

'Nano-fertilizer' takes shape at TNAU

Amutha Kannan

Photo: M. Periasamy



C. Sharmila Rahale, research scholar, who executed the project 'Nutrient Release Pattern of Nano-Fertilizer Formulations'. —

COIMBATORE: There will not be a single farmer who will not be happy if the fertilizer he uses for his crop has the capacity to release nutrients for 50 days when compared to the usual 12 days. If this has been his dream, then it is only a matter of time for it to get realised.

Scientists, in the last 40-odd years, have not been able to increase the nutrient use efficiency of crops beyond an average 42 per cent. But here is a fertilizer that promises a whopping 72 per cent. Though still in the nascent stage, in two to three years time, when commercialised, is expected to be a 'boon to the poor Indian farmer'.

And this comes in the size of one billionth of a metre, generically christened 'nano-fertilizer', the brainchild of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU). A pioneering effort of the year-old Department of Nano-Science and Technology of TNAU, the three-year project has been successfully completed by research scholar C. Sharmila Rahale and is on the next step towards proceeding from the laboratory to the land.

A post-graduate in soil science, Ms. Rahale was working in Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute, a constituent college of TNAU in Tiruchi, for 10 years, when the urge to take up research made her return to her alma mater in 2008. That was also the time the university was planning to set up a separate department for nano-science, for which the funds had already arrived.

Under the guidance of soil scientist K.S. Subramanian, now the Head of the Nano-Science and Technology, she started her thesis on "Nutrient Release Pattern of Nano-Fertilizer Formulations". Under the Rs. 2 crore grant for departmental research, the TNAU allotted Ms. Rahale Rs. 30 lakh so that she could undertake it as a university project.

Being the first of its kind in the country, it was a struggle for the 39-year-old Ms. Rahale to execute her project. According to Mr. Subramanian, "we have a lead we can work on to make it a fully commercial product. Once this is made available, the crores of money spent on fertilizer subsidy will reduce and will also benefit the farmer in terms of huge savings."

Ms. Rahale used zeolite as a carrier for her project. This was reduced to nano size and after application of nutrients placed in the soil. The release pattern of nutrients was studied in comparison with that of the conventional fertilizer urea. The release of nano-fertilizer went on for almost 50 days while that of the urea stopped after 12 days.

The intake of the nutrients by the crop was 72 per cent vis-à-vis the 42 per cent in the case of urea. The same procedure was tried out for different nutrients like nitrogen, phosphate, potassium and zinc.

"Even though developing the nano-fertilizer formulation may be expensive, when it reaches the farmer involved in rain-fed agriculture, it is expected to be not only cost-efficient but zero-cost," Mr. Subramanian says.

Based on the success of the project, various Government bodies like the Department of Science and Technology, Indian Council for Agricultural Research and Defence Research and Development Organisation have entrusted the department with related projects.

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John Deere introduces 60 hp tractor

Corporate Reporter

— PHOTO: BIJOY GHOSH



NEW VARIANT:Ranjit Nair (right), Managing Director and CEO, and Ravi Menon, Director, Sales and Marketing, John Deere India, at a press conference in Chennai on Monday.

CHENNAI: John Deere India Pvt. Ltd., the wholly-owned subsidiary of John Deere, and a leader in tractor manufacturing, on Monday introduced a new 60 hp tractor, 5060E, in Chennai.

Addressing presspersons here, Ranjit Nair, Managing Director and CEO, John Deere India, said the new tractor was equipped with power steering with tilt facility, side-shift gears and self-equalising oil-immersed disc brakes. The company was selling 11 models with over 90 variants in the 35 hp to 89 hp range in India. All models are being produced in India except 89 hp which is being imported.

Ravi Menon, Director, Sales and Marketing, said the new tractor was powered by a fuel-efficient, three-cylinder John Deere diesel engine (3029T).

Mr. Nair said the company was focussing on providing total agricultural solution. It had recently established a plant at Vadodara in Gujarat to manufacture micro irrigation systems. These systems were introduced in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Nair said the company would set up a new plant to manufacture self-propelled grain harvesters at Sirhind near Patiala in Punjab. Products from this plant would be rolled out in April next year, he said.

On the exports front, Mr. Nair said the company was exporting tractors of all categories to more than 70 countries.

The company sold close to 35,000 tractors in the domestic market last year.

The CEO said John Deere had recently announced a \$100 million investment in India. Of this \$80 million would be spent in setting up a new tractor unit and \$20 million in expanding its existing tractor unit in Pune.

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65 tonnes of mangoes seized

— Photo: G. Moorthy



HUGE CATCH:The artificially-ripened mangoes seized in Madurai on Monday.

MADURAI: In a surprise raid, 65 tonnes of mangoes were seized from as many as 15 godowns here on Monday following complaints that the merchants allegedly ripened the fruits using carbide stones.

Officials said that based on a tip-off that some wholesale fruit merchants were using chemicals to ripen the fruits, a search operation was simultaneously conducted since Monday evening at the fruit merchants' go-downs at Yanaikkal, Thalavai Agraharam, North Masi Street among other locations jointly by teams led by Corporation Chief Health Officer Subramanian, District Supply Officer Murugiah and Assistant Commissioner of Police Karthikeyan. The operations went on for over four hours.

According to Mr. Murugiah, at least 65 tonnes of mangoes were found to have been ripened with the help of carbide stones. The seized fruits were estimated to be valued at lakhs of rupees. Further investigation is on.

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Farmers oppose stone quarry unit

Staff Reporter

They say the proposed project is a violation of pollution norms

— Photo: A. Shaikmohideen



Popular demand:Members of the Ambasamudram Taluk Tamirabharani Farmers' Welfare Association demanding a ban on stone quarrying at Kodarankulam.

TIRUNELVELI: Members of Ambasamudram Taluk Tamirabharani Farmers' Welfare Association submitted a petition at the Collectorate on Monday seeking the official machinery's immediate intervention to stop the ongoing preparations to start a stone quarry unit at Kodarankulam.

The petition submitted by secretary of the association R. Papanasam said that when the government gave permission for granite quarrying at Aladiyoor near Ambasamudram, it attracted sharp criticism from all sections of the society and the Communist party of India leader R. Nallakannu mobilized the public and the farmers against the “looting of mineral wealth that badly affected the environment, threatened the people living nearby and also posed serious threat to the nearby Manimuthar dam providing succour to several thousands of hectares of cultivable lands”.

Meantime, preliminary steps were being taken to start stone quarrying also at Kodarankulam near the Tamirabharani “in violation of the established and laid down norms of Department of Pollution Control and Department of Forest” even as a case pertaining to carrying out mining activities in and around Kodarankulam was pending before Madurai Bench of Madras High Court.

“It is reliably learnt that the work on establishing the stone quarry has been started without getting proper permission from the Department of Forest. Since the matter is pending before the court, the district administration should instruct the Tamil Nadu Minerals Corporation not to carryout any work at Kodarankulam for starting stone quarry unit,” said Mr. Papanasam.

He warned that the cadres of political parties and nature lovers would stage demonstration near Vandimarichamman Temple in protest against giving permission to start stone quarrying at Kodarankulam on April 28.

Tomato glut leaves farmers in despair

Staff Correspondent

'The produce is being sold at Rs. 3 a kg in the retail market'

— Photo: M.A. Sriram



Problem of excess: Farmers dump tomato at the RMC yard in Mysore as the prices crashed on Monday.

MYSORE: Tomato prices have once again hit rock bottom, putting growers in deep trouble. According to sources, surplus produce and declining demand are the main culprits. Out of frustration, the growers dumped their produce into drains at the Regulated Market Committee (RMC) yard, the wholesale market for vegetables, at Bamboo Bazaar here on Monday.

With surplus arrivals from neighbouring districts such as Mandya and minimal bids for supply to neighbouring States like Kerala, the growers are left in a lurch. The produce used to fetch Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 a crate, but the prices have dropped sharply. In the absence of a cold storage facility at the market, it is difficult to store the produce, which has a limited shelf-life.

The tomato glut has caused anxiety among growers of the region. The growers had fetched a good price for their produce till a few weeks ago, but the prices started dropping in the past few days.

Growers have been bringing tonnes of tomatoes into the market that attracts merchants from Kerala and Tamil Nadu hoping to get good returns. The produce is now being sold at Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 a kg in the retail market.

Sources in the market said Mysore RMC receives more than 150 tonnes of tomato daily, half of which comes from Pandavpura taluk in Mandya district. The crop output has increased in recent years in the taluk as many farmers are taking to tomato cultivation.

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Workshop on climate change

Special Correspondent

MYSORE: The Citizens' Global Platform (CGP), Mysore Chapter, will conduct a State-level workshop on climate crisis and possible solutions, on May 18 and 19 in view of the unprecedented natural catastrophes confronting human society.

A release said the CGP is an umbrella organisation of non-governmental organisations working on the policies and laws related to environment, democracy, human rights, etc., and the workshop is being planned in view of the undeclared environmental emergency due to tsunamis, flash floods, shortage of water, and global warming, among other chances.

P.P. Baburaj of the CGP said the phenomenon called climate change has done a lot of damage so far and it will be unpredictable in the days to come.

Hence, one is duty bound to do ones mite to reverse or reduce the factors causing climate change.

This was the basis of the workshop, he said.

Limited participants

The number of participants is restricted to 30. Acclaimed resource persons will interact with the participants to share information and present new perspectives on issues of environment and climate change.

There will be video screenings, reading materials and useful interaction during the workshop, the venue and schedule for which will be finalised and announced in due course.

The last date to confirm participation is May 10.

For more details, candidates can contact Mr. Baburaj, Coordinator, CGP Karnataka, 94485-76297 or the CGP office at LL2, first floor, II Main, Vivekanandanagar, Mysore – 570023 (ph: 0821-2566484)

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Rs.4-crore worth paddy damaged in bund breach

Staff Reporter

Crop in 1,004-acre Manikyamangalam polder submerged



Crisis situation: District Collector P. Venugopal visiting the Manikyamangalam polder on Monday where a bund breached on Sunday. Paddy crop in over 1,000 acres was submerged in Alappuzha district.

ALAPPUZHA: Paddy worth over Rs.4 crore was damaged in the 1,004-acre Manikyamangalam polder, under the Kavalam Krishi Bhavan here, on Sunday night after a 30 metre-bund here was breached.

District Collector P. Venugopal who visited the site on Monday said the same polder had been hit by a similar bund breach in the beginning of this 'puncha' season, while sowing was almost over.

The farmers had lost about Rs.6 lakh then, but came back strongly to prepare the field and sow again.

The crop, some of which were about 55 days and the rest 85 days ripe, however, was entirely submerged and is beyond rescue after Sunday's bund breach, thus prompting authorities to declare the entire polder as calamity-hit, with the loss amounting to over Rs.4 crore.

The bund breach, which saw water from the lake sweeping away coconut palms and other trees on the bund, was noticed in the morning by fishermen, the far-flung Manikyamangalam region being uninhabited. The sudden rise in water-levels due to the opening of the shutters of the Thanneermukkom Barrage and the continuing rain are said to have caused the breach, with the outer bunds of this particular polder being among the weakest in the region. Even minor tidal pressures have caused breaches here earlier, farmers said.

More reports

With the water-level on the rise, bund breaches are being reported from other areas as well, with the 950-acre Illimuri North polder reporting one on Saturday night. Ripe paddy in about 300 acres here was submerged, the rest having been harvested.

Some of the harvested paddy that was kept in one corner of the field too was submerged. The damage was however, not stated to be as devastating as that at Manikyamangalam. Farmers are keeping night watches across the region to do whatever they can as soon as a bund is breached. Mr. Venugopal said the district administration was continuing its efforts to save the rest of the paddy in the district, where harvest is on, from being damaged by the rain, which is expected to continue for another two days.

Harvesters arrive

Efforts to arrange more combine harvester machines were bearing fruit, with 12 of the machines reaching Kuttanad on Monday, apart from the 93 that are already on the job. More are expected to be arranged by Tuesday and Wednesday.

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'Kuttanad has become a waste bin of pesticides'

Staff Reporter

Isaac calls for ban on all dangerous pesticides Surendran Pillai terms Indian stance questionable

ALAPPUZHA: The over usage of chemical fertilizers in the State's plantations and paddy fields has made regions like Kuttanad a waste bin of pesticides, Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac has said.

Inaugurating an anti-Endosulfan protest at the district collectorate here on Monday, Dr. Isaac said the Human Rights Commission had in 2003 ordered for a study by the Indian Council of Medical Research to verify whether the use of Endosulfan was causing deaths, which if found true, was a grave violation of human rights. However, the Union government, by refusing to accept the findings of that study and by ordering for a new one, was trying to hide from the reality and from its responsibilities.

A government that hesitates to ban a pesticide that is killing its own citizens should be ashamed of itself, he said, adding that the protest should not end with a ban on Endosulfan, but with bans on all dangerous chemical fertilizers.

Coir and Cooperation Minister G. Sudhakaran, inaugurated a hunger strike on the occasion. The Centre could never escape from the blame for the death of thousands due to Endosulfan, he said. The UPA government, by refusing to ban Endosulfan, had lost its right to continue in power, he said, adding that the usage of similar fertilizers in Kuttanad was causing a rise in the number of cancer cases in the region. District panchayat president Prathibha Hari presided over

the function. District Collector P. Venugopal; and A.M. Arif, P. Thilothaman and C.K. Sadashivan, MLAs, spoke.

Call for immediate ban

A Correspondent writes from Kattappana: Even as a large number of nations had taken steps to ban Endosulfan considering its proven harmful effects, the country's reluctance to take a step in this direction is highly questionable, Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs V. Surendran Pillai has said.

Inaugurating the district-level Anti-Endosulfan Day observance at Thodupuzha on Monday, the Minister said that there was no meaning in banning the pesticide in the State, unless there was a nation-wide ban on its use. He said that the pesticide could not be banned even in the State if the Central government did not take a decision to ban it.

He said that the government stood with the sufferers on this issue and the support it received proved that an immediate and complete ban on the pesticide was needed. Even after banning the pesticide in the State, it reached the plantations, especially cardamom plantations, from the neighbouring State. It pointed to the need for banning the highly dangerous pesticide across the country before it affected the next generation, he said.

The programme was organised by the district administration in association with various cultural, social and political organisations.

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800 organic farmer couples to go on 15-day visit to Cuba

B.S. Satish Kumar

The Karnataka State Organic Farming Mission is organising the trip

Estimated cost per person is Rs. 1.5 lakh Farmers will be sent in four batches

BANGALORE: As many as 800 organic farmer couples (1,600 farmers) from the State will now get to visit Cuba to learn about that country's achievements in organic farming. The Karnataka State Organic Farming Mission, which is organising the trip, has even readied the list of farmers to be sent abroad.

Mission Chairman A.S. Anand told The Hindu that all the groundwork had been completed and the trip was awaiting Cabinet clearance.

The mission has chosen four organic farmers from each taluk for the trip. He said the mission had prescribed various guidelines to ensure that only small and marginal farmers were selected. Preference has been given to those growing food crops than those into commercial cultivation while selecting farmers for the Cuba trip. The mission was already in touch with the Cuban Ambassador and would take up the matter with him for completing the formalities after getting clearance from the Cabinet, he said. The 15-day trip is estimated to cost about 1.5 lakh per farmer, he noted.

The Cuban authorities were of the view that December to June was the ideal season for visiting Cuba to study organic farming, Dr. Anand pointed out and said the mission would try to commence the trip from December. The 800 organic farmer couples would be sent in four batches.

He said the mission had particularly chosen Cuba for the trip as organic farming was being practised on nearly 60 per cent of that country's agricultural land. Organic farming was not just confined to villages in Cuba as a large number of urban dwellers in that country too were growing organic vegetables through terrace gardening, he noted. "This way, most of the people in Cuba are both consumers as well as growers".

The mission wants the farmers to particularly study the organic sugarcane cultivation in Cuba. "Unlike India, small groups of 300 to 400 organic sugarcane farmers themselves have set up and managing co-operative sugar factories in Cuba. We are considering emulating it in Karnataka and will try to help the visiting farmers to set up similar small co-operative sugar mills," he said.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/2011/04/26/stories/2011042660230500.htm>

Farmers agitating for supply of seeds caned

Special Correspondent

'Government has failed to protect interests of cotton growers'

Farmers perturbed the delay in sowing will result in stunted growth of the crop

State has held the Centre, private seed manufacturing companies responsible for crisis

—PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM



Worried:Farmers who were protesting for the timely supply of cotton seeds at K.R. Circle in Mysore on Monday being dispersed by the police.

MYSORE: Farmers agitating for timely supply of cotton seeds were caned by the police and dispersed from K.R. Circle in the city on Monday.

Scores of farmers gathered at the agriculture office here demanding timely supply of cotton seeds, reckoned to be short in the district. On learning the officials had left for Bangalore, the farmers took to the streets.

However, the district administration, which had clamped a ban on protests at K.R. Circle a few months ago, asked them to disperse. When the agitating farmers refused to relent, the police chased them away with mild caning, causing tension to prevail in the area for some time.

Demand for cotton

The Government has failed to uphold the interests of the cotton cultivators, the farmers complained. Concerned authorities had been warned about the impending scarcity of seeds in February, but no steps were taken in this regard. Vivek Cariappa, a farmer from H.D. Kote, told The Hindu there was an acute scarcity of cotton seeds in the district. Farmers were perturbed as the delay in sowing would result in stunted growth of the crop. With bountiful pre-monsoon showers blessing the district, time was ripe for cotton cultivation but the farmers were left in the lurch due to seed scarcity, he said.

Nearly 80,000 hectares is under cotton cultivation in Mysore district. H.D. Kote is one of the prime regions. Also, the area under cotton was likely to go up by 25 per cent this season as many tobacco cultivators in the region planned to switch to cotton. This is because of the sudden spurt in cotton prices, attributed to worldwide shortage in production caused by crop loss due to floods in China, India and Pakistan during 2010.

Good price

Mr. Cariappa said cotton was being traded at Rs. 4,000 per quintal at the beginning of last season and went up to Rs. 7,000 per quintal midway. Presently, it was being traded at about Rs. 9,000 per quintal in the market. Sources said the seeds are short in supply as there is a monopoly of a few companies. These companies want to hike the price of a bag of 450 gm of seeds from Rs. 200 to Rs. 250 per and are holding back supplies, they alleged.

Blame game

The State Government has held the Centre and private seed manufacturing companies responsible for the crisis plaguing the cotton farmers.

In a release, Minister for Medical Education S.A. Ramdas, in charge of Mysore district, said the Centre has been vested with the responsibility of fixing the price of the seeds and their distribution. But seed manufacturing companies have requested the Centre to increase the price of the seeds, which a few States have not agreed to.

He said the State Government would take all measures to uphold the interest of the farmers. The district administration has appealed to the farmers to cooperate.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Tuesday, Apr 26

Max Min

31.6° | 26.2°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 89%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:51

Sunset: 18:23

Barometer: 1006.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Wednesday, Apr 27

Max Min

32° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday

Apr 28

Friday

Apr 29

Saturday






Apr 30

Sunday

May 1

Monday

May 2

				
34° 26°	34° 26°	35° 26°	35° 26°	34° 28°
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Tue, Apr 26, 2011 | Updated 09.36AM IST

26 Apr, 2011, 03.24AM IST, Jatin Singh,

Sunny weather aiding wheat harvest in north India

The IMD monsoon forecast seems to be cautious though the department has predicted a 98% of the normal long-period average (LPA). (The LPA of the seasonal rainfall over India as a whole for the period 1951-2000 is 89 cm). The model error of 5% means that the actual rainfall for the season could be 93% or 103%. It seems to be slightly hedged towards the negative side of the normal. According to IMD, "There is very low probability for season rainfall to be deficient (below 90% of LPA) or excess (above 110% of LPA)."

We at Skymet concur with this guarded viewpoint for two reasons. One, the snow cover over Eurasia is above normal that correlates negatively with monsoon. The other is the probability of an El Nino evolving from the current La Nina conditions during July. El Nino is a phenomenon where sea-surface temperatures (SSTs) are above normal by 3/5 degree Celsius in the equatorial Pacific, impacting monsoon negatively.

We are currently in a marginally positive La Nina phase, the opposite of El Nino, with below normal SSTs over equatorial Pacific which is good for monsoon.

Global models indicate warming of the equatorial Pacific waters. El Nino developing after July

may weaken the monsoon later. The National Centre for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) is showing deficit rainfall for India in August, September and October. ECMWF's seasonal forecast for these months is not displaying confidence either, though signalling surplus rains in June/July. It is in this light that the May ENSO (El Niño-La Niña Southern Oscillation) forecast is crucial. The forecast captures periodic variations in the two Pacific systems. April forecasts suffer from 'spring predictability barrier'. In other words, spring is associated with a higher probability of error as it is a month of season transition. Summer has set in north India.

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'Agricultural cabinet' to redress farmers' problems in Bihar

April 26, 2011 10:53:29 AM

Amarnath Tewary | Patna

To address the problems of farmers of Bihar and boost the agrarian sector, the State Government has decided to constitute an 'agricultural cabinet' headed by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. The first meeting of this cabinet is to take place on Tuesday.

Significantly, Bihar has become the first State to constitute a 'farm cabinet' to address the plight of the farmers. The cabinet will have Ministers of 18 departments including irrigation, energy, sugarcane, rural works, animal husbandry, disaster management and water resources.

Besides, former director general of Indian Council of Agricultural Research [ICAR] Mangla Rai, who currently is functioning as agriculture advisor to the Chief Minister, will be the special invitee.

“It’s a revolutionary step in the field of agriculture in the State and it will prove a milestone in farm sector as well as for the benefit of the farmers of the State”, State Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh said, adding that the ‘agriculture cabinet’ will herald second green revolution in the country.

Significantly, Bihar Government has given high priority to the agriculture sector and increased its budgetary allocation to almost `844 crore in 2011-12. The State Government has made an agricultural road map for the boost in the sector in the year 2008.

Wheat procurement: Rs 2,646 cr deposited in farmers’ accounts

April 26, 2011 10:55:17 AM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

Determined to take steps in favour of farmers, the State Government is taking all measures to procure wheat on procurement price. The State Government has deposited a total `2,646 crore in the bank accounts of farmers from whom wheat was procured.

The flow of wheat to mandis and other procurement centres has speeded up unprecedented. As a result of this, within two days, 1.68 lakh metric tonne of wheat were purchased from the farmers. Including this, the total purchase of wheat so far has crossed 21.68 lakh metric tonne.

As per the policy decided this year the State Government is depositing the amount of wheat purchased directly in the bank account of the farmers. Accordingly, the Government has deposited `2,646 crore in the bank accounts of the concerned farmers. Payment to wheat purchased is not limited to this transparent process of payment; the different agencies that are engaged in procurement are making available money to buy wheat.

The State Government is making available funds to the purchasing agencies. The agencies, in

turn, are giving funds to the cooperative societies through which the procurement is going on. The cooperative societies are depositing the price of the wheat purchased directly into the bank account of the farmers from whom wheat is procured. Besides, the Apex Bank is making available to the societies funds on the basis of 15 per cent credit limit so that even after delay in the process, the payment is made to the farmers directly in their bank accounts in time. The Government and the administration are in the process of storing safely the wheat purchased in godowns and warehouses. All means of transport are being adopted to send the wheat to the warehouses and godowns. Till last Saturday around 16 lakh metric tonne was stored safely in godowns and warehouses and the process continues.

Enough bags have already been stocked to pack the wheat being purchased. The procurement agencies have a stock of more than 38.50 lakh unused bags of 50 kg capacity. More bags are being stocked in procurement centres where the wheat flow is increased unprecedented. Earlier the arrangement of stock was made according to demand and necessity.

DWM's technology boosts farm productivity in waterlogged areas

April 26, 2011 10:56:05 AM

PNS | Bhubaneswar

The scientists of Directorate of Water Management (DWM), a unit of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) here, have developed multi-cropping technique which has come as a boon for farmers in coastal Odisha whose land used to remain barren throughout the year due to water-logging.

The scientists have designed crop pattern for maximum productivity of waterlogged areas of coastal Odisha by utilising deep water rice varieties, water logging tolerant crops, medicinal plants and fishes. The technology has shown to have significantly increased the agricultural income of the farmers. This technology has enormous potential in coastal Odisha as 85,000 hectares land of the region suffers from problem of water-logging.

At a meeting held here on Monday to discuss 'Enhancing Agricultural Water Productivity of Waterlogged Areas of Coastal Odisha,' Director of DWM Dr Ashwani Kumar said the State has a unique the saucer-shaped land form in which is prone to water logging during monsoon and remains submerged under water depths of 0.5m to 2.0 m. After monsoon,the land becomes dry in winter and summer which makes the area infertile for a long period. He advised farmers to prepare in advance to store water in their fields in the coming rainy season and follow the crop pattern prescribed by the agricultural scientists for maximum yield and productivity.

A pond-based farming system has been devised to enhance the productivity of areas where 1.5 m to 2.0 m deep standing water has been observed. This system includes deep water rice variety in kharif season, salt tolerant vegetables like watermelon, ladies finger, spinach, chilly in winter and ondyke vegetables along with fish inside ponds.

A large number of farmers in coastal districts are using the technology successfully. The integrated farming system included cultivation of field crops, fisheries, poultry and short-duration horticultural crops on the dykes. In one case study in Cuttack district, the system showed a potential to earn about ` 1.5 lakh per hectare per annum.

Ministers' committee suggests reforms in agricultural marketing

April 26, 2011 10:57:59 AM

Chandigarh | PNS

The Committee of Ministers In-charge of Agriculture Marketing has recommended several policy reforms in agricultural marketing during its 6th meeting here on Monday.

Chairman of the Committee Harshvardhan Patil, who is Minister of Marketing and Cooperation, Maharashtra, said at a Press conference on Monday that the Committee has been set up by the Government of India on March 2 last year to promote agriculture market reforms in the country.

He said that the committee deliberated on vital issues for two days to bring in agricultural marketing reforms and had invited stake holders including farmers, traders and consulted States to seek their views.

He said that the purpose of having agricultural marketing reforms was to give choice to farmers to sell their produce as they would like to sell at a place where they get handsome price. The farmer should not be forced to sell at a single place.

The committee was examining what alternatives the farmers have and how they could get good price. Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the Government of India would take further decisions.

He said that so far 16 States have adopted the APMC Act. States of Bihar and Kerala have no APMC Act. The Act was still under consideration of seven States. The States would make amendments as per their needs. He said that in case of APMC Act, Haryana has decided on most of the issues and the remaining couple of issues would be studied by the State before taking any decision.

It was informed that the Committee also aimed at bringing uniformity in marketing reforms.

When asked about taxes, it was informed that taxes were decided by the States. It was also informed that in case of Model Act-2003, there were some differences on some issues between States and the Government of India.

When asked to comment on the suggestions or demands raised by the farmers, it was informed that the farmers demanded better infrastructure and networking so that they know about prices at other places. They also demanded facilities for export and more warehousing facilities.

Haryana Agriculture Minister Paramvir Singh, who was present on the occasion, said that the Haryana Government has partially accepted the Model APMC Act, but in-principle it was yet to be decided.

He said that the Government would study a successful model of a State and then take any decision.

2 months training programme in agriculture development

April 26, 2011 10:58:03 AM

Alok Singh | Chandigarh

With extending the training programme of a week to two months Punjab Institute of Cooperative Training (PICT) has launched an agriculture development programme for 25 field officers of cooperative bank, who are recently promoted. "It is the longest time given ever for any training programme started by PICT in Punjab," said the officer.

Since learning of the revenue act, loan applications are some of the time consuming subjects to understand thus time scheduled has been increased for their classes which will be concluded with the exams and certificates to the officers within the two months. Before that such programmes were not more than three to seven days.

"This year we have made certain changes in the training programmes held at PICT which includes long classes for the training officers. So that they could update their skills and can create awareness among the people about the Government schemes and development programmes," said the PICT Managing Director KS Palne while talking with The Pioneer. These 25 field officers of cooperative banks were recently promoted from various branches located at 20 districts in Punjab. All of them have started coming from Monday to get the classes. PICT have also provided food and lodging to them for two months. Cooperatives are playing a pivotal role in socio-economic development of the State.

Business Standard

Tuesday, Apr 26, 2011

USDA revises India's sugar output forecast

Press Trust Of India / New Delhi April 26, 2011, 0:12 IST

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has revised its estimate of India's sugar production in the ongoing 2010-11 sugar year slightly upward to 24 million tonnes (mt), but this is still lower than the government's forecast of 24.5 mt. Earlier, USDA had pegged the country's sugar production at 23.6 million tonnes during the ongoing 2010-11 sugar year.

USDA said in its latest report that it has revised India's sugar production forecast to 24 mt from its previous estimate after taking into account higher cane output of 340.5 mt in the 2010-11 sugar year.

Production in top two sugar producing states — Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh — is expected to be 9.3 mt tonnes and 6.2 mt, respectively, this year, it said. Higher production is expected particularly in central and southern India, as output in these regions is likely to be better following well distributed rain, it said.

Pawar, Thomas differ on lifting wheat export ban

Press Trust Of India / New Delhi April 26, 2011, 0:05 IST

The food ministry and agriculture ministry are at loggerheads on lifting of ban on wheat exports with the former saying overseas shipments of the grain could lead to rise in domestic prices.

"We are against wheat exports. We feel that if we open exports, domestic prices will be affected," Food Minister K V Thomas told reporters, here. His remarks come close on the heels of Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar's statement that the government should give a serious thought to allowing export of wheat as there is excess supply in the country.



Thomas said: "Pawar is pushing for wheat export because he as an Agriculture Minister has certain priorities towards farmers. But I am a Food Minister, I have different set of priorities and I need to be careful".

The proposal of wheat exports may come for discussion in the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGom) on Food on May 2. "But the Food Ministry will oppose it," he said.

Recently, Pawar had said that the country is estimated to harvest a record 84.27 million tonnes of wheat in 2010-11 crop year (July-June). There is wheat stock of 14 million tonnes, as against buffer norm of 7 million tonnes so far.

"The government will have to take a serious view as soon as possible... The government has set a buffer norm. We have stock more than the buffer norm. In this kind of situation, we must take a view (on exports)," Pawar had said.

"We have enough stocks and we can easily export two million tonnes of wheat and rice," he had said.

Not only Pawar, the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) suggested in its report that the government is sitting on excess foodgrains stocks worth Rs 43,000 crore, and that the country can easily export 3-4 million tonnes of wheat to benefit from high global prices.

The government has banned wheat export since early 2007.

Thomas noted that there is no need to export wheat for clearing the space for the new crop as the Food Ministry has made all arrangements for storage of the grain. "We don't have problems of storage now," he added.

Wheat harvesting has started from middle of March and the government procurement agency FCI has purchased 11.47 million tonnes of the grain so far at the minimum support price. The FCI is targeting the procurement of 26.2 million tonnes in 2011-12.