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Model Bt cotton farm attracts farmers

M. Soundariya Preetha

Experts explaining the benefits of Bt cotton and methods of cultivation to farmers during a field class on Tuesday at the farm of South India Cotton Association in Coimbatore.

COIMBATORE: Palanisamy from Kongalnagaram, near Udumalpet, has cotton on about an acre in his 12-acre farm this year.

Though he had raised cotton on his farm earlier, high costs and shortage of labour had made it difficult for him to grow cotton during the recent years. He returned to cotton this year and is confident of increasing the area under the crop next year.

Mr. Palanisamy was among the 40 farmers who visited a model Bt cotton farm here on Tuesday. The farm is developed by the South India Cotton Association (SICA).

The farmers from Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode and Dharmapuri districts went around the 65 cents farm for about 45 minutes.

Details

They learnt from experts the details on watering, field management, drip irrigation, pest management, fertilizer application and weather management. Then they had about an hour's session on the market for cotton in Tamil Nadu, the different varieties available, the need to go in for branded cotton seeds and pipeline technologies for cotton cultivation. This was followed by an interactive meeting.

SICA had developed the model farm (four tracts) jointly with Monsanto to demonstrate the latest technology on cotton cultivation. The association develops model farms annually, demonstrating the cultivation technologies for different varieties of cotton.

Date:09/02/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/02/09/stories/2011020953770300.htm

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Farmers demand adequate water supply to tail-end areas

Staff Reporter

ERODE: Over 1,000 farmers in the tail-end areas of Kalingarayan Canal in Erode district blocked the road near Kodumudi on Tuesday demanding adequate water supply to their fields.

They said that they were not getting adequate water as the canal and its branch channels were in bad shape for long.

“The Public Works Department rarely carries out maintenance and repairs in the canal and its branch channels. Weeds, damaged shutters and regulation structures prevent the smooth flow of water,” one of the farmers pointed out.

Crops cultivated on several acres of land withered due to erratic supply of water. The farmers had taken this issue to the notice of the officials in the department on a number of occasions. “We hardly received a positive response from the officials,” another farmer alleged.

Some of the farmers in the head section of the canal were using motors to tap water from the canal illegally. This was one of the reasons for the poor water supply in the tail- end areas.

Though officials in the department were well aware of the problem, no significant efforts had been made to solve it.

The farmers said that they would launch a series of agitations if the authorities failed to ensure adequate supply of water to the tail end areas.

The police and revenue officials rushed to the spot and pacified the agitators. Traffic on Erode – Karur main road was affected for more than two hours.

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Precision farming is a boon

P. Sudhakar

Sugarcane farmers have recorded an excellent yield in Tiunelveli district

SWEET:S. Devasahayam, right, Joint Director of Agriculture, inspecting a sugarcane field with precision farming system near Tirunelveli.

TIRUNELVELI: Farmers who hesitantly accepted the newly introduced system of precision farming that ensures huge savings in water and fertilizer consumption have recorded an excellent sugarcane yield during the just concluded season.

Sugarcane, the major crop, which is being cultivated under precision farming system in the district, has shown better yield this time.

CoC 671, Co 86032 and MC 707 are the most popular varieties that are being cultivated by farmers under precision farming system here. The normal sugarcane yield in Tirunelveli district is 38 tonnes per acre or 95 tonnes per hectare. By adopting the precision farming, an average yield has risen to 60 tonnes per acre (150 tonnes per hectare).

A maximum yield of 61 tonnes per acre (152.50 tonne per hectare) has been recorded by C. Karuppan of Maruthankinar in Kuruvikulam block, says T. Carol Zonia, Agriculture Officer, Tirunelveli.

The term precision farming refers to the timely application of water and fertilizers into the root zone of the crops by simultaneously using drip and fertigation systems. In the present scenario of acute water scarcity, the only alternative to sustain the area under field crops is only through drip irrigation system.

By applying the required quantity of water directly into the root zone, water requirement is reduced by 50 per cent and the water saved by this system can be effectively used to bring more area under cultivation by using the same water resource. Weed growth is minimised by which the cost incurred in weed control is also saved.

A major constraint in promoting precision farming among farmers is the large investment required to install the drip and fertigation system. Approximately Rs. 80,000 is required to install the drip and fertigation system in a field. This cost may vary based upon the crop grown, field lay-out, and relative position of water source.

The Government of India's scheme of ‘National Agricultural Development Programme', wherein precision farming is one among the components, enables the farmers to go in for this system with an attractive subsidy given by the Central Government under Precision farming for a hectare of cultivation.

For procuring drip and fertigation unit, a subsidy of Rs.48,640 (Rs.11,200 by the Centre and Rs.37,440 by Tamil Nadu Horticultural Development Agency - TANHODA subsidy), Rs.15,000 for purchasing Water Soluble Fertilizers, Rs.1,000 for undergoing training on precision farming is given to the farmers.

“During 2008 - 2009 and 2009 - 2010 around 500 hectare was brought under precision farming. Since the system increases the yield substantially and the Central and State Governments are giving an attractive subsidy for procuring the drip and fertigation unit, the farmers should make use of this opportunity to augment their revenue,” said Joint Director of Agriculture, S. Devasahayam.

Date:09/02/2011 URL: http://www.thehindu.com/2011/02/09/stories/2011020956350700.htm

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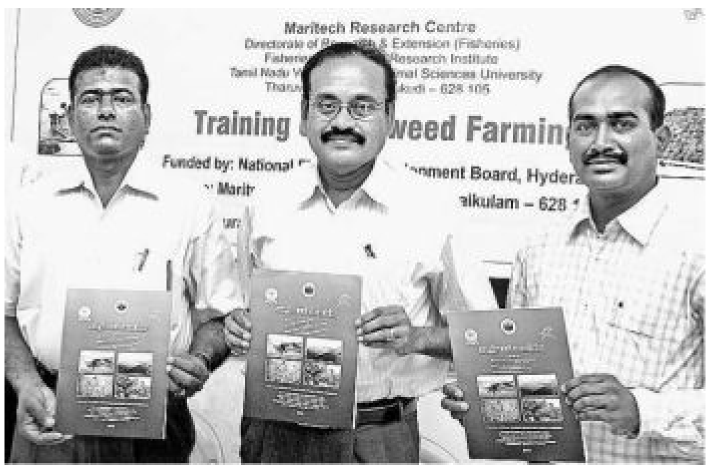
Training programme on seaweed farming

Staff Reporter



Informative:V.K. Venkatramani, Director of Research and Extension, releasing a booklet on ‘Seaweed farming' at Tharuvaikulam in Tuticorin district on Monday.

Tuticorin: With the objective of generating financial and social status of coastal people, Maritech Research Centre (MRC), Tharuvaikulam, which is affiliated to Fisheries College and Research Institute, Tuticorin, a five-day training programme on ‘Seaweed farming' commenced at Tharuvaikulam on Monday.

To familiarise mariculture technologies among fishermen and members of self-help groups, the programme was being held under the aegis of National Fisheries Development Board, Ministry of Agriculture, Hyderabad.

It would certainly serve as an alternate livelihood for the coastal folk.

The trainees were provided with ideas of adopting various methods of seaweed farming such as cultivable species of seaweeds, identification of seaweeds, value addition of seaweeds and different culture methods.

Practical demonstration of cultivation of seaweeds was also done.

According to a press release from FCRI on Tuesday, V.K. Venkatramani, Director of Research and Extension, said seaweeds with medicinal values, rich vitamins and minerals were being used for production of phytochemicals, Agar, Alginate and Carrageenan.

“These substances are widely used as gelling, stabilizing and thickening agents in foods, confectionery, pharmaceuticals, dairy, textile, paper and paint industries.

Many protein rich sea weeds are consumed in soups, salads vegetables and porridges. The food products like jelly, jam, chocolates, pickles and wafers can also be manufactured from certain marine algae. Certain seaweeds are used as cattle feed and also as fertilizers for various land crops. Many bioactive compounds can also be obtained from seaweeds,” he said.

Coastal people, self-help group members and entrepreneurs, who were interested in cultivating seaweeds, would be highly benefited through this initiative.

Innovative technologies on cultivation and value addition of seaweeds were taught. Guidance would also be given for formulation of project report on availing bank loan and subsidy to the needy participants.

S. Athithan, Associate Professor, and V. Lamek Jayakumar, Director of Training, were present.

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Relief package announced for areca nut growers

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The State government announced a special package for areca nut farmers having four hectares of land, a major relief to the cash-strapped farmers in the district.

Eligible farmers would be paid Rs.10 per tree to partially offset the mounting losses due to the cutting down of less productive trees, apart from easing financial burden resulting from pesticide purchase to contain 'Mahali' disease that caused premature fall of areca nuts. There were also provisions for assistance in manure application and irrigation, an official release said here on Tuesday.

According to the package, a farmer would get Rs.13,700 per hectare and the maximum amount was fixed at Rs.25,000. A farmer having areca nut trees in 50 cents would get Rs.10 per tree, it added. The government has also prescribed a module for providing manure, pesticide to contain 'Mahali' and other diseases and irrigation intervals for different varieties of areca nut trees. The farmers could apply for the relief to the agriculture offices in their respective panchayats.

The farmers of the district, known for producing high-quality areca nuts, have been grappling with low productivity due to vagaries of weather coupled with mounting cost of production due to shortage of labourers.

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Show to focus on vegetable farming

Staff Reporter

Kozhikode: Promotion of vegetable farming will be the focus of a flower-fruit-plant show to be organised by the Calicut Agri-Horticultural Society at Marine grounds on Beach road from February 10 to 15. The stalls would focus on setting up of vegetable gardens in urban spaces and the role of vegetables in health. Saplings of high-yielding variety of Broomstick plant will be on sale at the show.

Flower plants from all over the country will be on show. The Calicut University's Department of Botany will exhibit different species of ginger while the Malabar Botanical Garden will showcase the biggest collection of water plants in the country. The M.S. Swaminathan Foundation from Kalpetta will bring endangered plants in Malabar and the Arecanut and Spices Research Centre and Krishi Vigyan Kendra will set up stalls which detail modern agricultural methods.

The Centre for Water Resources Development and Management's stall will focus on use of ground water for farming. Classes will be held at the venue on all days. There will be a painting competition for schoolchildren, flower arrangement and gardening competitions for the public and ‘Pushparani' and ‘Pushparaja' competition for children. There will be cultural events every evening.

Entry charges will be Rs.20 for adults and Rs.10 for children. Concession will be allowed to students who come in groups with teachers. The public must bring cloth bags with them if they wanted to carry home purchases at the show, a press release said.

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Central team begins visit to assess crop loss

Staff Reporter

Stock-taking: District Collector Peeyush Kumar explains the extent of damaged crop due to heavy rains during November – December 2010, to members of the Central team in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

VIJAYAWADA: An inter-ministerial Central team on Tuesday began its two-day visit to Krishna district to assess the losses incurred by various sectors and departments in the district due to cyclones and heavy rains that struck the district last year.

District Collector Peeyush Kumar told the team members that the district suffered a loss of Rs.133.52 crore last year. While Agriculture Department suffered a loss of Rs.81.84 crore, the

Department of Horticulture suffered a loss of Rs.1.19 crore. The Animal Husbandry Department borne a loss of Rs.103 crore and the Roads and Buildings Department suffered Rs. 25.71 crore of losses. The Rural Water Supply, Panchayat Raj and Municipal Administration departments suffered losses of Rs. 0.14 crore, Rs. 15.80 crore and Rs. 7.01 crore, respectively, taking the total to Rs. 133.52 crore. The team head and Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs Sri Radha Raman Jha told reporters that they estimated the losses suffered by the district last year. A report would be submitted to the Central and State governments. The team would visit various places in the district on Wednesday and interact with the farmers.

Central Water Commission Superintendent Engineer (KCC) A. Parameswaran, Deputy Director in the Department of Expenditure of the Ministry of Finance Deenanath and and others were present.

hindustantimes

Reuters

Beijing, February 08, 2011

First Published: 20:01 IST(8/2/2011)

Last Updated: 20:04 IST(8/2/2011)

China raises rates with inflation on the rise

China raised interest rates on Tuesday for the second time in just over six weeks, intensifying a battle against stubbornly high inflation that threatens to unsettle global markets.

The timing was a surprise, coming on the final day of China's Lunar New Year holiday, but investors have long expected more monetary tightening as Beijing struggles to rein in price pressures and ward off a property bubble.

Benchmark one-year deposit rates will be lifted by 25 basis points to 3%, while one-year lending rates will also be raised by 25 basis points to 6.06%, the People's Bank of China said. The changes go into effect on Wednesday.

Although annual inflation slowed in December, analysts polled expect it to have picked up to 5.3% in January, the fastest pace in more than two years, on the back of soaring food prices.

"It is the first interest rate rise in the Year of the Rabbit, but it will not be the last," said Xu Biao, an economist with China Merchants Bank in Shenzhen, referring to the country's new year, which began last week.

"If inflation stays high in February, the central bank will be forced to increase interest rates on a continuous basis," he added. "Investor confidence will be seriously hurt by expectations of aggressive policy tightening."

Fearing tighter monetary policy will dampen demand in a country whose growth helped lift the world out of the global financial crisis, commodity markets fell after the central bank announcement.

Three-month copper fell below $10,000 a tonne and US crude futures prices dropped.

The MSCI world equity index held on to gains, trading up 0.15%, but the FTSEurofirst 300 index was down 0.3%, turning negative after China's move.

For now, however, Chinese officials have insisted that inflation will be controllable and domestic investors have priced in only gradual tightening.

Chinese stocks could, in fact, rise slightly when the market re-opens on Wednesday to catch up with Asian counterparts that have rallied during China's week-long holiday.

Tightening cycle

This is the third rate increase since China began a monetary tightening cycle in earnest in October.

Wary of raising rates too high, China has leaned most heavily on quantitative tools in its tightening, forcing banks to lock up more of their deposits as reserves seven times over the past year and also ordering them to lend less.

Beijing has also imposed a slew of measures to target property prices that have stayed stubbornly high. The country's leaders, acutely aware of public anger over unaffordable housing, have said they would not tolerate property inflation and speculation.

"I didn't think it (China's rate hike) would happen today, but it doesn't matter whether you think it will happen today or tomorrow. You know that interest rates are going up," said Mike Lenhoff, chief strategist at Brewer Dolphin in London.

Excessive cash in the economy, partly stemming from China's huge trade surplus, is a root cause of fast-rising prices and Beijing hopes that higher rates will encourage savers to keep more of their money in banks and also weigh on demand for mortgage loans.

Anti-inflation talk from the central bank in recent months has primed investors for more policy tightening and, even with the latest move, many believe further tightening is in the cards.

Economists forecast in December that China's one-year deposit rate would climb to 3.25% by June.

A stronger currency would be another weapon against inflation, reducing the cost of imported goods.

But Beijing is expected to keep the yuan to its path of gradual appreciation, frustrating critics from the United States to Brazil who say an undervalued exchange rate gives Chinese firms an unfair advantage in global trade.

Sign of strength

While tighter policy may have tapped the brakes on the Chinese economy and taken a toll on the domestic stock market, which has dropped 12% since hitting a 2010 high in November, analysts believe the country's slowdown will be moderate.

China's economy is likely to grow 9.3% in 2011, according to a Reuters poll, down from a pace of 10.3% in 2010 that many feared was unsustainable.

If anything, that Beijing is tightening policy at a time when US and euro zone interest rates are at record lows is a mark of confidence within the country that its economy, the world's second-largest, is on solid ground.

"Global markets may begin to see the frequent rate hikes as a sign that growth slowdown in China is inevitable, which could briefly weigh on market sentiment," said Dariusz Kowalczyk, economist with Credit Agricole-CIB in Hong Kong.

"But in the end, the move will be seen as a sign of strength, with solid growth momentum allowing policymakers to raise rates. And in the end global markets should respond positively to such moves aimed at controlling inflation," he said.

http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/660038.aspx

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Clear

Wednesday, Feb 9

Max	Min
31.2°	19.8°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs	Sunrise: 6:34
Humidity: 65%	Sunset: 18:12
Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1007.0

Tomorrow's Forecast

Cloudy

Thursday, Feb 10

Max	Min
31°	21°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Feb 11	**Feb 12**	**Feb 13**	**Feb 14**	**Feb 15**
				
27° | 17°	26° | 17°	27° | 18°	27° | 18°	27° | 18°
Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy

DECCAN Chronicle On The Web
Published on Deccan Chronicle (http://www.deccanchronicle.com)

EU bid to ban endosulfan may drive up food prices

Feb 09 2011

Food prices would shoot up further, if Europe has its way on its proposal at a global green forum to ban a cheaper generic pesticide — endosulfan — across the world.

"A ban on endosulfan would drive up the cost of agriculture and jeopardise the country's food security at a time of rising demand," said Dr Chengal Reddy, the secretary general of the Consortium of Indian Farmers Association and chairman Federation of Farmers Associations.

India is the world's largest producer, exporter and user of the low-cost pesticide, which farmers across the rest of the country continue to use on tea, cotton, rice and other crops.

According to Mr Pradeep Dave, the president of the Pesticides Manufacturers and Formulators Association of India, said European patented alternatives would be ten times more expensive." Apart from India, other developing countries such as China and Argentina have opposed the European Union's proposal. Though India has refused to back the proposal, farmers and pesticide companies are planning to organise rallies to force the government to protect the interests of farmers.

India has a huge task drawn up at Stockholm Convention meeting in April, says Mr R. Hariharan, the chairman of the International Stewardship Centre. "The Stockholm Convention does not work on the basis of consensus. The Indian government has to work with other developing countries in Asia and Africa to adopt a consensus based model on the endosulfan issue."

Some environmental non governmental organisations, however, want the government to ban the pesticide. “The biggest problem of endosulfan is bioaccumulation. In colder countries like Denmark and Finland, endosulfan residue is present even after they stopped using it,’’ an NGO, working for the ban on endosulfan, said.

Source URL:

http://www.deccanchronicle.com/business/eu-bid-ban-endosulfan-may-drive-food-prices-225

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Wed, Feb 09, 2011 | Updated 10.54AM IST

9 Feb, 2011, 04.32AM IST, PK Krishnakumar,ET Bureau

High prices, bean shortage to hit cocoa imports

KOCHI: High prices and a shortage of beans in the world market may adversely hit cocoa imports into the country. Inward shipments have been on the rise in the last couple of years spurred by an increasing consumption.

Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Co-operative (Campco) managing director AS Bhat said the company will import cocoa powder only if international prices match the current Indian prices. Local prices are now almost on par with global prices.

International prices have been rising since last September. From $2,874 per tonne, international prices have reached $3,340 per tonne now. In January 2010, global prices had peaked to $3,600 per tonne on global shortage. If the bullish trend continues, India’s imports could be reduced.

The political turmoil in Ivory Coast and the resultant ban on exports have caused a general shortage in the global market, leading to an escalation in prices. India imports cocoa beans and other products from West African countries and Indonesia.

According to Venkatesh N Huballi, director of Directorate of Cashewnuts and Cocoa Development, imports have been going up in the last couple of years. Imports touched 9,262 tonne in 2009-10, up from 7,026 tonne in the previous year. Production in India has remained stagnant in the last few years in the range of 10,000 tonne to 12,000 tonne. But demand from chocolate companies is going up and many are forced to import more.

With a prolonged monsoon, there was a shortage of beans in India during 2010 and the quality of available beans was not good.

Wed, Feb 09, 2011 | Updated 08.09AM IST

8 Feb, 2011, 08.02PM IST,REUTERS

India cotton seen hitting life high on thin supply

MUMBAI: Indian cotton prices are likely to hit a fresh lifetime high this week, tracking a rally overseas and as in local demand surpasses lower-than-expected arrivals, dealers said.

"Local mills and exporters were aggressively buying to fulfil their requirements, but arrivals were low. They were not improving despite record high prices," said a senior official at Gujarat State Co-operative Cotton Federation Ltd.

Domestic cotton arrivals at Indian spot markets till Feb. 6 in the 2010/11 season rose by just 5.7 per cent on year, the state-run Cotton Corp of India said.

India, the world's second-biggest producer, had permitted 5.5 million bales for exports from Oct. 1 but met with a poor response because rains hit harvest.

An initial deadline was extended until Feb. 25 for 1.7-1.9 million bales which went unshipped.

Overseas demand for Indian cotton has increased after bad weather hit crops in China and Pakistan, both leading consumers.

In India, the price of the most common Shankar-6 variety surged by 2,500 rupees to a record high of 55,500 rupees per candy of 356 kg each on Tuesday, data with the Cotton Association of India showed.

At 7:07 p.m., the New York cotton futures contract was down 0.02 per cent at $1.7447 per lb.

India is likely to produce a record 32.9 million bales of cotton in 2010/11, topping last year's 29.5 million bales, a senior government official said last week.

More of Australia's summer cotton crop could be at risk as floodwaters caused by heavy rains flow to southern planting regions, the government's commodities forecaster said on Tuesday.

Wed, Feb 09, 2011 | Updated 07.51AM IST

8 Feb, 2011, 06.37PM IST,PTI

Tea production falls by 1.3 pc to 966.4 million kgs in 2010

NEW DELHI: Country's tea production declined by 1.3 per cent to 966.4 million kgs in 2010 due to a drop in output in Assam, according to data released by the Tea Board today.

The country had produced 978.99 million kgs in 2009. Tea production in north India declined by 11.83 million kgs to 723.02 million kgs on account of fall in output in Assam where output dropped to 480.28 million kgs from 499.99 million kgs in the previous year.

However in West Bengal, production rose by 8.2 million kgs to 229.78 million kgs.

In south India, tea production fell marginally to 243.37 million kgs from 244.13 million kgs.

the pioneer

Govt sees 50% drop in pulse import

February 09, 2011 10:46:14 AM

Timsy Jaipuria | New Delhi

Expecting a bumper crop this year, the Ministry of Commerce, according to its fresh estimates, has projected a 50 per cent drop this year in pulses import as against last year.

Saying that such a bumper crop would help the nation counter the adverse situations in acute shortages of food items, Commerce Secretary Rahul Khullar said: “Pulses are expected to be a bumper crop at 16.6 million tonnes this year in which case imports will be half of what they were last year.”

Interestingly, the country is likely to achieve an “all time record” of 16.6 million tonnes of pulses this year. This is more than last year’s output of 14.57 million tonnes.

Further quipping on this, Khullar said that arrangements for import of pulses were being made.

“...Import contracts for pulses were being entered into and the same would be done by private traders,” he said.

As of now, India falls far short of meeting the projected demand of nearly 25-30 million tonnes of pulses over the next decade.

Government has permitted import of pulses at zero duty to improve its domestic availability.

On the edible oil case, Khullar said its prices, which were on rise last year, are likely to remain stable in 2011.

“The good news on edible oil front is...It is available (in international markets), there is no shortage and there is no hardening of prices during 2011, which means you should not see further inflation (in edible oil),” he said.

One must know that India’s total pulses’ import in 2009-10 was 3.4 million tonnes. The shortage of about 2-3 million tonnes is met through imports.

Even the edible oil becomes a sensitive issue because edible oil has a weightage of about three percentage points in the wholesale price index (WPI), which the Government is struggling to reduce since last few months. India had imported 8.82 million tonnes in 2009-10.

Subsidy on the anvil for Bundelkhand paan growers

February 09, 2011 10:47:11 AM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

Sanction has been given to grant subsidy to paan growers and modernisation of paan barrages in the State. Paan growers of Bundelkhand will be especially benefited by the scheme under which efforts will be undertaken to construct better shades in place of traditional paan barrages in Sagar, Chhatarpur, Damoh, Tikamgarh, Narsinghpur and Katni districts.

A sum of Rs 30,000 per unit grant will be provided to each paan grower. This will entail an expenditure of Rs 297.60 lakh. This information was given at a meeting of State-level Sanctioning Committee of National Agriculture Development Scheme at the Mantralaya here on Monday. The meeting was chaired by Chief Secretary Avani Vaish.

Those present on the occasion included Joint Director of Union Agriculture Ministry's Dairy, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department Swarnmala Rawla, director of National Agriculture Development Scheme Reena Saha, deputy consultant of Planning Commission AK Tiwari, committee's member-secretary and Principal Secretary Agriculture and Cooperatives Madan Mohan Upadhyaya, vice-chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru Agriculture University, Jabalpur Vijay Singh Tomar and principal secretaries, secretaries and other officers concerned of Rural Development, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Horticulture and Food Processing and Finance departments.

At the meeting, Chief Secretary Avani Vaish instructed for motivating farmers to sow the local varieties of linseed, arhar and extrabold gram (double dollar). He also instructed to consult the experts of Jabalpur and Gwalior agriculture universities in this connection. He said extrabold gram is much in demand in India and abroad. Attention should also be given to free crops of this various from worms and insects with a view to increasing its yield.

It was informed in the meeting that a new hybrid variety of arhar known as ICPH 2671 has been developed. Similarly, a two-year project has been sanctioned for developing local varieties of linseed. A sum of Rs 106 crore has been sanctioned for making agriculture appliances available. The meeting also sanctioned a scheme for storage of onions. Under the scheme, every farmer will be given Rs 1.60 lakh per unit. A total of Rs 522.12 lakh has been sanctioned to farmers of Harda, Chhindwara, Mandsaur and Rajgarh to motivate them towards drip irrigation.

Business Standard

Wednesday, Feb 09, 2011

Vietnam rejects corn, soymeal from India

Reuters / Hanoi/new Delhi February 09, 2011, 0:20 IST

Vietnam rejected three small cargoes of corn and soymeal from India over fumigation issues and was expected to turn to more expensive South American supplies, traders from both countries said on Tuesday.

Two ships were carrying 21,000 tonnes of corn each, while a third ship was carrying 13,000 tonnes of the grain and 8,000 tonnes of soymeal, traders in India said on condition of anonymity.

"The first cargo was rejected in early January. Now, Vietnan will have to pay over $40 a tonne extra for the South American corn and meal," said a Mumbai-based trader, who did not wish to be identified.

Another trader said Indian corn was currently available at about $290-$300 per tonne, while soymeal was priced at around $480 per tonne.

Indian traders said their government had taken up the issue with Vietnam. Officials at the trade ministry were not immediately available for comment.

"Other than Vietnam, we have not received any complaint at all about Indian corn or meal. It is not a quality issue even. Vietnam differs with us on (the process of) fumigation," the Mumbai-based trader said.

India's share in the estimated 90-million-tonne global corn trade is small, but Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam often seek prompt shipments for feed use from South Asian nations.

Demand for soymeal from Vietnam, along with that from Japan, South Korea and the European Union, helped push India’s oilmeal exports up 67 per cent last month, data from a leading trade body in India showed. A trader in Vietnam had earlier said the country had rejected 21,300 tonnes of corn and soymeal from India.

The cargo, including 16,300 tonnes of corn and 5,000 tonnes of soymeal delivered by the same vessel, was rejected at Ho Chi Minh City port on Sunday because insects were found in it, the Vietnamese trader said without elaborating.

Vietnam’s feed demand this year could reach 20.6 million tonnes, of which 7.7 million tonnes would be imported, a state-run newspaper cited industry projections last month as saying.

Vietnam spent an estimated $200 million to import feed and raw material such as corn and soymeal for feed production in January, up 24.2 per cent from the same month last year, government data show.

In 2010, Vietnam’s imports of feed and the materials that go into feed rose 22.4 per cent in value from the previous year to $2.16 billion.

Mills' body lowers sugar production forecast

Press Trust Of India / New Delhi February 09, 2011, 0:19 IST

The Indian Sugar Mills Association (Isma) on Tuesday revised the country’s sugar production downward to 25 million tonnes (mt) for the 2010-11 season due to late rain in Uttar Pradesh, the second biggest sugar producer in the country

“We estimate sugar output to be 25 mt, as against 25.5 mt projected at the beginning of the season,” Isma President Narendra Murkumbi said.

Sugar output in Uttar Pradesh is lowered to 6.4 mt from seven mt due to late rains, while in Maharashtra, the country’s biggest sugar, it is kept unchanged at 9.4 million tonnes, Isma said.

However, the revised estimates are slightly higher than the government’s projection of 24.5 mt for the 2010-11 season (October-September).

According to Isma, the country’s sugar demand is expected to be 22 mt this year. “The quantity of sugar released in February is also in excess, which means that the total off-take in the domestic market will not be more than 22 mt,” Murkumbi said. On the possibility of sugar exports, he said, “The government should allow export of 500,000 tonnes of sugar under the open general licence (OGL) scheme, as this will help mills to improve their finances.”

“The cash-flow situation of mills is getting strained. They will not be able to sustain as stocks are building up. One million tonne can be easily exported under OGL, as there is a surplus of three million tonnes this year,” he said.He also mentioned India has a export window open between February and mid-April. Thereafter, the Brazil crop is expected to enter the market.Currently, government has kept on hold export of 500,000 tonnes of sugar under OGL in the wake of high inflation.On sugar price trend, Isma observed that the fall in wholesale prices is not being reflected in the retail market, where the sweetener is available at Rs 30-32 a kg.“Difference between ex-factory price and retail price is widening,” Murkumbi said. The ex-factory price of sugar has declined by Rs 200 per quintal in the last few months. “It is likely to fall further due to surplus production this year and an expected healthy crop for the next season,” he said.

THE HINDU Business Line

Spot rubber remains steady

Business Line File photo of a man laying rubber sheets in the sun for drying near Vaduvanchall in Kerala's Wayanad district.

Kottayam, Feb. 8:

Spot rubber finished almost unchanged on Tuesday. The market lost its direction as the domestic futures declined recording moderate losses in all its contracts on the NMCE. Gains in global rubber rates failed to enhance the sentiments but the prices managed to sustain at current levels lacking quantity sellers on any grade.

Sheet rubber closed flat at Rs 237 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi according to traders and Rubber Board. Meanwhile RSS 5 lost marginally on comparatively low demand. The overall volumes were dull.

Futures decline

The February series declined to Rs 232.50 (236.77), March to Rs 237 (241.91), April to Rs 246.00 (250.57) and May to Rs 249 (254) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

The volumes totalled 15070 lots and open interest 13358 lots. The turnover was Rs 364.94 crores.

RSS 3 (spot) closed firm at Rs 275.61 (272.82) a kg at Bangkok. The February futures for RSS 3 improved to ¥503 (Rs 277.49) from ¥498.7 during the day session and then to ¥506 (Rs 279.15) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 237 (237); RSS-5: 226 (227); ungraded: 221 (221); ISNR 20: 231 (231) and latex 60 per cent: 152 (152).

ISMA lowers sugar output estimates

New Delhi, Feb 8:

Indian Sugar Mills Association on Tuesday revised downward the country's sugar production to 25 million tonnes in the 2010-11 season due to late rains in Uttar Pradesh, the second biggest producing state of the sweetener.

"We estimate sugar output to be 25 million tonnes, as against 25.5 million tonnes projected at the beginning of the season," ISMA President Mr Narendra Murkumbi told reporters.

Sugar output in Uttar Pradesh is lowered to 6.4 million tonnes from 7 million tonnes due to late rains, while in Maharashtra, the country's biggest producing state, it is kept unchanged at 9.4 million tonnes, the ISMA said.

However, the revised estimates are slightly higher than the government's projection of 24.5 million tonnes for the 2010-11 season (October-September).

According to ISMA, the country's sugar demand is expected to be 22 million tonnes this year.

"The quantity of sugar released in February is also in excess, which means that total off-take in the domestic market will not be more than 22 million tonnes," Mr Murkumbi said.

On possibility of sugar exports, he stressed that the “government should allow export of 5,00,000 tonnes of sugar under the open general licence (OGL) scheme” as this will help mills to improve their finances.

“The cash-flow situation of mills is getting strained. They will not be able to sustain as stocks are building up. One million tonnes (10 lakh tonnes) can be easily exported under OGL as there is a surplus of three million tonnes this year,” he said.

He also mentioned the India has export window open between February and mid-April. Thereafter, the Brazil crop is expected to enter the market.

Currently, government has kept on hold export of 5 lakh tonnes of sugar under OGL in the wake of high inflation.

ISMA, the apex body for private sugar mills, reviewed the production consumption situation of sugar for 2010-11 season.

ISMA Director General Mr Abinash Verma said: “Because of late rains in Uttar Pradesh, recovery was marginally lower than expected. Therefore we have revised UP estimate downward to 6.4 million tonnes.”

On sugar price trend, the ISMA observed that the fall in wholesale sugar prices is not being reflected in the retail market, where the sweetener is available at Rs 30-32 per kg.

“Difference between ex-factory price and retail price is widening,” Mr Murkumbi said, the ex-factory price of sugar has declined by Rs 200 per quintal in the last few months. “It is likely to fall further due to surplus production this year and an expected healthy crop for the next season,” he said.

Ex-factory price of sugar in Uttar Pradesh is ruling below Rs 2,600 per quintal, while that of Maharashtra below Rs 2,800 per quintal, he added.

Pepper futures decline on bearish sentiments

Kochi, Feb. 8:

Pepper futures on Tuesday dropped on bearish sentiments created by reports such as Vietnamese offer of pepper at lower rates, failure of talks to end the strike at Kochi port, limited time left between now and maturity of February contract, and so on.

The market opened on a steady note and continued so till noon. Since the ‘badla' has shrunk, those holding validity-expired stocks and farm-grade pepper against their sales were liquidating. Investors were buying back their sales.

Non-availability of physical pepper has compelled even leading exporters to buy the validity-expired pepper.

Stuck at the port

Following continuance of strike at the port, pepper cargoes sent for shipment in the last week of January are held up in the port. Even consignments moved to Tuticorin port were also allegedly stopped by the strikers en route. As a result, whatever pepper consignments which “we were able to sell during the gap between January 15 and February 15, that is, before the Vietnam crop hit the market, are stuck here without leaving the Indian shores,” some of the exporters told *Business Line*.

Vietnam reportedly was offering 500 GL and 550 GL pepper at $4,450 (c&f) and $4,650 (fob) a tonne respectively . Some of the multinational companies and exporters with multi-origin operations were also allegedly offering Vietnam pepper cheap, they said.

Now, the arrivals will pick up and the trade has to depend on the domestic market for business, they said.

February contract on the NCDEX dropped by Rs 169 and closed at Rs 23,160 a quintal. March and April dropped by Rs187 and Rs 192 respectively to Rs 23,402 and Rs 23,690 a quintal.

Total turnover fell by 8,327 tonnes to close at 14,922 tonnes. Total open interest increased by 494 tonnes to close at 15,767 tonnes showing good buying interest.

Spot prices, in tandem with the futures market trend, dropped by Rs 100 to close at Rs 21,900 (un-garbled) and Rs 22,700 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market remained out priced at $5,300-5,325 a tonne (c&f), despite the decline in the futures market prices, due to appreciation of the rupee against the dollar, they said.

Vietnam model of pepper cultivation worth emulating, says planters' body

Business Line Vietnamese method pepper cultivation
Hubli, Feb. 8:

The Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA) is planning to adopt the Vietnamese method — exclusive monocrop — of pepper cultivation.

“Pepper is grown exclusively as a monocrop in Vietnam with very high density planting on wooden poles, concrete pillars or brick pillars. We felt this model can be emulated in our coffee estates,” said Mr Sahadev Balakrishna, Chairman, KPA.

“This method can be adopted in few of our coffee estates to boost our productivity. We were pleasantly surprised to see the mind-boggling pepper productivity of Vietnam which is 2-2.5 tonnes per acre,” he added.

Recently, a 25-member KPA delegation led by Mr Sahadev Balakrishna , Mr Marvin Rodrigues (vice-chairman) and Mr Nishant Gurjer (convener, scientific committee) visited the exclusive pepper growing area of Vietnam as part of their field visits to the coffee and pepper growing regions.

“We visited the Chu Se district in Gia Lai Province, which is the largest pepper growing region in the world. Vietnam grows more than 1.20 lakh tonnes of pepper and this region (Chu Se) alone grows more than one lakh tonnes of pepper. Whereas India grows a total of about 70,000 tonnes of pepper,” said Mr Balakrishna.

Talking about cultivation method, Mr Marvin Rodrigues said “Pepper is grown at a spacing of 2 metres by 2 metres which results in 1,000 pepper vines per acre. So even if a single pepper vine yields about three kg, the productivity per acre is incredibly high.”

“Just like in coffee, each and every pepper vine has got a basin system around the root for continuous irrigation during the dry season and heavy application of fertilisers. We however did find the odd pepper vines showing signs of being attacked by the pepper wilt disease,” he added.

“Rich volcanic soil coupled with highly intensive farming which primarily focuses on continuous irrigation and heavy application of fertilisers has resulted in the success story of coffee and pepper productivity in Vietnam,” Mr Nishant Gurjer, said.

In Vietnam, the Karnataka Planters' Association delegation also interacted with coffee traders who purchase coffee from the growers directly and visited fertiliser shops to get a better understanding of what exactly is being utilised and the costs.

“We also visited and interacted with coffee roasters and owners of coffee shops. Right throughout Vietnam, whether in small towns like Buon Me Thuat and Pleiku or in large cities like Ho Chi Minh City, we found numerous coffee shop chains and local roasters having coffee shops catering to the local population. The domestic consumption of coffee in Vietnam is a healthy 80,000 tonnes which augurs well for the future,” said Mr Balakrishna.

Raichur cotton soars to more than double of MSP

Hubli, Feb. 8:

Cotton prices in the Raichur market is currently quoted around Rs 5,625 a quintal, 69.23 per cent higher than the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 2,600 fixed by the Government.

With the north Karnataka region getting good rains during the kharif season, the yield is higher between 12-15 quintal a hectare.

Arrivals

Cotton arrivals in the markets of north Karnataka have been normal.

Cotton cultivation this year is intensive in Gulbarga, Davangere, Raichur and Haveri districts of Karnataka.

The State accounts for 6.55 per cent of cotton area (4.66 lakh hectares) and 7.02 per cent of the cotton production (10.15 lakh bales) in the country during the year.

The MSP fixed this year for cotton is Rs 2,600/quintal for medium staple and Rs 3,000/quintal for long staple cotton.

The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (Demic) established at the Department of Agri-business Management, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, has forecast the prices of cotton to be around Rs 3,800-4,100/quintal from February to March in Raichur, Ranebennur and Haveri markets.

“If the cotton export is allowed for more than 55 lakh bales, prices in the Indian markets are likely to increase,” a Demic official said.

“Farmers are advised to keenly follow fallow the export performance before taking up marketing decisions,” he added.

Cotton prices soar on supply, demand mismatch and global cues

The Hindu Cotton prices sky-rocketed on supply-demand mismatch in the spot market and a rising trend in the global market. (File photo): P.V. Sivakumar

Chennai, Feb. 8:

Cotton prices sky-rocketed on Tuesday, on supply-demand mismatch in the spot market and a rising trend in the global market.

Prices for Shankar-6 in Gujarat increased to Rs 56,000 a candy (of 356 kg), from around Rs 52,000 on Monday. At the Rajkot Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) yard, the modal price or the rate at which most trades took place increased to Rs 6,500 a quintal, from Rs 5,575 on Monday. Quality cotton fetched as high as Rs 6,610. At Rajula APMC in Gujarat, the modal price for the fine variety increased to Rs 6,575 against Rs 5,775 on Monday. Arrivals at Rajkot APMC were 500 tonnes (750 tonnes) and at Rajula, it was 380 tonnes (750 tonnes). In Madhya Pradesh, raw cotton modal prices at Ratlam APMC yard for DCH-32 increased to Rs 7,605 against Rs 7,210, despite higher arrivals of 15.53 tonnes (11.3 tonnes).

In Khammam, Andhra Pradesh, higher arrivals kept prices steady at Rs 5,300.

“No spot delivery is being offered for February and March. Forward deliveries are being offered for April and May. Moreover, the market seems to be under some frenzy over the review on export cap that will be held after February 10. We don't see any fundamental reasons for such a spike on Tuesday,” said Mr A. Ramani, an analyst.

The Union Commerce Secretary, Dr Rahul Khullar, had said a few days ago, that the Centre would review cotton export cap after February 10. The Textile Ministry is against raising the cap on the grounds that cotton production is lower than the 329 lakh bales (170 kg) estimated by the Cotton Advisory Board (CAB). But the Agriculture Ministry wants an additional 15 lakh bales to be allowed for exports, going by CAB estimates.

Global prices have gained momentum after dropping during the weekend. The price rally has resumed on fears that the supply will not be able to meet demand, especially from China.Other rates: H-4 Mech1 Rs 55,000-56,000 a candy; Bunny Brahamma Rs 56,500-57,000; MCU - 5 / Surabhi Rs 58,000-58,500; DCH - 32 Rs 81,000.

Edible oil dips tracking Malaysia market

Business Line An edible oil retail outlet (File photo): Arunangsu Roy Chowdhury
Mumbai, Feb. 8:

Edible oil prices in Mumbai ruled firm in post-noon trade, taking cues from higher Malaysian market closing, on Tuesday.

Till noon, tracking the weak Malaysian market, prices of palmolein fell by Rs 3.

Cotton oil was down by Rs 2, on selling by Dhulia line millers. Other edible oil prices were steady.

Morale was firm after the Malaysian market closed.

Indore NBOT soya oil futures also rebounded from its low level.

In the Rajkot market, with higher arrivals in the southern States and fresh buying by exporters, groundnut oil ruled steady. There, Telia tin price was Rs 1,160 (Rs 1,160) and loose was Rs 750 (Rs 750) for 10 kg.

Leading wholesalers said that due to limited and need-based buying by stockists, and due to the absence of active demand from consumers, market trend at local level looked weak in line, despite the firm foreign markets.

About 400 tonnes of palmolein was sold by Liberty at Rs 608, and then it raised the rates. Around 100-120 tonnes of palmolein was resale traded in the range of Rs 601-602.

After registering active trade in cotton refined oil, buying by stockists eased to almost zero, on Tuesday. Dhulia-side producers were selling at Rs 620, but got no response.

In Mumbai, direct refineries were quoting higher rates.

Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 617, Ruchi was quoting Rs 613-614 for palmolein, soya refined oil at Rs 635 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 705.

Malaysian BMD CPO futures closed higher by 1,523 ringgits. CPO Futures recovered early losses, as crude and soya oil futures reversed overnight falls.

Fundamentals also found support, with traders now expecting a sharp drop in Malaysia's January palm oil output.

Malaysia's CPO futures - NBOT futures

Malaysia's BMD CPO futures February-10 closed at MYR 3,925 (3,910), March-11 was at 3,913 (3,890) MYR. Indore NBOT soya oil futures February– 11 fell to Rs 645 (Rs 649) and March-11 to Rs 664.50 (Rs 666.50).

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rate (Rs/10kg):

Groundnut oil 760 (760), soya refined oil 630 (630), sunflower expeller refined 680 (680), sunflower refined 725 (725), rapeseed refined oil 660 (660), rapeseed expeller refined 630 (630), cotton refined oil 618 (620) and palmolein was 605 (608).

Orientation for Farmers' Club members

Hubli, Feb 8:

Vijaya Bank, lead bank for Dharwad district, in association with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural development (Nabard), facilitated training and basic orientation programme for 37 Farmers' Club promoted by Syndicate Bank, KVG Bank, Vijaya Bank, Union Bank of India, Corporation Bank, SBI, Karnataka Bank. In all, 37 representatives of farmers' club spread across Dharwad district attended the programme.

Earlier in the day, the programme was inaugurated by Mr Srikant B. Kulagod, Assistant General Manager, Syndicate Bank, Regional Office, Hubli and Mr Y.N. Mahadevaiah, Assistant General Manager, Nabard-Dharwad, conducted the work shop.

‘Farm mechanisation is convenient, cost-effective'

Business Line Cheaper and faster: Training being given for mechanised paddy transplantation. Mangalore, Feb. 8:

If you are a trekker and on an expedition, to Gadaikallu hill (also known as Jamalabad) in Belthangady taluk of Dakshina Kannada district you need to cross a narrow bridge leading to the base point.

After crossing the bridge, if you take right turn a kilometer-and-half prior to the base point and walk a little distance you would get a picturesque view of the entire Kudremukh range from a vast green paddy field. On the boundary of the paddy field there, you see two houses with Mangalore-tile roof.

Though climbing the difficult stretches of Gadaikallu may be easier for Mr Ajith Kumar Ariga (who lives in one such house), but same thing cannot be said about farming in the above mentioned paddy field.

The main reason for this situation is the shortage of farm labour in the region. The 51-year-old Ariga did not even bother to think about mechanisation in his paddy field and arecanut plantation till a decade ago, as he could get enough people for these activities.

Explaining the problems related to labour shortage to this reporter on a visit organised by the Karnataka Information Department to his field recently, Mr Ariga said that most part of his farming activities, ranging from paddy to arecanut cultivation, are now dependent on mechanisation.

“Since the past 10 years I have been facing difficulties in finding workers for carrying out farming activities,” he said.

Showing ‘Jaya' and ‘Rashi' varieties of paddy planted on his two-acre land, he said this rabi season, he had to bring a paddy transplanter and a mechanised weeder to transplant and to remove weeds in his field. After seeing its performance at the District Agriculture Training Centre at Belthangady town, he thought it fit to give a try at his field also. The centre provided him the transplanter without charging any rent. He had to bear just the transportation cost from the centre to his farm and back.

“I need around 10-15 members a day for four-five days to plant paddy in my field. I have to pay each one of them around Rs 125 a day. Due to the acute shortage of farm workers, I decided to give a try to paddy transplanter and weeder this season,” he said, adding that with mechanisation he could finish the work in six hours using the services of three persons.

Expressing satisfaction over the use of these machineries for farm activities, he said they helped him save money and valuable time. The transplanter saved him around Rs 3,000 this season. Now he is thinking of using machineries for harvesting activity also. Dr G.T. Puthra, who heads the District Agriculture Training Centre of the Karnataka Government at Belthangady, observed that the experiences of people like Mr Ariga have made other farmers, who had abandoned paddy cultivation due to labour shortage, to reconsider their decisions. They are seeing the benefits of using them, he said.

Mr Ariga, who cultivates nearly 2,000 arecanut plants and around 200 coconut trees, now no more dependent on manual labour for his plantation works.

Clutching the local-made tree climber to his legs, he showed how quickly and easily he can spray copper sulphate solution to arecanut trees and harvest arecanut and coconut from the trees. Commenting on current trend of labour shortage, he said: “These days an educated person looks for an office job. The uneducated prefers jobs in the nearby cashew factories or SHG-run (self-help group) home industries units. No one wants to do labour-intensive farm jobs.” On an optimistic note he said these factors did not deter him. In stead, it made him to look at other avenues to tackle the problem.

Sluggish demand pulls down wheat

Business Line Lady farm workers at a wheat cultivating field near Ajmer, Jaipur in Rajasthan. (File photo)

Karnal, Feb. 8:

Dara wheat prices dropped further on account of sluggish demand on Tuesday. Dara prices dropped by Rs 10-20 and ruled around Rs 1,250 a quintal against the levels of Rs 1,270 quoted last weekend.

For the finer quality, it was around Rs 1,270 a quintal while the seed variety was around Rs 1,280. In Delhi market, wheat prices dropped too and ruled around the levels of Rs 1,320-1,330 a quintal.

Mr Sewa Ram, a wheat trader, told *Business Line* that the market had already witnessed a fall of Rs 40-50 a quintal in last few days and it's hard to anticipate the levels where the market will get any support. Traders have adequate stocks but the domestic demand is very low, he added.

With no arrivals from Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh of Dara and desi wheat varieties, local traders are offloading their stocks in order to exhaust their stocks before March 31, said Mr Ram. Around 300 quintals stock of dara variety was offloaded by the local stockists, on Tuesday.

Flour prices

Flour prices continued to tumble, dropping Rs 20 for a 90-kg bag and quoted at Rs 1,270 against the levels of Rs 1,290 quoted last weekend. Chokar prices witnessed a fall and ruled at Rs 600 for a 49-kg bag.