

Importing grains cannot solve food shortage problems

M.J. PRABU

The farmer developed nearly 15 wheat and 10 mustard varieties



Utilising space:Mahavir Singh, from Rajasthan, inspecting his field.

“It is a universally acclaimed fact, that importing food cannot solve the problem of food shortage. Modern technologies do offer vast prospects for crop improvement but that alone need not make it popular among small and marginal farmers,” says farmer Mr. Mahavir Singh Arya, from Churu district of Rajasthan.

Despite facing acute problem of water shortage, Mr. Mahavir, an advocate of organic farming, developed numerous varieties of wheat and mustard, and claims that he never used any inorganic fertilizer to grow crops and still managed to generate good yield.

Ignorant

“Urban people do not seem to know the real problem we farmers face,” he says and adds:

“To them it becomes an issue only during price hike. Though farming being an important area — a large section of the public view agriculture as something involving the government and it becomes a job for elected persons to resolve the farmers' problems.

“The fact, that we import food to cater to domestic demand, besides large scale migration to cities does not seem to cause any serious concern in the urban man's mind.”

Real life

According to him, though urban people may be fascinated by the simple village life, in reality life isn't all that easy in villages.

“The aspiration of rural folks to seek out greener pastures in nearby metros, educate their kids and push them out of the village. Hence statistically, food supply is dwindling and demand is shooting up — we are all sitting on a volcano ready to erupt anytime,” he feels.

“A farmer's life is a tale of continuous experimentation and struggle for existence and even getting a good price for the produce is difficult for us,” he explains.

Different odds

In spite of all the odds, inquisitiveness made him visit Hissar agriculture university to see some breeding experiments in crop varieties and learn the method of selection and crossing between different varieties. He returned to start experimenting in the fields.

Encouraged by the success, he got interested in breeding and thereafter he made it a point to visit various research institutions and universities, to keep himself updated.

The farmer developed more than 10 varieties of mustard by crossing the

varieties available in Delhi region. The maturity period of all these varieties varies from 130 to 150 days and the yield from about 1.8 tonnes to 2.4 tonnes per hectare. All the varieties are disease resistant and high yielding, according to him.

He chanced upon a variety of tall and high yielding wheat and crossed it with a locally popular variety.

The next year, the farmer observed that the crops grew taller, bore bolder grains, that were resistant to disease. He selected plants possessing characteristics like height of the plant, resistance to disease, etc., every year and developed the variety 'Mahavir Kisan Mahan.'

Different varieties

In the same way, he kept on crossing varieties obtained from different regions with other local varieties and successfully developed more than 15 varieties of wheat.

The maturity period of all the wheat varieties varies from 135-160 days, except one, named Mahavir Kishan Pragati, a short duration dwarf variety developed by him that comes to harvest in 95-110 days. The yield of these varieties varies from 4-8 tonnes for an hectare.

Extra effort

“For a farmer every available area of space needs to be utilised so that some sort of income can be generated. In places like ours where water is a scarce commodity, extra effort is needed to obtain even average yield. Government should look into the cause of the millions of farmers like Mr Mahavir who toil day in and day out to feed the over billion plus population of the country.” says Sundaram Verma, a progressive farmer himself and Honey Bee Network collaborator of Rajasthan.

Mr. Mahavir mentions that the government may be trying its best, but an extra effort towards providing enough support to the farmers would go a long way in making India a self reliant country in food crops.

For more information, contact Mahavir Singh Arya, village Gudan, taluka Rajgadh, district Churu, Rajasthan, Mobile 09461932854.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/05/26/stories/2011052650321500.htm>

Huge potential for turmeric in North East

The North Eastern region offers great potential for large scale cultivation of many spices.

In terms of area, turmeric is the third largest crop in the region. However, its productivity in the region is only 1.5 tonnes against 3.9tonnes / ha in the country.

According to Dr. S.V. Ngachan, Director, ICAR Research Complex for North Eastern Hill Region, “after much research and demonstration, we have identified two varieties of turmeric, Lackadong and Megha varieties for their higher yield and quality.”

Good yielder

“Trials in Sikkim, Mizoram, Tripura and other states, proved that Megha and Lackadong yield curcumin of not less than 6.5 per cent. The average yield is around 30-32 tonnes per ha. In addition oleoresin content is also very high for these varieties,” adds Dr. Ngachan.

“So far under NAIP [National Agricultural Innovation Project], we have been able to spread these varieties in around 33,000 hectares in the north east,” he adds.

The biggest challenge faced by the turmeric growers in the region is lack of premium price for the produce.

Post harvest losses of almost all the farm produce in the region are very high due to near zero facility for their handling, processing, value addition, packaging and even organized marketing.

It is an irony that though the region produces best quality turmeric, ginger, pineapple, orange, apple etc., there are very few processing units for any of these crops.

Processing units

“To help the farmers, ICAR and NAIP have set up some semi processing units in seven districts of NEH Region,” says Dr. Ngachan.

Earlier farmers were incurring heavy loss due to huge transportation cost for ferrying their produces to processing units in far off places.

But now farmers, after drying the turmeric in the field can bring them to the unit for processing.

After packaging, they will sell it either directly or through the ICAR Farmers'Association for marketing under the logo of ICAR.

“When compared to Kerala or Andhra, NEH varieties are rich in curcumin and oleoresin content. We should be able to offer farmers a premium price by setting up semi processing units in various parts of the region with the help of entrepreneurs and industry people,” he adds. For details contact Dr. S.V.Ngachan, email:svngachan@rediffmail.com, phone :0364-2570257.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/05/26/stories/2011052650251500.htm>

FARM QUERY

Dual poded gram

Where can I get information on dual poded gram varieties?

Trilok Chander,Gurgaon

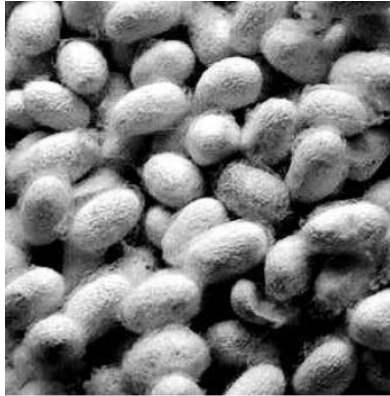
Mr. Balasahib Patil from Maharashtra developed a new dual poded gram variety called ‘Sushil Laxmi’ that yields nearly 1.8 tonnes per acre under irrigated, and 0.8 to 0.9 tonnes per acre under rain-fed conditions. The variety is reported to be highly popular among farmers across the States of Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh. For further details contact Mr. Bala Sahib Patil, Hassor, Shrol block, Kolhapur district, Maharashtra, phone: 02322-261082, mobile: 98226-09999.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2011/05/26/stories/2011052650071400.htm>

New method to unreel silkworm cocoon found

K.K. NAJEEB



The development of a method for unreeling the strands of silk in wild silkworm cocoons could clear the way for establishment of new silk industries in Asia, Africa and South America.

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Come and farm our virgin lands, Ethiopia tells India

Siddharth Varadarajan

— PHOTO: PTI/ Manvender Vashist



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh looks on as External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and Ethiopian Finance Minister Sufian Ahmed greet each other after signing an MoU at the National Palace in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Wednesday.

Addis Ababa: It has taken 64 years for an Indian Prime Minister to visit Ethiopia but when Manmohan Singh sat down with its leadership here on Wednesday, he must have felt India has no better friend in the whole of Africa. "I am often accused of being too pro-India," Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told Dr. Singh when they began their talks at the former palace of Emperor Haile Selassie. "And my answer is, 'Guilty as charged!'"

Officials present at the meeting said, Mr. Zenawi welcomed the re-emergence of India as a global powerhouse and noted how Indian investment in Ethiopia had shot up to \$4.7 billion in just four years. Speaking to reporters at a joint press conference later, the Ethiopian Prime Minister said he hoped to see that figure touch \$10 billion by 2015. "We want to see more Indian companies in every field, from textiles and food processing to IT and agriculture."

Mr. Zenawi ridiculed what he said was "ill-informed and even ill-intentioned loose talk" about Indian farming companies indulging in "land grabbing" in Ethiopia. The country had 3 million hectares of unutilised land which it intended to lease out to foreign companies to grow food, he said. Karaturi, the Hyderabad-based agricultural investor, has already been given a lease of 300,000 ha. in the Gambela province to produce maize. "Everything is transparent and the deeds can be seen on the Internet... We want to develop our land to feed ourselves rather than admire the beauty of fallow fields while we starve," Mr. Zenawi said in response to a question about concerns expressed in some quarters about the leasing programme. It was possible that land-grabbing was going on elsewhere in Africa but not in Ethiopia, he said, adding, "I want to reassure Indian companies that they are welcome here. We want them to come and farm what is virgin land."

While Dr. Singh expressed the hope that the balance of trade which is currently heavily weighted in favour of India would gradually equalise as the Ethiopian economy grew, Mr. Zenawi told reporters the imbalance was not a big issue. "Our bilateral trade is \$660 million, which is peanuts compared to our overall trade. I am less concerned about the contents of the peanuts than about the fact that these are peanuts. It is the capacity to trade that we lack and this is what India is helping Ethiopia to develop through its investments," Mr. Zenawi said.

India, which has sent thousands of teachers to Ethiopia since the 1950s, has now agreed to provide specialised training to Ethiopian diplomats and trade negotiators as part of its capacity building programme. On Tuesday, Dr. Singh announced a \$300 million line of credit to help

revive the Ethiopia-Djibouti rail route. With Ethiopia in a state of 'no war, no peace,' with Eritrea, Djibouti remains the only viable outlet to the sea for this landlocked nation of 85 million people.

Dr. Singh's final engagement in Ethiopia will be an address to its parliament on Thursday morning, following which he travels to Tanzania for a two-day official visit.

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11.5 tonnes of mangoes seized

Staff Reporter

— Photo: K. Pichumani



Hazardous: Corporation health officials seize mangoes ripened using calcium carbide, in Koyambedu on Wednesday.

CHENNAI: The Health Department of the Chennai Corporation on Wednesday conducted raids in various parts of the city and seized 11.5 tonnes of mangoes ripened using calcium carbide. Around 500 kg of papayas were also seized.

According to Corporation officials, the clinically proven carcinogenic chemical is being used across various wholesale and retail outlets to ripen mangoes. The Koyambedu Wholesale Fruit Market, which is the point of arrival of mangoes in the city, has unbridled usage of the chemical despite warning by the civic authorities against its use. The officials said they found labourers packing carbide into small sachets on Wednesday so that they could be hidden within the mangoes. A total of 34 of 67 shops screened in the market were found to be using the chemical. Over 650 kg of calcium carbide was seized.

Godowns in Royapettah were also raided. Over 600 kg of fruits were seized. The fruits were destroyed.

Use of carbide to ripen mangoes is an offence under the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act, and that those using it would be booked under the act, said a senior official of the Chennai Corporation.

The Corporation has informed purchasers and commission agents about the same. Calcium carbide is a hazardous chemical and contains traces of arsenic and phosphorus hydride. While inhalation of the chemical could cause unconsciousness, consumption of fruits ripened using the chemical might have serious health implications.

Symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, eye and skin irritation are common among people who consume such fruits. It might even lead to permanent vision loss, intestinal problem, low blood pressure and memory loss, said a senior official of the Chennai Corporation.

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Kuruvai cultivation area likely to go up

S.Ganesan

TIRUCHI: With the State government announcing its decision to open the Mettur reservoir for irrigation on June 6, the area under kuruvai paddy cultivation in Tiruchi district is expected to go up this year.

Though samba is the major crop for the district, the prospect of assured water supply for irrigation has enthused farmers to gear for kuruvai paddy cultivation this year. Agriculture Department officials told The Hindu that they expected a substantial increase in the area under kuruvai over the normal coverage of about 6,500 hectares in the district.

“We expect about 7,500 to 8,000 hectares to be covered under kuruvai this year,” said a senior officer in the department. Of this, about 6,000 hectares would be in the filter point and delta areas of the district, mostly in the Lalgudi belt. Another 2,000 hectares would be covered under kuruvai paddy in the non-delta areas in Uppilliyapuram and Thuraiyur blocks. Last year, about

4,750 hectares were covered under kuruvai in the district, a large portion of it in the filter point areas. The year before that, kuruvai was raised in about 4,200 hectares.

Farmers' representatives choed confidence of the agriculture officials. "It is a good decision to open the Mettur reservoir on June 6. We are hopeful of good coverage and yield as the conditions are conducive this year," said G.Kanagasabai, president, District Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association.

Date:26/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/26/stories/2011052650790300.htm>

Training for turmeric farmers

VELLORE: About 110 turmeric farmers of Thimiri block were imparted training in methods of turmeric cultivation and improving productivity under drought conditions, at the Government High School in Kavanur on Wednesday.

Eapan Vettath Eapan, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Walajapet, who conducted the training programme, said that the training was being imparted on the instructions of the Deputy Director of Horticulture, Vellore, in the light of the farmers' fears over cultivating turmeric owing to crop loss suffered by them on account of the drought and pest attack last year.

The Deputy Director had ordered that such training programmes be conducted in all blocks in Vellore district.

The Assistant Director said that the high intensity of sunshine and lack of rain were the major causes for the low yield of turmeric in Vellore district. Cultivating turmeric crop between coconut trees (for shade), selection of drought-resistant varieties such as Bhavanisagar-1, mulching the field with 10 tonnes of leaves per hectare (for preservation of moisture) and spraying the crop with 0.3% Borax (to prevent evapo-transpiration) would increase productivity and yield by 20 % over the current yield.

Mr. Eapan and Sivamurugan, Assistant Professor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Virinjipuram, conducted detailed training in turmeric cultivation. Mr. Eapan said that the next training programme would be conducted at the Walajapet block within a few days.

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Groundnut seed distribution launched

Anantapur: Member of Parliament Anantha Venkatarama Reddy, local MLA B. Gurunatha Reddy and district Collector B. Janardhan Reddy have launched the groundnut seed distribution programme at the local marketyard here on Wednesday.

The farmers response to the programme was poor in the context of rumours that the seed being supplied was of poor quality.

Collector B.Janardhan Reddy stated that the groundnut seed was indeed of a good quality. He advised farmers against being carried away by false propaganda with regard to the quality of the groundnut seed. He said that every farmer is entitled to three bags of groundnut per acre .

The total quantity of seed that would be distributed is 5.50 lakh metric tonnes in the district.

MP Anantha Venkatarama Reddy and MLA B. Gurunatha Reddy stated that the government always stood by the welfare of the farmers. He revealed that those farmers who were not covered under the crop damage compensation programme would now be covered under input subsidy payment programme.

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'Implement schemes for farmers effectively'

Set up committee to change crop insurance policy: sangha

Chitradurga: The Karnataka chapter of the Rashtriya Krishi Sangha has accused the State Government of not effectively implementing schemes launched to curb farmer suicides in the State.

In a press release here on Wednesday, the sangha said the Government had introduced several schemes such as subsidies on farming equipment and seeds for small and marginal

farmers and providing low interest loans. However, the absence of proper monitoring by the Government had resulted in ineffective implementation of the projects. Caste politics in identifying beneficiaries and undue political interference in general had added to poor implementation, the sangha said.

According to Government statistics, between 2004 and 2011, a total of 2,603 farmers committed suicide in the State. But, in reality, around 5,800 farmers had ended their lives as they could not cope with the increasing input costs and sharp decline in profits, they claimed.

Several farmers were still debt-ridden, with no prospects of a better future. The reason for all this was poor implementation of the projects, which were framed to help distressed farmers, they said.

Other reasons have also contributed to the woes of the farmers, the release said. They included unfair evaluation of minimum support price, delay in offering loans to the farmers, and unfriendly methods of giving crop insurance.

The release said that in order to provide better solutions to the problems of farmers, the Government must keep a strong vigil over implementation of the project and bring in necessary changes.

They demanded a minimum support price of Rs. 2,500 for a quintal for sugarcane, Rs. 1,500 for a quintal for maize, Rs. 3,600 for a quintal for groundnut and Rs. 3,800 for a quintal for toor dal.

The sangha also demanded that the Government set up a committee of experts to bring about significant changes in the crop insurance policy.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/26/stories/2011052658722200.htm>

Forest communities in Nepal grappling with climate change

Meena Menon

The rainfall pattern has changed in intensity and quality as a result of which paddy

production is decreasing

— Photos: Meena Menon



CONSERVATION AND PROGRESS: Badri Prasad Jangam (left) explains the activities of the Gaurkhuashwor community forest management committee in Dhulikhel in Nepal. (right) Khilbahadur Nuitel shows visitors the dried up water source at Panchakhal.

DHULIKHEL (NEPAL): Communities that manage the forests in Nepal are grappling with the vagaries of erratic rainfall, drought and depleting water for drinking and agriculture.

The rainfall pattern has changed in intensity and quality as a result of which production of paddy is decreasing, says Eak B. Rana, project coordinator, REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries) Ecosystem Services at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu.

While the people have adapted in some ways to the changing rainfall pattern and lack of water, migration has increased. An ICIMOD study on community perceptions and responses to climate change impacts in Nepal, India and Bhutan points to increased migration, though not due to climate change alone. The study says income generation options are inadequate in Nepal, apart from poor social capital and support systems, leading to labour migration.

Interestingly, it was the people's movement to regenerate forests since 1972 that led to them eventually managing the green areas. In 1988, community-based forest management groups were formally approved, with the Kavre and Sindhupalchowk districts being the pioneers. There are now 16,000-20,000 community-managed forests in Nepal, covering 25 per cent or 1.2 million hectares of the country's forest land, Mr. Rana says.

Communities also earn revenue by selling non-timber forest produce (NTFP).

Rejuvenating the land

A little ahead of Dhulikhel in Kavre district is the Gaurkhureshwor community forest area, spread over 24 hectares. Badri Prasad Jangam, chairperson of the group — which has been managing the forest for 19 years — says this was a bare region earlier, but the community living nearby decided to rejuvenate it by planting trees.

The first area to be managed by the community, the region now is a lush forest with a variety of wild animals, including leopards.

The 60 houses in the village get their fuelwood requirements and the water streams have been recharged in the area. The community grows cardamom and broom grass as cash crops. In addition, the forest gets tourists who are charged from Rs.500 upwards for a visit. The area has local varieties of trees, including rhododendrons and is also known for its orchids.

Saryu Jangam, one of the four women on the nine-member forest management committee, says the earnings are used to train women in tailoring, conservation and in using improved cooking stoves. A guard has also been hired to patrol the forests at Rs.2,000 a month. The community forest is held up as a model and anyone caught felling trees is punished with a fine.

Depleting water sources

However, things are not so happy further ahead in Panchakhal, which is part of the Ratomate community forest area spread over 108.12 hectares. There has been a drought for six years in the area. Khilbahadur Nuitel points to a natural water source that trickled to a stop four years ago; this water had been enough for the entire village. A well that was dug nearby dried up a year ago.

The people blame the extensive pine forests — which were planted in the 1970s to regenerate degraded forests as part of an Australian project — for the depleting water table. Mr. Rana, however, says the pine forests are not the only reason: in fact, there is no research or scientific study to show that pine trees have a high evapo-transpiration rate. He says the streams and water sources in many parts of Nepal are drying up due to

prolonged drought and climate change.

In Panchakhal, Mr. Nuitel says, it now rains in May though traditionally rainfall occurred during June-September. With help from an NGO, the village has dug a 250-foot borewell and pumps water to a tank. Villagers get 80 litres a day for their use, but the 11-hour load shedding does not help. Most families use biogas to reduce dependence on forests.

Jamuna picks up her aluminium cans to trudge uphill to fetch water from the tank. "I spend an hour each in the morning and evening bringing water," she says. The people are planning to plant broad-leaved species of trees to mitigate the effect of the pines.

Ironically, Panchakhal used to be called 'Mudepani,' which means enough water. It was also noted for its banana crop.

Mr. Rana explains that Nepal still does not have a concrete framework in terms of a policy under REDD, but is part of two programmes: the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, and the United Nations REDD Programme. The country has gotten \$200,000 for a readiness preparation proposal and an additional \$3.5 million from the World Bank to work on six different components related to REDD.

To adapt to the changing scenario, ICIMOD has set up a demonstration centre in the Jhikhu Khola watershed at Lamdihi village, where Saraswoti Bhetwal shows other farmers the techniques of roof-water harvesting, making farm ponds, drip irrigation, composting and terracing. From growing one maize crop a year, she now harvests rice, potato and vegetables thrice a year. Last year, she says, the rain was scanty and the roof-water lasted only for five months. But now the people come to learn from her.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Thursday, May 26

Max Min

38.1° | 28.4°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 79%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:41

Sunset: 18:29

Barometer: 1003.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, May 27

Max Min

37° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

May 28



36° | 29°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

May 29



36° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Monday

May 30



37° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday

May 31



38° | 29°

Rainy

Wednesday

Jun 1



39° | 29°

Rainy

Streamline post-harvest handling of fruits: Experts

May 26, 2011 11:50:27 AM

Rajendra S Markuna | Haldwani

Agricultural scientists have expressed concern over poor post-harvest care for fruits, vegetables and all other farm produce saying the problem of fruit dropping, fruit cracking and short shelf life of farm produce is a matter of concern. They emphasised on the need to have a proper post-harvest care system in the State.

Speaking at a programme on the “Relevance of Plasticulture Applications in Litchi Production”, the Vice-Chancellor of the GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, BS Bisht, said that the Pantnagar University has a litchi tree at its Research Centre at Kotdwar which is 150 years old.

The Vice-Chancellor stressed on the need of having a proper post-harvest mechanism so the farm produce could be protected from external factors and be used for long. At the same time, he called for scientific use of plastic particularly in the farming sector.

“Though use of plastic is harmful to the environment, it is beneficial in many other ways. It is vital for the farming community and scientists to know how to utilise plastic in the agriculture sector,” Bisht said.

Dr Vishal Nath Pandey, Director, National Research Centre on Litchi, Muzzafarpur, Bihar; Dr J Kumar, Dean Agriculture; Dr JP Pandey, Director Experiment Station and Ashok Gahrotra, Sr Project Officer (NCPAH) Ministry of Agriculture were also present on the occasion.

In his remarks Vishal Nath Pandey called for the need to extend productivity of litchi and to improve its storage and infrastructure facilities. He also urged the scientists to work for intensive horticulture and input management.

Expressing concern over people's lacking interests in farming J Kumar said that India is an agrarian society but, farmers are losing interest in agriculture due to lack of assured profits. A variety of agro-climatic conditions prevail in India because of which different kinds of fruits and vegetables can be grown in different areas at different altitudes.

We urge the people to make the most of these favourite conditions saying about seven metric tonnes of litchi is produced in Uttarakhand. We must keep on maximising the litchi growth here.

JP Pandey, Director Experiment Station emphasised on right fertiliser, drip irrigation technique, water management, high-tech innovation including plasticulture and precision farming saying 46 millions tonnes of fruits is produced in India and 9 per cent of total litchi is supplied by China and India alone in the world market. India lies at ninth rank in litchi production.

Farmers' protest against land acquisition gains momentum

May 26, 2011 11:49:31 AM

Shiv Rawal | Chandigarh

The farmer's agitation in Bhatta-Parsaul has left deep imprints in Haryana. The State is now face to face with farmer's agitation on acquisition of agricultural land even though its policy for compensation is considered to be one of the best in the country. A rally against land acquisition has been planned on June 5 by a confederation of farmers' organisation.

Opposition too has come down on the State Government for turning a blind eye to the demands of the farmers who have been staging protest against acquisition of their land for industrial

projects.

Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda has repeatedly asserted that the State had the best land acquisition policy. Despite this, farmer's agitation has spread to several parts of the State, indicating growing unrest like Bhatta-Parsaul in Noida where Congress General Secretary Rahul Gandhi had to intervene.

Agitation is taking place against the setting up of Industrial Model Township (IMT) in Ambala, expansion of the industrial belt in Manesar in district Gurgaon, IMT in Dharuhera in district Rewari, Nuclear Power Plant in Gorakhpur in district Fatehabad, Expressway in district Palwal, industrial expansion in Kheri Saadh in district Rohtak and a few other places.

Talking to The Pioneer, Haryana Bharat Bhoomi Bachao Sangharsh Samiti president Ramesh Dalal said, "The number of agitations have gone up but the Congress Governments both at Centre and State have not yet come forward to find out the reasons." Dalal said thousands of agitating farmers would hold a rally in Rohtak on June 5. "The next day, we will also sit on fast unto death against the ongoing exploitation of farmers in Haryana in the name of land acquisition," he said.

Bharatiya Kisan Union leader in Haryana, Gurnam Singh said, "The Government must not acquire fertile land for industrial projects. Such projects can be set up at other places where land is not productive. Fertile land in Haryana is being acquired for the benefit of private developers not for social infrastructure of the State,"

Setting up of Ambala IMT and acquisition of land even led to internal fissures in the Congress with the local MP and Union Minister Shelja coming out openly against the project even though Hooda says that industrialisation was the way out to get rid of unemployment at a time when land holdings are coming down. Selja had written letters to UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi seeking her intervention into the matter while a similar letter was also written by Haryana

Finance Minister Captain Ajay Singh Yadav to Chief Minister Hooda asking him to stop the acquisition of land for Dharuhera project, Rewari.

Recently, the farmers in Sonapat also started agitation against the state government's ambitious project Rajiv Gandhi Education city in Rai demanding back their land which had been acquired for the project years ago. Besides, at present the farmers in Haryana are agitating in the districts of Mewat, Rohtak, Rewari, Gurgaon, Fatehabad and Ambala against land acquisition.

Police have said that so far two deaths have been reported in Haryana relating to agitation against land acquisition, including the death of Manoj, a former sarpanch of Kheri Sadh village of Rohtak district who was shot dead when he was sitting on dharna near the village against land acquisition while earlier Ram Kumar Siwach, 65 had died while sitting on a protest in Gorakhpur against the land acquisition.

Business Standard

Thursday, May 26, 2011

Let APMCs, fertiliser firms set up PPP soil labs: AgriMin to states

Anindita Dey / Mumbai May 26, 2011, 0:57 IST

The ministry of agriculture has suggested states include their respective Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) in setting up soil testing laboratories in public private partnership mode with fertiliser companies.

As per the recommendation of Nandkumar Committee report on optimisation of use of fertiliser, the ministry is suggesting a PPP mode for site-specific soil testing programme (SSSP) — a venture of the ministry to improve the yield of the land by using fertiliser under site-specific

nutrient management (SSNM). SSSP aims at the testing the sample of the soil before advising use of a certain type of fertiliser.

Officials said the districts which consume about 50 per cent of NPK (nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potassium) will be the first to take up the SSNM project. This should be followed up by those districts that have major soil nutrient problems and large areas under crops or similar problems with soil degradation. Besides NPK, secondary and micronutrients and soil ameliorants, green farm yard manure and biofertilisers should also be an integral part of SSNM.

The Gujarat Government has already brought APMCS in its fold to set up soil testing laboratories and help the farmers. Similarly, the state of Haryana, to this effect, has set up 30 static soil testing laboratories and one mobile soil testing laboratory which is implemented through PPP mode.

The TamilNadu government has worked out an innovative scheme for establishing agri clinic cum mini soil testing laboratories, run by unemployed youth with bank loans and government subsidy. It has also tailor made special kits made of urea, farm compost and technical pamphlets which are distributed to farmers. The state in its plans submitted to the government proposes to distribute green manure seeds at 25 per cent subsidy. Around 250 metric tonnes of green manure is distributed every year. The state has set up vermin compost units and municipal compost units by subsidising 50 per cent of the cost.

The report has observed that fertiliser consumption is growing along with increasing negative nutrient balance between crop removal and fertiliser.

Use of green farm manure has decreased considerably due to inadequate availability, labour costs and higher prices while soil testing and preparation of soil maps continue to be slow. Fertigation — a combination of liquid fertiliser during irrigation, while very effective in increasing land productivity is at a very nascent stage due to heavy dependence on imports for liquid or soluble fertiliser which attracts high custom duty.

Govt extends deadline for sugar export licence for mills

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi May 26, 2011, 0:10 IST

The government has extended the deadline for sugar mills to seek permission to export sugar from their own production of 2010-11 by fifteen days.

The deadline for mills to seek the food ministry's permission for allowing export ended on May 18. However, many mills, mainly cooperative sugar mills were pressing for extension of the deadline due to procedural problems. "We have extended the deadline by 15 days," a senior food ministry official said. The sugar crop year runs from October to September.

The government last month, allowed export of 4.45 lakh tonne of sugar under open general licences (OGL). However, till last week, mills had sought permission to export 253,000 lakh tonnes of sugar against the available quota of 445,000 lakh tonnes

The quota was allocated to 490 mills on the basis of their average production during the last three years. As per the notification, the last date for submission for applications by mills opting to export sugar from their own production is May 18. However, the deadline for mills opting to source sugar for export from other factories is June 2.

Sugarcane area poised to rise by 8-10% in 2011-12

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi May 26, 2011, 0:08 IST

Sugar production estimated at 26-26.5 million tonnes, up from 24.2-24.5 million tonnes.

Area under sugarcane in the new crop year that starts in October 2011 is expected to increase by around 8 -10 per cent because of good price to growers, relatively favourable weather and continuation of positive sugar cycle.

In 2010-11, sugarcane was planted in 4.98 million hectares across the country, of which 1 million hectares was in Maharashtra and over 2 million hectares in Uttar Pradesh, official estimates show. Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra are the two largest sugarcane producing states in the country, accounting for more than 80 per cent of the annual crop production.

Industry officials estimate that area under sugarcane next year could go up to 5.47 million hectares because of favourable factors, of which acreage in Maharashtra is expected to rise by 5 per cent, while that in Uttar Pradesh by 10 per cent from this year. Actual production of sugarcane is expected to be around 380 million tonnes, up from 346 million tonnes in 2010-11.

Title	2010-2011	2011-2012*
Area **	4.98	5.47
Cane production	346.00	380.00
Sugar production	24.20-24.50	26.00-26.50

** Figures for 2011-2012 are unofficial estimates as the crop is still in planting stage*

***Area is in million hectares*

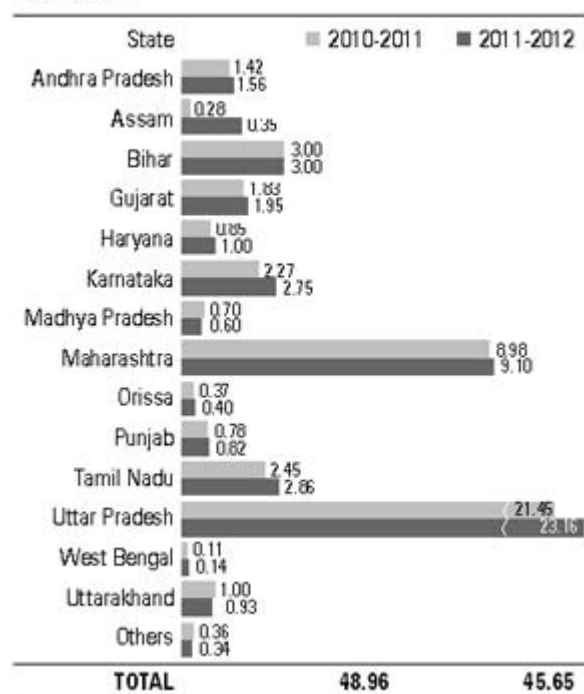
Note: The sugarcane crop year runs from October to September

Source: Trade and industry sources

“As a result of higher sugarcane production we estimate that if sucrose content is normal in cane and large quantities are not diverted for other purposes then sugar production in 2011-12 should be around 26 to 26.5 million tonnes,” Abinash Verma, Director General of Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) told Business Standard.

SUGARCANE ACREAGE TILL LAST WEEK

in lakh hectares



Source: Department of Agriculture

Sugar production this year is estimated to be around 24.2 to 24.5 million tonnes. India's annual consumption of sugar is around 22 to 23 million tonnes.

As per the latest data from the agriculture ministry, sugarcane has already been planted in around 4.89 million hectares of land till last week, almost 7.25 per cent more than the same period last year. In Maharashtra, sugarcane has been

planted in around 0.91 million hectares, up 2.24 per cent from last year.

Sugarcane acreage in Uttar Pradesh, the country's second largest producing state is estimated to be around 2.31 million hectares, up almost 9 per cent from last year.

"The acreage is expected to rise by 8 -10 per cent next year because of good price to growers, continuation of the positive sugar cycle and good progress in ratoon sugarcane crop," Verma said.

Ratoon crop in sugarcane is the new cane which grows from the stubble left behind after harvesting. This enables the farmers to get three or four crops from these before they have to replant. The reason why the cane does this is because sugarcane is a type of grass.

He said that average cane price paid to sugarcane farmers in 2010-11 was much more than last year as both the central government fixed 'fair and remunerative price' and state advised price were much higher than last year.

In fact, in Uttar Pradesh, which houses some of the biggest sugar mills in the country, the average price paid to farmers in 2010-11 was almost Rs 40 per quintal more than the previous year at Rs 205 and Rs 210 per quintal. Similarly, the average price for sugarcane paid to farmers in other parts of the country was also significantly higher than the previous.

Officials said production of molasses, a key raw material for the alcohol, chemical and fuel industry is also expected to rise by 10 per cent. However, most industry officials are sceptical whether a higher crop production in 2011-12 could lead to more exports as the global sugar surplus next year has been estimated at 6 million tonnes of white sugar by the International Sugar Organisation (ISO).

"These are very early days to talk about final sugar production next year and export possibilities, but we believe that given the international trends there could be limited opportunity to export," officials said.

In 2010-11, the government had allowed export of 450,000 tonnes of sugar under open general license (OGL). Exports under OGL require just a formal permission from the government with no other obligation.

NCDEX doubles margin to control pepper volatility

BS Reporter / Mumbai May 26, 2011, 0:01 IST

The country's second largest commodity derivatives exchange, the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), has levied 10 per cent special margin on all running contracts of pepper to control volatility in the prices.

The exchange through a circular dated May 24 said that it was levying 5 per cent special margin on all long positions for pepper contracts over and above 5 per cent of cash margins. This was in addition of over 10 per cent initial margins levied on the contract earlier.

The special margin was levied to control the abnormal volatility in near month contract in the last couple of trading sessions. According to NCDEX website, pepper prices hit both upper and lower circuit almost every day since May 14 to hit on at Rs 30502 per quintal for the contract maturing in June.

The price volatility may continue till end-June, but not beyond, say observers. The new crop in Malaysia, Brazil and Indonesia would be ready in six to eight weeks. Vietnam is yet to market 65 per cent of its fresh crop. So, global supply is likely to increase during July-September. Overbought Indian pepper futures would burst unless overseas demand increases very sharply, said a trader in the spot market here.

Based on earlier reports that global supply would shrink, Indian futures took a speculative route. According to leading exporters, this was not in line with the reality and the increased supply will begin to impact the price line after a couple of weeks.

India has been a net importer since 2009. This year, with Indian prices staying high, more imports will come into the country, said experts.

Harvesting will be over by the end of this month in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It has been completed in the new cultivation areas of Meghalaya and Assam, where the output has been a record 5,000 tonnes this time. This rise would partly compensate for an anticipated loss in production in Kerala and Karnataka. With a bullish view on prices, farmers have so far sold only 20 per cent of the fresh crop, or 10,000 tonnes, in the current season. Once the price begins to fall, much stock is likely to be offloaded.

NCDEX adds agri commodity for base capital collateral

BS Reporter / May 26, 2011, 0:03 IST

The National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) has expanded the acceptance of additional base capital and added agricultural commodities as collateral in the designated depository accounts to be maintained with the custodian approved/appointed by the exchange under demat system. These goods shall be pledged in favour of NCDEX to secure performance of all obligations of the member of same quality specification which is deliverable under the contract specification of agricultural commodities being traded on the exchange.

THE HINDU Business Line

Experts favour limited release of Bt brinjal; NGOs frown



Business Line A genetically modified brinjal variety.

Hyderabad, May 25:

The Bt brinjal issue refuses to die. Several experts participating in a Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) meeting have favoured “limited release of Bt (brinjal) seeds to identified farmers under strict supervision”.

Though this is not the last word on the issue, non-governmental organisations opposing introduction of Bt technology in food crops, say this stand could lead to dangerous consequences.

In a recent special meeting convened as a follow-up to last year's stormy Public Hearing on Bt brinjal, experts discussed additional studies to assess the safety of Bt food crops. Most experts were of the view that studies prescribed under the current regulatory system and those conducted with Bt brinjal were adequate.

Dr P. M. Bhargava, noted scientist; Dr Ram Vishwakarma, Director of Indian Institute of Integrated Medicine (Jammu); and representatives of Ayush, however, opposed this view and called for additional studies.

"Cry1Ac protein has been used extensively in global agriculture and has gone through bio-safety clearances in so many countries. There should be no doubt about safety," minutes of the meeting said, quoting those who opposed additional studies.

Mr G. Ramanjaneyulu, Executive Director of Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, said Mr Jairam Ramesh, Union Minister of State for Environment, had asked GEAC to conduct the meeting to discuss additional studies on the subject.

"The idea is not to discount fears and turn down pleas for additional studies. The outcome of the meeting does not augur well and sounds dangerous. Any release, limited or otherwise, would contaminate," he said.

GEAC said it had asked the experts to send a half-page recommendation on the way forward. It would conduct another meeting in this regard.

Karnataka to create additional irrigation facility in river basins

Earmarks Rs 7,800 cr for the sector

Bangalore, May 25:

The Karnataka Government has drawn up plans to create an additional irrigation facility for two lakh acres this year in all river basin areas in the State, the State Minister for Water Resources, Mr Basavaraj Bommai, said today.

The Government has earmarked Rs 7,800 crore in the Budget for irrigation sector and another Rs 2,000 crore would be raised through borrowings to meet the expenditure, he told reporters after reviewing progress of works in his ministry with top officials.

The Government would be taking up the task for reviving fertility of one lakh hectares of land where productivity has gone down due to excess use of water in parts of the State, he said.

The State and the Centre have inked a MoU to implement the project over the next five years with an outlay of Rs 603 crore on equal cost sharing basis, Mr Bommai said.

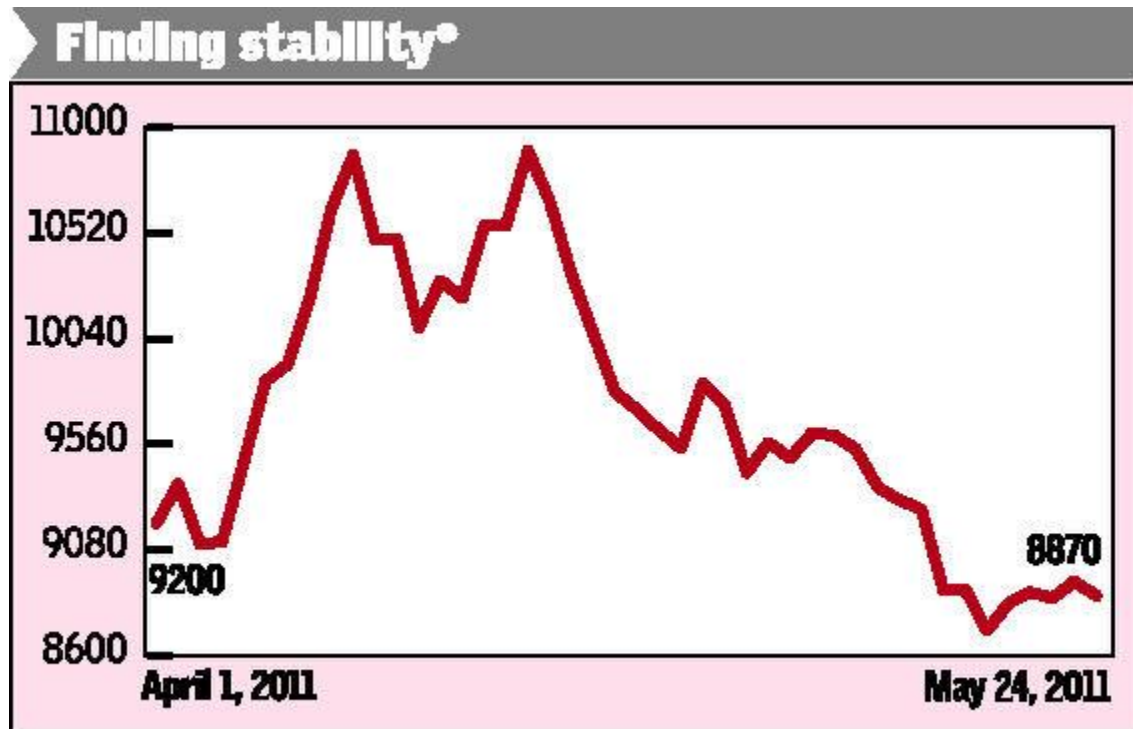
Command Area Development scheme

Of the Rs 760 crore fund set apart for taking up irrigation improvement project in the Command Area Development scheme, about Rs 160 crore would be spent this year on this project, he said, adding that NABARD will also provide Rs 80 crore.

Ghataprabha dam

The pilot project implemented in Ghataprabha dam in Belgaum district to regulate water flow into canals installing electronic flow meters was a success and the Government planned to bring other dams under the similar system, Mr Bommai said.

Chilli turns cold on short-covering



***in Rs/quintal for June contract of Guntur 334 variety on NCDEX**

Chennai, May 25:

Chilli futures hit a record Rs 11,224 a quintal on April 23 for June contracts on the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange. Since then, they have dropped, and on Wednesday closed at Rs 8,770.

“Bearish sentiments are prevailing due to short-covering. Also, on Wednesday a hike in the margin money for pepper affected chilli,” said Mr Anand James, Chief Analyst, Geojit ComTrade Ltd.

In Bowenpally in Andhra Pradesh, quality grade chilli was quoted at Rs 8,600 a quintal, though the modal price or rates at which most trade took place was Rs 6,600.

Guntur, the main market for chilli that sets the trend for the rest of the country, is closed for summer until June 5.

“Prices will begin steady after June 15. Also, the price movement will depend on how the crop in Madhya Pradesh shapes up,” said Mr Alapati Srinivasa Rao, a trader in Guntur.

This is because the Andhra Pradesh crop has been sold out. “Almost 90 per cent has been sold out,” Mr Rao said.

Traders in Guntur are holding 45 lakh bags (45 kg each) with them in warehouses.

“Prices could flare up if the Madhya Pradesh crop faces any problem,” Mr Rao said.

“Heavy arrivals also led to fall in prices in the last few weeks. Things are bound to be this way in the short-term,” said Mr James.

The rupee is seen as a key factor in exports. A weak rupee could boost exports. “Export demand is good,” said Mr Rao.

But Mr James said: “Not much export demand is visible. It is one of the reasons why the domestic market intelligence cell has asked growers to hold back chilli.” Movement in the price of pepper could continue to influence chilli, said Mr James.

Liquid milk scores over commodities in dairy biz



The real money today is in liquid milk.

Stable cash flow, less price volatility are key considerations

New Delhi/Chennai, May 25:

For those in, or wanting to enter, the dairy business, the real money today is in liquid milk.

While marketing of liquid milk has been traditionally monopolised by cooperatives – the likes of Amul, Mother Dairy, Nandini and Aavin – there are now many private players, such as Hatsun Agro Product and Heritage Foods India Ltd, increasingly entrenching themselves in the business.

Currently, raw buffalo milk, containing 6.5 per cent fat and 9 per cent solids-not-fat (SNF), is being delivered to dairies in the North at around Rs 31 a litre. For 100 litres or 102.8 kg (one litre of milk equals 1.028 kg), that translates into Rs 3,100. The choice is whether to process the 100 litres into commodities – which is what most dairies in the North do – or market it as liquid milk in pouches.

If the commodity route is employed, the 100 litres processed would yield 6.68 kg of fat (ghee) and 9.25 kg of SNF or skimmed milk powder (SMP). At the prevailing ex-factory prices of Rs 255 a kg for ghee and Rs 195 a kg for SMP, the gross realisation would be about Rs 3,508. But this excludes conversion costs on account of fuel, utilities, packaging, labour and other overheads that come to roughly Rs 16 a kg in ghee and Rs 18 a kg in SMP – or adding up to Rs 273 on 6.68 kg and 9.25 kg respectively.

The dairy's net realisation, then, from processing 100 litres of milk into commodities is only Rs 3,235, which just about covers the basic cost of raw material. And if one provides for interest, depreciation and other financial charges, the commodity business is a losing proposition at today's realisations on ghee and SMP and the cost of milk delivered at the dairy dock.

On the other hand, full-cream liquid milk (6 per cent fat and 9 per cent SNF) is, at present, retailing at Rs 35 a litre in Delhi. After deducting Rs 2 towards processing and packaging, Rs 0.75 for local transport, Rs 1.50 for retailer/distributor margin, and Rs 0.50 for advertising and other marketing costs, the net realisation works out to Rs 30.25 a litre or Rs 3,025 for 100 litres.

However, the raw milk sourced by the dairy contains 0.5 per cent extra fat. Factoring in the value of this additional fat takes the effective realisation from selling 100 litres of full-cream milk in pouches to Rs 3,150. Although this is below the realisation from commodities, there are at least two factors tilting the economics in favour of liquid milk.

One, the current Rs 31-a-litre raw milk cost is a “lean season” price, which is bound to come down as supplies improve with the monsoon's arrival. Two, once raw milk prices fall, it would also lead to lower prices of ghee and SMP, which is not the case with liquid milk.

“The advantage with liquid milk is that once you raise prices, they remain at that level. There is no retail consumer pressure to reduce prices even if there is a decline in raw milk costs. This is not so for ingredients, where prices are volatile and move in tandem with raw milk costs, as is usual with commodities,” an industry source pointed out.

According to him, the ingredients business makes sense only “if you produce and stock up during the flush season (when milk is available cheaper) to sell in the lean summer months (when realisations on ghee and SMP are higher)”. That, of course, entails locking up funds and incurring interest costs – unlike in liquid milk, “where procurement and sale is a daily round-the-year activity.”

Wheat grown on fly ash-soil mix, fit for human consumption

Hyderabad, May 25:

The much maligned waste from power plants, fly ash, may after all have some beneficial effects.

Going by research findings of the Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), wheat grown on fly ash-treated soils may be safe for consumption. Thermal power plants throw up huge quantities of fly ash. But they find hardly any takers for the ash, as the cost of transporting it from the remotely situated plants is expensive. Efforts to dispose it of mean expenditure to the plant. If the plants don't dispose of the ash, then mounds of it become an environmental problem.

A the team of NIN scientists studied the use of fly ash as a mix in soils where wheat is grown. Studies have shown that a mix of 200 tonnes for an hectare will not have any adverse effects on the nutritional composition of the wheat.

The NIN study was focussed on fly ash application on nutritional quality of agriculture produce and associated safety issues for possible human consumption. Accordingly, the scientists carried out evaluation on rats fed with wheat grown in fly ash-applied soils.

The tested locations were Bakreswar, near Dhanbad in Jharkhand, and Rihand Nagar, near Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. Results on analysis of wheat samples grown at both sites showed that the nutrient composition of wheat grown on fly ash treated soils was not different from that grown without fly ash. However, with respect to trace minerals and heavy metals there was a difference, which NIN scientists say may not make a significant impact, as they were all within permissible limits. Interestingly, the NIN study is one of the first in respect of biological evaluation of agriculture products grown on fly ash treated soils. According to information available, 100 million tonnes of fly ash is produced by 82 thermal plants. The national fly ash mission has initiated 15 technology demonstration projects at 55 sites all over India to assess the effects of field application of fly ash.

Swiss chocolate co trains cocoa farmers on quality aspects

Kochi, May 25:

Indian Organic Farmers Producers Company Ltd (IOFPCL) and the Switzerland-based Chocolate Stella are exploring new areas in the cocoa sector, including value-addition, and export of organic and conventional cocoa on long-term basis.

IOFPCL has been doing business with Chocolate Stella since 2009, an end user of cocoa, in the global market. The company makes dark chocolate directly out of cocoa produced by farmers in Kerala, signifying the presence of Indian cocoa in the global market.

Mr Antony Panakal, Business Development Manager of Chocolate Stella, said that there is a potential interest for dark chocolate in the world market and consequently, there will be demand for superior quality cocoa from IOFPCL. The company had started imparting training to farmers in India and there are about 5,000 farmers involved in the activities of IOFPCL, which is expected to increase to 10,000 in the current financial year.

Timely intervention

The lead farmers from Kerala were trained in Switzerland on quality improvement aspects of cocoa and chocolates. The intervention of IOFPCL enhanced the price of cocoa from Rs 16 to Rs 50 a kg. Mr Antony, who was here to support the export activities of organic and fair trade products of IOFPCL with member farmer groups in various parts of the State, said that the

Indian single origin chocolate introduced by Chocolate Stella in the International Confectionary Fair at Cologne in Germany had received encouraging response.

Seeking more participation from farmers in the activities of IOFPCL, he said that the intervention of IOFPCL could provide better farm gate price to the farmers, reduce involvement of intermediaries in the value chain and facilitate presence of India in the international cocoa market. The intervention of IOFPCL is able to link the Indian cocoa farmers with the end user of cocoa in Switzerland, he added.

Exports

Mr K.J. Thomas, Managing Director, said that IOFPCL had so far exported 60 tonnes of organic cocoa, three tonnes of organic vanilla, 16 tonnes of organic coffee, 22 tonnes of organic coconut oil, 100 tonnes of organic pepper to Switzerland, the US and Germany. The company is expecting 100 per cent growth during the current financial year.

India is in deficit of 10,000 tonnes of cocoa and the demand is increasing in the world due to various reasons.

A comprehensive policy by the Government for promotion of cocoa industry is essential including creation of a crop-specific autonomous institution with full mandate for its sustainable growth, he said.

Year's highest volume on offer at Coonoor tea auction

Coonoor, May 25:

As much as 15.32 lakh kg is being offered for Sale No 21 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be conducted tomorrow and Friday, reveals an analysis of the listing by brokers.

This is the largest volume offered in 2011. It is some 20,000 kg more than last week's offer but about 10,000 kg less than the offer this time last year.

Of the 15.32 lakh kg on offer, 11.08 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 4.24 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 14.40 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.92 lakh kg are of the orthodox variety.

The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in the leaf and dust grades.

In the leaf counter, only 0.43 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 10.65 lakh kg are CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.49 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 3.75 lakh kg, CTC.

In the 15.32 lakh kg, fresh teas account for 12.49 lakh kg. As much as 2.83 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions.

Lack of buyers weakens spot rubber

Kottayam, May 25:

Spot rubber weakened on Wednesday. The market continued to shed the gains as there were no positive signals to trigger an uptrend either from the domestic or international scene. There has been selling from dealers and growers but the trading volumes were low in the absence of quantity buyers on any grade.

Sheet rubber declined to Rs 217 (218) a kg according to traders. The grade slipped to Rs 217.50 (218.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

The June series concluded the session at Rs 218.40 (218.87), July at Rs 221.65 (221.82), August at Rs 220.50 (220.85), September at Rs 217.08 (216.70), October at Rs 210 (212.25) and November at Rs 214 (211) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

The key Tokyo rubber futures bounced back in tune with other commodities, while market participants kept a close eye on Shanghai futures to assess the demand from China.

The May futures for RSS 3 expired at ₹408 (Rs 225.52) a kg while the June futures improved to ₹409 (Rs 226.03) from ₹403.5 during the day session and then to ₹414 (Rs 228.79) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) closed at Rs 231.17 (230.25) a kg at Bangkok.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 217 (218); RSS-5: 214 (216); ungraded: 212 (213); ISNR 20: 209 (211) and latex 60 per cent: 130 (131).

Rice listless on slack trading

Karnal, May 25:

With trading being slack, prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice ruled almost unchanged on Wednesday.

The market is moving range-bound but within negative territory, said Mr Parveen Kumar, a rice miller. Traders are not getting the expected levels of orders and with not much buying, they are selling on lower margins, he added.

Market sources say Government may lift the export ban on non-basmati rice, banned in April 2008, after assessing the requirement under the proposed National Food Security Act. The Food Corporation of India has stocks higher than the buffer norm. The total buffer with the government is 59.1 million tonnes which is three times against the normal norm, say the sources.

Pusa1121 (steam) was ruling at Rs 5,200-5,320 a quintal, Pusa-1121(sela) at Rs 4,100-4,345, and Pusa-1121(raw) at Rs 5,080-5,120 a quintal.

Prices of duplicate basmati quoted at Rs 3,750-4,060 a quintal. Pure Basmati (raw) ruled around Rs 6,500-6,610 a quintal.

Prices of the brokens of Pusa 1121 dropped marginally, Tibar was quoted at Rs 3,100-3,425, Dubar at Rs 2,400-2,670 and Mongra was at Rs 1,900-2,200.

Non-basmati varieties managed to hold their previous quoted levels amid tepid selling. Sharbati (steam) quoted at Rs 3,100-3,280 while Sharbati (Sela) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,030 a quintal.

Malaysian cues perk up edible oils



Mumbai, May 25:

Edible oils market got a boost from the Malaysian market, which closed higher, on Wednesday.

In the domestic market, new demand for forward delivery rose in line with the foreign market. In Mumbai, soya refined and cotton refined oils rose by Re 1 each. Rapeseed oil declined by Rs 6 for 10 kg. Groundnut oil and sunflower oil ruled steady.

Crude palm oil futures (CPO) on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives (BMD) rebounded on buying interest amid supportive export figures. A wholesaler said palmolein volumes increased as stockists covered for forward delivery. However, trade was negligible in the spot/ready market because of less-than-expected demand for imported and indigenous oils.

A refinery directly traded 1,800-2,000 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 575-578 for 10 kg for delivery in June-July. Higher new arrivals of rabi oilseeds in producing centres kept indigenous oils steady. Liberty was quoting palmolein at Rs 582. Ruchi's rates were: for palmolein Rs 578, for soya refined oil Rs 622 and for sunflower oil Rs 685. Allana's palmolein was at Rs 582.

Malaysia's BMD CPO June contract was at MYR3,515 (MYR3,460), July at MYR3,461 (MYR3,408) and August at MYR3,416 (MYR3,380) a tonne. Indore NBOT soya June contract closed at Rs 647.20 (Rs 640.10) and July at Rs 654 (Rs 641.50).

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rate (Rs/10 kg): Groundnut oil 860 (860), soya refined oil 623 (622), sunflower exp. ref. 635 (635), sunflower ref. 690 (690), rapeseed ref. oil 641 (647), rapeseed expeller ref. 611 (617), cotton ref. oil 626 (625) and palmolein was 575 (577).

Turmeric plunges below Rs 8,000/quintal



Erode, May 25:

Turmeric prices dropped below Rs 8,000 a quintal on Wednesday on lack of fresh orders.

“We never expected spot turmeric to go below Rs 8,000. On Wednesday, both varieties of turmeric decreased further by Rs 300/quintal. This is primarily on lack of fresh orders from all over India,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Mr Ravishankar said, “Due to poor demand, the fine hybrid ‘kora’ variety turmeric also decreased by Rs 1,000/quintal in three days and the low quality variety fell by over Rs 500.” Traders said the price in other turmeric selling places is also showing decline, which reflected here. Some traders said they are awaiting for good orders from other centres, which they hoped will lift prices.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was down Rs 275/quintal and at the Regulated Marketing Committee, the root variety fell Rs 500. The finger variety fetched Rs 6,909 to Rs 7,814 a quintal while the root variety sold at Rs 6,210-7,011.

Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 7,430-8,329, the root variety Rs 6,474-7,269. Out of the total arrivals of 3427 bags, 350 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,079-7,810, the root variety Rs 5,859-7,029, out of 936 bags kept for sale 736 were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 6,100-7,919, the root variety Rs 5,896 -6,869. All the 115 bags that arrived were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 7,389-8,082, the root variety Rs 6,289-6,589. Out of 880 bags, 814 were sold.

Chana, chickpea up on lower arrivals

Indore, May 25:

Amid a widening gap between demand and supply, chana for the past few days has been witnessing a fluctuation in prices. Chana, which had declined on sluggish demand on Tuesday, saw an uptrend on low arrivals and improved demand. In the spot, it was quoted Rs 30-35 up at Rs 2,470-2,475 a quintal. Traders attributed the rise in spot chana to weak arrivals and robust demand from the millers. Chana (*desi*) also perked up by Rs 25-30 on weak arrivals at Rs 2,425-2,430 a quintal and chana (*mausmi*) ruled at Rs 2,600-2,800. Arrivals were 3,000-3,500 bags.

Rise in chana also perked up chana dal with chana dal (bold) in the spot rising by Rs 25 to Rs 3,125-3,150 a quintal. Chana dal (medium) quoted at Rs 3,000-3,025 and chana dal (average) quoted at Rs 2,900-2,925 a quintal.

Dollar chana or chickpea has been witnessing an uptrend for the past two-three days on weak arrivals and improved domestic demand. On Wednesday, dollar chana in the physical market rose by Rs 100 Rs 5,900-6,300 a quintal. In container, however, dollar chana ruled flat on subdued export demand with dollar chana (44-46 count) being quoted at Rs 6,750 and the 42-44 count quoted at Rs 6,850 a quintal. Arrivals of dollar chana in the local market was recorded at about 2,200-2,500 bags.

Downtrend continued in masur on slack demand and rise in arrivals of imported pulse. On Wednesday, masur (bold) dipped by Rs 50 to Rs 2,850 and masur (medium) ruled at Rs 2,600 a quintal. Masur dal, however, remained steady on subdued demand.

Slack demand and fall in prices of tur in Maharashtra had its effect in Indore *mandis* as well with the prices of tur (Maharashtra) further declining to Rs 3,100-3,175 quintal, down by Rs 75-100. Tur (*Nimar*) also declined by Rs 100 to Rs 2,500 a quintal on slack demand from the millers. Tur dal (*marka*) and its other varieties, however, remained steady.

Declining trend was also witnessed in moong with new moong (best quality) in the spot being quoted Rs 50 less at Rs 4,400-4,550 a quintal. M moong (*juna*) quoted at Rs 3,500-3,800 a quintal. Moong dal on the other hand ruled steady. Urad ruled firm at Rs 4,150-4,200 a quintal and urad (medium) quoted at Rs 3,600-3,800 a quintal.