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TNAU recommends pest and disease control measures

Staff Reporter

COIMBATORE: The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) has suggested plant protection measures to be undertaken by farmers this season. Farmers of Virudhunagar and Sivaganga are asked to watch for incidence of rice blast which can be controlled by foliar spray of tricyclazole or edifenphos.

Smut

Rice false smut incidence has also been noticed in Thanjavur, Sivaganga and Villupuram.

Farmers can use sprays of hexaconazole or chlorothalonil based on intensity.

Necessary precautions may be taken not to use seeds from affected crops for subsequent planting.

For rice bacterial leaf blight, farmers can spray streptomycin sulphate and tetracycline combination with copper oxychloride or copper hydroxychloride.

Sugarcane

In sugarcane, internode borer incidence has been found to occur in Salem, Namakkal, Thanjavur, Theni, Thiruvannamalai, Villupuram and Virudhunagar.

Trichogramma egg parasitoid can be released to combat this.

Bollworms found in cotton at Virudhunagar, Theni and Krishnagiri can be controlled by application of quinalphos or carbaryl.

Groundnut farmers

Groundnut farmers are asked to watch for incidence of leaf miner by setting up light traps.

If normal rain is not received, there is a possibility for the outbreak in Virudhunagar, Thiruvelveli and Pudukottai.

Farmers can spray quinalphos or methyl demeton or dimethoate.

Coconut leaf blight in Pollachi and Dindigul crossing the Economic Threshold Level can be controlled by spraying Bordeaux mixture or tridermoph.

Tapioca, papaya and mulberry farmers are asked to watch for incidence of papaya mealy bug for obtaining parasitoids free of cost from TNAU research stations / KVKs / colleges.

Details

For details, contact Head, Department of Agricultural Entomology, TNAU, on 0422-6611214; or Head, Department of Plant Pathology, TNAU, on 0422-6611226.

Date:10/03/2011 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/03/10/stories/2011031052551800.htm>

FARM QUERY

Dryland groundnut variety

Can you kindly give the contact details of a farmer in Gujarat who had developed a drought resistant groundnut variety?

Ramgopal

Maharashtra

You can contact Mr. Dhirajlal Virjibhai Thummar, Via Mota Akadiya, PO Pipal lag, Taluka Pipal lag, Amreli 365455, Gujarat, mobile: 02792-286093, 9825513469. The farmer named the variety as Dhiraj 101.

The crop matures in 95-105 days and bears 35-40 pods per plant. About 90-100 kg of seeds are required for an hectare and yield 3,200-3,500 kgs from an hectare. Mr. Thummar used only herbal pesticide for controlling insect pests and diseases in the crop.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/03/10/stories/2011031052691800.htm>

Controlling vascular streak dieback in Cocoa

Vascular streak dieback is a serious threat in cocoa cultivation and cause cent per cent loss if left unprotected.

The disease is caused by air-borne fungal pathogen. The fungus ejects the spores into the air during night time and spread through wind.

The spores grow on fallen unhardened leaves through epidermis, mesophylls in the vein and grow down into the stem; the incubation period is 3 - 5 months before the first symptoms are visible.

Wetting of the surface by rain is essential and infection occurs only in wet weather condition. Lack of wind and high humidity limits the disease spread.

Symptom

The first indication of the disease is yellowing of one or two leaves on second or third flush

behind the growing tip. The diseased leaves fall prematurely within few days of turning yellow.

The youngest and oldest leaves remain intact while all the middle leaves have fallen the affected shoot is eventually dried and if unchecked the disease will extend back along the main branch resulting in progressive death of the plant.

The diseased stem, when split longitudinally a brown streaking of the wood with presence of fungus in the xylem vessels is very common. Streaking of the wood prior to death is the perfect diagnostic character of the fungus.

Management

– Identification of severely diseased or dead plants uprooting and burning them immediately to avoid spread of the pathogenic spores.

–Prune the diseased branches about 30 – 40 cm below the end of visible streaking which delay the disease build up and remove the sources of fresh infection besides preventing further growth of the fungus on infected trees.

–Judicious within canopy pruning, improve aeration, sunlight penetration and reduce the disease spread.

– Apply bordeaux paste on the pruned area and spray 1 per cent Bordeaux mixture or copper oxychloride 0.25 per cent twice i.e. in May – June and again October as a prophylactic measure.

–Soil drenching with 0.25 per cent copper oxychloride (2.5g/ litre of water) around the

plant.**M. Kannan& M. Ananthan**Horticultural Research Station,
ThadiyankudisaiPerumparai, Dindigul,Tamil Nadu

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<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/03/10/stories/2011031052461800.htm>

FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

Sprinkling water using Chandraprabha rain gun

M. J. PRABU

The system can irrigate an acre in about one and half hours

Photo: Special Arrangement



Novel irrigation: Annasaheb with his rain gun.

Unlike the knowledge and awareness of the present day, about 25 years ago farmers never knew the effectiveness of water conservation and the need for preserving groundwater by using tubes and buckets for irrigating their crops.

But in that phase, Annasaheb Udagavi, from Sadala village of Chikkoditaluka in Belgaun district, North Karnataka, developed a sprinkler system that covers as much as 140 feet radius to irrigate sugarcane crops.

“To save my betel-vine orchard from acute scarcity of water, I fitted PVC pipes used in electrical fittings, after making perforations using nails. I spent Rs. 30,000 to cover two acres of betel-vine two decades ago for irrigation,” he says.

Poor prices

By irrigating it for an hour every day, he successfully maintained the orchard for seven years.

But poor prices for betel leaf and labour problems made him switch to other crops.

He then started cultivating tobacco for a few years and changed over again to sugarcane for better returns.

“But the irrigation problem continued,” he says. “Salinity and difficulty in irrigating the dense crop made me search for an alternative. And then the sprinkler irrigation system started taking shape.”

According to Mr. Annasahib, washing down aphids and white flies using a high-pressure water spray is the best method to save crops from pests. By studying the conventional sprinkler irrigation system, the farmer designed a new one to suit the sugarcane crop.

Further improvement

After installing it in the field, he further improved the design by providing a groove for nozzles of different sizes to shoot water to different lengths according to the need.

Further, he introduced a locking system to prevent the sprinkler head from throwing water into neighbouring fields and named it Chandraprabha.

“Two ‘Chandraprabha rain gun’ sprinkler heads are enough to irrigate an acre of

sugarcane.

“The cost of one sprinkler head is priced at Rs. 3,500 and the per acre installation cost comes to Rs. 15,000 inclusive of the installation of three inch PVC main pipeline and riser pipe,” he explains.

It can irrigate an acre in about one and half hours.

Since the system is made using a three inch pipe and a wide nozzle, even composts such as biogas slurry can be applied to the crop through it. It does not even need additional pipelines because of its large coverage, according to him.

Three in one

Mr. Annasaheb also designed a machine to plant, apply manure, and stubble shave sugarcane crops.

“Manual methods of operations such as planting, applying manure, and stubble shaving takes about 30-35 man-days/hectare/day for each operation. Tractor drawn rotovators in the market did not give a shaving effect on the ratoon crop and manual cutting failed,” he explains.

The output of the machine is 0.4 hectare/hour and can apply about 105 kg of fertilizer in the same time. The height of the stubble shaving can be adjusted upto two inches from the ground using a nut-bolt arrangement on the side.

Cost

It requires one person to operate it and consumes less diesel, thereby reducing operational costs, emissions, and pollution. The current model costs Rs 40,000, according to Mr. Annasaheb. The innovator filed a patent for this innovation and is using it for many years. For more details contact Mr. Annasaheb Bhavu Udagavi, Pattan Modu thotta, Examba Road, Sadalge, Chikodi, Belgaum, Karnataka 591239, mobiles: 08330- 251676, 09342212732.

Date:10/03/2011 URL:

GM crops debate: consensual versus adversarial approaches

Unlike the adversarial approach, both sides of an argument are looked at impartially in consensual approach

— Photo: Akhilesh Kumar



Quite different: Unlike the public, scientists are not trained to hold placards, shout slogans or mobilize crowds.

In general, there are two ways to resolve differences in viewpoints and opinions between individuals or groups. One is the adversarial approach, as adopted in wars between nations, in courts of law between opposite parties, and in democracies, between Government and the opposition. For every winner here, there is also a loser hence making it a zero-sum game. Sport is also adversarial, but in an enjoyable way for participants and spectators alike.

On the other hand, the establishment of viewpoints in science occurs not adversarial approach but consensual. A quintessential feature of scientific research activity, which every academic scientist takes for granted, but largely unknown to the general public, is that of peer review. Peer review represents the epitome of a consensual approach in scientific discourse.

Because science is human endeavour at the boundaries or frontiers of the unknown, scientists recognize that any new knowledge that is generated can only be assessed and evaluated by other practitioners at these boundaries, namely, their peers. Thus, in addition

to undertaking their own research, scientists are under an unwritten moral obligation to accept the task of reviewing the work of their peers. The reviewers are critics but not adversaries, and it is only when they reach consensus with the proponents of the research can a scientific advance be published and made known to the world. Peer review does have its share of minor shortcomings in its actual practice.

Unlike the zero-sum game of an adversarial approach, everyone is a winner here when scientific advances occur in this manner.

Whereas adversarial arguments begin from an assumption of mistrust between the parties, consensual approach rests on an assumption of trust and all the parties are expected to self-declare conflicts of interest. Scientists, therefore, are most comfortable when they participate in consensual discussions. Consensus amongst experts is not unanimity, but at the very least it is an agreement on why they have chosen to disagree.

Given this background, it is indeed a pity that several aspects of debate in this country on genetically modified (GM) crops and foods have adopted the adversarial approach rather than a consensual one. Furthermore, academic scientists have been drawn into the discussions on unfamiliar terms and territory that have been dictated by activists and the lay public; this is the experience which has emerged from the consultations on GM brinjal that were held around the country by Minister Jairam Ramesh last year.

Scientists are not trained to hold placards, shout slogans, mobilize crowds, or denigrate their so-called opponents, and hence have been unable to match the activists in their strategies and actions. Indeed, the scientists of this country are being exposed for the first time to practices previously encountered by their counterparts in the developed world, for example on issues such as the debate on creationism versus Darwinism.

Then again, while consensual approach calls for each party to see and to assess both sides of an argument impartially, in the adversarial approach one party may deliberately attempt to shut itself to, or deny, the viewpoints of the other. So it is that even in the legal system (whose primary purpose, as with science, is to unravel the truth), it is arguable whether adversarialism is the best approach, since one party may fail to state its case properly leading to a decision that is not consonant with the truth. The *amicus curiae*

system, and court-appointed expert committees represent forays of the legal systems away from the classical adversarial approach.

Black and white

As a corollary, whereas an activist perceives the arguments for and against GM crops in black and white, the academic scientist is unable to do so. Thus, even if a scientist, after balanced consideration, favours industrial exploitation or environmental release of a GM organism, he will not categorically state that it is absolutely safe. The best that he would say is that there is no evidence of it being unsafe.

There certainly is reason in the scientist's caution. If there is one word that evokes the horror, in all its dimensions, of unforeseen adverse events arising from scientific research, it is not Frankenstein; it is thalidomide.

Use of this drug in the mid-twentieth century for treatment of nausea of the first trimester of pregnancy led to the birth around the world of thousands of unfortunate children with grossly deformed limbs. No scientific advance is guaranteed to be totally free from risk.

And yet it is the balanced approach that permits a scientist to see the other side of the coin as well. The discovery of the technology for creating GM organisms in the 1970's, and its exploitation since, have resulted in manufacture and use of a variety of pharmaceutical products for cancer, heart disease, stroke and kidney disease, as well as of vaccines such as those against hepatitis and diarrhea. These advances have resulted in the saving of millions of lives, without any harm. Adversarialism also thrives to some extent on the deliberate muddling of issues involved, for example by confusing the health and environmental risks of GM crops with arguments on exploitation of farmers, enrichment of multinational companies, and the like.

When it is pointed out that America has adopted GM foods for over two decades without adverse health consequences, that country is decried as the haven of crony capitalism and profit-greedy corporations. It is hard to imagine that the regulatory authorities of the country would have an agenda other than that of the health of its citizens in taking their decisions. Indeed, it was the caution exercised by these authorities that protected the USA

from the thalidomide disaster fifty years ago.

Finally, academic scientists are often exhorted to step out of their ivory towers to engage in social discourse in their capacity as experts of their domain. However, this can best be achieved only if the consensual approach is adopted in topics of controversy such as the debate on GM crops. Ivory towers exist not because scientists are callous or oblivious of their societal obligations, but because their task of pursuing knowledge at the frontiers is so intense that any diversion comes at the cost of the pursuit itself. Thus, most scientists would rather that they continue their own research instead of indulging in activities that they may perceive as frustrating or less pleasant. The consensual approach would be expected to provide the more favourable milieu for their engagement.

I would therefore urge everyone involved to return to the consensual path in resolving the scientific issues in this debate. Above all else, it is also the more civilized one.

(For this column, I have taken the permission of my colleague and friend Dr J. Gowrishankar, Director, Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad to reproduce his erudite and lucid analysis).

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

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Water in reusable bottles introduced in tiger reserve

V.S. Palaniappan

COIMBATORE: Treated and bottled water in reusable virgin plastic bottles was launched by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden R. Sundararaju and the first bottle was received by the Field Director of Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) H. Basavaraju on Wednesday.

Range Officer of Top Slip, Ulandy Range, S. Thangaraj Panneerselvam said that visitors brought packaged drinking water in plastic bottles and some even bought them at the

canteen run by the Forest Department at Top Slip.

After consuming the water, the visitors tended to throw it on the road sides leaving huge heaps of plastic bottles. This was harmful to wildlife.

Considering the price of the packaged drinking water bottles, the ATR officials hit upon the idea of introducing reusable virgin plastic bottles containing treated water sourced from the natural water resources in the sanctuary.

These packaged and sealed PET water bottles would be sold at Rs 30 each to the tourists. The tourists, after consuming the water and while returning from the sanctuary, could hand over the bottle and get a refund of Rs 5. If the tourist failed to return the bottle, the Rs 25 taken as deposit per bottle would have to be forfeited.

ATR authorities have a reverse osmosis plant and the water resources to produce more than 100 bottles a day which is actually double the quantity of water bottles being sold now.

Treating and packaging of water in the bottles would be done by the tribal people. The income generated out of this would be used for eco-development committee programmes to improve the living conditions of these people.

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Sericulture farmers and reelers stage dharna

Staff Reporter

They oppose duty-free imports of silk

— Photo: K. Murali Kumar



Members of all-India struggle committee against duty-free silk import staging a protest in front of the Director of Sericulture office in Bangalore on Wednesday.

BANGALORE: Sericulturists and silk reelers on Wednesday staged a dharna here in protest against duty-free imports of silk and have threatened to hold rail roko in the districts where sericulture is popular, on Monday.

They have urged the Union Government to scrap the global tender called for for duty free import of 578 tonnes of silk. "The Union Government has also brought down the excise duty on silk imports from 35 per cent to 5 per cent. We want the excise duty to be hiked to 50 per cent," president of the Karnataka Rajya Prantha Raitha Sangha Maruti Manpade has said. Duty free imports of silk, he said, would devastate the local sericulture industry and will wipe away small sericulturists, reelers and others. The crash in silk prices has led to a crisis in the sericulture industry here, resulting in farmers' suicide, he claimed.

The protesters also submitted a memorandum to the Sericulture Commissioner urging the State Government to lead a delegation, in the interest of farmers, to the Union Government seeking imposition of 50 per cent excise duty on imported silk.

Besides rail roko, the farmers have decided to stage a dharna in front of the offices of Union Law Minister Veerappa Moily at Chikkaballapur, Union Minister of State for Railways K.H. Muniyappa in Kolar and Foreign Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna in Bangalore, on March 20.

Rail roko will be staged in Tumkur, Ramanagaram, Bangalore Rural, Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Mysore, Mandya and Chamarajanagar. Farmers leader G.C. Bayyareddy was present.

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Promising scenario for maize growers

Exports look up due to demand in Russia, China, Argentina

Trade analysts expect the exports to touch 3 million tonnes by this month

"The price is estimated to be around Rs.950 to Rs. 1,000 per quintal this month

TIRUPATI: The situation appears promising for maize growers in the State, while turmeric growers are advised against storing the crops for long.

The Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre of ANGRAU's Sri Venkateswara Agricultural College campus in Tirupati has predicted that maize exports might look up due to the demand in countries like Russia, China and Argentina as a result of the drought and rain wreaking havoc there.

Rising demand

While the crop is estimated to be good in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, the crop price is firmed up in Andhra Pradesh due to the failure of kharif crop.

Though rabi sowing was normal, what could pep up the prices is the increasing demand across the globe.

Trade analysts expect the exports to touch 3 million tonne by this month compared to 2

million tonnes last season.

“The price is estimated to be around Rs.950 to Rs.1,000 per quintal this month, which is set to increase to Rs.1,100 by May,” says P. Raghuram, co-principal investigator of National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) and a professor of agricultural economics.

Turmeric price

On the other hand, turmeric prices had ruled the roost throughout the year 2010, thus encouraging farmers in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka, which was evident in the form of increase in acreage by 20-25 p.c..

The estimated turmeric output this year was 65-67 lakh bags of 70 kg each against last year's 45-47 lakh bags. The crop prospects in Nizamabad, Adilabad and Kadapa districts appear bright, while it could be a let-down in Guntur.

Advice to farmers

“According to our studies, turmeric prices had started declining in major markets and we advise farmers against storage of the crop,” Dr. Raghuram said, adding that the forecast holds good only under normal political situation.

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Saplings planted



Eco-drive: Rama.Subburam, MLA, planting a sapling during the NSS camp of the H.H. The Rajah's College.

PUDUKOTTAI: Mass tree planting campaign marked the week-long special camp of the NSS unit of H. H. The Rajah's College in Perungudi and Papanpatti villages recently.

Rama.Subburam, MLA of Tirumayam, inaugurated the mass tree planting campaign. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Subburam appreciated the social services rendered by the NSS students in the villages and also for creating awareness programmes on health schemes.

S. Subbiah, Syndicate member of the Madurai Kamaraj University, underlined the important role played by the youths in the overall development of the nation.

M.Subramanian, president of Perungudi panchayat, presided. V. Murugaiyan and S. Ravichandran, both NSS programme officers, and others spoke.

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Many birds recovered

Staff Reporter

KOLKATA: A large number of caged birds were recovered from the coach of a train at Howrah railway station here on Wednesday.

Over 200 parrots and about 20 mynas were recovered from a coach of the Gaya Express. The caged birds were spotted by personnel of the Government Railway Police, Howrah divisional railway manager Parthasarathi Mandal said.

“Very often the traffickers transport caged birds in the open and passengers do not take note of it,” he added.

The birds were handed over to the authorities of the State Forest Department and the persons accompanying the consignment were arrested, he added.

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“Anti-common man and anti-farmer”

Staff Correspondent

Shimla: Leader of Opposition Vidya Stokes termed the Himachal Budget as “anti-common man and anti-farmer”. There is nothing new and it's just a jugglery of facts, she told reporters. Pradesh Congress Committee president Kaul Singh Thakur criticised the government's move to privatise education, hydroelectric projects and tourism sectors in the State. The Himachal State Secretariat of the CPI (M) said the Budget lacks the basic direction of development and hides the essence of the crisis which is in the offing in the hill State. It has expressed concern on the negative growth rate in the agriculture.

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Ten new fish markets to come up soon

Special Correspondent

MANGALORE: Ten new fish markets will be set up for fish sellers at an estimated cost of Rs. 15 crore by the National Fisheries Development Board and the Coastal Development Authority, said authority chairman B. Nagaraja Shetty here on Wednesday.

The fish markets will be set up at Kinnigoli, Bantwal in Dakshina Kannada district, Padubidri, Katpady, Yedthare and Byndoor in Udupi district, and Uppunda, Shirali, Ankola and Karwar in Uttara Kannada district. The fish markets will have hygienic stalls, waste disposal facility, and a restroom.

In order to decongest the traffic within the city, plans are on to build a road of 100 ft breadth with four lanes around the city at five places. These are Ullal bridge to Kuloor (12 km), Kuloor to Maravanthe (5.8 km), Ullal to Kannur (6.5 km), Maravoor to Gurupur bridge (6.3 km), and Gurupur to Kannur (7.5 km). The estimated cost is Rs. 700 crore.

He said the State Highway 67 from Manipal to Bajpe would be converted into a four-lane road at an estimated cost of Rs. 250 crore. The authority had called for two tenders to build a road from Mangalore to Sankalakari (34 km) at a cost of Rs. 13 lakh.

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Graft alleged in cashew nut purchase

Staff Reporter

KOLLAM: The Indian national Trade Union Congress (INTUC)-affiliated Kerala Cashew Workers Congress (KCWC) has alleged corruption of over Rs.8 crore behind the January 7 purchase of 11,000 tons of raw nuts from Tanzania by the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation (KSCDC).

The purchase was carried out through two agents. The price was \$1,760 a ton. On the same day, another deal for purchase of 5,000 tons of raw nut from Mozambique was fixed at the rate of \$15,00 a ton, KCWC leader K.R.V. Sahajan said at a press conference here on Wednesday.

The price of raw nut is based on its 'count and outturn.' (The count is the number of raw nuts per kg and the outturn is the quantity of kernels obtained from every 80 kg bag of raw nuts after processing). While both origins showed the same count, the outturn showed only a small difference, he said.

The loss

The price of nuts from Tanzania should have been \$1,591.84 a ton. A rate of \$1,790 was fixed. The difference worked out to Rs.8.41 crore, Mr. Sahajan said.

The KCWC had incurred a loss on Rs.1.27 crore in kernel sales during November 1 and 2, he said.

This was brought to the notice of the Chief Minister and the Minister for Cashew P.K. Gurudasan, Mr. Sahajan said adding that the INTUC had sought more information about the kernel deal under the Right to Information Act. The KSCDC had stated that the information could not be provided as it would adversely affect the business prospects of the corporation, he said. An appeal is pending.

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Increased allocation for agriculture, power not significant: Datta

Special Correspondent

BANGALORE: Janata Dal (Secular) member Y.S.V. Datta on Wednesday said the total allocation to agriculture, power, irrigation and rural development and panchayat raj had come down under the Bharatiya Janata Party Government in the State.

Speaking on the budget in the Legislative Council, Mr. Datta said while M. Rajasekhara Murthy and Siddaramaiah as finance ministers had made a total allocation of 62 per cent, 55.57 per cent and 53.6 per cent in 1990-91, 1995-96 and 2005-06 respectively, to these four departments, it had helped farmers in a big way. Trouncing the claim of Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa that he had allocated 44 per cent to these departments, including ten per cent on agriculture for 2011-12, Mr. Datta said it was only an improvement on Mr. Yeddyurappa's budget allocation in the preceding three years. Mr. Yeddyurappa had allocated 38.41 per cent, including nine per cent on agriculture during 2008-09, but reduced it to 38 per cent and 36 per cent during 2009-10 and 2010-11, respectively while maintaining seven per cent on agriculture. The figures show the commitment of the BJP Government towards the welfare of the farmers, he added.

The JD(S) leader said of the 66 new projects that Mr. Yeddyurappa claims to implement this year, 53 had allocations ranging from Rs. 2 crore to Rs. 10 crore, while 10 are partly or fully funded by the Centre.

For CBI probe

Huge funds under the organic farming programme had been diverted to people who had allegiance to the BJP in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Shimoga districts and in Sringeri, through a trust. This has to be investigated by the CBI, he said.

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Climate change forcing fishes to shift places, say scientists

Correspondent

'One degree rise can destroy fish on the entire coral reef'

Poisonous Puffer fish growing rapidly Sea erosion on west coast causing concern

Karwar: The distribution of fishes on the east coast and the west coast was affected badly. The sardines and mackerels, which were found in Karnataka and Kerala coast, were now distributed up to Gujarat and Pakistan, said Vivekananda, well-known marine scientist.

Addressing a seminar on cage fishing, he said the climatic changes, change in the direction of the wind and the change in the temperature had affected the fishes and the fishes were moving from one place to another, he said.

In the coming days, the other fishes too moved from one region to another in the coming days. The poisonous Puffer fish, which were rare, were growing rapidly and the liver of this poisonous fish was being exported to Japan.

The climatic change had affected the egg-laying by fishes and the changes would seriously affect the production of the fishes in future, Mr. Vivekananda said. The sea erosion on the west coast of India was a cause for worry, he said.

The rise in the temperature of the sea had affected the coral reef at many places. The coral reefs which housed the rare fishes and mammals in the sea were on the verge of "bleaching" (destroy), he said. One degree rise in sea temperature would destroy entire coral reef, he said.

The coral reef in the Netrani Island near Bhatkal had been brought to light by the Central Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) and CMFRI was taking care of the island. In India, Andaman, Lakshadweep, Rameswaram and Kutch had coral reefs and were destroyed in 2002 by the rise in sea temperature by the El Nino. Now, only a few

coral reefs were left on these islands, he said.

Dr. Rajagopal, who had conducted the study of distribution of mammals in the sea, said that a study was being taken up on the dolphins, sharks and sea cows. Three new species of mammals were discovered in Indian Ocean by his study.

Dr. K. K. Phillipose, senior scientist of CMFRI, was present.

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FTA with ASEAN will not harm agri sector: Sharma

Special Correspondent

'The agreement provides for a safeguard mechanism to address sudden surge in imports'

NEW DELHI: Allaying fears in some quarters that the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will harm domestic agriculture, Commerce and Industry Minister informed the Rajya Sabha that majority of agriculture items had been protected by placing them in exclusion of the negative list where no tariff concession were available to ASEAN countries.

Replying to questions during Question Hour in the Upper House, Mr. Sharma said items on the negative list included vegetables, fruits/nuts, spices, cereals/grains, oilseeds/oil, natural rubber and tobacco. "The agreement also provides for a safeguard mechanism to address sudden surge in imports on account of tariff concessions. When such a surge is likely to hurt the domestic market, safeguard measures including imposition of safeguard duties can be initiated to prevent or remedy serious injury and to facilitate adjustment for the domestic market," he said . Mr. Sharma said 1,297 products including 689 agriculture goods, had been kept in the negative list. On reduction of tariff on tea and coffee, he said

the tariff on tea and coffee would be 45 per cent each and that on pepper would be 50 per cent in 2020, a 1.8-5 per cent reduction from the present import duties.

Mr. Sharma said India was targeting a 40 per cent jump in its trade with ASEAN to \$70 billion in 2012 with the signing of FTA. He said trade with ASEAN had grown to \$50 billion in 2010 from \$41 billion after New Delhi signed a Trade in Goods Agreement with the Southeast Asian block on August 13, 2009.


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Rat poison in your veggies

New Delhi, March 10, 2011

PESTICIDES: HITTING YOU ALL OVER	
Pesticides	Toxic impact
Chlorpyrifos	Nerve damage
Endosulfan-T	DNA mutation, hormone disorders, neurotoxicity
Heptachlor	Nervous system and liver damage
Quinalphos	Developmental, reproductive, neurological damage
Aldrin	Cancer, infertility
Chlorfenvinfos	Developmental, reproductive, neurological damage
Chlordane	Affects nervous system, lungs, liver, kidneys, eyes
DDT	Cancer, hormone disorders, infertility



Fresh veggies and fruits your way of healthy living? You may want to think again. Vegetables and fruits finding their way to Delhi markets are a toxic cocktail capable of causing cancer, heart disease and infertility and posing a risk to nervous system and liver. Fresh produce sold in the Capital contains four banned pesticides laced with rat poison and insecticide, the Delhi high court noted on Wednesday, as it ordered surprise checks on traders contaminating their produce with chemicals and endangering people’s health for profit.

The banned pesticides include chlordane, a rat poison that affects the nervous system, endrin, an insecticide that causes headaches and dizziness, and heptachlor, which damages the liver and decreases fertility.

Pesticides, toxic colours and nerve-damaging hormones are used by farmers and traders to speed up growth, ripen and improve colour. These can trigger paroxysms of dizziness and seizures, besides causing heart disorders, sterility, nervous breakdowns and memory loss over the long term. Most of the vegetables sold in the Capital come from Azadpur market, Asia’s biggest wholesale hub for vegetables and fruits with an annual turnover of Rs600 crore.

Ordering a “reality check”, the court asked additional solicitor general AS Chandhiok, one of India’s top law officers, a team of six lawyers and two NGO representatives to go shopping in

Delhi's wholesale markets. The fresh fruits and vegetables they buy will be tested for contaminants. The court has sought a report within five weeks.

If found guilty, traders selling contaminated produce will be booked under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act and fined up to Rs1,000 and/or imprisoned up to six years.

"Let there be some reality check. We want to know what really is happening and how rampant it is," said the bench of chief justice Dipak Misra and justice Sanjiv Khanna.

Pesticides and hormones in fruits and vegetables in India were 750 times European standards, reported a study by the Delhi-based NGO, Consumer Voice, in October.

"In Delhi, 11,000 samples have been tested over the last three years, leading to 1,344 prosecutions," said Delhi government lawyer Najmi Waziri. "What is the point of booking shopkeepers for pesticides when the real culprit are the farmers?" asked Chandra Bhushan, head of food safety research at the Centre for Science and Environment, an NGO.

Since it is a PIL, the Delhi high court direction can be used as a precedent by courts in other states to ensure food safety.

"The farmers don't know the right use of many pesticides, they need training. Also, they have access to many banned pesticides, which has to be stopped," said Bhushan.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather		Tomorrow's Forecast					
Clear	Thursday, Mar 10		Friday, Mar 11				
	Max	Min	Max	Min			
	31°		21.4°	Cloudy	36°		21°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs Sunrise: 6:20
Humidity: 66% Sunset: 18:18
Wind: Normal Barometer: 1009.0

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Mar 12	Mar 13	Mar 14	Mar 15	Mar 16
31° 21°	31° 25°	32° 24°	32° 23°	32° 22°
Cloudy	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Thu, Mar 10, 2011 | Updated 08.16AM IST

10 Mar, 2011, 01.30AM IST, PK Krishnakumar & S Sanandakumar,ET Bureau

Chilli exporters hit as importers tighten safety standards

KOCHI: Indian chilli exporters are facing new challenges as importing nations tighten their food safety standards. This is bad news for chilli export which is now going through a bullish phase.

As part of its food safety laws, the US has started prescribing zero tolerance levels for food contaminants like aflatoxins and pesticide residues. The stringent norms have led to the rejection of a few consignments of chilli and chilli products from the country.

“There is no uniform global standard for detecting the aflatoxin and pesticide residue levels in chillies. Europe has set a maximum residue limit of 0.01 ppm (parts per million) while the US has tightened the norms further to zero tolerance levels without specifying any limit,” said Philip Kuruvilla , MD of Indian Products , a leading chilli exporting company.

Consequently, consignments are being detained because even a minute variation can cause problems. Some supplies have been rejected as they did not conform to the strict norms of Europe and the US, the principal markets for value-added chilli exports.

The emergence of Asian countries as the main buyers of Indian chillies has helped in boosting the exports as the testing norms are not that stringent there. Indian chilli exports have reached the target of 2 lakh tonnes two months before the close of the fiscal year because of good Asian demand. “The pesticide problems have become an increasing cause of concern though exports are booming.

10 Mar, 2011, 01.26AM IST, Sutanuka Ghosal,ET Bureau

Premium tea jumps 50% on rising demand

KOLKATA: The new tea season has brought good news for tea companies which have presence in north India. Prices of premium quality teas have appreciated by 50% and average quality teas are being sold at a premium of 14%.

Most of the sales taking place now are private and tea companies which operate through such

deals are expecting to close the fourth quarter of the current fiscal on a strong note. Azam Monem, director of McLeod Russel India, the largest integrated tea company in the world, said: "The new season has opened on a strong note. Prices of premium tea have gone up from `200 to `300 per kg whereas the average quality teas are costlier by `20 per kg. Mostly, teas are being sold privately as the volume of teas is less. The volume will pick up by the end of this month."

Tea industry analysts said global prices, which have strengthened significantly in the second half of the last calendar year, are expected to remain firm in 2011 as well, riding on a significant deficit in the global markets amidst rising demand. "Overall tea production in the calendar year 2010 is expected to have hit record levels at all-time highs of over 320 million kg, up from the previous highest crop of 318.6 million kg in 2008. Despite the strong crop, the global demand-supply equation remains well-balanced due to increasing consumption around the world. This includes absorption of tea by producing countries themselves, particularly the increasing consumption in India and China," said CS Bedi, MD, Rossell Tea.

In fact, the FAO tea price index has gained nearly 20% since August 2010 and the trend is likely to continue going forward. J Kalyansundaram, secretary of Calcutta Tea Traders Association, said: "There is no tea at the auctions now. Reportedly, prices have appreciated significantly in private sales. Teas for auction sale will start arriving within another two weeks. But definitely, the outlook price-wise is bullish. Production is expected to be better this year as weather has been conducive till date."

Analysts believe that there is around 100-120 million kg deficit in the global market which has been continuing since the poor crop of 2009. Despite a strong production outlook in Kenya and Sri Lanka, prices have been firming up mainly because of this deficit as well as rising consumption. India's deficit in 2009 was 50 million kg and it has touched almost 100 million kg in 2010.

9 Mar, 2011, 02.49PM IST, REUTERS

Pepper, turmeric trade up; jeera down

MUMBAI: India pepper futures were up in afternoon trade on bargain buying supported by estimates of lower output, but lack of interest from exporters limited the gain.

"Bargain buying at lower level is keeping the prices of the commodity up in the domestic market and supplies are also low as farmers are not willing to sell at lower prices," said Chowda Reddy, senior analyst at JRG Wealth Management.

Unseasonal rains delayed harvest, affecting the yield of pepper vines, and is likely to slash Indian production this year, but lower stocks and lesser global output will keep prices firm, a Reuters poll found.

At 2:40 p.m., March pepper was trading up by 0.24 percent higher at 22,281 rupees per 100 kg.

In the Kochi spot market, pepper was up by 62 rupees at 22,447 rupees per 100 kg on weak exports.

India's pepper exports in April-January fell 7 percent on year to 15,700 tonnes.

JEERA: India's jeera futures edged lower on Wednesday afternoon weighed by rising arrivals from the new season crop, and weak exports, though estimates of lower output kept the downside limited, analysts said.

The most-active jeera for April delivery on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) was trading 1.19 percent lower at 16,631 rupees per 100 kg.

"Jeera is witnessing fresh selling due to increasing arrivals. It should come down further to 16,520 rupees," said Chowda Reddy, senior analyst with JRG Wealth Management.

In India, the world's largest producer and exporter, jeera is cultivated mainly in Gujarat and Rajasthan during winter from October to December, and harvested in February-April.

India's jeera exports in April-January fell 36 percent on year to 26,000 tonnes.

Industry officials expect jeera output to come down this year due to unseasonal rains and cloudy weather.

As on Jan. 10, in Gujarat, the biggest producer, area under jeera stood at 244,600 hectares, marginally higher than 242,700 hectares sowed a year ago, said J.H. Suthar, deputy director, state farm department.

TURMERIC: India turmeric extended the previous session's gains on Wednesday afternoon supported by lower arrivals in the domestic spot market, analysts said.

NCDEX turmeric for April delivery was trading 1.49 percent higher at 10,0880 rupees per 100 kg.

"The arrivals are lower than expectations, which is supporting prices," said JRG's Reddy, adding turmeric may trade in the range of 10,800-11,000 rupees.

Turmeric output is likely to rise to 6.7 million bags of 70 kg each from 4.65 million bags produced in 2009/10, a Reuters poll of seven traders and exporters showed.

In the Nizamabad spot market, the price rose by 183.35 rupees to 12,050 rupees per 100 kg.

9 Mar, 2011, 02.46PM IST,REUTERS

Oilseeds, soyoil rise on bargain-buying

MUMBAI: India oilseeds and soyoil futures edged higher on Wednesday afternoon on bargain-buying after a sharp fall in the past two sessions, though rising rapeseed arrivals weighed on sentiment, analysts said.

U.S. soybean futures edged down on Wednesday, dropping for a third straight day as forecasts of higher South American output pressured the market ahead of a key government report on global demand and supply of agricultural products.

Malaysian crude palm oil dropped to a five-week low on Wednesday as traders rebalanced their positions ahead of a slew of industry data.

"Lower-level buying lifted futures, but fundamentals are not supporting upside. Rapeseed arrivals in Rajasthan are rising," said Badruddin Khan, associate vice-president, research at Angel Commodities Broking.

The north-western state of Rajasthan is the biggest producer of rapeseed in the country.

At 2:00 p.m., April soyoil on India's National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) was 0.45 percent higher at 634.45 rupees per 10 kg.

In the Indore spot market, soyoil dropped by 0.25 rupee to 619.5 rupees per 10 kg, while soybean fell by 8 rupees to 2,368 rupees per 100 kg.

April soybean on NCDEX was 0.52 percent up at 2,421.5 rupees per 100 kg, and April rapeseed rose 0.47 percent to 2,803 rupees per 100 kg.

In Sri Ganganagar market in Rajasthan, rapeseed price fell by 5 rupees to 2,725 rupees per 100 kg.

India's rapeseed output could jump 16.1 percent in 2011 to 6.85 million tonnes, helped by favourable weather conditions, a leading trade body had said.

THE HINDU Business Line

Jairam Ramesh orders cancelling of Bt-maize field trials in Bihar



A genetically modified corncob.

Patna, March 9:

The Union Minister for Forest and Environment, Mr Jairam Ramesh, has instructed the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) to immediately cancel field trials for Bt-maize in Bihar.

"I have instructed the Chairman of the GEAC to immediately cancel field trials for Bt-maize in Bihar," Mr Ramesh said in a letter to the Chief Minister, Mr Nitish Kumar.

Time Given for State Govt

According to the letter, the copies of which were made available to media here, Mr Ramesh said he had also instructed the GEAC to give the State Government one month's time to agree or

disagree with the field trials for genetically modified crops as recommended by the GEAC, particularly GM food crops.

Mr Nitish Kumar, on March 5, had demanded that Mr Ramesh instruct the GEAC to immediately cancel field trials for Bt-maize in the State.

Selling pressure squeezes spot rubber



Kottayam, March 9:

Physical rubber prices continued to remain under pressure on Wednesday. The market opened weak and fell further on selling from dealers and growers following the declines in domestic futures on early trades. But it failed to regain the losses fully in tune with the late recovery on the NMCE. According to sources, there were no buyers on RSS 4 at lower levels and the grade hit Rs 215 a kg in the morning session.

Sheet rubber surrendered to Rs 216.50 (220) a kg according to traders. The grade weakened to Rs 216 (222) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi as reported by the Rubber Board.

In futures, the March series recovered to Rs 219.70 (213.66), April to Rs 227.31 (220.89), May to Rs 232.56 (225.03), June to Rs 236.49 (227.88) and July to Rs 237.90 (228.87) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

RSS 3 (spot) nosedived to Rs 248.59 (263.39) a kg at Bangkok. The March futures declined to ?447 (Rs 242.87) from ?462 during the day session and then to ?444 (Rs 241.24) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 216.50 (220); RSS-5: 214 (217); ungraded: 213 (215); ISNR 20: 214 (218) and latex 60 per cent: 130 (133).

Non-basmati varieties show marginal rise in price, aromatics maintain levels



Karnal, March 9:

With some buying in the market, rice prices of non-basmati varieties rose marginally by Rs 10-25 a quintal while the prices of aromatic varieties managed to maintain their previous levels.

Some fresh buying pushed the prices of non-basmati rice upwards while with slack overseas and domestic demand prices of aromatic rice ruled steady, said, Mr Tara Chand Sharma, a rice trader. Weather is favourable for the trade and market may witness some good buying in upcoming days, he added.

On Wednesday, prices of Pussa-1121 rice (steam) ruled at Rs 5,180-5,220 a quintal, Pusa-1121(sela) ruled at Rs 4,200-4,320, and Pusa-1121 (raw) at Rs 5,100-5,130. Basmati (sela) was sold at Rs 6,200 and basmati (raw) at Rs 7,300-7,325. Prices of duplicate basmati ruled at Rs 3,970-4,050 a quintal.

Brokens such as Tibar were quoted at Rs 3,000-3,500, Dubar at Rs 2,200-2,600 and Mongra at Rs 1,900-2,100.

Sharbati (sela) quoted at around Rs 2,600-2,700 while the Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 3,000-3,160.

Permal (sela) ruled at Rs 1,900-2,120 and Permal (steam) was at Rs 2,100-2,190 a quintal. For the brokens of Sharbati variety, Tibar was quoted at Rs 2,450, Dubar was at 2,100 and Mongra was at Rs 1,475.

Paddy Trading

About 150 bags of Pusa (duplicate basmati) arrived and were sold at Rs 2,150-2,240 a quintal and around 100 bags of Pusa-1121 at Rs 2,170-2,330 a quintal. Around 150 bags of pure basmati arrived and were sold at Rs 2,240-2,610 a quintal.

Volumes at coonor tea sale rise by 2.47 lakh kg



Coonor, March 9:

A volume of 11.19 lakh kg will be on offer for the tenth sale Coonor Tea Trade Association (CTTA) scheduled tomorrow and Friday, reveals an analysis of the listing by brokers.

This is 2.47 lakh kg more than last week's offer but as much as 4.52 lakh kg less than the offer this time last year.

Of the 11.19 lakh kg on offer, 7.78 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.41 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 10.45 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.74 lakh kg, orthodox variety.

The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.40 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 7.38 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.34 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 3.07 lakh kg, CTC.

Fresh tea

In the 11.19 lakh kg, fresh tea accounts for 10.13 lakh kg and 1.06 lakh kg comprises teas remaining unsold in previous auctions.

Nearly a quarter of the offer had been remaining unsold in the recent weeks.

Inadequate demand has been lowering prices and the volume sold so far this year. This week, export purchases were the weakest so far in 2011. Much dependence is on internal buying.

ITC to export 3,000 t of soyabean meal to China



Kolkata, March 9:

ITC Ltd will export approximately Rs 30 crore worth of soyabean meal ? a raw material for producing poultry feed ? to China.

The Indian FMCG major on Wednesday entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Chinese importer Yunnan Huijia Imp and Exp Co Ltd for exporting 3,000 tonnes of soyabean meal.

The agreement was signed during an interaction between the members of Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and a trade delegation from Yunnan province here. According to an ITC official, the contract will result into ?export of Rs 30 crore in immediate terms?.

Earlier, Mr Xiong Qinghua, Director-General, Department of Commerce of Yunnan province said that the trade volume between India and Yunnan increased to \$680 million (Rs 3,060 crore) in 2010.

However, the balance of trade is heavily in favour of Yunnan as exports (mainly fertilisers) to India stood at \$520 million (Rs 2,340 crore). Indian exports ? primarily iron ore and alumina ? clocked \$160 million (Rs 720 crore) in 2010.

?We hope that bilateral trade between India and Yunnan province picks up in the coming years,? Mr Xiong said.

According to him, India accounts for over 5 per cent of Yunnan's foreign trade. The province is looking forward to areas like solar energy and natural resources as the driver of future growth in trade relations with India.

92% sold at speciality tea auctions



Business Line Speciality teas displayed at the Tea and Tourism festival in Ooty. (file photo): D Radhakrishnan
Coonoor, March 9:

Nearly 92 per cent of the teas offered for the speciality tea auctions for The Golden Leaf India Award teas was sold, says an analysis of the Market Report.

“This was the first time the speciality auction was conducted through e-auction in which, buyers from India's all auction centres participated simultaneously. Of the 40,958 kg offered, 37, 534 kg were sold. The average price fetched was Rs 140.47 a kg for leaf and Rs 117.60 for dust,” the Tea Board Executive Director Mr R Ambalavanan, told *Business Line*.

In the orthodox leaf market, Welbeck Organic Flowery Orange Pekoe (FOP) topped at Rs 360 a kg followed by Welbeck Organic Green FOP at Rs 350, Kodanaad Broken Orange Pekoe Fanning (BOPF) Rs 321, another similar grade Rs 300, and Sutton Rs 250.

In all, 60 marks got more than Rs 100 and 11 marks Rs 81-99. There were no takers for 12 marks at the asking price.

In the dust market, Vigneshwar Speciality, auctioned by Paramount Tea Marketing, topped at Rs 290.

“This was the only mark which fetched more than Rs 200 in the dust market. But in CTC fannings market, our BOPF topped when P S Tea Industries, Coonoor, bought it for Rs 201. Our

Broken Pekoe (BP) got the highest price among all CTC leaf grades when Sri Sakthi Associates, Coimbatore, bought it for Rs 195,” Mr Vigneshwar Managing Partner Mr B Ramesh said.

Sree Lakshmi Estate speciality got Rs 196, Periaurrai Rs 160 and Waterfall Amrit Rs 150. In all, 29 marks got more than Rs 100 and eight, Rs 84-99. All teas were sold.

Spot sugar prices soften on lower demand



Mumbai, March 9:

Spot sugar prices in the Vashi market extended their bearish trend on Wednesday as mills started selling at lower rates in the absence of any announcement regarding exports.

Continued sluggish demand in the main producing States of Maharashtra and Utter Pradesh resulted in a Rs 10 per 100 kg decline in prices in the major consuming markets.

In the Vashi wholesale market, lifting pressure for purchases due on March 10 and 15 weighed on sentiment. At the mill level, selling pressure mounted for carry-over stock from last month, the 15-days' extension for which is approaching. As a result, the naka and mill tender rates fell further by Rs 5 /Rs10 a quintal, said a wholesale trader. Morale was weak.

Mr Jagdish Rawal, Joint Secretary of the Bombay Sugar Merchants' Association, told *Business Line*: "Due to the continued absence of local demand at the main consuming markets, along with uncertainty over export permission and sugar production, the sugar market has been witnessing need-based trade volumes since January. The market has witnessed a downward trend in prices and thin volumes in the first fortnight of January and February and the current month also under pressure of high supply. No one in the market wants to carry a big inventory.?"

An analyst said the Government has declared 16.84 lakh tonnes of normal free-sale sugar quota for March. With that, the total normal free-sale sugar quota for the first three months of the calendar year adds to more than 50 lakh tonnes. The quota for February was 16.23 lakh tonnes and for January 17 lakh tonnes. Given the lower demand during the winter season, that quota proved to be on the higher side. Mills were not able to offload their given quotas in time, which resulted in an extension of time for unsold quantity since February.

Arrivals in the markets were at usual levels of about 50-52 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were at 46-48 truck loads. About 14-15 mills, by tender offer, sold about 60,000/ 70,000 bags in the range of Rs 2,670 / Rs 2,720 for S grade and Rs 2,725 / Rs 2,775 for M grade. Late evening tender rates were expected Rs 5/Rs 7 lower.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants' Association sugar rates:

Spot rates: S grade Rs 2,801/ Rs 2,856 (Rs 2,801/ Rs 2,851) and M grade Rs 2,841/ Rs 2,916 (Rs 2,846 / Rs 2,916).

The naka delivery rates: S grade Rs 2,760/ Rs 2,790 (Rs 2,770 /Rs 2,810) and M grade Rs 2,810/ Rs 2,850 (Rs 2,815 / Rs 2,850).

HC orders tests on veg for pesticides

New Delhi, March 9:

Concerned over reports of rampant use of banned pesticides in fruits and vegetables, the Delhi High Court today asked the Centre and the city government to conduct tests in approved laboratories after procuring vegetables “randomly” from various places here.

“We would like to find out as to whether pesticides are there in the vegetables sold in Delhi or not. It would be appropriate that the vegetables be purchased randomly and sent for the test at laboratories, certified by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories,” a bench headed by the Chief Justice, Mr Dipak Misra, said.

The court asked the Additional Solicitor General, Mr A.S. Chandiok, standing counsel for the Delhi government, Mr Najmi Waziri, the Delhi Legal Services Authority member secretary, Ms

Asha Menon, and others to go together for purchasing vegetables from different shops or 'mandis' in the national capital.

The bench also allowed two representatives of NGO Consumer Voice to accompany the lawyers.

“A report, after the tests, be submitted before this court within five weeks from today,” the bench said.

It said the tests be conducted at laboratories at Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) or other places which were approved by NABL.

Alarming report

Earlier, the court had taken suo motu cognizance of a news report about rampant use of banned pesticides in vegetables and fruits, putting the lives of consumers at risk.

The report, quoting a study on use of banned pesticides, conducted by NGO Consumer Voice said the amount of pesticides used in India was as much as 750 times the European standards.

Out of five internationally banned pesticides, four were found to be common in vegetables and fruits, it said. These pesticides cause headache and affect fertility and can damage the kidney and liver, the report said.

Fish output at 57 lakh t during Apr-Dec '10-11 fiscal

New Delhi, March 9:

India's fish production stood at 57.03 lakh tonnes in the first nine months of the current fiscal.

During the 2009-10 fiscal, the country produced 78.53 lakh tonnes of fish, according to government data.

West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat are the major fish producing states in the country.

During the 2009-10 fiscal, West Bengal produced 15.05 lt, Andhra Pradesh 12.93 lt, Gujarat 7.71 lt, Kerala 6.63 lt, Maharashtra 5.38 lt and Tamil Nadu 5.34 lt, the Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr Arun Yadav, said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.