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National seminar on eco-friendly crop protection

In recent years, there has been renewed interest in popularizing organic and consumer-safe pest management technologies, to cater to organic and export-focus cultivation of crops in India.

Need for promotion

A national seminar on Biotechnological approaches in organic and eco-friendly crop protection towards promoting knowledge transfer and technology awareness was organised recently by the Sun Agro biotech research centre (SABRC) and the Department of Zoology, University of Madras in Chennai.

The event was inaugurated by Dr. P. Murugesu Boopathy, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu agricultural University.

He exhorted the scientific community to keep constantly reminding themselves of the need to keep evolving strategies and fine-tuning agro-technologies, so as to be able to provide assured and adequate food to the growing population.

Need for support

He also emphasized the need to adequately support the organic farming communities with appropriate technologies, especially eco-friendly pest control options to be available at farm level.

He further pointed out the potential for public-private R&D collaboration as a vital link in catering to consumer-safe produce by promoting organic technology products like biopesticides and pheromone trapping systems.

Dr. J. Kannaiyan, President, Sun Agro Biotech Research Centre (SABRC), in his introductory remarks informed the delegates that SABRC is a technocrats-founded consortium, devoted to supporting R&D in developing eco-friendly agro products, and has been recognized by Govt. of

India - Department of Scientific & Industrial Research (DSIR) as an approved centre for scientific and industrial R&D.

Past initiatives

He also recalled the past initiatives of SABRC in convening two such national seminars earlier in the last five years, with focus on organic and eco-friendly pest management technologies .

Dr.E.I. Jonathan, Director, Centre for Plant Protection Studies (CPPS), TNAU in his inaugural lecture spoke on the recent success of biological control of papaya mealy bug in the state.

He explained that this successful campaign for mass production and field release of the imported bioagent was an outstanding success story in biological pest control at national level. About 60 experts from several ICAR institutes and other Universities participated.

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Farm query

300-year-old jack tree

Is it true that there is a 300-year-old jackfruit tree in Bangalore that is quite famous for its taste?

P. Sachidananmurthy

Karnataka

Yes, the tree is presently in the field of farmer Mr. K. Narasimhaiah and is nearly 300 years old and the tree bears nearly 300 fruits annually, which the farmer sells for Rs 20,000- Rs.30,000.

For more details you can contact Mr. K. Narasimhaiah, Kachahalli village, Tubagere hobli, Doddaballapur taluk, Bangalore rural district, mobile: 09916961666 or talk to the scientist Mr. K.N. Srinivasappa at 09845774509, GKVK, University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore.

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Solar-powered sprayer that solves many problems

M. J. Prabu



VIABLE ALTERNATIVE: David demonstrating to farmers the use of the solar sprayer. Photo: Special Arrangement

Once charged during the night it can be operated for nearly eight hours

One need not be a genius to develop any commonly used devices. Take the case of the humble yet important knapsack manual sprayer (hung on the shoulders).

Though many models are available on the shelves, priced at different rates, most of them last for only a few years.

“Regularly filling them with water, pesticides and fuel (in case of fuel operated ones) makes it difficult to lift and hang them on the shoulder. After an hour of spraying, the weight of the machine creates a backache and shoulder pain for farmers,” says Mr. David Raja Beleau, Assistant Director of Horticulture Kadayam, Tamil Nadu, who developed a solar powered battery operated sprayer for farmers.

Big effort

In the commonly available ones, the user needs to exert a lot of effort to push the lever up and down to create the pressure to spray.

Sometimes when the pressure becomes uneven, the nozzle gets blocked and the farmer has to spend time to rectify it.

“Being a farmer and working among them for long years, I decided to make some alterations in the existing design and fitted solar panels and a battery unit to it.,” says Mr. David.

An electric motor operated by a 12 volt 7 Amp rechargeable battery, powers the sprayer which has a capacity of 16 litres.

Once charged during the night, it can be operated for nearly eight hours and there is no need for petrol or any other fuel to operate the device.

While spraying in the field, the battery can be further charged by switching on the solar power system attached to the sprayer.

The solar panel is attached to a helmet and connected to the battery.

Minimizes drudgery

“The sprayer not only minimizes the drudgery of the work but is also more effective than the conventional ones.

“Since villages still get electricity for a short time, that too during odd hours, this solar sprayer just might be the answer,” explains Mr. David.

The solar power system in the sprayer can also facilitate lighting of ‘wireless light traps’ that control insect pests and reduces the number of insecticide sprays by fifty per cent, cutting the cost of cultivation for the farmer.

This reduces pesticide residue in the products thereby improving the quality of the products. The light traps can also control mosquitoes effectively .

While demonstrating to the farmers in Tirunelveli a farm labourer who gets hired by others for spraying said that it was just the equipment he dreamt of when the cost of fuel was increasing everyday.

A woman farmer who bought the sprayer said ‘It is easy for me to carry the load on my back and spray easily on my jasmine crops.

Seems like a boon

Another farmer from Kolli hills who came to see the demonstration of the device remarked that, “in a remote area like ours power failures are common occurrence. This device seems to be a boon for us.”

“That the idea of converting existing battery powered knapsack equipment into solar powered one emerged because villages still did not have enough electricity to either run the sprayers or

to charge the batteries for any single spraying operation. The solar power system is priced at Rs. 3,500. Farmers can buy it and fit to the existing devices they use,” says Mr. David.

Those who are interested can contact Mr.David Assistant Director of Horticulture Kadayam through his mobile number 9486285704 or microeconomicsdavid@yahoo.co.in

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'Maturation clock' in tomato

An increase in fruit yield might be achieved by manipulating a molecular timer that determines the number of branches that make flowers.

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Tea Board ready to launch directorate for small tea growers

Special Correspondent

Arrangements have been put in place by the Tea Board for bringing into being a separate directorate for the Small Tea Growers.

Disclosing this to press persons at Coonoor on Wednesday, the Chairman, Tea Board, M.G.V.K.Bhanu said that the objective was to extend various facilities including latest technology to the segment which played a significant role in the tea industry.

Stating that the headquarters of the directorate will be at Guwahati where there were about one lakh small tea growers, he said that it would be run by the Tea Board with the assistance of three Joint Directors who would be stationed in North Bengal, Guwahati and Coonoor.

A staff strength of 92 has been sanctioned. He pointed out that the small sector has become very important not only in India but also in other parts of the World.

Adverting to the current tea scenario, Mr.Bhanu said, “we want to give maximum thrust to exports”. In keeping with this, five countries, the United States of America, Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran and Egypt, have been selected to implement five initiatives over the next five years.

A sum of Rs100 crore has been set aside for the purpose. While declining exports is a source of concern, the domestic market is improving. To a query, he opined that the Quality Upgradation Programme introduced here about a decade ago should continue.

Though it is not compulsory to participate in E-Auctions, the trend favours the method of selling tea. Regretting that colouring of tea has attained menacing proportions, Mr. Bhanu said that the sale of such tea was rampant in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. He stressed the need to put an end to the harmful practice with the help of the authorities concerned.

Efforts would be made to promote the health benefits of tea among school children. The coming Tea and Tourism Festival here would be effectively used. Steps would also be taken to check the practice of converting tea gardens into house sites.

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Seminar on attracting youth towards agriculture

Staff Reporter

A State-level seminar on "Attracting Youth towards Agriculture" will be held at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University here on December 29 (Thursday).

Agriculture Minister S. Damodaran will inaugurate the seminar and release the souvenir. V. Ponraj, Advisor to former President of India, Ajay Vir Jakhra, Chairman, Bharat Krishak Samaj, New Delhi, and N. Parusuraman, Scientist, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, will address the participants.

P. Murugesu Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU will preside, and M. Karunakaran, District Collector, will felicitate.

The seminar will begin at 9 a.m.

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TNAU scientists visit Krishna Delta Zone

Staff Reporter

As many as 17 agricultural scientists of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University visited Krishna Delta Zone in Andhra Pradesh as part of an exposure visit.

According to a release, Dhanuka Agritech Limited organised the visit of the scientists under the public-private partnership initiative. TNAU representatives from the university, affiliated

directorates, research stations, and Krishi Vigyan Kendras, visited the rice fallow black gram area.

Interaction

They also interacted with black gram farmers about the regular cultivation practices, varieties used, seed rate, crop improvement methods, and crop protection. The team visited the research farms of Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, and Agricultural Research Station, Ghantasala, and Regional Agricultural Research Station, Guntur.

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'Increase water level in Mullaperiyar Dam'

Staff Reporter

Centre urged to send paramilitary personnel to protect the structure



For a better deal:Members of various organisations took out a procession in Erode on Wednesday to protest against the Kerala government's stand on Mullaperiyar Dam issue. - PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN

A large number of people, members of various associations and representatives of political parties took out a procession here on Wednesday urging the Kerala government to increase the water level of Mullaperiyar Dam to 142 ft.

Flagged off by president of Federation of All Trade and Industry Associations of Erode District N. Sivanesan at the VOC Park grounds, the procession passed through important thoroughfares including Mettur Road and Gandhiji Road before culminating near railway station.

The procession was organised under the banner of People's Movement for the Retrieval of Mullaperiyar Dam. Participants also raised slogans condemning the Central Government for not taking adequate efforts to assert the rights of people in Tamil Nadu over the dam waters.

They also strongly opposed the Kerala government for spreading false information on the safety of the dam.

They wanted the Centre to send paramilitary personnel to protect the dam and initiate concrete measures to settle the row between the two States amicably.

They also appealed to the Kerala Government to ensure adequate protection to the devotees visiting Sabarimala from Tamil Nadu.

Traders in Malayapalayam village near Nambiyur downed their shutters to express their solidarity with the Tamil Nadu Government for its stand on the issue.

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Banana tissue culture centre at Inungur proposed

Staff Reporter

Steps to be taken to give value addition to banana and reed grass; no shortage of fertilizers

Tabling issues:Collector V. Shobana speaking at the farmers grievances day meeting in Kulithalai on Wednesday.

Value addition possibilities for banana and reed grass (korai) must be explored to harness the potential for the crops in the district, according to Collector V. Shobana.

Addressing the farmers at the grievances day meet held here on Wednesday, Ms.Shobana pointed out that large tracts of land in the district has been brought under banana and korai grass.

While banana has been sold through regulated market and private shanties, sale of korai is mostly handled by private players. Attempts would be initiated to give value addition to the crops to manufacture marketable products.

Some parts of the banana crop such as fibre and stem could be separated and sold with value addition, while mat-weaving industry would get a fillip with value additional products of korai

grass, Ms.Shobana said . The condition of farmers raising korai grass and that of mat-weavers has been ominous as utility of the products were coming down. Unless newer usages for reed grass mats were found, it would be difficult to resuscitate the product, she opined.

The Collector also said a proposal would be forwarded to the government to establish a banana tissue culture centre at Inungur village, where a government seed farm with vast and fertile land was available.

She pointed out that a large number of desilting works on irrigation and drainage channels were being taken up for the benefit of farmers.

Ms.Shobana clarified that there was absolutely no shortage of fertilizers and pesticides and enough quantity of inputs have been stocked in the primary agricultural cooperative societies and with private dealers.

To a question from the working president of the Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association Mahadanapuram V.Rajaram, Ms.Shobana said that surprise checks were being carried out to ascertain the quality and quantity of inputs supplied to farmers.

Convener of the Farmers Discussion Group, Kulithalai, A.V.Gopaladesikan, urged the government to select best performing farmers under the System of Rice Intensification method at the district level too, apart from the State awardees, and reward them. Replying to a question from V.Ponnusamy of Vadakkupalayam, Ms.Shobana said that in the past five months a total of 19 part-time ration shops have been opened and efforts are on to streamline supply of essentials through PDS. Illegal sand mining has been curbed and sand quarrying has been well regulated, Ms.Shobana said.

She called upon the farmers to cooperate in ushering in the second green revolution as envisioned by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa.

Kulithalai MLA A.Pappa Sundaram, joint director of agriculture S.Jagadeesan, joint registrar of cooperative societies Uma Maheswari, personal assistant to Collector (Agriculture)

Vijayakumar, Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association deputy secretary Kavandampatti

R.Subramanian, took part.

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Awareness rally spreads message on global warming

green attempt: Students of Sri Bharathi Arts and Science College, Kaikurichi, planting sapling. Awareness rally and mass tree planting campaign by NSS volunteers of the Sri Bharathi Arts and Science College, Kaikurichi, near here marked the global warming awareness camp held here. The programme was conducted by the ACT India – Network, a State-level network of NGOs involved in addressing global warming. V.R.Karthick Thondaiman, chairman, Pudukottai municipality, flagged off the rally and P.Karunakaran, moderator, ACT India Network, delivered keynote address. G.Dhanasekaran, chairman, V.Vaidhyathan, secretary of Sri Bharathi Group of Educational Institutions, Janaki Swaminathan, principal, Sri Bharathi Arts and Science College for Women, offered felicitations.

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Agriculture godowns planned in delta region

Special Correspondent

development on agenda: R. Kamaraj, Food Minister, speaking at a meeting of Collectors and TNCSC officials in Tiruvarur on Wednesday.

It has been planned to procure 25 lakh tonnes of paddy during the kharif season between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012, in the State, said R.Kamaraj, Food Minister, here on Wednesday.

He held discussions with officials of Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Tiruvarur district on paddy procurement.

Collectors K.Baskaran (Thanjavur), C.Munianathan (Tiruvarur) and Munusamay (Nagapattinam), and Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) officials participated in the meeting.

Mr. Kamaraj said out of 25 lakh tonnes, 4.28 lakh tonnes have been procured so far.

The State government has fixed the price for fine variety of paddy per quintal at Rs 1,180, which includes the incentive of Rs 70 and for common variety Rs 1,130, with Rs 50 as incentive.

It has also been planned to establish agriculture godowns at a cost of Rs 100 crore in the delta districts.

“There should not be any malpractice at direct purchase centres (DPCs). Stern action would be taken against erring officials,” the minister cautioned.

Farmers could air their grievances on following numbers: Thanjavur - 9445190660, Nagapattinam - 9445190662 and Tiruvarur -

9445190661. They could also contact the head office in Chennai on 9444084560 and 9444023119.

They could use the fax number of the food minister - 044-25671124.

Nirmala, food secretary, and Karthikeyan, Managing Director, TNCSC, took part, said a release here on Wednesday.

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Training in shrimp farming

Staff Reporter



Netting the catch:V.K. Venkataramani, Director of Research and Extension (Fisheries), handing over the course certificate to a participant during the function in Tuticorin.- Photo: N. Rajesh
The Maritech Research and Extension Centre, Tharuvaikulam, affiliated to the Fisheries College and Research Centre, a constituent of TANUVAS, Chennai, organised a skill development

training course for shrimp farming assistants and a self employment training course on seaweed production recently.

A total of seven participants attended the programme. Various aspects in seaweed farming and shrimp farming were taught to the participants.

Then the participants were given hands on training in progressive farms located in the district so as to gain practical knowledge in the respective training courses. Later, a test was conducted to assess the participants' grasp of the training.

The programme was designed with the objective to motivate the downtrodden coastal community, to alleviate their poverty and to improve their financial status. Such programmes would also indirectly help in conserving marine resources.

At the valedictory function on Monday, V. K. Venkataramani, Director of Research and Extension (Fisheries) distributed certificates to the participants. S.Athithan, Associate Professor and K.S. Vijay Amirtharaj, Assistant Professor at the centre, coordinated the programme

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'Quality of tea should be consistent'

Special Correspondent

QualiTEA awards given to growers, factories, societies and buyers



Conform to global standards:Chairman of Tea Board M.G.V.K.Bhanu (second right) releasing a new tea clone at Coonoor on Wednesday.- Photo: M. Sathyamoorthy

Concerted efforts should be made to produce quality tea consistently, observed the Chairman, Tea Board, M.G.V.K. Bhanu at Coonoor on Wednesday.

He was participating in a programme organised by the Tea Board to give away 'QualiTEA Awards'. Lamenting that exports were coming down because, "we are unable to produce quality tea in a sustainable manner," he said that fluctuating quality resulted in importers losing faith.

Adverting to the growing importance of the small growers segment, he said that it accounted for 26 percent of the total production. While the total number of estate gardens was only 1586, there were about 1.76 lakh small growers.

All over the world tea gardens are going into the hands of small growers. The bought leaf tea factories segment was also growing. He also acknowledged the coming together of the small growers and the bought leaf tea factories for maintaining quality.

Listing the advantages of the E-Auction system, he said, “we want to bring even transactions relating to tea waste under it.”

Pesticide

While clones which are resistant to climate change should be developed, pesticide and insecticide residue should conform to global standards, he said and added that high priority should be accorded to energy audit.

The Vice Chairman, Tea Board, C.N. Natraj said that such awards will motivate the small tea growers.

The Executive Director, Tea Board (South), R. Ambalavanan said that such a ceremony was being organised for the first time. It was part of a quality promotion initiative.

The Executive Director, Tea Board (North East), R. Saini suggested that study tours should be organised to exchange notes.

The President, United Planters Association of Southern India (UPASI), D. Hegde also spoke.

Mr. Bhanu distributed awards to growers, factories, societies and buyers, launched a Tea Management System, released a superior quality clone brought out by the UPASI-Tea Research Foundation and some publications of the UPASI-Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

The Deputy Director, Tea Board, Anupam Das proposed a vote of thanks.

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State intervention sought to help red gram growers

Special Correspondent

The demand for higher minimum support price (MSP) for red gram crop in the district is gathering steam with more organisations joining the chorus.

The latest to join forces was Veera Kannadigara Sene, a local pro-Kannada organisation.

The president of the group, Amruth Patil Sirnoor, led a procession to the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) in Nehru Gunj here to stage a demonstration in front of it, demanding Government intervention to prevent distress sale by small and marginal farmers.

A memorandum addressed to Agriculture Minister Umesh Katti was submitted to APMC president Mallikarjun Shivanna. They demanded that the Government increase MSP for red gram to Rs. 6,000 a quintal and establish procurement centres in all hoblis to directly purchase produce from growers.

The memorandum pointed out that the prices for red gram had crashed to Rs. 3,200 a quintal and farmers were forced to sell their produce for cheap because of various reasons, including loan repayment.

Worst-hit

The worst-affected were the small and marginal farmers who did not have the resources to retain their produce till the prices stabilised.

Government intervention at this stage would stabilise prices, the memorandum said.

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- *Veera Kannadigara Sene submits memorandum seeking higher MSP for the produce*
 - *'Worst-affected are small and marginal farmers who are forced to sell their produce cheap'*
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Panel to work out production cost of arecanut

Special Correspondent

The Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative Ltd. (Campco) has set up a committee to fix the production cost of arecanut for 2011-12.

The seven-member committee will be headed by G.V. Joshi, member, Karnataka State Planning Board, and an economist. Mr. Joshi said that the committee would invite suggestions from farmers and they would be taken into account before finalising the report.

"We will try to submit the report by January end, 2012," he told *The Hindu* .

A committee headed by Mr. Joshi had worked out the production cost of arecanut for the State Government last year, Konkodi Padmanabha, president of CAMPCO, said.

The committee had recommended the production cost of white arecanut at Rs. 114 a kg and red arecanut at Rs. 148 a kg.

Mr. Padmanabha said that the State Government had asked the Union Government to fix the production cost of white arecanut at Rs. 108 a kg and the cost was revised to Rs. 85 a kg from Rs. 65 a kg.

- *Campco has set up a seven-member committee*

- *Panel to invite suggestions from farmers*

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Deficient rain affects paddy crop

Staff Correspondent

It leaves farmers of Raichur in an unenviable situation



Mudukappa, a farmer, sits in his dried-up paddy field in Bolmandoddi village, near Raichur.

Mudukappa, a small farmer in Bolmandoddi village near Raichur, who cultivated paddy on his two acres of dry land, has no alternative for his livelihood. His one-month-old paddy crop has dried up due to lack of water. The well in his field, which initially had some storage, dried up owing to a long dry spell.

Deficient rainfall during the kharif season has resulted in a total loss of paddy crop in many parts of rain-fed areas of Raichur district, leaving farmers in an unenviable situation.

Raichur taluk is the worst hit where paddy crop is cultivated under lift and well irrigation in rain-fed areas. The crop has withered due to lack of water supply. After some rainfall initially, many farmers in the rain-fed areas took up paddy cultivation in 2,650 hectares. But wells and irrigation tanks remained dry due to the failure of rain.

Many affected farmers, especially small and marginal landholders, find the going tough as relief work is yet to take off. Many of them have started migrating to cities in search of employment.

The misery of the paddy growers in the tail-end regions of the Tungabhadra Left Bank Canal in the district is not different. Though cultivation of paddy in the command areas has been restricted to certain areas, it has become a routine practice for farmers to cultivate paddy on a large scale.

But the failure of the department concerned to properly handle water management and also the excessive utilisation of water in the upper reaches has resulted in shortage in water supply in

the tail-end regions. Frequent agitations by the farmers demanding proper water supply in the tail-end command areas has not yielded any results.

Paddy crop in some parts of the tail-end regions in Manvi and Raichur taluks have withered owing to lack of water. Some farmers in the district, who cannot bear the burden of crop loans, have committed suicide.

K. Satyanarayan, a tail-end farmer at Kukkala Camp near Raichur, ended his life by consuming pesticide in his field last week.

This year, the district received only 292.4 mm of rainfall, against an annual average of 671.1 mm. During the kharif season, between May and July, the district received 163.5 mm of rainfall, against an average of 218 mm. During rabi season, the district received 159 mm of rainfall, against an average of 348.9 mm during this period.

During kharif, sowing was completed in 1.44 lakh hectares against the target of 1.54 lakh hectares in the rain-fed area. Crops sown in almost all five taluks in the district have been affected. The extended dry spell, following sowing, has meant stunted growth of red gram, groundnut and cotton.

During rabi, crops had been cultivated in 1.77 lakh hectares against the normal of three lakh hectares. Crops in 75,653 hectares have stunted growth due to the failure of rain. The yield is expected to be less than 50 per cent.

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'Rear indigenous cattle to promote organic farming'

Staff Reporter

With Kasaragod district, wrecked by alarming health hazards posed by the overuse of endosulfan, being declared as an organic farming district, agriculture scientist Subhash Palekar has mooted the idea of going back to age old agriculture traditions to ensure zero budget cultivation.

His talk at the ongoing workshop on zero budget farming here, which was inaugurated by district panchayat president P.P. Shyamala Devi on Tuesday, brought cheers to hundreds of farmers in the district.

Mr. Palekar, hailing from Maharashtra's Amravati district, addressing the gathering at the five-day workshop, called upon the farmers to rear indigenous breeds of cattle to help restore organic farming. An indigenous cow would provide manure for cultivating up to 30 acres of land. The fresh cow dung and urine would ensure cultivation without any external inputs, thereby making farm inputs free of cost, he said at the workshop.

On an average, an indigenous cow would produce 10 kg of dung and eight litres of urine a day. The manure would help enrich and culture the soil with highly useful microbes in the range of 300 crore to 500 crore in relation to 35 lakh microbes obtained from the dung and urine of hybrid cattle, he said.

Fresh cow dung would help to culture the soil easily and help it to enrich biodiversity which, in turn, would aid zero budget farming. The result would be pesticide-residue free and healthy farm produces.

The workshop, hosted jointly by Amrithdhara goshala, Bajakudlu, where the indigenous Kasaragod breed of cows are reared; Thrissur-based River Research Centre; and Endosulfan Victims People's Forum, is being held at the Murali Mukund auditorium.

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Protest organised in front of NABARD

A lunch-hour demonstration was organised at the regional office of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in Thiruvananthapuram as part of a country-wide action in response to a call by the All-India NABARD Employees Association (AINEA) demanding withdrawal of the decision to cancel the recruitment of development assistants and opposing the unilateral decision to implement the recommendations of the BCG.

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Asset creation low in farm sector

Special Correspondent

Data compiled by SLBC

Asset creation in the State's agriculture sector is slackening judging by the diminishing share of term loans (in total lending) to the sector in the last three years.

According to data compiled by the State-Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), term loans meant for asset creation in the farm sector constituted 22 per cent of the total bank support that went to the sector in the State in 2008-09. The remaining 78 per cent of the lending to the sector was short-term loans, which the farmers take at the time of launching a crop and repay on taking the harvest.

The term-loan component came down to 17 per cent of the total lending (to the farm sector) in 2009-10 and, from that low level, improved slightly to 18 per cent in 2010-11.

It meant that lending for replanting activities in rubber, cardamom, tea and coffee plantations, and other activities for improving productivity and the overall prosperity of the farm sector constituted only a small share of the total banking assistance going to the sector.

This lacuna in the lending operations of the banks to the farm sector in the State was brought to the notice of the SLBC by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) recently. The annual credit plan of the banks for 2011-12 had targeted the disbursement of Rs.4,370 crore as term loans to the farm sector in the State. The SLBC has now revised the target to Rs.12,405 crore to give an impetus to asset creation in the sector.

The latest meeting of the SLBC noted that the Union budget for 2011-12 had set a 'ground-level credit' target of disbursing Rs.1,95,000 crore by way of term loan for agriculture and allied activities in the country.

The newly revised term loan target for the sector in the State was in line with the high target set at the national level.

The SLBC had advised the banks to organise campaigns, in association with the Agriculture Department, among the farmers to create awareness about the schemes under which the farmers could avail term loans.

Since the financial year was entering the last quarter, it may be difficult for the banks to achieve the newly set target.

Bankers felt that the campaign now being launched could help them improve the position a great deal next year.

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- *78% lending to sector comprised short-term loans*



Dam: Kerala to petition SC against its own panel

WEDNESDAY, 28 DECEMBER 2011 20:50

VR JAYARAJ | KOCHI

Kerala's Congress-led UDF Government on Wednesday decided to petition the Supreme Court against two experts of the high-powered panel it had constituted to look into the dispute between Kerala and Tamil Nadu over the 116-year-old Mullaperiyar dam for taking an allegedly pro-Tamil Nadu position during his recent inspection of the dam.

After a meeting of the Cabinet on Wednesday, Revenue Minister Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan told newsmen at Thiruvananthapuram that the experts of the panel who visited the dams in Kerala's Idukki district and Tamil Nadu last weekend were trying to submit a report to the apex court in favour of Tamil Nadu by getting the State's support through a clever move.

"We can't accept the unilateral actions of the experts (CD Thatte and DK Mehta). We will certainly inform the Supreme Court and the concerned authorities about their actions during their visit to the Mullaperiyar dam," Thiruvanchoor said while justifying the action of the Kerala officials of boycotting the experts' inspection of the dam.

The team of Kerala officials headed by MK Parameswaran Nair, chairman of the Mullaperiyar Special Cell, and Water Resources Department's chief engineer P Lathika had boycotted the inspection of the dam by Thatte and Mehta last Saturday on the ground that they were not prepared to take the State's suggestions and complaints seriously.

The Kerala officials had protested against the act of Thatte who told the Tamil Nadu officials that they could take necessary measures to strengthen the dam as this advice was against the

stipulations of the Supreme Court. When Lathika continued her protest, Thatte allegedly told her to keep quiet. Later, Nair said the expert had humiliated Lathika.

Asked whether the Government would initiate legal proceedings against Thatte and Mehta for their pro-Tamil Nadu stand, Thiruvanchoor said this would be decided in consultation with legal experts. The Cabinet at its meeting earlier decided to consult lawyer Harish Salve who was presently arguing for Kerala in the Mullaperiyar case in the Supreme Court.

At the same time, Kerala security men posted at Mullaperiyar on Wednesday foiled the attempts of Tamil Nadu to carry out maintenance works on the dam. The Tamil Nadu officials had tried to clear the vegetations over the baby dam attached to the main Mullaperiyar dam but the Kerala officials foiled this attempt as per the Water Resource Department's instructions.

Business Standard

Thursday, Dec 29, 2011

Cashew kernel prices decline in Palasa

VDS Rama Raju / Chennai/ Visakhapatnam December 29, 2011, 0:16 IST

Cashew kernel prices in Palasa have dropped by Rs 70-100 per kg over the last one month due to oversupply.

“This is the first time that large quantities of second grade imported cashew kernels are available in the domestic market, leading to a reduction in prices,” said Malla Srinivasa Rao, president of the Palasa Cashew Manufactures Association.

Normally, Palasa cashew traders import cashew nuts every year from other countries to feed the processing units here.

However, this year cashew kernels also came to the domestic market in huge quantities, leading to a decline in prices, he added. This apart, economic slowdown led to a decline in cashew exports as a result, exporters diverted their material to the local markets.

“Last month, we sold grade-I cashew kernel at Rs 540-580 per kg. Now, the prices have come down to Rs 440-460 per kg. Similarly, second grade kernel prices have declined from Rs 420 to Rs 350-360 per kg,” he said. Kernel prices generally increase during festival, but this time they may not increase further.

Meanwhile, cashew nuts prices have also declined by Rs 1,000-1,500 per bag (each bag contains 80 kg) in the last two months.

In November, imported nuts were at Rs 7,500 per bag and domestic at Rs 8,000. Now both domestic and imported nuts are available at Rs 6,500 per bag here. Palasa cashew processing units need about 300,000 bags of nuts up to the end of March to operate their units. The new crop would be available in the domestic market from April first week, Rao said.

Castor production in Gujarat likely to cross 1 mn tonne mark

BS Reporter / Mumbai/ Ahmedabad December 29, 2011, 0:01 IST

On the back of increased sowing of castor seed during the Kharif season this year coupled with favourable weather conditions, castor production in Gujarat, the largest producer of the commodity, is all set to witness a sharp jump in the output of this oilseed. Both government and industry players see Gujarat's castor production crossing one million mark in the year 2011-12.

The industry expectation of higher production in the state stems from the fact that area under castor crop this Kharif season galloped by nearly 300,000 hectares. "As on September end, the castor acreage stood at 873,000 hectares in the state, while the average acreage for the last three years is around 487,000 hectares," said an official with the state agriculture department.

As per the information available with The Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA), an apex body of solvent extraction industry, the total area under castor crop in 2011-12 has jumped to 811,000 hectares from 519,000 hectares in 2010-11, which shows a sharp rise of close to 300,000 hectares. "Considering the substantial increase in the acreage, the castor production in Gujarat may well be in the range of 1-1.1 million tonnes in 2011-12," said a market source.

It may be mentioned here that the castor crop survey released by SEA in February last year had estimated the castor production in Gujarat for 2010-11 at 860,000 tonnes, which was

higher by 10 per cent as compared to the production registered in 2009-10. The average yield for the year 2010-11 was 1,781 kg per hectare as against 1,683 kg per hectare during the year 2009-10.

"The climatic condition this year for castor crop is favourable and the area under the oilseed has surged noticeably. This may result into a rise of 20 per cent in castor production in Gujarat this year," said Prakash Mehta, a castor trader based out of Ahmedabad.

However, the full fledged arrivals of the new crop is likely to be delayed by a month and the arrival will pick up with the onset of February. "Most of the castor arrivals in the local markets currently are comprised of old stocks. The new crop will be delayed owing to late sowing," added Mehta.

The sowing of castor is normally completed by the month of September but extended monsoon this year delayed the sowing activity in the state. The delay in arrivals has also kept the spot prices of castor at higher levels. Currently, the spot prices of the commodity are hovering around Rs 800-805 per 20 kg. The castor prices had reached an all time high of Rs 1,250 per 20 kg during the period January-February this calendar year.

Castor traders in local markets expect the prices to inch up in near future in the wake of tight supply at present. The overall castor production in India in 2010-11 was 1.20 million tonnes.

Jeera futures gain 1.6% on spot demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi December 28, 2011, 12:30 IST



Jeera futures rose by Rs 258 to Rs 16,370 per quintal today, as speculators created fresh positions, driven by pick-up in spot market demand amid restricted arrivals from the producing regions.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, February jeera rose by Rs 258, or 1.60%, to Rs 16,370 per quintal, with an open interest of 11,814 lots.

The January contract moved up by Rs 216, or 1.37%, to Rs 16,022 per quintal, with a business volume of 11,022 lots.

Analysts said fresh buying by speculators on pick-up in spot demand amid restricted arrivals from producing mainly pushed up jeera futures prices.

Cotton arrival gains momentum

Vikas Sharma / New Delhi/ Chandigarh December 29, 2011, 0:59 IST

The arrival of cotton in terminals and markets across Punjab and Haryana has picked by almost 40 per cent in the last few days.

As against the average arrival of 25,000-26,000 bales coming across various markets in Haryana , Punjab and Rajasthan, the arrival now has moved to 35,000 bales. The prices, however, have not moved up in proportion to the arrival of cotton. According to officials from the Cotton Corporation of India the average prevailing prices of kapas ruled at Rs 4,200 per kg as against Rs 5,000 per kg last year, 16 per cent dip in prices. Rakesh Rathi, president, North India Cotton Association maintained mills demand has improved from mills side.

The arrival has moved up primarily as off take by mills has improved. With mills exhausting their available stock, they have entered market for fresh purchases. In addition to this, members of ginning association adds the domestic demand has started picking up as yarn realization are moving to better from stable. These all factors are contributing towards rise in off take of cotton from the terminal markets. Members also believe this farmers have started realising remunerations for cotton this year would not be as high as last year, have started bringing the crop to the markets.

Bhagwan Das Bansal, president Punjab Cotton Factories and Ginners association maintained stronger dollar also suggest things on export side could improve for cotton this year, thus helping the cause for cotton. "We are expecting exports of nearly 1 core cotton bales this year as well, which is similar to previous year," Bansal added.

Rathi added on export front they were eyeing China which happens to be major market for Indian cotton. Besides exporting the allotted quota of cotton bales to China, they were also eyeing the quota of cotton under sliding duty system .

FMC may step in to cool prices

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai December 29, 2011, 0:28 IST

Mulls 'trade-to-trade' deposit, as rates break new highs, despite repeated raising of margins.



The Forward Markets Commission (FMC) is mulling a last resort to cool guar gum and guarseed prices, through introduction of 'trade-to-trade' for the first time in the commodity derivatives market.

Under trade-to-trade, a client must deposit the entire value of the trade upfront. The order is settled when the seller ensures delivery.

In other words, the system will function like spot trade.

"The matter came for discussion on several occasions in the recent past. However, no firm decision was taken," said an FMC official.

Guar seed for delivery in the near-month hit the upper circuit on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange in early trade on Wednesday, recording a staggering 35.5 per cent rise so far this month. The commodity set a new high record and rose four per cent to close the day at Rs 7,272 a quintal. And, guar gum, a derivative of guarseed, also hit the upper circuit and closed at a lifetime record of Rs 24,114 a qtl. It has gained 43.7 per cent so far this month.

The price continued to spiral upward despite the NCDEX raising the special margin thrice this month. Effective December 13, special margins on guar gum and guarseed were levied to 10 per cent from the existing exchange margin of 10 per cent, which had proved inadequate for the price to cool. The special margin was then raised to 20 per cent effective December 19. And, to 30 per cent effective December 27. Yet, as noted, the price of both commodities hit the upper circuit to set a new record on Wednesday. The overall margin is now 40 per cent (10 per cent exchange margin and 30 per cent special margin).

Guar gum constitutes 1-1.5 per cent of raw material in application industries. Since the commodity faces no competition, industries are ready to buy at a higher price. India supplies 95 per cent of world consumption. Oilfield demand is expected to remain strong for a few years at

least, if not longer, as the technology of horizontal drilling spreads beyond its current areas of application. Presently, the industry buys gum powder at an average \$7,500-7,600 a tonne (Rs 40,000 a qtl) as compared with last year's average price realisation of \$1,600 a tonne. Looking at the increased usage of this process, particularly in the US, this year's demand is expected to be a billion pounds (450,000 tonnes).

Compared to the demand, the supply this year was a major issue for industries. When guar sowing began, it faced stiff competition from cotton, with farmers in Haryana and the northern parts of Rajasthan preferring it over guar, decreasing the area under production. According to market sources, crop output for India this year would be close to a million tonnes (equivalent to 300,000 tonnes of guar gum) and the carryover stock from last year would be 75,000 tonnes. So, total gum availability would be 375,000 tonnes, while expected demand is 450,000 tonnes.

Official data showed guar gum worth Rs 1,133 crore was exported in 2009-10 and Rs 2,812 crore in 2010 -11. The industry expects export worth Rs 7,247 crore in 2011-12. The gain is for farmers, with prices in major mandis at Rs 6,800-7,000 a qtl for guar seed. Currently, guar gum manufacturers and exporters are enjoying very high margins, of Rs 8,000-12,000 a qtl. Continued depreciation of the rupee against the dollar had boosted realisation, said a Jaipur-based trader. According to Vedika Narvekar, an analyst with Angel Broking, strong fundamentals are driving prices of both gum and seed.

Meanwhile, the FMC has sent teams of its officials in coordination with exchanges to investigate traders' books of accounts

THE HINDU Business Line

Spot rubber prices static in slow market

Kottayam, Dec. 28:

Physical rubber prices continued to rule unchanged on Wednesday. Market activities were slow as most of the traders were in a holiday mood prior to New Year; but it showed signs of weakness during closing hours, an observer said. Sheet rubber closed steady at Rs 200 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was partially mixed as ungraded rubber dropped on comparatively low demand.

Weakness in the international markets and the wide gap prevailing in between the domestic and international markets with Indian grade on a premium, continued to weigh on, analysts said. However, in the international scene, the recent fall in Japanese industrial output capped gains. The Japanese industrial production in November declined 2.6 per cent compared with October.

The January series weakened to Rs 201.20 (202.98), February to Rs 203.60 (205.35), March to Rs 207.35 (208.65), April to Rs 211.80 (214.50), May to Rs 213.00 (214.00) and June to Rs 211.50 (212.05) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 180.49 (180.65) a kg at Bangkok. The January futures moved up marginally to ₹ 253.0 (Rs 173.20) from ₹ 252.9 a kg during the day session but then finished unchanged in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates/kg were: RSS-4: 200 (200); RSS-5: 196 (196.50); Ungraded: 189 (190); ISNR 20: 191 (191) and Latex 60 per cent: 110 (110).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 29, 2011)

As India dithers, Indonesia, Malaysia in talks to resolve palm oil duty row

Mumbai, Dec. 28:

It is of course a matter of conjecture as to when the Indian government would address the longstanding issue of marking the imported vegetable oil tariff value to the market price.

The tariff value on imported refined palm oil is at a low level in relation to the current market price.

The issue was imparted urgency because our country's principal palm oil supplier Indonesia slashed export tax on refined palm oil to promote value-added export and kept export tax on crude oil at a higher level.

Despite a strong case in terms of revenue generation and reasonable protection for the domestic refining industry, nothing has moved because of New Delhi's unsuccessful fight against high levels of food inflation.

So, while it is unclear when the issue of tariff value will be dealt with practically, the Government has clearly ruled out another demand of the industry - that of a ban on import in consumer packs.

IMPORT BAN

While the rationale for seeking a ban on import in consumer packs (not in bulk) is that such imports would hurt domestic packers, in the assessment of the Department of Food and Public Distribution, domestic edible oil industry is not affected by import of edible oil.

From discussions with officials at various levels it is clear that the ban on import in consumer packs may not be imposed; and that the matter of raising the tariff value on refined oils will have to be decided by the Ministry of Finance.

Even as India continues to grapple with tariff-related vegetable oil issues, Indonesia and Malaysia are already in talks to address the issue.

Clearly, Indonesia's export duty cut will willy-nilly affect Malaysia's export competitiveness of refined palm oil.

Malaysia runs the risk of losing market share in price sensitive markets such as India, for instance.

JOINT MEASURES

The two top producing countries are already engaged in discussion to review their respective export policies. According to reports, joint measures that will benefit downstream palm oil processing industries are expected to be announced before year-end.

Various possibilities relating to reworking export tax on both sides are being explored.

Interestingly, despite being the world's second largest producer and exporter, Malaysia imports crude palm oil from Indonesia to utilise its large domestic refining capacity. Duty-free quota on Indonesian crude palm oil bound for Malaysia is under active consideration.

There is reason to believe, Indonesia will buckle under Malaysian pressure.

The Indonesian government is also under pressure from palm oil plantations and smallholder cultivators who complain that their crude palm oil exports attract higher rates of tax than processors who export refined oil.

The possibility of smuggling in the wake of huge duty differential cannot be ruled out, a trade representative pointed out.

So, some more action can be expected in this sphere of trade soon. gchandra@thehindu.co.in

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 29, 2011)

Award-winning premium Nilgiri green tea now in India

P.S. SUNDAR

SHARE · PRINT · T+

Coonoor, Dec. 28:

The 'Avataa Nilgiri Long Ding Green Tea', popular in the US and Europe, will henceforth be available in the Indian markets.

"This tea has won the prestigious certification 'tea with superior characteristics' at 'North American Hot Tea Spring Championship 2011' and was showcased in 'Champion circle' at Las Vegas World Tea Expo. Although it is a premium Nilgiri green tea, so far, it was not available in the Indian markets. We have now launched it in domestic markets," Mr G. Udayakumar, Director, Bluegate Beverages, which manufactures this, told *Business Line*.

"This has become possible because of our installing a new production and packing facility at an outlay of Rs 1.5 crore at Billimalai Estate, 12 km from Coonoor. The high-grown leaves from the 250-acres of Billimalai Estate situated at 6,400 feet above sea level alone are used to manufacture this tea," he said.

'Avataa' means 'fresh' in Sanskrit. 'Long Ding' refers to the celebrated 'Kaihua Long Ding' tea in China originating in Kaihua county and Long Ding Lake. "Only tender leaves handpicked from select pockets are used. Long and stalky in appearance, the raw material picked as 'two leaves and a bud' undergoes minimum processing. Accordingly, they retain the best antioxidant

properties of green tea. Our pack comes with Tea Board's observation on 'Green Tea for healthy living' highlighting its protection against cancer and heart ailments," he said.

"This is multi-brew tea readied with steeping for three minutes some 10 tea leaves in a glass of water heated to about 80 degrees Celsius. water can be added to the same tea four more times. When brewed, the leaves fully open with fresh aroma and leaves sweet aftertaste," he said.

"This is a high-value-low-volume beverage. We get only 40 kg suitable green leaf daily. We are packing in convenient consumer cans. In the end-market, the tea fetches Rs 3,500 to 4,000 a kg," he said.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 29, 2011)

Sugarcane harvesters rumble gets louder

RAHUL WADKE

SHARE · PRINT · T+

LABOUR SHORTAGE

Mumbai, Dec. 28:

The rumble of sugarcane harvesters has begun to replace the songs of cane cutters. And it has only increased in the current sugar season that began in October.

Acute shortage of agricultural labourers is forcing farmers to use mechanical harvesters for cutting cane. Companies selling harvesters are seeing 100 per cent increase in the sales over last year.

The harvester is a large machine weighing about eight tonnes and costs about Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1.10 crore. It can cut about 120 tonnes of sugarcane in about 16 hours.

ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT

Farmers in major sugarcane growing States such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka are not getting labourers for cutting sugarcane. Employment guarantee scheme like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and road building projects are providing alternative employment to the labourers.

Mr Gaurav Sood, General Manager (Crop Solutions) of New Holland Fiat (India) Pvt Ltd, told *Business Line* that since April about 180 harvesters have been sold across country, while last year the company could sell only about 70. The rush for harvesters is such that orders placed in July are being delivered in December, he said.

This year there is a strong demand for harvesters from western and southern States, while the demand is picking up in Uttar Pradesh. Among all the States, Maharashtra is the largest buyer with about 70 harvesters already deployed in the field, he said.

Mr Sood said that the Brazilian sugar industry has been using harvesters for the last 15 years and they are now selling about 1,200 harvesters a year. In India, that number would be reached in about three years, given the rapid demand for harvesters in the market.

THAI HARVESTER

Sensing a business opportunity, Shrijee Group, an established player in manufacturing sugar plant equipment, has tied up with a Thai manufacturer for supplying harvesters. Last year, it introduced the Thai harvester in Indian market and managed to sell 5 machines. But this year, 25 harvesters have already been sold and there is demand for more.

Mr G. D. Agarwal, Chairman of Shrijee Group, said that the going is good for Indian harvester market with rising demand from sugar mills and private contractors who want to hire out the machines.

The company has plans to manufacture its own machines by December 2013. With indigenisation the cost will come down by 20 per cent, he said.

Mr Agarwal said that "Indian farmers are habituated to plant sugarcane in a very close nit manner, which makes it difficult for the machines to cut sugarcane completely in a farm. But the sugar mills have now started educating farmers that at least four feet distance is required between two beds. In a few years, it would be possible to cut the whole crop using harvester," he said.

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Quality of turmeric arrivals improves



Erode, Dec. 28:

Spot turmeric prices increased by Rs 150-200 a quintal on Wednesday as the quality of arrivals improved.

“Given the quality, traders purchased over 60 per cent of the 11,000-odd bags that arrived. The price of the hybrid Salem crop decreased by Rs 300 a quintal owing to medium quality. Because of the year-end, turmeric farmers are bringing huge stocks to the market and are willing to sell at the prevailing price,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants' Association.

He said exporters were buying turmeric to fulfil fresh orders received from Bihar. But traders were purchasing selectively, quoting a good price for quality goods and lower for poor quality. Only quality goods were being dispatched to Bihar, with the remaining stock being given to local spices firms.

Traders quoted increased prices for the first 100 lots (each lot comprises 15 bags), quoting a lower price thereafter. So the sale of the first 100 lots was immediate. Very few farmers gave their acceptance for sale of the other lots. Sales in the Gobichettipalayam Cooperative Marketing Society and the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society were encouraging after a lapse of several days.

Some traders said they had received orders from other areas for the best varieties. Farmers are bringing a medium variety, holding good quality turmeric with them, expecting a better price for the produce.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants' Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,669-4,369 a quintal, and the root variety at Rs 3,496-4,277.

Salem crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 3,889-5,229 and the root variety at Rs 3,819-4,500. Totally, 2,341 bags arrived for sale, of which 650 were sold.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 29, 2011)

Sugar rules flat on limited buying

OUR CORRESPONDENT

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Mumbai, Dec. 28:

Sugar prices ruled flat across markets in the country on Wednesday as traders await the Centre's announcement on the sale quota for January. Limited buying, too, aided the trend.

In Maharashtra's Vashi wholesale market, prices ruled steady.

In central Uttar Pradesh, sugar produced last season that ended in September ruled at Rs 2,840 a quintal, while the one produced this season was quoted at Rs 2,940.

Mr Hemant Vora, a Mumbai wholesaler said that prices were rangebound in the physical market with Rs.2-.5 gain or losses according to quality. Supply from mills is ample and new month's

free sale quota is also expected to be ample. As of now market is witnessing eased demand. Only a few mills offered tenders on Tuesday. From next week, market may see some improvement tracking new month's free sale quota. In Maharashtra, the absence of buying by neighbouring States this month, forced producers to concentrate on local market only. After a sharp drop of more than Rs 225-250 a quintal in Maharashtra this month sugar prices may stabilise at current level, he added.

On Tuesday, about 10–12 mills offered tender and sold about 35,000 – 40,000 bags in the range of Rs 2,770-2,830 (Rs 2,770-2830) for S-grade and Rs 2,860-2,930 (Rs 2,850-2,950) for M-grade. Arrivals in Vashi market were at 48-50 truckloads and local dispatches were around 44-45 truckloads. Freight rates were steady.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates : S-grade Rs 2,921-3,000 (Rs 2,922-3,000) and M-grade Rs 3,001-3,102 (Rs 3,001-3,102).

Naka delivery rates : S-grade Rs 2,870-2,910 (Rs 2,860 - 2,910) and M-grade Rs 2,970-3,020 (Rs 2,970-3,020).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated December 29, 2011)

Lower offtake keeps aromatic rice flat

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SHARE · PRINT · T+



Karnal, Dec. 28:

Sharbati and Permal varieties of rice rose on Wednesday on good quality. All other aromatic and non-basmati varieties were flat on low demand.

Good quality stocks lifted prices of Sharbati (sela) and Permal varieties, said market sources. Demand is generally low around this time of the year, the sources said.

Duplicate basmati remained flat at Rs 3,000-3,150 a quintal. Sharbati (steam) quoted around Rs 2,800-2,900 while Sharbati (sela) sold at Rs 2,750-2,800 a quintal, Rs 25 up.

Permal (sela) increased by Rs 50 at Rs 1,800-2,000 a quintal, while Permal (raw) was up Rs 100 at Rs 1,900-2,050 a quintal. PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,100-2,200 a quintal, while PR-11 (steam) quoted at Rs 2,300-2,500 a quintal.

Pusa-1121 (steam) quoted at Rs 4,050-4,100 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) was at Rs 3,150-3,200 a quintal. Pure basmati (sela) sold at Rs 3,700-3,750 a quintal, while basmati (raw) was at Rs 4,100 a quintal. Among the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar sold at Rs 3,000, Dubar was at Rs 2,500 while Mongra was trading at Rs 2,020 a quintal. Around 10,000 bags of aromatic paddy varieties arrived at the Karnal grain market terminal.

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Chickpea unchanged despite slack demand



Indore, Dec. 28:

Dollar chana or chickpea was unchanged on Wednesday despite slack buying support in export and local markets. It sold at at Rs 7,400-7,600 a quintal in local *mandis*. Arrivals declined to 500-600 bags. Two to three days ago, new dollar chana that arrived from Ujjain and Agar in Madhya Pradesh quoted at Rs 8,500 a quintal.

After rising the past two days, chana (kanta) on Wednesday declined by Rs 50 to Rs 3,300-3,325 a quintal on slack demand and weak futures. Chana (desi) also declined by Rs 25 at Rs 3,250 a quintal.

With rise in acreage and prospect of bumper crops, a bullish trend in chana appears unlikely in near future, though speculation could push up prices, said Mr Sanjay Bansal, a wholesale chana trader. Chana dal, on the other hand, remained unchanged, with chana dal (average) at Rs 3,950-3,975 a quintal, chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,050-4,075 a quintal and chana dal (bold) at Rs 4,250-4,275.

Masoor was firm on weak arrival, with masoor (bold) at Rs 3,000-3,025 a quintal and masoor (medium) at Rs 2,750.

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