

# THE HINDU

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**<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/06/16/stories/2011061652451700.htm>**

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## **Helping farmers solve their marketing problem**

The Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU) through its Directorate of Extension Education's Department of Market Extension arranged a buyer –seller interaction meeting in Chennai recently.

About 22 two vegetable growers from four districts Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, Vellore and Villupuram were invited to participate and talk about their problems, ideas and expectations regarding marketing.

A city based private vegetable and fruits company called Efarm was also invited by the University to work out the modalities for procuring, pricing and planning for continuous supply from the farmers.

### **Precision farming**

Dr.P.Murugesu Boopathy, Vice-Chancellor, in his inaugural address highlighted the benefits of precision farming system and how several farmers across the State adopted it.

He stressed the need for farmers to form commodity interest groups and plan their cropping so as to market their produce efficiently in a sustained manner.

Almost all the farmers said that they were aware about the several technologies available at the University but face problems in marketing their produce.

Mr.Venkatasubramanian, Founder, Efarm said that quality played the foremost role while buying and insisted the farmers to maintain the same.

The peak demand of every vegetable along with the preferred variety was explained so that farmers would grow the needy variety in future.

He also asked the farmers to assess the actual cost of production of each commodity so as to know the minimum selling price when any buyer came for procurement.

#### Common website

“A common website would be created soon in which the farmers could upload the availability of their commodities along with price and the transactions done through internet. It is similar to online auction in which farmers can themselves participate,” said Mr. Venkat.

Farmers were asked to provide their cultivation details for creating a database by the company after which the planning on procurement will be made.

#### First initiative

“The initiative taken by TNAU in arranging the interface between the actual vegetable growers and direct buyers is first of its kind which would focus towards an memorandum of understanding between the farmers and procurement agencies in order to solve the marketing crises prevailing for a long time,” said Dr. Boopathi.

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#### FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

##### **Spawning success stories with backyard aquaculture**

M.J. PRABU

Unavailability and huge investment make prawn farming difficult

Photo: IISR



**Novel:Manoj uses empty plastic bottles instead of PVC pipes.**

A little care, proper planning and timely technical advice can bring amazing results for any farmer, according to Dr. V.A. Parthasarathy,

Director, Indian Institute of Spices Research, Kozhikode, Kerala. In that context, farmer Mr. K.K. Manoj's backyard freshwater prawn hatchery unit at Atholi in Kozhikode district, Kerala is a model worthy of emulation

“I started with tiger shrimp farming near my house, and later switched over to brackish water breeds such as Pearl Spot, Mullet, and others as these fishes are available aplenty in the lakes near my house. I approached scientists at Peruvannamuzhi Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) for help,” he says.

Parent stock

Knowing that brood stock (mother prawns) is available in the pond, the scientists put forward the idea of setting up a hatchery for breeding giant fresh water prawn in the farmer's backyard.

“Even though a huge demand exists for post larvae of prawns, lack of availability, and the need for a huge investment make it difficult for many aspiring prawn farmers. Climate change, and many other contributing factors severely affect the natural breeding of fresh water prawns in many areas. The only solution is to breed them in captivity. So we trained the farmer to breed

them in the backyard in small tanks,” says Dr. B. Pradeep, Subject Matter Specialist (Fisheries), KVK, Peruvannamuzhi.

Last year, Manoj set up a hatchery in his backyard on an experimental basis, the first of its kind in the Malabar area. Though these prawns are grown in fresh water, they require brackish water containing a specific salinity level for eggs to hatch, and grow through the larval period.

“As per the advice of the scientists, I set up an artificial pool near my house using silpolin sheets and maintained the salinity of water in the tank at optimal level to create an artificial environment for spawning and larval development,” says Mr. Manoj.

Thin survival rate

“Around one lakh eggs are produced by a female prawn at a time, but only ten per cent survive to the post larvae stage. In the larval stage, they are fed with *Artemia nauplii*, a primitive, aquatic species largely found in salt water. Mr. Manoj's determination and hard work plus timely scientific intervention showed good results,” says Dr. Pradeep

“On an experimental basis I sold around 5,000 post larvae prawns in the first stage,” says the farmer proudly and adds “I am planning to expand the hatchery.” According to him, freshwater prawn farming in the state faces a bright future, if the potential of lakes and granite quarries in the area are exploited properly.

Felicitation

Recently, the Indian Institute of Spices Research felicitated Mr. Manoj at its annual Karshika Sankethika Darshanam 2011, a farmers mela and technology expo for his innovation in developing low cost fibre cages for rearing Pearlsport fishes in captivity.

“Normally, these fibre cages are made of fibre wire mesh. PVC pipes are used to float these structures on water. Since PVC pipes are very costly, I used empty plastic bottles to replace them. The bottles help the cage to float on the water surface,” explains the farmer.

The production cost for a standard fish culture cage works out to more than Rs. 3,000 rupees, whereas the low cost model is priced at only Rs.1,000. With a full-fledged Pearlsport hatchery unit, the innovative farmer produces around 20,000 fingerlings each breeding season.

“There is a good demand for Pearlsport from small scale farmers. I am getting around Rs. 5 for each fingerling,” says Mr. Manoj.

Feasible

According to Mr. Manoj, pearlspot farming in captivity is profitable as it requires minimum investment and harvesting is easy. Even small scale farmers and women can grow them in the backyard.

“You may find it consuming a lot of time, requiring tremendous care and attention, but more than a livelihood, it is an awesome experience, if you really like the thrill of fish rearing,” says a beaming Mr. Manoj.

For more details contact Mr. K.K. Manoj, Koodathumkandi House, Velur Post, Atholi (Via), Kozhikode- 673315. mobile: 09387527887 and Dr. B Pradeep, email: kvk@spices.res.in, phone: 0091-496- 2662372.

**Date:16/06/2011 URL:**

**<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/06/16/stories/2011061652341700.htm>**

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FARM QUERY

**Garole sheep breed**

**Can you kindly give the contact information of farmers conserving garole sheep breed?**

**Devin Sinha,New Delhi**

The sheep breed are mainly reared for meat. You can contact Mrs. Namitha Mondal, Sumatinagar village and post, PS- Sagar Island district, South 24 parganas, West Bengal- 743-373, mobile: 093781-69769 and Prof. Subhransu Pan, Head Dept of Livestock Production

Management, University of Animal and Fishery Sciences, Kolkata at email:  
span28@rediffmail.com, mobile: 094333-65563.

Date:16/06/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/06/16/stories/2011061654860300.htm>

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## Davangere farmers seek ban on endosulfan

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*'Ministers reluctant to support ban on pesticide because of pressure from MNCs' Protesters demand that diesel be given to farmers at a subsidised rate*

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DAVANGERE: Farmers under the banner of the BJP Raitha Morcha staged a protest outside the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Wednesday demanding that the Government permanently ban the sale and use of endosulfan and provide diesel to farmers at a subsidised rate.

### Hazard

The farmers said that it had been proved that the use of endosulfan was hazardous to health, poisoned crops and destroyed soil fertility.

The farmers questioned why the Government was dilly-dallying on the matter.

The protesters noted that the sale and use of endosulfan was banned at many places including Europe, and various government agencies had recommended banning it. They alleged that Union Ministers, including Sharad Pawar and Jairam Ramesh, were reluctant to ban the "dangerous insecticide" because of the pressure from multinational companies.

The farmers said that the price of diesel had gone up and they were finding it difficult to buy it for agricultural activities.

They demanded that the Government provide diesel to them at a subsidised rate.

Leaders such as Lingaraju, Kondajji Nagaraja Rao, N. Sathish, Avaragere Kenchappa and Shivaji Patil were among those who participated in the agitation.

Date:16/06/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/06/16/stories/2011061655560300.htm>

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### **Rain: heavy crop loss in Kasaragod**

Staff Reporter

KASARAGOD: The incessant rain that lashed the district since the onset of monsoon has resulted in damage to property estimated at Rs.32.49 lakh.

Agriculture crops in 50 hectares of land were damaged causing a loss to the tune of Rs.18.48 lakh, an official release said here on Wednesday. As many as 12 houses were destroyed and 124 houses were damaged in the rain. The district recorded 12 cm rain in the last 24 hour.

Date:16/06/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/06/16/stories/2011061656360300.htm>

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### **Farmers register high paddy yield**

Special Correspondent

*Adopt SRI technique; use less water and more bio-manure*

PUDUKOTTAI: Three village panchayats – Ennai, Thalini and Kadavampatti in the district have registered a steep growth in paddy yield, thanks to implementation of 'System of Rice Intensification' (SRI) technique.

In all, 86 farmers took to this technique on a total area of 75 acres. A phenomenon in these village panchayats is that the area of individual landholding is very small, as farmers grow paddy for their livelihood sustenance.

These village panchayats registered an increase in 30 tonnes of paddy production due to the SRI technique, according to a post-harvest survey conducted by the JRD Eco-technology centre of M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation.

### Creating awareness

The foundation, with a view to create awareness of SRI technique among farmers, set up three farmers' field schools – one in every village panchayat in October last year.

“The schools, which functioned till January this year at Keezh Ennai village in Ennai panchayat; Thalinja in Thalinja village panchayat and Neivaipatti village in Kadavampatti village panchayat ensured that the farmers strictly adhered to SRI techniques. Every cultivation practice was monitored and farmers were guided to use less water and more bio-manure.

With a view to bring more farmers under the ambit of SRI technique, a “farmers' field day” meeting was held here recently. Farmers who adopted SRI technique, explained their success story to non-SRI farmers.

### Appreciation

R.S. Hopper, principal coordinator, Community-managed bio-industrial water shed programme of Foundation; P. Rajendran, Thalinja panchayat president and Oswald Quintal, director, ‘Kudumbam’, an NGO were among those who spoke. They appreciated the SRI farmers' efforts in increasing productivity.

K.Balan, Deputy Director of Agriculture, released a hand book on ‘SRI and sustainable agriculture’.



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<http://www.thehindu.com/2011/06/16/stories/2011061656030300.htm>

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## Pay compensation to farmers in 15 days: Sandesh Swamy

Staff Correspondent

*They had given up land for the Kabini drinking water project*

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*6.2 acres of land acquired from six farmers for the project 'Farmers have stopped work at the project site for the last 10 days'*

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Mysore: The former Mayor Sandesh Swamy has threatened to stage a protest if compensation is not paid to farmers who ceded their land for the Kabini drinking water project.

Speaking to presspersons here on Wednesday, Mr. Swamy demanded that Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa direct the Revenue Department to pay the compensation in 15 days. If this did not happen, all 65 councillors of the Mysore City Corporation (MCC), irrespective of their political affiliation, would take part in the protest, he said.

The Rs. 108-crore drinking water project for the city is being implemented under the Centre's Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission.

Course of events

Mr. Swamy said the MCC released Rs. 1.48 crore to the Revenue Department in August last so that it could pay compensation to six farmers for their 6.2 acres which was acquired for the project.

The farmers had agreed to give up their land following an oral assurance that Rs. 23 lakh would be paid for an acre of irrigated land and Rs. 18 lakh for an acre of dry land. The quantum of compensation had been fixed in the presence of the then district in-charge Minister Shobha Karandlaje and the then Deputy Commissioner P. Manivannan.

However, the Revenue Department later objected to this, claiming the amount was higher than the land value prescribed by the sub-registrar.

Now, farmers had locked up the buildings at the project site, halting work for the last 10 days. This was the third time that the work had been stopped by farmers demanding compensation, Mr. Swamy said.

Minister in charge of Mysore district S.A. Ramdas recently assured the farmers that compensation would be paid in 10 days, and that deadline ended on May 29.

Project work of up to Rs. 60 crore had been completed.

Criticised

Mr. Swamy alleged that efforts were on to release 3.5 km of land in the Hongalli-Belagola-Melapura area on the outskirts of the city to facilitate water pipelines for a couple of industries in that area. The region already had two water pipelines of the MCC, he said, and demanded that permission for the pipelines be scrapped.

There was "mischief" in the deal, as it was not brought to the notice of the MCC, he alleged. The corporation would be short of land if such requests by industries were considered.

Besides, as per the Chief Minister's directive, the land concerned would come under the Bruhat Mysore Mahanagara Palike in the future, he added.

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## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Jun 16

Max Min  
37.6° | 23.9°

Rain: 22.0 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 47%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:42

Sunset: 18:36

Barometer: 1003.0

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, Jun 17

Max Min  
37° | 28°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday  
Jun 18



34° | 27°  
Rainy

Sunday  
Jun 19



34° | 28°  
Rainy

Monday  
Jun 20



33° | 28°  
Rainy

Tuesday  
Jun 21



33° | 28°  
Rainy

Wednesday  
Jun 22



33° | 28°  
Rainy

15 Jun, 2011, 12.21PM IST,PTI

## Cardamom futures gain 0.24 pc as demand picks up

NEW DELHI: Cardamom prices rose by Rs 1.90 to Rs 801.50 per kg in futures trading today on the back of a pick-up in demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange , cardamom for July delivery gained Rs 1.90, or 0.24 per cent, to Rs 801.50 per kg, with an open interest for 200 lots.

Likewise, the spice for delivery in August edged up by Rs 1.60, or 0.19 per cent, to Rs 834.50 per kg in 77 lots.

Market analysts said a pick-up in demand in the spot market against limited arrivals from producing regions mainly led to the rise in cardamom futures prices.



## Govt focuses on hybrid maize cultivation in 21 dists this year

June 16, 2011 10:59:45 AM

**SUDHIR MISHRA | Balangir**

Apparently worried over the reports in media against Monsanto company and other multinational seed companies entering into the State to boost hybrid maize production last year,

this year a special drive to augment maize production in the Odisha has been taken with seed companies under Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yojana(RKVY).

According to sources, this year maize cultivation has been taken up in 40,000hectares in Odisha against the last year's 30,000hectares with the help of seven seed companies namely JKAgrri Genetics Limited, Bisco Bio- Sciences Pvt Ltd, UPA Advanta Ltd, Bayer Bio –Science Ltd, PHI Seeds PVT limited, CP seeds Pvt Ltd, Nirmal Seeds Pvt Seeds Ltd and MAHYCO seeds Pvt Ltd.

The cultivation has been taken up in 21districts namely, Ganjam, Sonepur, Mayurbhanj, Nuapada, Jharsuguda, Gajapati, Nayagarh, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Sambalpur, Baragarh, Koraput, Malkangiri, Angul, Keonjhar, Kandhmaal, Boudh, Khurdha, Dhenkanal, Sundergarh and Rayagada over 40,000hectares. While last year Monsanto was allowed to take up maize cultivation in Balangir district, this year Bayer Bio-Science Ltd has been allowed to cultivate hybrid maize in the district.

The target of maize cultivation in Balangir this year is 2, 000 hectares and the variety approved for cultivation is PRO AGRO 4644, informed DDA Manoranjan Mallick.

Last year, the companies were supplying seeds and also their responsibility was to arrange training and field visit. However, this year there has been a change. According to guidelines, the selected farmer for the programme will purchase seeds from the company or authorized license dealer at Rs.100 per kg and obtain a valid cash memo. After the purchase, the farmer will take up the cultivation programme in his field and apply the basal dose of fertilizer in proper quantity and the line sowing with proper spacing.

After the sowing is completed, the farmers will produce the seed purchase memo to the BTT (block technology team)/AAO and will get money for fertiliser and other inputs. Before getting the cheque, the farmers will have to produce a permit issued by FIAC (Farm Information and

Advisory Centre).

This year, an NGO has been involved in the operation that will ensure the application of basal dose and motivation to farmers' registration and facilitation of training. Before release of the cheque, there would be field visit by the agriculture officials.

While the Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) will ensure the timely arrival of seeds, the seed companies will organise one training programme for each 100 hectares and will organise at least one field day for 500 hectares at their own cost.

This year, there was a lot of uncertainty about the mode of cultivation but finally it was decided in the first week of June.

#### **'Use urea-treated chaff to avoid fodder shortage'**

June 16, 2011 10:58:29 AM

#### **Staff Reporter | Bhopal**

The shortage of green fodder in summer affects milk production. Keeping this in view, the Gwalior unit of the Madhya Pradesh State Cooperative Dairy Federation is advising milk producers in the areas under its jurisdiction including Gwalior, Bhind, Morena, Datia, Shivpuri, Sheopur and Tikamgarh districts to use urea-treated chaff instead of green fodder during summer. For this purpose, a special campaign is being conducted by the Dairy Federation.

Under the campaign, demonstrations related to use of urea-treated chaff in place of green fodder for more milk production at low cost during summer are being held constantly for milk producers by the concerning Dairy Cooperative Societies. The chaff is made easily consumable for cattle after treating it with four per cent urea solution for 21 days. This process removes stiffness of chaff and it can be easily digested by the cattle.

Under the process, four kg urea is mixed properly in 65 litres of water for making 100 kg urea-treated chaff. Later, the chaff is spread on a pucca floor and is covered by a plastic sheet after mixing the chaff with urea solution.

After 21 days, the colour of chaff turns golden and softens enough to be consumed by cattle. Before feeding the chaff to cattle, it is very necessary to spread it in the open air for half an hour. The cattle relish grazing this treated chaff and drink more water. As much as 29 metric tonnes of wheat chaff has been treated by 706 animal rearers belonging to 193 Dairy Cooperative Societies working under Gwalior Dairy Federation this year.

## Business Standard

Thursday, Jun 16, 2011

### Veg oil imports rise after 6 months

BS Reporter / Mumbai June 16, 2011, 0:59 IST



Rebound expected to continue, though overall quantity may be less than last year

After successive declines for six months, vegetable oil imports rose 19 per cent in May, due to less availability from local crushing units.

Data compiled by the apex trade body, the Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA), show that imports shot up to 664,133 tonnes in May as compared to 558,765 tonnes in the corresponding month last year. This is the first monthly rise in arrivals in this oil year (November-October).

Says B V Mehta, executive director of SEA, "Nearly 70 per cent of the estimated 28 million tonnes of oilseed output has been crushed so far this year, resulting in higher availability from local sources. Crush margins averaged Rs 1,000 per qtl this year, as against a negative Rs 800-

1,000 per qtl parity last year. Oil availability from local sources was very low last year, as mills were not aggressively crushing seeds due to negative margins.”

During the first seven months of the current oil year, however, imports continued to remain lower at 4.27 mt, a decline of 12 per cent from 4.85 mt in the same period last year. SEA attributed four basic factors for the slump in overall imports. One, higher production of oilseeds during kharif and rabi seasons. Two, increased crushing activity boosted local availability. Three, good crushing parity due to high price of oil and export demand for oilmeals. Four, negative margin in imports and high prices of edible oil had stopped demand growth.

He believes the upsurge would continue during the remaining five months of this year, due to the possibility of further decline in availability from local sources.

Nearly half the remaining 30 per cent of the oilseeds available in the country are expected to be supplied to crushing units for processing, while the rest would be used for sowing next season and direct consumption. Therefore, another 700,000-800,000 tonnes of oil will possibly be made available from local mills.

As a consequence, import will increase during the rest of the current oil year. Mehta estimates total imports would remain 800,000 tonnes lower than the last year’s record at 9.2 mt.

“Veg oil import is unlikely to surpass 8.4 mt this year,” Mehta said, adding that price-sensitive rural consumers may lower buying due to upward revision in retail prices. Prices have surged 50 per cent in the past year. with the benchmark RBD palmolein up to \$1,237 a tonne in May as compared to \$829 a tonne last year. Crude palm oil jumped to \$1,163 a tonne versus \$803 a tonne earlier, crude soybean oil to \$1,287 from \$844 a tonne and crude sunflower oil to \$1,399 a tonne from \$902 a tonne in May last year.

Negative parity in imported oil was also seen because of appreciation in the rupee, up to 44.85 against the benchmark dollar in May, as against 46.50 in the comparable month last year.

The stock of edible oil as on June 1 at various ports was estimated at 470,000 tonnes (CPO 320,000 tonnes, RBD palmolein 30,000 tonnes, degummed soybean oil 60,000 tonnes and crude sunflower oil at 60,000 tonnes) and about 875,000 tonnes in the pipeline. Total stock was, therefore, estimated at 1,345,000 tonnes as compared to 1,275,000 tonnes a month before.



## **MP expects good soya output**

**Shashikant Trivedi / New Delhi/ Bhopal June 16, 2011, 0:41 IST**

With the onset of good monsoon, soya processors and farmers are expecting a good crop this year too. The crop estimate is however not decided as of now as sowing has not started in Madhya Pradesh.

Processors expect the acreage in Madhya Pradesh — known as the soya bowl of India — to touch more than 5.5 million hectare. According to Soyabean Processors Association of India, an Indore-based organisation that releases soya crop related estimates and data, “Soya is likely to cross more than 10 million hectare of acreage this year too.”

Although there was a shift from soya to other crop in the Malwa belt, the crop production during 2010-11 is likely to touch 5.5 million tonne. “This year we expect acreage in Madhya Pradesh to reach 5.5 million hectare. Sowing in states like Maharashtra has started, growers in Madhya Pradesh will start sowing by the fourth week of this month. The good monsoon sign augurs well for acreage and the crop,” said Rajesh Agrawal, Sopa spokesperson, adding, “Acreage is likely to touch more than 10 million hectare this year like the previous year.”

Madhya Pradesh contributes to 80 per cent of India’s total soya production. Barring a few dry spells in the late 90s, soya crop has never slipped to less than 3.8 million tonne in the state.

On the other hand, state government is likely to set a target of 5.55 million hectare acreage. “This year acreage will slightly go up from last year’s 5.5 million hectare,” said an official in the agriculture department.

Farmers in Malwa belt — Indore, Ujjain, some parts of Bhopal, Dhar and Jhabua have reported shortage of seed. The state needs at least 0.8 million tonnes seed while the availability is only 0.4-0.5 million tonnes.

According to the meteorology department, the state is likely to receive good spell of rains this fortnight of June. “Reports from across the state indicates the state is going to receive normal rain fall this year,” a MET department official said.

## **Farmers' protest halts tobacco auctions**

**D Gopi / Guntur June 16, 2011, 0:01 IST**

With tobacco farmers agitating for remunerative prices, auctions at the 11 platforms spread over the southern black soils (SBS) and southern light soils (SLS) in Prakasam and part of Nellore districts are yet to start. Tobacco growers are on strike since June 2, demanding higher prices and have refused to bring the product to auction platforms since June 9.

The requests by Tobacco Board chairman, G Kamalavardhana Rao, to increase the price to Rs 120 a kg from Rs 104 a kg had fallen on deaf ears and farmers were left with no option but to keep off from the auction centres.

On the other hand, buyers say the tobacco prices in the international market have come down and there were no export orders on hand. In addition, the crop in SBS and SLS was of low quality due to incessant rain in December 2010. In some parts, farmers have gone for a second crop in January replacing the damaged and discoloured crop. This had increased the investment for the farmers, which is why they were demanding higher prices.

Board executive director, C V Subba Rao, said they were also holding talks with buyers to increase the price. "We are expecting a positive response from the buyers by this weekend," he added.

In Andhra Pradesh, 57.71 million kg was sold by June 8 at an average price of Rs 112.19 a kg. This was against 91.17 million kg sold at an average price of Rs 98.63 a kg during the same period in 2010.

"The price offered to the farmers this year is comparatively more than the previous year. Due to increased investment, it is not working out for farmers and hence the agitation," Subba Rao said.

## **Intensive rice cultivation seen solution to labour shortage**

AP FORMULA

Hyderabad, June 15:

The main grouse of farmers against Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), the job guarantee scheme, is that it made farming unviable by making labour unaffordable.

Several thousands of small farmers have reportedly shunned land, unable to find labour.

The Andhra Pradesh Government says this is no longer a problem for farmers. A Government-supported SRI (System of Rice Intensification) cultivation method could help farmers tackle the labour problem effectively.

“There is no point in blaming a good scheme that helped crores of daily wage labourers get assured work throughout the year,” Mr V Nagi Reddy, Principal Secretary (Agriculture) of Andhra Pradesh, says. “We have finalised a support system for small farmers to help face labour and technological shortages. We are going to set up 100 SRI cultivation support systems across the State,” he said.

“These units would be up and running by rabi.

We will give a subsidy in the range of 30-50 per cent to entrepreneurs who show interest to join the programme. Each unit, which would cost Rs 1 crore, would cater to 100-200 farmers,” he told *Business Line* on the sidelines of a global summit on “Green Revolution II” organised by ASSOCHAM here on Wednesday.

SRI cultivation would reduce water consumption by 30 per cent and increase productivity by 20 per cent.

“We request industries bodies such as ASSOCHAM to help us rope in entrepreneurs,” he said.

### **Mixed trend in rubber**

Kottayam, June 15:

Spot rubber saw a mixed trend on Wednesday. The undercurrent was firm as RSS 5 and ungraded rubber improved following comparatively better demand. Weather variations seemed to have confused traders who decided to wait for clarity after the expiry of the June futures on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

According to traders, sheet rubber finished flat at Rs 227.50 a kg amidst low volumes. The grade improved to Rs 227.50 (227) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board. The June series expired at Rs 229.25 (227.39) while the July series weakened to Rs 230.70 (231.93), August to Rs 232.43 (234.06), September to Rs 231.45 (232.58), October to Rs 229.01 (231.28) and November to Rs 229.80 (230.25) a kg for RSS 4 on NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 231.65 (232.20) a kg at Bangkok. The June futures for the grade recovered to ¥414 (Rs 229.58) from ¥411.9 a kg during the day session and then to ¥416 (Rs 230.68) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 227.50 (227.50); RSS-5: 226 (225); ungraded: 222 (222); ISNR 20: 224 (223) and latex 60 per cent: 143 (143).

### **Feed makers may partially replace costlier maize**



Poultry sector pushing up domestic demand for coarse grain

New Delhi/Chennai, June 15:

Wheat can be used as feedgrain in northern and central parts of the country compared with the southern region. But feed manufacturers are expected to only source a part of their feed demand from wheat.

Currently, the landed cost of wheat in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka is Rs 1,350-1,400 a quintal. "It is Rs 40-50 higher than the price of maize at the gate of our units," he said.

"Poultry farmers will not totally shift to wheat since the balance will again swing. The smartness is in using both equally to ensure both grains prices rule on par," said Mr K.S. Ponnusamy, a feed producer in Namakkal.

Broiler chicken feed typically contains 60 per cent corn. It is lower, at 40 per cent in feed for layer (egg-producing) birds and 10-12 per cent for cattle.

Earlier when maize prices became unviable, the producers substituted it with jowar that came from Maharashtra.

"At one point of time, we used to get corn at Rs 500-600 a quintal during peak arrivals and Rs 700-800 in the offseason.. When it was unviable, we used jowar. But now jowar is used by grain-based distilleries. Even within Maharashtra, jowar is not available for consumption," said Mr Ponnusamy.

He said the Centre should stop export of maize or allow imports under tariff rate quota (TRQ) as was allowed earlier. The TRQ imports were stopped after maize production surged in the country.

This year (July-June), maize production is estimated at a record 21 million tonnes against 16.6 million tonnes a year ago.

"Exports of maize are not happening as is being said by some people. In fact, we have had some consignments rejected by Vietnam on grounds of higher moisture," said Mr A. Rajkumar of Chennai-based Alagendran group of companies.

The problem is similar to the one faced four years ago when Indonesia rejected Indian consignments that had higher moisture.

About 2.5 million tonnes of maize is estimated to have been exported this year.

“This time, maize that arrived in the market had higher moisture. Farmers have to spend more to dry and reduce moisture. Therefore, they brought the maize direct to market after harvest,” Mr Rajkumar said.

Even multi-national companies that are exporting maize from the country have been hit by rejections of maize consignments.

“The fact is that it is just domestic demand, especially from the poultry sector, that is keeping maize prices high,” said Mr Rajkumar.

Currently, farmers do not hold any maize stock. “Traders are holding the stock and therefore, prices may not drop in the next couple of months,” said Mr Rajkumar.

But wheat prices could gain, according to flour millers. “Wheat prices could begin rising after a fortnight,” said Mr Pramod Kumar of Sunil Agro Foods in Karnataka.

“Maize prices could drop from September onwards when kharif arrivals begin,” said Mr Rajkumar.

Kharif sowing of maize will depend on the weather. “If monsoon turns out to be good, cotton could see higher acreage and pulses the least. We expect some pulses growers shifting to cotton, some to groundnut and some to maize,” Mr Rajkumar said.

Maize enjoys the reputation of a crop whose inputs costs are low. It needs minimum maintenance, less water and has lower labour requirement. “In fact, farm machinery can help sow or harvest corn,” said Mr Rajkumar.

The lower production cost could see more farmers shifting to maize in large numbers in the near future, say industry players.

## **Vegoil imports rise 19% in May**

New Delhi, June 15:

Vegetable oil imports increased 19 per cent in May to 6.64 lakh tonnes owing to low supply of domestic oil seeds, an industry body day said. The rise comes after six months of decline.

The import of vegetable oils in the 2009-10 oil year (November-October) stood at 5.58 lakh tonnes, according to Solvent Extractor's Association's (SEA) latest data.

“In this oil year since November, local mills intensified crushing of oilseeds on increased parity compared to the same period last year, which led to a depletion of stocks in the domestic market,” SEA Executive Director B.V. Mehta said.

The low domestic supply of oil seeds in the markets led to a rise in import of vegetable oil in May, he added.

However, the vegetable oils imports during November, 2010 to May, 2011 declined by 12 per cent to 42.67 lakh tonnes as compared to 48.49 lakh tonnes in the corresponding period of 2009-10 oil year (November-October), according to the data.

“Total imports in the first seven months of the current oil year declined owing to increased availability of oil seeds in the market and increased parity due to record production of oilseeds in the country,” Mehta said.

India is estimated to have harvested a record 30.25 million tonnes of oilseeds in 2010-11 crop year (July-June).

The current stock of edible oils as of June 1, 2011 at various ports is estimated at 4.7 lakh tonnes and about 8.75 lakh tonnes in pipelines.

“Total stock, both at ports and in pipelines, is estimated at 13.45 lakh tonnes as compared to 12.75 lakh tonnes as of May 1, 2011,” SEA said.

India imports palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia and soyabean oil from Argentina and Brazil.

## **'Kerala rubber convention can help showcase technology'**

Kochi, June 15:

The Confederation of Indian Industry and the Rubber Board organised a one-day conference in Kottayam to create a platform showcasing developing technologies and ideas related to rubber processing. The theme of the conference, held under the banner of Kerala Rubber Convention 2011, was “Sustainable rubber manufacturing and processing.”

Inaugurating the session, Ms Sheela Thomas, Chairperson of Rubber Board, Government of India, said, “Kerala Rubber Convention will create a platform for showcasing technology, ideas and solutions and help rubber planters and micro, small and medium industries as well as regional and national players to attain economic sustainability in their operations.” The conference was also expected to enhance technological interventions and highlight Kerala's potential as a promising investment destination.

India is the fourth-largest producer and third-largest consumer of natural rubber in the world. Over one million people are directly involved in farming of rubber, while another six million people are indirectly associated with this business. There are around 4,500 manufacturing units dependent on rubber.

### **State's economy benefits**

Rubber is seen as key to the development of Kerala. The recent rally in rubber prices is estimated to have contributed significantly to the 10 per-cent-growth registered by the State's economy. Close to 92 per cent of the nine lakh tonnes of rubber produced in India comes from Kerala.

“Today's session will enhance technological intervention and highlight Kerala's potential as a promising investment destination. This will also provide a platform for business meetings and knowing more about financing options,” Mr K.T. Thomas, Chairman of Kerala Rubber Convention 2011 and Director of Paragon Polymer Products, said.



## Assocham sets up action plan for agriculture



Sowing reform: Dr William D. Dar, Director-General of ICRISAT, and Mr Dilip Modi, President, Assocham, at the Global Summit on Green Revolution in Hyderabad on Wednesday. — Photo: G. Krishnaswamy

Hyderabad, June 15:

Assocham will engage with various State governments to implement a 10-point Action Plan it has prepared to revolutionise agricultural sector in the country. It calls for a dedicated Agriculture Budget and a one-nation-one-market regime to encourage farmers.

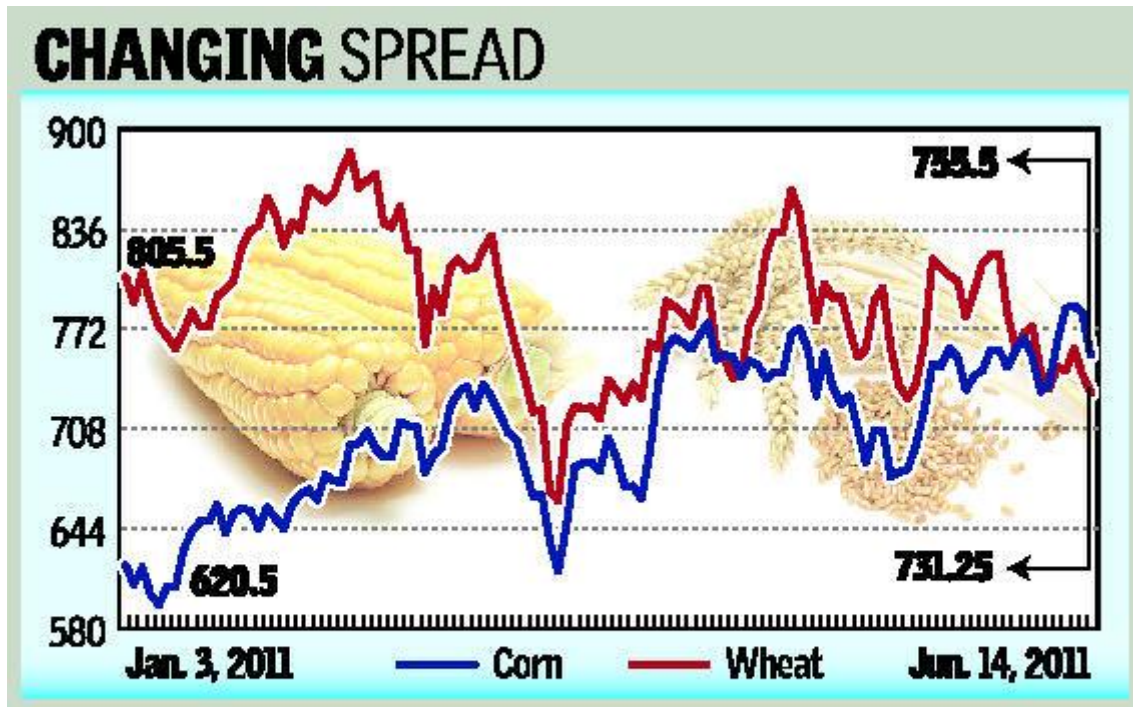
“We are not talking about 4 per cent growth for this sector. We are targeting a growth 10 per cent in the next few years,” Mr Dilip Modi, President of ASSOCHAM, said.

Addressing the global summit on ‘Green Revolution II - Growth engine for transformation’ organised by ASSOCHAM here on Wednesday, he said the chambers would emphasise on ‘Soil-to-crop-to-market’ in order increase productivity and marketability of farm produce.

Talking on other focus areas of the Action Plan, Mr Modi said the country should move from consumption-based subsidies to capital subsidy. Besides encouraging private sector to

participate more in agriculture activities, the chamber would focus on agriculture education and development of relevant applications.

Feed-grade maize turns costlier than wheat



*\*Closing quotes for most actively traded contracts on CBOT.  
Corn and wheat prices in cents/bushel.  
A bushel of wheat is 27.21 kg; A bushel of corn is 25.40 kg*

New Delhi/Chennai, June 15:

Chickenfeed is far from that. Today, it is probably as, if not more, expensive to feed chicken than humans!

Feed-grade maize, or corn, sells at Rs 1,230-1,240 a quintal, which is more than the Rs 1,150-1,200 for wheat in most mandis near key producing centres. A year ago, maize ruled at Rs 960-980, while wheat quoted over Rs 1,250.

. On the futures market, too, maize is ruling above wheat. The most actively traded maize contract for July delivery quotes at Rs 1,306 a quintal against Rs 979.30 during the same time

last year. In the case of wheat, the actively traded contract for delivery in July is quoting at Rs 1,197.80 against Rs 1,223 a year ago.

Far-month contracts of maize for delivery in September are ruling at Rs 1,332 for maize (Rs 988). In the case of wheat, they are traded at Rs 1,244.20 (Rs 1,266.40).

The trend is similar globally too, with the July corn contract at the Chicago Board of Trade quoting, for the last one week, higher than the corresponding futures price for wheat (See chart).

This is the first time since 1996 that the wheat-corn spread has turned negative over a sustained period — contrary to the general perception that wheat, being a foodgrain, would trade at a healthy premium to corn.

Corn prices have surged on multiple floods hitting the crop in the US, the biggest producer, lower carryover stocks and demand for ethanol.

Given that an estimated 60 per cent of India's corn production is turned into poultry and animal feed, would the relative cheapness of wheat lead to its displacing the former as the preferred food for chicken and livestock? Not yet, says Mr Balram Yadav, Managing Director of Godrej Agrovet Ltd, the country's largest feed miller, which consumes half a million tonne of corn every year.

“Corn has a calorific value of 3,400 Kcal/kg, which is more than the 3,080 Kcal/kg for wheat. So, in terms of energy equivalent, wheat prices have to drop to below 90 per cent of corn for being viable to be incorporated into compounded feed formulations,” says Mr Yadav.

However, Mr K.S. Ponnusamy, a feed producer in Tamil Nadu's Namakkal district, says that if the landed price of wheat is on a par with maize price then they would go for equal mix of wheat and maize.

## Call for more efforts to develop rubber goods sector

Kottayam, June 15:

The Rubber Board Chairperson, Ms Sheela Thomas, has inaugurated the Kerala Rubber Convention 2011 here, organised by the CII (Kerala chapter).

She said 60 per cent of rubber produced in the country was consumed by the tyre sector.

Mr Jose Dominic, Chairman, CII Kerala chapter, stressed the need for more efforts to develop the manufacturing industry in the state by making utmost use of resources and market opportunities.