government releases over time highlights the evolving structure of Punjab’s public grain management system. In 1971–72, procurement by the Punjab Food Department stood at 6,421 hundred metric tons, while government releases were 574 thousand metric tons, indicating a relatively modest procurement and distribution system. Over time, both indicators increased substantially, but procurement and releases did not always grow at the same pace, reflecting shifts in government stock management strategies.

By 1990–91, procurement had increased nearly fourfold to 25,336 hundred metric tons, while releases reached 2,469 thousand metric tons, suggesting a larger role for government distribution in stabilizing wheat markets. The early 2000s marked a further expansion of procurement capacity, with procurement reaching 36,367 hundred metric tons in 2000–01, while releases remained comparatively lower at 2,668 thousand metric tons, indicating the accumulation of larger government reserves during this period.

In more recent years, the relationship between procurement and releases reflects the functioning of a mature grain management system. For example, by 2012–13, releases rose sharply to 4,152 thousand metric tons, while procurement remained substantial at 27,846 hundred metric tons, suggesting increased reliance on public wheat distribution to manage market supply. By 2020–21, procurement reached 36,903 hundred metric tons and releases increased further to 5,121 thousand metric tons, illustrating the scale at which government institutions now operate in both acquiring wheat from farmers and supplying it to markets.

Overall, the long-term pattern indicates that Punjab’s wheat procurement system has evolved into a strategic buffer mechanism, where procurement supports farmer price stabilization while releases help regulate market supply. The growing volumes of both procurement and releases demonstrate how government intervention in wheat markets has expanded significantly, enabling the state to manage seasonal fluctuations, maintain strategic reserves, and support food security across the province.



Source: Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Board, Government of the Punjab — Punjab Development Statistics for 50 Years (1972–2021).



Wish to Contribute to Gallup Big Data Analysis?

Gallup Pakistan is looking for collaboration with researchers to expand the Big Data Analysis project. If you have any ideas, please write to Bilal I Gilani, Project Director, Big Data Analysis at Gallup Pakistan.

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