

Milk production affected due to summer

Staff Reporter

SANGAREDDY: Call it the effect of summer, Medak district is losing 20,000 litres milk per day. This, even after crossing the milestone of more than one lakh artificial inseminations along with Gopala Mitra inseminations. The low availability of milk is expected to continue till June.

While 90,000 litres of milk was collected per day in Medak district, it has been reduced to 70,000 litres per day due to high temperature, high humidity and low availability of fodder in addition to less number of white cattle. Of the total milch animals, while white cattle constitute 30 per cent, black cattle is at 70 per cent.

Most of the black animals will not be in a position to produce milk of the earlier quantity due to various reasons and this was one of the main reason for reduction in milk production in the district.

Artificial insemination was organised for about 1.39 lakh cattle in Medak district last year and conception percentage stood at 40 per cent which is being considered as good. "The highest number of artificial inseminations took place in Medak district in recent times," said V. Laxma Reddy, Joint Director, Animal Husbandry.

As many as 1,283 milch animals were distributed in the district in last financial year and according to official estimates it requires another 2,000 milch animals to get included in the system to meet the requirement.

Date:11/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/11/stories/2011041154590500.htm>

Project to alert farmers on weather conditions

Staff Reporter

They will be told about the steps to be taken to minimise crop loss

SANGAREDDY: To alert farmers regarding weather changes and the precautions that need to be taken by them to minimise crop loss, Gummadidala in Jinnaram mandal of Medak district, has been selected on a pilot basis for the project, by the National Federation of Farmers' Association.

Addressing a programme at Gummadidala on Sunday, national general secretary of the association Peddireddy Chengal Reddy said groups would be formed with 10 farmers each as members. The group leader would be provided with alerts regarding weather changes and the precautions that need to be taken on how to reduce crop loss.

The groups would be in contact with a team of agriculture and weather experts in Hyderabad, who would assess the changes and advise the farming community 48 hours in advance. The pilot project is expected to start in three months.

The association has also selected Ranga Reddy district for the project, Mr. Chengal Reddy said.

Date:11/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/11/stories/2011041153280400.htm>

'Ignored' farmers take up canal cleaning

G. Nagaraja

Faced with official apathy, tail-end farmers in West Godavari take up weed removal in K-E canal

-Photo: A.V.G. Prasad



Tough times: A thick wall of tape grass being removed from the Krishna-Eastern canal near Dhavajigudem on the Krishna-West Godavari district border on Sunday.-

ELURU: Fed up with the alleged apathy by the government in implementing the Rs. 200 crore modernisation scheme and left to fend for themselves, the tail-end farmers in West Godavari district have resorted to self-help in weed removal from the Krishna-Eastern canal under the banner of the Water Users Association (WUAs) to save the standing paddy crop.

The WUAs embarked on the weed removal programme from Perikeedu to Kesarapalli for a stretch of 25 km in Krishna district on Sunday by engaging 20 tractors and 200 workers. The exercise, estimated to cost around Rs. 3 lakh, will last for five days. Even as a pair of tractors, linked with a barbed wire, positioned on either side of the canal and moved on, the wire cut through the high-rise weed and a batch of 10 workers removed the thickets of tape grass at each point.

The Irrigation Department sanctioned Rs. 7.5 lakh for weed removal in the same stretch in January. Besides, the farmers spent a little over Rs. 1 crore in February last for the same purpose. But in no time, thick layers of tape grass again sprang in the canal for a stretch of 40 km from Eluru to Gannavaram, warranting a fresh round of weed removal again at the fag end of the season. The higher-ups in the Irrigation Department refused to sanction funds on the ground that the rules did not permit them to do so more than once in any one given crop season. The WUA leaders approached the West Godavari district administration for financial help, but their pleas reportedly fell on deaf ears.

Mulpuru Veerabhadhra Rao, president of the Chataparru WUA president, said at least 1,000 acres out of 3,300 acres of paddy fields in his village in Eluru rural mandal alone was withering for want of water as the weed-struck K-E canal failed to bring water to the tail-end fields. "We can't afford to wait for the government help. It's do or die for all of us", Mr. Veerabhadhra Rao said. According to Yerneni Nagendranath of the Andhra Pradesh Rytanga Samakhya, the paddy crop in 7,000 acres at the tail-end parts in West Godavari district is facing the threat of withering. Paddy was raised in 38,000 acres in rabi under the canal ayacut in both Krishna and West Godavari .

Date:11/04/2011 **URL:** <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/11/stories/2011041153870500.htm>

IAS, PCS officers to oversee wheat procurement in Punjab

Chandigarh: To ensure smooth and hassle-free procurement of wheat, the Punjab Government has asked senior IAS and PCS officers to supervise the total procurement process of the crop, including timely payment to the farmers of their produce in the State.

Disclosing this here on Sunday, an official spokesman said that S.R. Ladhar, Commissioner, Jalandhar Division, would supervise the procurement process for Amritsar, Taran Taran, Jalandhar and Kapurthala districts while G.S. Grewal, Commissioner, Patiala Division, would supervise the procurement process for Patiala, Ludhiana, Sangrur and Barnala districts.

Raminder Singh, Commissioner Ferozepur division would look after the procurement process of Ferozpur, Faridkot and Moga districts.

The spokesman said that B.S. Sudan, Secretary Personal and General Administration would look after the entire arrangement of wheat procurement of Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur and Saheed Bhagat Singh Nagar districts.

While K.J.S. Cheema, Special Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, would supervise the procurement operations in Bathinda, Mansa and Muktsar districts, Gagandeep Singh Brar, PCS, would look after the procurement process in Ropar, Mohali and Fathegarh districts.

Experts see huge demand for fish industry

Staff Reporter

Stress on observing moderation in feed

Call for efforts to explore the scope for 'branding' of fish products

ASA-IM promises to extend support to feed producers, fish farmers



Looking ahead:Global Aquaculture Technical directors P.E.Vijay Kumar and Michael D.Cremer and The Hindu Business Line Associate Editor G.Chandrasekharan participating in the fish industry debate forum conducted by Amercian Soyabean Association in Vijayawada on Sunday.

VIJAYAWADA: Experts at the 'Fish industry debate forum' organised by the American Soyabean Association Marketing International (ASA-IM) here on Sunday foresaw a huge demand for the fish industry in the country in the next 5-10 years even as they recommended organised activities among fish farmers and feed producers on the lines of the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC).

Michael C. Cremer, technical director of Global Aquaculture, ASA-IM, spoke on the topic 'Future of fish feed industry' when he stressed the need to achieve sustainability by observing moderation in use of feed and by not looking for greater profitability. He explained that overuse of feed would result in accumulation of waste at the bottom of fish ponds, which would lead to various problems with a long-term impact.

Dr. Michael called for efforts on the part of everyone to ensure faster pace of growth in fish production so that this industry would be able to meet the growing demand for food products in future. He touched upon waste management elaborately, saying that lack of discipline in this respect led to serious problems in Vietnam. For the health of ponds and for maintaining good yield in the next 10 years, waste should be generated up to naturally manageable limits, he added.

Marketing strategies

Stating that if more feed was used there would be more waste, Dr. Michael said that the Vietnamese had come to use over the years nearly 300 tonnes of feed per hectare and now they were struggling to reduce this to 100 tonnes by adopting various measures and in the face of losing sustainability.

G. Chandrasekhar, associate editor, Business Line, Mumbai, moderated the debate when he strongly advised the fish industry to organise itself through a centralised forum so as to evolve effective marketing strategies and explore scope for "branding" of fish products for making fish eating fashionable and more popular.

P.E. Vijay Anand, technical director of ASA-IM, assured the feed producers and farmers of further support from their organisation in enabling united efforts for further development of the industry. He said that from nothing three years ago, the feed industry had grown to a capacity of 5 lakh tonnes per year in Krishna and West Godavari districts, which was a sign of greater potential for it.

He explained how ASA-IM could generate awareness among fish farmers to go for 'floating feed' which consists of 50 per cent soyabean.

Krishna District Fish Farmers Association president Kamineni Srinivasa Rao and fish feed producers were present.

Date:10/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/10/stories/2011041063980600.htm>

Good news for tenant farmers

Special Correspondent

Government

to promulgate Ordinance soon which will benefit farmers, land owners

HYDERABAD: The State government which could not pass a legislation to provide legal backing to tenant farmers and safeguard the rights of the land owners in the recent Budget session, is determined to promulgate an Ordinance soon.

Cabinet meeting

A senior official said the Ordinance on 'Andhra Pradesh Land Licensed Cultivation Act, 2011' will be placed before the next Cabinet meeting for approval and to bring it into effect.

The draft legislation has been vetted by the Law Department and the opinion of the Advocate General and a retired Judge of Supreme Court has been sought.

Well within parameters

The Law Department as well as the Advocate General and the retired Supreme Court Judge have made it clear that the legislation was well within the parameters of the State government and it could go ahead with the promulgation of the Ordinance.

The Ordinance will enable tenant farmers secure institutional finance and also avail of crop insurance, input subsidy and agricultural inputs which they so far were deprived of.

The official dismissed the speculation that in view of opposition to the Bill from some quarters, the government had decided to put it on the back burner. "The government is committed to protecting the interest of tenant farmers as well as land owners. But as it could not be passed in the Budget session, it will now be brought into effect in the form of an Ordinance," he added.

Date:10/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/10/stories/2011041057310300.htm>

Farmers oppose BT cotton

Staff Reporter

SANGAREDDY: Farmers have joined hands to oppose BT Cotton cultivation and demanded that the government ensure supply of uncontaminated seed.

At a round table meeting held recently at Bangalooru by Southern Action on Genetic Engineering (SAGE), farmers not only from the State but also Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Orissa shared their bitter experiences.

Four farmers -- Bandi Sulochana, Ankati Rajamani, Karny Shanker and K. Bhagyalakshmi -- from Warangal district opposed BT cotton. "I am cultivating BT Cotton for the past six years based on the suggestion of a dealer who said that it did not require sprays and gives high yields. While five years back my profit was Rs. 15,000, I am now incurring a loss of Rs. 20,000 by going for BT cotton seed," says Ms. Rajamani of Malkapet village of Atmakur mandal. She says that BT Cotton has taken away her seed, made her dependent on the dealer and created health problems to plants, soil and animals.

Mr. Shankar has no different story to tell. "I was told that my hard work will be reduced and I will have more gains. Big advertisements made me to believe in BT Cotton," he says adding that Bollworm and Mealy Bug survived instead of dying after eating BT Cotton.

"All my hopes are lost. Today my preference is non-BT cotton seed," says Mr. Shankar.

"Though I do not grow BT Cotton I am a victim as my neighbours grow BT Cotton Crop," said Ms. Bhagya Lakshmi.

The representative of SAGE organised a rally at Sangareddy on Friday and presented a memorandum to the officials in this regard urging the authorities to supply non BT Cotton to the farmers.

Date:10/04/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/10/stories/2011041054660700.htm>

Kudgi plant: farmers' compensation fixed

Staff Correspondent

Rs. 4.75 lakh per acre for non-irrigated land

Farmers who have irrigated land to get Rs. 6 lakh

BASAVANABAGEWADI (Bijapur District): Large- and Medium-scale Industries Minister Murugesh Nirani has said the State Government will give Rs. 4.75 lakh per acre for non-irrigated land and Rs. 6 lakh per acre for irrigated land to farmers who lose land for the 4,000-MW thermal power plant in Kudgi village.

Addressing presspersons after the Jana Spandana programme here on Saturday, he said the compensation was finalised at a meeting in Bangalore on Friday, attended by Energy Minister Shoba Karandlaje, National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) officials and a delegation of farmers from Kudgi.

The revised package would also be applicable to those who had already received compensation.

Exemption

If the farmers wished to purchase land at other places using the amount, there would be exemption from stamp duty.

“The officials have also clarified farmers' doubts regarding the possible effect of fly ash on beetle leaves and the quality of water in Alamatti dam. Advanced technology, which would completely minimise the effect of fly ash, would be used in this power plant,” Mr. Nirani added.

Infrastructure

The NTPC would also develop infrastructure around the village. It also planned to establish an Industrial Training Institute.

Mr. Nirani, who is in charge of the district, said tahsildars would be appointed as nodal officers to solve people's problems that were raised at the Jana Spandana.

The officers would be instructed to give a detailed report on the steps taken to address the problems, in a stipulated time, the Minister said.

Date:10/04/2011 **URL:** <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/10/stories/2011041060330500.htm>

Decontrol of fertilizer prices hits farmers

Staff Reporter

PALAKKAD: K. Krishnankutty, Socialist Janata (Democratic) (SJD) secretary-general and a leading farmer in Chittur, said the decontrol of fertilizer prices by the Union government had hiked prices by 200 per cent to 400 per cent.

In a statement here on Saturday, he said hitherto the price of fertilizers was decided by the Union government. But now it had allowed the manufacturing companies to fix the price of their products. He said the State government had promised to extend a fixed amount of subsidy as assistance to farmers to tide over the crisis.

Date:10/04/2011 **URL:** <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/10/stories/2011041060380500.htm>

Convention planned on Malnad's tender mango

Staff Correspondent

'Indiscriminate harvesting poses a threat to Appemidi trees'

Shimoga: A two-day convention on Appemidi, a tender variety of mango grown in Malnad region, will be held at Yalavarasi Farm near Sagar from April 18 and 19.

At a preliminary meeting to discuss preparations for the event in Sagar on Friday, Karnataka State Organic Farming Mission chairman A.S. Anand said the convention would design strategies to conserve the Appemidi.

Task force

The former member of zilla panchayat B.R. Jayanth said afforestation in the name of development needed to be prevented to conserve Appemidi.

Indiscriminate harvesting practices had posed a threat for the existence of Appemidi trees, the local community need to be trained on scientific harvesting practices, he said.

A task force comprising conservation activists and agriculture scientists should be formed to conserve Appemidi and other plants which were native to the Western Ghats.

A memorandum would be submitted to Chief Minister in this regard, he said. The convention would be inaugurated by Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa.

Experts on grafting, cultivation, harvesting and processing of Appemidi would take part in the convention. Exhibition

An exhibition and sale of food products prepared from Appemidi would be held.

Convention

The convention would serve as a forum for exchange of ideas and information among Appemidi growers, Mr. Anand said.

Record production of sugar in UP

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh has achieved a record production of 590 lakh quintal sugar in the current crushing season. "So far 590 lakh quintal sugar has been produced in the State by crushing 6,380 lakh quintal cane with a recovery percentage of 9.13 per cent," an official spokesman said here on Saturday.

The figures were quoted by the officials during a departmental review meeting held by Cane Development Minister Naseemuddin Siddiqui held here on Saturday.

"Production this year is 83 lakh quintal higher than 507 lakh quintal in the last crushing season," he said.

During the review meeting, Mr. Siddiqui said that the government was committed to timely payment of cane price and that stern action would be taken against sugar mills which delay the payment. While directing the officials to promote co-production among farmers, the Minister said that the process of realising commission given by the mills to cane committees should be speeded up.

The officials informed the Minister that as against cane dues of Rs.12,904 crore in the current crushing season, 11,800 crore has been paid to the farmers so far.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Monday, Apr 11

Max Min

34° | 25°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 84%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:59

Sunset: 18:21

Barometer: 1011.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Apr 12

Max Min

36° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

Apr 13



32° | 24°

Cloudy

Thursday

Apr 14



33° | 25°

Cloudy

Friday

Apr 15



33° | 24°

Cloudy

Saturday

Apr 16



33° | 24°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

Apr 17



33° | 25°

Cloudy

Rs 1,000 cr deposited in farmers' accounts as wheat support price

April 11, 2011 11:57:50 AM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Government in order to fulfill its commitment to welfare of the farmers has directly deposited over Rs 1,000 crore in the bank accounts of farmers against procurement of wheat on support price in the last 25 days.

This amount includes bonus paid at the rate of Rs 100 per quintal by the State Government. This aims at saving the farmers from clutches of middlemen besides benefiting genuine farmers. This process will go on in future too. This remarkable achievement shows that the announcement of the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh has come into force in the State.

During the Rabi season, over 8.5 lakh metric tonne wheat has already been procured. In many areas, the sowing was delayed due to belated rains. In these areas, harvesting is in progress and after Nauratri festival the arrival of crops in market will increase. Out of the procured wheat, 5.69 lakh tonne has been safely stored in godowns. In order to rule out any possibility of irregularities in the payment, the State Government has introduced the system of directly depositing the amount in bank accounts of farmers. There is no shortage of Hessian bags and the same are still available for 25 lakh metric tonne wheat. The procurement process is being consistently monitored and all the ministers have taken up of this responsibility in the field.

In order to ensure proper and hassle free payment of their produce to farmers, the State Government has put in place a transparent mechanism from this year. Now, at the time of selling their produce, the farmers fill up a proforma on the basis of their loan books at the procurement centre. The loan books show the name of their banks as well as their account numbers. The cooperative societies duly acknowledge this and record of quantity procured and the price thereof. Subsequently, the societies send the statement along with the details of

concerning farmers daily to the banks concerned. On the basis of this, the amount is deposited in farmers' bank accounts.

Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurveda acquires US herbal products' firm

April 11, 2011 11:57:55 AM

VIKRAM RAUTELA | HARIDWAR

Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurveda Limited has acquired an American herbal products' company, Naturomic LLC. The South California-based company will now be known as Patanjali Herboved.

Spread over an area of 130 acres in Anaheim in South California, the company manufactures various types of herbal products. Though Patanjali Ayurveda Limited had unofficially taken over the company about two months ago, its formal acquisition was officially announced at a function held at Patanjali Yogpeeth here on Saturday afternoon with the CEO of the company, Dr Sharad Mehta handing over the company's legal documents to Baba Ramdev and general secretary of Patanjali Yogpeeth, Acharya Balkrishna.

While addressing a Press conference on the occasion, Ramdev said the taking over of the Naturomic LLC would go a long way in ushering in an era of health and prosperity across the world. "The US-based company will now function as Patanjali Herboved and will be a subsidiary company of Patanjali Ayurveda Limited," the Yoga guru said.

Launching a total of six herbal products manufactured by the company, Baba Ramdev said, "Ayurveda has got a solution for every health related problem. In India, the science has been used in curing people since ancient times and now its importance is being acknowledged in foreign countries as well. Patanjali Herboved will be instrumental in spreading the message of importance of Ayurveda and herbs in the entire West."

Speaking to mediapersons, Mehta said, "It is the beginning of a new revolution in Ayurveda. There is huge market in the foreign countries for Ayurveda products and Patanjali Herboved shall try to tap it fully."

Acharya Balkrishna, when contacted, said, "The Patanjali Ayurveda Limited has acquired 80 per cent stake in Naturomic LLC, which will be now known as Patanjali Herboved. Over the next two years, the Patanjali Ayurveda Limited will work to develop and promote the company as an Ayurveda products' manufacturing unit in America."

Yoga guru Baba Ramdev has already set up Patanjali pharmacy, phase-I and II and a gigantic Patanjali food Park at Padartha in the district. Pantanjali Herboved is the first extension of Patanjali Ayurveda Litimed in a Western country.

Govt plans to procure onions for lean period

April 11, 2011 11:58:04 AM

SEEMA SINDHU | New Delhi

The recent onion crisis seems to have taught the Government a lesson for future. To avoid any such incidence in future, the Government is planning to procure onions from across the country and store it for lean period, according to a Consumer Affairs Ministry official.

"Nafed (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India) would procure onions from farmers across the States and would store it to sell when there is shortage. We have analysed the cost and it is not very high. Factoring in the different cost components, onions can be stored at cost of Rs 4-7 a kg," the Consumer Affairs Ministry official said.

The Consumer Affairs Ministry has written to all the States in this regard to seek their view as agriculture and its marketing is State subject. Onion is a highly perishable commodity and thus tends to create speculation during lean period, leading to steep price rise. In addition, storage is also difficult. The Kharif onion (sown in September to January) cannot be stored for more than a week as it has high moisture level. However, rabi onion (sown in November to April) can be stored, said the official.

Nafed would procure rabi onion which can be stored for six-eight months. Rabi onion has very low moisture level and is fit for storage for long period, provided the appropriate technology. He further told that the Government is also considering a similar plan for potatoes. However, at this juncture, the same is not possible for other vegetables as the cost of storage would be very high

in view that the country lacks cold chain infrastructure.

Heavy and unseasonal rains in Rajasthan, Nashik and most of south India last year had damaged kharif onion crop season leading to skyrocketing prices. Onion prices had reached 70-80 per kg in December-January. This had rocked the UPA Government as onion is a staple vegetable.

Rs 1,000 crore deposited in farmer accounts

April 11, 2011 11:58:51 AM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Government in order to fulfill its commitment to welfare of the farmers has directly deposited over `1,000 crore in the bank accounts of farmers against procurement of wheat on support price in the last 25 days.

This amount includes bonus paid at the rate of `100 per quintal by the State Government. This aims at saving the farmers from clutches of middlemen besides benefiting genuine farmers. This process will go on in future too. This remarkable achievement shows that the announcement of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has come into force in the State,

During the Rabi season, over 8.5 lakh metric tonne wheat has already been procured. In many areas, the sowing was delayed due to belated rains. In these areas, harvesting is in progress and after Nauratri festival the arrival of crops in market will increase. Out of the procured wheat, 5.69 lakh tonne has been safely stored in godowns. In order to rule out any possibility of irregularities in the payment, the State Government has introduced the system of directly depositing the amount in bank accounts of farmers. There is no shortage of Hessian bags and the same are still available for 25 lakh metric tonne wheat. The procurement process is being consistently monitored and all the ministers have taken up of this responsibility in the field.

In order to ensure proper and hassle free payment of their produce to farmers, the State Government has put in place a transparent mechanism from this year. Now, at the time of selling their produce, the farmers fill up a proforma on the basis of their loan books at the procurement centre. The loan books show the name of their banks as well as their account

numbers. The cooperative societies duly acknowledge this and record of quantity procured and the price thereof. Subsequently, the societies send the statement along with the details of concerning farmers daily to the banks concerned. On the basis of this, the amount is deposited in farmers' bank accounts.

9, 8.5 lakh metric tonne wheat procured till April

April 11, 2011 11:59:02 AM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

Procurement of farm produce on support price is the only largest scheme that directly benefits the farmers. Madhya Pradesh Government is the first in the country to provide bonus on support price to the farmers. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan increased the pre-decided bonus amount of `50 to `100 per quintal.

This year also, the same amount is being paid as bonus. Last year, over 35 lakh metric tonne wheat was procured on support price and `4200 crore was paid to the farmers against this. This included `350 crore paid as bonus.

Encouraged by procurement of last year, the State Government has fixed the target of 35 lakh metric tonne for this year. The procurement started on March 15 and till April 9, 8.5 lakh metric tonne has already been procured. The State Civil Supplies Corporation procured wheat in 23 districts and marketing federation did the same in remaining districts. The highest quantity of 1,44,990 metric tonne was procured in Harda district. The procurement will continue till May 31.

With a view to ensuring smooth procurement, the State Government has already arranged 1,22,819 bales of Hessian bags for 25 lakh metric tonne. One bale comprises 500 Hessian bags. By now, 33,382 bales have been used and 89,437 are still available.

The State Government has been increasing the number of procurement centres as per the targets. Last year, the target was to set up 1,250 procurement centres but till last date of procurement, the number was increased to 1,652. So far this year, 1,862 procurement centres have been set up.

Four districts — including Harda, Hoshangabad, Raisen and Sehore — are reporting maximum procurement in view of which the procured wheat is being transported by rail to the godowns in other districts. As per requirement cap storage is being arranged and it is being ensured that the wheat is not affected by rains. This responsibility has been assigned to State warehousing corporation.

30% Punjabis farmers but output declining

April 11, 2011 12:02:36 PM

Alok Singh | Chandigarh

Punjab's agricultural contribution to the Centre has been declining every year which is a major cause of concern for the people of the State. Where the State was contributing 60.9 per cent wheat and 41 per cent rice in 1990, it has now come down to 42.2 percent wheat and 29.5 per cent rice in the year 2009.

With little flip-flops in the figure till 2000, it had gone down to 51.2 per cent wheat and 32.9 per cent rice in 2001, after four years in 2006 it jumped to 75.3 per cent in respect to wheat but in respect to rice it had gone down to 31.9 per cent. In 2007 again fallen down to 60.9 per cent wheat and 27.8 per cent rice.

The fall was continued in the year 2008 with 43.8 per cent wheat and 25.1 per cent rice and in 2009 the same proportion of decline was recorded of wheat to 42.2 per cent while with a little jump of rice was recorded to 29.5 per cent, that were contributed to the Centre.

Experts say the main reason of decline was improper storage of paddy and food grains in the State. The other cause was unscheduled rains and unhealthy climate for the crops. Indecent and massive use of pesticides with harmful chemicals perhaps would be the other reason. The area of the cultivation has also been saturated.

“There is no more scope to increase area under agriculture in the State as it has already reached at saturation level where almost 99 per cent of cultivable land was under plough. It has been observed that diversification in the farm sector is the need of the hour, which is envisaged so as to achieve some long term benefits as optimum utilisation of natural resources especially

soil and water, maintaining sustainability in ecological and environmental field and stability in productivity and income,” said an expert.

In the last four decade only one lakh hectare of land for cultivation has been increased. In 1970 area under the cultivation was 40.3 lakh hectares which increased to 41.61 lakh hectares in 2009, showing an increase of 2.7 per cent in the production. Cropping intensity which reveals percentage of gross area sown to net area sown enhanced from 140 in 1970 to 190 in 2009-10.

The present agriculture cropping pattern in the State is dominated by the wheat paddy rotation causing degradation in soil fertility and fall in the underground water table.

Wheat and paddy cover the major portion of the gross cropped area as area under these two crops has increased to 80 per cent in 2009 from 47 per cent in 1970. However, area under wheat has decreased from 35.26 lakh hectares in 2008 to 35.22 lakh hectares in 2009 showing marginal decrease of 0.11 per cent. The area under paddy has increased from 27.34 lakh hectares in 2008 to 28.02 lakh hectares in 2009 showing increase of 2.49 per cent.

Interestingly, the total food grains production in State has been increased over the last few decades, especially in the post green revolution period. In 1970, production of food grains was 73.05 lakh metric tonnes which increased to 269.49 lakh metric tonnes in 2009 registering more than three fold increases.

Wheat and rice played a major role in pushing up agriculture production in the State. The production of the rice has increased from 65.06 lakh metric tonnes in 1990 to 112.36 lakh metric tonnes in 2009 showing an increase of 23 percent. Similarly, the production of wheat has increased from 121.59 lakh metric tonnes in 1990 to 151.69 lakh metric tonnes during 2009 registering an increase of 25 per cent.

Agriculture continues to be an important driver of the State economy, it has contributed to 15.78 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product at constant prices during 2009 and as per Census 2001, around 30 per cent of the working population of the State was engaged in agriculture.

Business Standard

Monday, Apr 11, 2011

Cotton prices in Gujarat ease by 2 per cent

BS Reporter / Mumbai/ Ahmedabad April 11, 2011, 0:05 IST

After a recent spell of bullishness, cotton prices have started cooling down in Gujarat as the millers have gone slow on buying in the wake of piling up of cotton inventory. The prices for Shanker-6 variety of cotton had touched a peak of Rs 62,500 per candy (a candy = 356 kg) last week. However, it has now eased to Rs 60,500 to Rs 61,000 per candy.

Cotton traders maintained that the fall in the prices is a temporary phenomenon as arrivals may reduce in coming days, triggering a price rise by April end.

"Cotton prices have dipped by more than 2 per cent in last seven days. But this may not last longer as there are other factors that can keep up the prices in the long run. Also, this is a lean season for millers to buy cotton due to ending of the financial year. They may start fresh buying from next month onwards," said NM Sharma, managing director, Gujarat State Cooperative Cotton Federation Limited (GUJCOT), a farmers' cooperative.

According to industry insiders, millers have stopped buying due to nonviable yarn exports, which are affected due to rupee appreciation against dollar and a reduction in the international yarn prices.

"Yarn exports are not attractive at present. International prices are low and strong rupee is making the exports costly, therefore mills are avoiding fresh buying. This may last for some time till the inventory gets cleared at the millers," said an Ahmedabad-based cotton yarn exporter.

"Arrivals are stable in the markets at present but there are no buyers, hence prices are going down. This may last for some more time as mills have excess inventory piled up with them. The buying is almost 50 per cent less than the last month, this has caused the prices to come down," said a cotton trader from Surendranagar.

So far in the domestic market, cotton prices have remained lower against the international prices. Industry experts informed that the international prices have remained stable at around 195 cents per pound, while the domestic prices have remained at discount against the international prices.

The weakness in the domestic prices was mainly attributed to the increased supplies following the restricted exports. The cotton production in the country for the current season is estimated at 40 million bales (a bale = 170 kg) in 2011-12.

Coffee exports may fall 20-30% in FY12

Debasis Mohapatra / Bangalore April 10, 2011, 0:27 IST

Political crisis in West Asia and lower carry-over stock to have adverse effect.

Coffee exports from India are expected to fall 20-30 per cent in the current financial year on the back of ongoing political crisis in West Asia and lower carry-over stock as compared with the last financial year.

In FY11, the country exported 325,116 tonnes of coffee, up 59.34 per cent compared to the corresponding period last year on the back of production deficit in major growing nations like Brazil and Columbia.

Total export value realisation from the country also increased 75 per cent to Rs 3,789 crore as compared to Rs 2,615 crore in the previous financial year.

“Current financial year will see a fall in exports from the country on the back of the ongoing crisis in parts of West Asian nations and lower carry-over stock,” Ramesh Rajah, president of Coffee Exporters’ Association said.

He also said most of the coffee produce from the country had been front loaded in the fourth quarter due to higher international prices.

International prices of coffee in the January-March period was ruling at an all time high on the back of production deficit from major producing nations and robust demand.

While arabica prices touched a 14 year high of 295cents/lb, robusta prices reached \$2,700 a tonne during this period.

“The volume of front loading from exporters was very high, leaving little carry forward stock for the current financial,” Rajah said.

Even, exporters are getting less orders from West Asian region due to the ongoing political crisis.

“Financial institutions are reluctant to handle the credit guarantee documents due to uncertainty in these regions. Also, order flow from West Asian region is drying up,” Rajah added.

West Asian region is the third-largest block for Indian coffee after European and Russian nations.

Along with these factors, stronger rupee may also play spoilsport for the exporters in FY12.

“Appreciating rupee will erode margin level in the current financial. We are also skeptical about the current price level that is expected to dip on the back of a good harvest from producing nations,” he said.

Referring to this issue, a top Coffee Board official said low carry-over stock was definitely a point of concern for exports. However, he declined to comment on the prospects of coffee exports in the current financial year due to such factors. However, some of the exporters have a different view on this matter.

“Low carry-over stock is not a new phenomena in Indian context. This will have minimal impact on export figure as production is a better parameter to judge export performance,” an industry insider with one of the largest coffee export house of India said.

He also said West Asian region was not big enough to upset export figures. “The demand is robust in Western economies and prices are expected to sustain at the present level,” the official added.

Sugar export sanction not that sweet

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi April 10, 2011, 0:09 IST

The government's delayed approval to export of 500,000 tonnes of sugar under open general licence (OGL) is not being cheered by the industry. Analysts say realisation from exports would be around Rs 2-3 per kilogram less than what it would have been if export was allowed immediately after last December's policy announcement.

After food inflation entered double digits in December, it was decided, in the first week of January, that the matter of sugar exports be referred to an empowered group of ministers (EGoM). The EGoM met on March 22, after more than two months, and cleared the proposal. A formal order in this regard is expected in a few days.

Industry players say inordinate delay has not only lowered their export realisation, but could also put a spanner on lucrative export deals with the European Union. "The EU recently placed an order for import of 300,000 tonnes of high-value sugar at an attractive price of Rs 40 per kg (ex-factory). But this won't materialise if millers fail to enter into contracts in the next 15 days," a senior industry official said.

He said Indian millers can capture, at least, 200,000 tonnes of the order. He said the procedural delay on part of the government in giving a final nod to the exports is not helping matters.

Sugar mills in Maharashtra can export at Rs 30 per kg (ex-factory), while domestic prices are hovering in the range of Rs 25.50 to Rs 26 per kg in the state.

"In other words, millers in Maharashtra, as on date, stand to gain Rs 4.50 to Rs 5 per kg on exports. But the same realisation could have been almost Rs 2-3 per kg more, if the 500,000 tonnes could have been exported in January," the official said.

In Uttar Pradesh, the ex-factory realisation from exports is estimated to be around Rs 28 per kg after factoring in transportation cost from mills to ports, while the domestic price of sugar is also around the same level of Rs 27.50 to Rs 28 per kg.

"Export contracts to EU countries have to be finalised within the next 15 days since countries such as Dubai are vying for the opportunity," the official said.

Brazil, which is the world's largest producer of the sweetener, is also expected to start exporting sugar from mid-May. "As of now, Brazilian exports don't pose a threat to India. But if final clearances are delayed further, then we should brace for the same," the official said.

In Brazil, sugarcane crushing begins usually from May and exports begin from middle or late May. Sugarcane production in Brazil is expected to be around 640 million tonnes in 2011-2012 crop marketing season, that has started in April, almost 20 million tonnes more than last year.

India's sugar production is estimated at 24.5 million tonnes in 2011-12 sugar year (October-September) against 18.8 million tonnes in the previous year. The annual demand is pegged at 22 million tonnes.

THE HINDU Business Line

Pepper prices soar on supply crunch



A file photo of a farmer tending his pepper plant.

Kochi, April 10:

The pepper market appears to be in the strong grip of the bulls who are pushing the prices up sharply.

Surprisingly, the prices continued to soar even after the much-awaited harvesting of the new crop in Vietnam, estimated to be over one lakh tonnes, started about a couple of months ago.

The supply continued to remain squeezed and the overseas buyers are said to be buying from India now at over \$6,000 a tonne.

Brazil and Indonesia do not have much to offer and the only source at present is India.

Overseas buyers are said to have recently purchased at \$6,000 and above a tonne (c&f) to meet their immediate commitments, market sources told *Business Line*.

The sellers who are holding some material seem to have withdrawn from the market, anticipating the prices to cross the historic Rs 300 a kg. The spot price of MG 1 had touched Rs 265 a kg about 12 years ago.

According to projections, the global pepper output is expected to be less than that of 2010 while the consumption in producing and other consuming countries have been showing a steady growth of 3-5 per cent.

All the contracts went up sharply during the week. April, May and June contracts shot up by Rs 873, Rs 1,050 and Rs 1,225 respectively to close at Rs 26,297, Rs 26,850 and Rs 27,332 a quintal.

Total turnover increased by 39,113 tonnes to close at 81,117 tonnes.

Total open interest went up by 1,738 tonnes to 14,428 tonnes showing good additional purchases.

The market also witnessed switching over to nearby positions during the week.

Spot prices soared by Rs 1,200 to close at Rs 24,700 (ungarbled) and Rs 25,500 (MG 1) a quintal on strong buying amid limited availability.

Overseas trend

The black pepper market was very dynamic during the week and prices increased at all origins.

This was due to anticipated short supply of this year crops, says the latest report from the International Pepper Community (IPC).

MMTC floats bids for import of 5.25 lakh tonnes of fertilisers



Right type of fertilizer

New Delhi, Apr 10:

Ahead of the Kharif season starting from June, state-owned trading firm MMTC has invited bids for importing 5.25 lakh tonnes of Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) and other fertilisers to meet domestic demand.

Bids for the supply of 4,00,000 tonnes of DAP and 1,25,000 tonnes of complex fertilisers will close on April 13 and April 15 respectively, and the tenders will be finalised the same days, the company said on its website.

MMTC has specified that bidders should import complex fertilisers during April-May, and DAP from May to September.

The company said the consignment of 1,15,000 tonnes of DAP should reach the Krishnapatnam port in Andhra Pradesh, while 90,000 tonnes each at Kandla (Gujarat) and Vizag (Andhra Pradesh) ports, respectively.

The rest of DAP should be discharged at Tuticorin and New Mangalore, it added.

Besides, MMTC said the shipment of complex fertilisers should reach Mumbai and Tuticorin ports.

According to the official estimates, fertiliser demand is estimated to be 4 per cent higher at 28.8 million tonnes in the ensuing Kharif (summer) season, as against 27.7 million tonnes in the year-ago period.

The Kharif season starts with the onset of the south-west monsoon from June. Crops like paddy, pulses and oilseeds are largely grown during this season.

Millers blame elections for delay in sugar export notification



A bitter sweet scenario for the sugar sector.

New Delhi, April 10:

The delay in issuing an official notification permitting export of five lakh tonnes (lt) of sugar – despite an Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) giving the go-ahead on March 22 – has upset domestic millers.

“We have missed the bus. Even if the notification comes now, it is too late as the May 2011 white sugar contract at London expires on April 15. The subsequent month contracts are trading much lower, which makes exports unattractive”, a miller said.

The May contract on NYSE Liffe settled at \$ 699.70 a tonne on Friday, as against the corresponding quotes of \$ 651.60 and \$ 642.50 for August and October 2011.

elections

The actual reason for the delay in issuing the formal export notification is not known.

One version is that the notification has been sent to the Election Commission, which is still to clear it. But the logic of this is unclear, because out of the four States where assembly elections are being held, only Tamil Nadu is a significant sugar producer. Only its cane growers potentially stand to benefit from exports.

On the other hand, West Bengal, Kerala and Assam are purely sugar-consuming States, so much so that “delaying exports actually influences the electoral outcome to the extent of keeping prices low”, commented the miller.

It also helps that the Ministers concerned – Mr Pranab Mukherjee (Finance) and Mr K.V. Thomas (Food and Public Distribution) – belong to West Bengal and Kerala, he noted.

Re-exports too halted

In fact, it is not just the five-lt exports under open general license cleared by the EGoM that is yet to be notified.

The Food Ministry is apparently not allowing even mills carrying out re-export obligations against past advance licences to extend the validity period of their release orders beyond the month for which they were issued.

Earlier, these extensions were granted automatically.

The miller also mentioned the ‘large’ official sugar releases made for March and April. Mills have been allocated a normal non-levy quota of 13 lakh tonnes (lt) to sell in March and 15.80 lt in

April, compared with their corresponding last year's monthly releases of 11.70 lt and 12.80 lt. Even for January and February, the releases of 17 lt and 16.23 lt were more than their respective 2010 levels of 11 lt and 12 lt. "The Centre is in no mood for the slightest increase in sugar prices before the elections", the miller noted.

prices

So, will prices go up after the polls? "Unlikely, because the big buyers (soft drinks and ice-cream makers) have made most of their purchases. They stock up before the summer, which is when most of their sales take place. Our loss is their gain", he added. Ex-factory realisations of S-30 sugar in Maharashtra averaged Rs 2,530 a quintal on Friday, with premium quality M-30 grade fetching Rs 2,570 a quintal. As against this, mills claim their average production cost at Rs 2,700, translating into a cash loss of around Rs 150 on every 100 kg of sugar sold.

Tea exports fell by 11% in February



Business Line Fall in tea exports.

New Delhi, Apr 10:

India's tea exports in February this year fell by almost 11 per cent to 11.93 million kg, according to the latest Tea Board data.

The country had exported 13.35 million kg of tea in the year-ago period, the data said.

Tea exports from North India in the period under review fell by 22.20 per cent to 6.6 million kg as compared to 8.4 million kg in the corresponding period of the previous year, it said.

However, exports of the brew from South India in the same period rose by 9.41 per cent to 5.33 million kg as against 4.87 million kg in the previous year, it added.

In the first two months of the current year, the tea export fell by 9.08 per cent to 27.72 million kg as compared 30.49 million kg in the same period previous year.

Like-wise in the April 2010 - February 2011 period, tea exports fell by 12.06 per cent to 167.02 million kg compared to 189.93 million kg in the year-ago period.

This year, the Tea Board is eyeing markets in the US, Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran and Egypt to boost its exports. India would target these markets with high-end and value-added varieties.

Maharashtra to crush 90 lakh tonnes sugar

New Delhi, April 10:

Maharashtra is on course to achieving a sugar output of over 90 lakh tonne (lt) in the ongoing 2010-11 season (October-September).

As on Friday, mills in the State had crushed 673.39 lt of cane and produced 75.97 lt of sugar at an average recovery rate of 11.28 per cent. During the corresponding period of the 2009-10 season, they had crushed 543.53 lt and produced 62.52 lt of sugar at an average recovery of 11.50 per cent.

"If there are no heavy pre-monsoon rains, crushing will go on right till end-May or even early-June. In that case, we will end up crushing about 800 lt and produce 90 lt-plus of sugar", said Mr

Prakash Naiknavare, Managing Director, Maharashtra State Cooperative Sugar Factories' Federation.

In Uttar Pradesh, the country's No. 2 produce, most mills have closed, with production estimated at about 58.5 lt.

Palm oil may test resistance



Malaysian palm oil futures on BMD exchange ended higher on Friday rising briefly to a 17-day high as traders covered short positions ahead of a monthly US Department of Agriculture crop report. Demand is likely to pick up in the coming weeks despite the prospect of rising production in Malaysia, the world's second-largest supplier of palm oil after Indonesia, after two consecutive years of declines due to weather events. Although, overnight USDA supply/demand data was bearish soya prices continued to rally higher. Markets were also supported by the strength in crude oil futures. New York Mercantile Exchange crude has risen above \$113 a barrel due to discouraging reports about developments in the civil war in Libya.

CPO futures are moving perfectly in line with our expectations. As mentioned in the previous update, favoured view now expects prices to find support on any dips to hold for a test of 3,400-3,450 Malaysian ringgit (MYR/tonne) zone again. Strong near-term resistance will now be seen at 3,450-65 MYR/tonne. We can now expect any corrective dips towards 3,365 or even lower to 3,345 MYR/tonne to hold well. This will be subsequently followed by a gradual move towards 3,495-3,500 or even higher towards 3,550 MYR/tonne being a potential target. This is our favoured view. Unexpected fall below 3,315 MYR/tonne could however, damage our bullish expectations. If prices continue to rise above 3,550 MYR/tonne, being a strong near-term resistance then we might see prices edging even higher towards 3,600 MYR/tonne levels.

We believe the impulse that began from 1,427 MYR/tonne, which hit 4,486 MYR/tonne ended and a prolonged corrective move has possibly ended at 1,335 MYR/tonne. In the big picture, a new impulse began from 1,335 MYR/tonne and the third wave with a projected objective of 3,900 MYR/tonne has been met. Most probably a wave “A” target has been met. A corrective wave “B” targeting 3,625-3,700 MYR/tonne has also materialised. The present fall in the form of a wave “C” could have ended at 3,165 MYR/tonne. Only a rise above 3,670 MYR/tonne will confirm that a new impulse has begun. Else, we can still see the 3,100-105 MYR/tonne being tested on the downside subsequently. RSI is in the neutral zone now indicating that it is neither overbought nor oversold. The averages in MACD are below the zero line of the indicator still indicating bearishness to be intact. Only a cross-over above the zero line again could indicate a reversal in trend.

Therefore, look for palm oil futures to test the resistance levels in the coming sessions.

Supports are at MYR 3,345, 3,310 and 3,250. Resistances are at MYR 3,450, 3,495 and 3,550.

Gnanasekaar .T

(The author is the Director of Commtrendz Research and also in the advisory panel of Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd (MCX). The views expressed in this column are his own and not that of MCX. This analysis is based on the historical price movements and there is risk of loss in trading. He can be reached at gnanasekar_thiagarajan@yahoo.com.)

Spot rubber prices improve

Kottayam, April 9:

Domestic rubber prices improved on Saturday. On the spot, prices firmed up mainly on covering purchases following the moderate gains on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Sheet rubber closed firm at Rs 241 (239) a kg, according to traders. The weekend session ended on a positive note giving hope for a better opening on Monday.

Futures gain

In futures, the April series improved to Rs 241.60 (238.88), May to Rs 249 (246.21), June to Rs 253.49 (250.16), July to Rs 254 (251.50), August to Rs 248.39 (242.01) and September to Rs 243.50 (242.27) a kg on the NMCE.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 241 (239); RSS-5: 238 (235.50); ungraded: 234 (231); ISNR 20: 235 (234) and latex 60 per cent: 142 (140)

Commercial farming of Golden Rice in 2 years

Hyderabad likely to house IRRI's research centre



Progressing well: Dr R.S. Ziegler, Director-General of International Rice Research Institute at Manila, Phillipines, with Dr Swapan Kumar Datta, Deputy D-G, ICAR at the 46th Annual Rice Research Group Meeting at the Directorate of Rice Research in Hyderabad on Saturday. — P.V. Sivakumar

Hyderabad, April 9:

After years of waiting, farmers in the Asian countries could hope for sowing Golden Rice in the next few seasons. “The Golden Rice project is moving on well. An important announcement will come on this later this month. We have undertaken field trials at various locations. It is going on very well,” said Mr Robert S. Zeigler, Director-General of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

Addressing reporters here on Saturday, he said the rice strain fortified with Vitamin-A was critical to address the micro-nutrient needs of hundreds of thousands of poor children in the world.

“It will be available for commercial farming in two years. It will be launched first in the Philippines and then in Bangladesh,” he said.

India centre

IRRI engaged in talks with ICAR (Indian Council of Agriculture Research) to set up a research centre in Hyderabad. “One possibility is to create a centre in Hyderabad. The other possibility is to create a distributed presence in India,” he said.

Mr Zeigler was here to attend the 46th Annual Rice Research Group meeting at the Directorate of Rice Research (DRR). He said the global outlook for rice was good assuming there was good weather. Stocks were adequate if not abundant.

Earlier addressing the gathering of rice scientists and private industry, he said the food security of India was food security of the world. “If India is not food secure, the world is not,” he said, pointing out the recent Census estimated population figure at 1.2 billion.

Mr Zeigler and other speakers, who included Dr Swapan Kumar Datta Deputy Director-General of ICAR, highlighted the focus on East India to grow rice. They pointed out that traditional areas such as Punjab and Haryana reached stagnation and the East promised a good alternative with abundant availability of water.

(kurmanath@ thehindu.co.in)