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Date:30/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053050670400.htm>

Training in bee-keeping

COIMBATORE: The Department of Agricultural Entomology of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will organise a training in bee keeping on June 6. Interested candidates have to reach the Department of Entomology before 9 a.m. A fee of Rs. 150 has to be remitted. A certificate will be given at the end of training. Candidates can call 0422-6611214, or e-mail to entomology@tnau.ac.in. for details.

Date:30/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053052970500.htm>

Integrated turmeric complex will come up soon, says Minister

Officials asked to expedite ongoing construction works

Project would benefit a large number of turmeric farmers in Erode

PHOTO: Special Arrangement



Inspection: Agriculture Minister K.A. Sengottaiyan (left) taking a look at the map of the proposed turmeric market complex at Karumandichellipalayam near Erode on Sunday.

ERODE: Agriculture Minister K.A. Sengottaiyan has promised that the integrated turmeric complex would come up at Karumandichellipalayam in Erode district soon.

Inspecting the development works being carried out through the agriculture department at different parts of the district on Sunday, the Minister said that the project would benefit a large number of farmers in Erode, which was one of the largest turmeric producing districts in the country.

Godown

Currently a godown and a few other facilities were being constructed at a cost of Rs. 6.5 crore at the site.

Asking the officials to speed up the works, the Minister promised that he would take the various demands of the turmeric farmers to the notice of the Chief Minister.

Inspecting the common treatment plant at the Sipcot premises, the Minister asked the textile processing industries to utilise the plant properly.

He also promised the general public and the farming community that the government would bring in necessary measures to sort out their problems.

Earlier, inspecting the Melia Dubia tree plantations in Chennampatti near Gobichettipalayam, the Minister said that Agriculture and Forest departments were jointly promoting the cultivation of the Melia Dubia (Malai Vembu in Tamil) as it would help farmers enhance their income.

The Melia Dubia fetches a handsome price in the market and requires low maintenance expenditure.

The Minister also inspected development works in Gobichettipalayam and received grievances petitions from the people. Senior officials accompanied the Minister during the inspection.

Farmers declare 'crop holiday'

G. Nagaraja

Achanta farmers to go for 'crop holiday' as an answer to the current crisis in the paddy market

ACHANTA (WEST GODAVARI DIST): Paddy farmers of this delta village in West Godavari district have declared a 'crop holiday' in next kharif as an answer to the current crisis in the paddy market.

The 'crop holiday' will be enforced in the village under the aegis of the Rytu Sangham, a body of peasants represented by political parties in the village.

The sangham took a decision to this effect at a meeting attended by over 500 farmers a couple of days ago. The declaration came in the wake of the distress conditions caused by over-production leading to a price crash and increasing labour cost.

Testing ground

The village, a testing ground for the Green Revolution in the mid 60s, literally suffers from the problem of plenty in rabi.

With a paddy area of 4,500 acres, it produced a little over 1.8 lakh quintals in the current season, a two-fold increase over the previous rabi. According to president of the Rytu Sangham, Godavarthi Radhakrishna Chowdary, hardly 20 per cent of the produce has been marketed so far.

Most of the produce covered under the tarpaulin covers and the dry grass is seen stocked in the paddy fields and on the road side.

A major portion of the crop is yet to be threshed because of the late transplantation extended up to December last year because of the heavy rains.

No choice

Nekkanti Subba Rao, a progressive farmer from the village said, "We are left with no choice but to declare 'crop holiday' in at least one out of the two seasons every year," he said.

Labour costs

The labour cost had doubled in the last two years.

Migration of workers to cities for construction work and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme had led the daily wage up to Rs. 350-Rs 400 a day, Mr. Subba Rao said.

"When a farmer receives 40 bags per acre, half the yield goes towards the labour cost. He will end up in negative balance after deducting the expenditure incurred on the inputs", he added.

Peddireddy Chengal Reddy, secretary-general of the Consortium of Indian Farmers Associations, welcomed the move.

Welcome move

"The Achanta farmer has shown the way for his counterparts across the spectrum." Mr. Chengal Reddy said the consortium would follow in their footsteps and campaign for the reduction of paddy area by 25-30 per cent in the country so as to reverse the demand-supply position.

Date:30/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053056640700.htm>

Better procurement re-assures paddy ryots

M Venkateswara Rao

Government agencies purchase 20,000 tonnes of paddy in Krishna district alone in the last few days

Farmers swarm centres, particularly those in Tiruvuru, Reddygudem, A Kondur, Mylavaram

Civil Supplies Dept engaged the services of IKP women groups to make purchases on its behalf

-PHOTO: CH.VIJAYA BHASKAR.



Protective measure:Paddy farmers covering their produce with tarpaulin at a purchase centre in Mylavaram on Sunday.

VIJAYAWADA: Paddy farmers in upland areas of Krishna district are happy that they could dispose of their stocks at minimum support price (MSP) this year, thanks to paddy purchase centres opened by the government, albeit late.

The government agencies purchased 20,000 tonnes of paddy from farmers in Krishna district alone in the last 10-15 days creating a record of sorts. Farmers literally swarmed the centres, opened particularly in upland areas like Tiruvuru, Reddygudem, A Kondur, Mylavaram etc, making them successful instantaneously.

Food Corporation of India had slowed down rice procurement from millers on the plea that it has no godown space. Rice millers exploited the situation to their advantage, slowed down their operations and purchased paddy at Rs. 600 a bag of 70 kg as against MSP of Rs. 1,000 a quintal (Rs. 700 a bag) this year.

Farmers in Krishna delta sold their produce at less than MSP losing Rs. 100 a bag. But upland farmers, who got less yields, insisted on MSP and lost in the bargain. Millers literally shunned purchases in upland areas. Telugu Desam Party launched an agitation and compelled the government to open paddy purchase centres to buy paddy directly from farmers and save them from distress sale.

Jonnalagadda Chalapathi Rao, a farmer who owns three acres in Chandrala village of Mylavaram mandal, summed up the situation. He got only 22 bags per acre as against normal yield of 30 bags. He sold with great difficulty 35 bags to a private trader at Rs. 600 a bag. The trader refused to buy the remaining 31 bags even at Rs. 550. He is a happy man today as he could sell the same produce to the government at Rs. 700 a bag. "We would have been doomed had the government not opened the centres", he observed.

The government opened 57 centres in Krishna district on May 10. Interestingly, Civil Supplies Department engaged the services of Indira Kranthi Patham women groups to make purchases on its behalf. A visit to the purchase centre at Mylavaram showed hectic activity. But marketing officials are on tenterhooks as there is no storage facility. They had to stock nearly 1,000 quintals in the open, facing the risk of untimely showers. "We are praying that there should be no rain until the stocks are lifted by Civil Supplies Department", one official said.

Mylavaram MLA Devineni Umamaheswara Rao (TDP), demanded the government to continue the practice of paddy purchases and put an end to their exploitation by millers. He alleged that the FCI and state officials were hand in glove with millers and purchased 80 lakh tonnes of rice from millers and not a grain of paddy from farmers.

Date:30/05/2011 **URL:** <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053051260700.htm>

Cultivation target in Bijapur district fixed at 4.3 lakh hectares

Staff Correspondent

Production target for the district is 11,98,354 tonnes

'Farmers concentrating on crops that fetch more prices' Jowar to be cultivated in 66,000 hectares

BIJAPUR: With the onset of monsoon, farmers in all the five taluks of the district are preparing for the kharif season.

This year, the Agriculture Department has set a target of bringing 4.3 lakh hectares under cultivation and a production target of 11,98,354 tonnes.

According to official sources, the annual expected rainfall is 631 mm, of which the district has already received 35.2 mm.

Jowar, the major crop in the region, will be cultivated in 66,000 ha. and toor in 1,96,000 ha.

“As farmers are getting irrigation facilities under various schemes, they are concentrating more on crops such as sugarcane and toor that fetch more profits.

Apprehension about a fall in the market price of jowar is another reason for the reduction in the cultivation target,” the sources said. The area fixed for commercial crops such as cotton and sugarcane is 10,300 ha. and 5,000 ha. respectively.

Sugarcane will be cultivated in 31,913 ha., of which 5,720 ha. are in Bijapur, 1,849 ha. in Basavanabagewadi, 11,194 ha. in Indi, 12,861 ha. in Sindgi, and 289 ha. in Muddebihal taluk.

“Last year, the quantity of sugarcane produced was more than what sugar factories could handle.

Keeping this in view, agricultural officers have been instructed to guide farmers to concentrate on other crops to avoid losses,” the sources added.

Stock

The available stock of seeds was 24,900 tonnes and it would be distributed through 18 centres, depending on the requirement.

The requirement of fertilizers was 73,300 tonnes and the district already had a stock of 16,772 tonnes, the sources added.

Date:30/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053056040400.htm>

NABARD has big plans for 'Kasaragod dwarf'

Staff Reporter



Seeking divine intervention:A ritual, 'Gomatha Thulabharam,' held at Bajakudlu, near Perla, to underscore the need to save the 'Kasaragod breed' of cow from extinction.

Kasaragod: The 'Kasaragod breed' of cows, a contender for a Guinness Book of Records entry for its small size but facing extinction, has found a saviour in the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). The bank has come out with a scheme to form self-help groups to rear the breed, which is considered commercially unviable as a cow can produce only up to two litres of milk a day.

The bank has initiated moves for a census of the cow in the panchayat limits of Badiyadka, Enmakaje, Kumbadaje, and Karaduka. Later, the self-help groups will be financed, K. Gopalan, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, said at a function near Perla.

At the function, Raghaveshwara Bharathi, chief of Ramachandrapuram Math in Karnataka, which rears a large number of these cows, called upon people to join hands with the bank in rearing them. The project was not only aimed at protecting the breed but also to enhance the

income of people. The milk of the cow breed had rich nutritional and medicinal values and fostered healthy food habits, he added.

The cows, known as 'kitchen cows,' can be reared at a low cost. The grass grown in the backyard, supplemented with food waste, is enough to feed them.

The cows provide highly nutritious, healthy milk required for a family. Their urine and dung contain elements that enrich the soil. The youth seems to be little interested in rearing these cows, with fewer than 2,000 of the animals remaining. A ritual, "Gomatha Thulabharam," was held at Bajakudlu, near Perla, in February, under the supervision of Raghaveshwara Bharathi, to underscore the need to save the breed from extinction.

Date:30/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053060660300.htm>

Plea to give subsidy to dairy farmers

Thiruvananthapuram: Consumer organisations have urged the government to give dairy farmers incentives and subsidies so that they are encouraged to stay on in the dairy sector and increase production.

In an open forum on milk price hike organised by the Confederation of Consumer Vigilance Centre here recently, the organisations demanded that instead of hiking the milk price and putting consumers to hardships, the government should give more benefits to dairy farmers and ensure that the domestic milk production was boosted.

Consumers demanded that various dairy farming schemes scattered across different government departments be brought under a coordinated system. It was the government's responsibility to ensure that circumstances conducive to dairy farming were created in the State.

This would include providing water and electricity on reduced tariff and subsidising cattle feed.

It was suggested that cattle feed factories of Kerala Feeds, a government enterprise, be opened in every district. The government should also offer subsidy to farmers to cultivate those produces which were required for the manufacture of cattle feed.

It was pointed out that at present dairy farming, milk marketing, and various related activities were managed by the Kerala Livestock Development Board, the Animal Husbandry Department, the Dairy Development Department, and the Kerala Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Milma).

The open forum was inaugurated by Transport Minister V.S. Sivakumar.

Date:30/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053055640300.htm>

Dip in area under cotton, groundnut cultivation

G. Prabhakaran

Climate change hit groundnut production: study Decline started in 2000-01

PALAKKAD: The area under cotton and groundnut cultivation in Palakkad district is dwindling fast. Palakkad is the only district in the State where these two crops are grown in a big way by farmers.

The major cotton-growing regions included the taluks of Chittur and Palakkad, and Attappady (Mannarkkad taluk).

According to statistic published by the Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Kerala, cotton was cultivated on 7,258 hectares of land in 1970-71. The production was 7,292 100-kg bundles.

In 1980-81, cotton was grown on 6,223 hectares and the production was 9,847 100-kg bundles. In 1990-91, the area under cotton cultivation rose to 10,731 hectares. The production was 17,320 100-kg bundles.

The decline started in 2000. During 2000-01 the area under cultivation became 3,847 hectares and the production was 6209 100-kg bundles. In 2008-09 this became 1,152 hectares and 1,498 100-kg bundles respectively.

Groundnut scenario

In 1970-71, groundnut was cultivated on 14,692 hectares of land. The production was 16,088 tons. This was the State's total production during that period, according to the data.

In 1980-81, the area under cultivation declined to 9,309 hectares and production came down by over 50 per cent.

In 1990-91, the area under cultivation rose to 12,812 hectares and the production touched 9,522 tons.

During 2000-01, the area under cultivation dwindled to 3,676 hectares. The production fell to 2,733 tons. It further shrunk in 2008-09 when only 1,733 hectares was used. The production touched a low of 1,282 metric tons.

A study by T.M.V. Rao, who retired from the department, had listed various factors which led to the decline.

Cotton growers had been facing the problem of pest attacks. Poor marketing of the produce in the State was another reason, the study said. Traders from Tamil Nadu started procuring cotton at lower prices, the study quoted farmers as saying. Shortage of labour was also stated as a problem. Groundnut growers also had the same share of problems. Climate change had also affected the crop largely, the study said.

Date:30/05/2011 **URL:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/30/stories/2011053061760400.htm>

Probe ordered into seed procurement

Special Correspondent

MADURAI: Collector U. Sagayam has directed the Joint Director of Agriculture to conduct an inquiry into allegations levelled by a group of farmers against an officer in a seed procurement centre at Melur.

At a farmers' grievance redress meeting at the Collectorate here on Friday, a group of farmers led by S. Manimaran said that there were discrepancies in procurement price of seeds at the seed procurement centre at Melur.

Rs. 2 lakh loss

Due to this, he and a few others had suffered a loss of about Rs. 2 lakh. It is said that the officer had procured seeds at Rs. 11.93 a kg from many farmers, but at the same time procured at only Rs. 9.55 per kg from them, Mr. Manimaran said.

Issue to be examined

Citing a Government Order (G.O.) and a court verdict, the officer explained his stand that he had gone by the G.O, but the District Revenue Officer B. Muruges, who chaired the meeting, said that the issue would be thoroughly examined by a senior officer.

Meanwhile, the farmers, who had gathered the details through the Right To Information (RTI) Act, said that the Agriculture Department officials across the State had procured seeds at Rs 11.93 per kg as per the G.O.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Monday, May 30

Max Min

40.9° | 28°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 67%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:41

Sunset: 18:31

Barometer: 1003.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, May 31

Max Min

39° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

Jun 1



37° | 29°

Rainy

Thursday

Jun 2



37° | 29°

Rainy

Friday

Jun 3



37° | 29°

Rainy

Saturday

Jun 4



36° | 29°

Rainy

Sunday

Jun 5



37° | 28°

Rainy

30 May, 2011, 01.13AM IST, S Sanandakumar,ET Bureau

Domestic raw cashew nut shortage may drop by 10-15%

Domestic availability of raw cashew nuts is likely to be down by almost 10% to 15% this season. Earlier estimates had predicted a much more severe fall of 30% to 40 % in the current season. But the cashew industry spokesmen are of the view that the crop will be better than the earlier estimates.

Global shortage

The slight decline in domestic availability has happened at a time when there is a global shortage of raw cashew nuts. Supplies from Ivory Coast fell due to the political unrest in that country. Industry spokesmen pointed out that Brazil has also entered the import market as there is a shortage in crop this year.

Brazil is a major supplier of cashew to the US market. The cashew-processing countries will compete to import raw cashew nuts from African countries. This would add to the shortage situation, the industry spokesmen said.

Price situation

Raw cashew nut prices have seen a sharp increase of almost 80% in the last one year due to the shortage in supply and competition among the cashew-processing countries. The cashew kernel prices have moved up from Rs 423 per kg in the beginning of this season to Rs 460 per kg as of now. Despite the high prices, the demand from various food industry segments has been steady. However, the industry representatives are of the view that in the retail market the

demand has seen a decline.

Processing capacity

The demand for cashew kernels has been growing at a steady rate of 18% till last year. However, the processing capacity of the industry has come down by almost 25% due to non-availability of workers. Shortage of raw nuts has resulted in higher prices for cashew kernels.

Demand fall

Finally, the demand growth itself has contributed to the price escalation. It is thus the opposing pulls of higher demand and lower processing capacity that made cashew dearer in the market. Interestingly, the industry expects that the higher prices this year would lead to a fall in demand. They fear that the user-industries would start consuming substitutes like almonds wherever it is possible.

30 May, 2011, 01.06AM IST, Nidhi Nath Srinivas,ET Bureau

India faces problem of plentiful food

Is there food shortage in India? Bet you will say yes. After being rammed by inflation , it's natural. But not true. India has no food shortage. On the contrary, we are now faced with the huge problem of plenty.

There is a bumper wheat and rice crop. In Andhra Pradesh, India's rice bowl, production is up 30%. Millers are offering only Rs 8 for a kilo of paddy though the MSP is Rs 10.30. Angry farmers last week threw paddy into the Krishna river. The state government has borrowed Rs 550 crore from RBI for procurement. The FCI can do little. After buying 50 million tonne wheat and rice this season, added to 44 million tonnes left from last year, it is exhausted.

The oilseed crop is 20% larger. Import of palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia is down for the sixth straight month till April, a three-year low. Sugar output is up 28%. Even exports can't prod the bulls into action.

Production of pulses rose by a fifth to cross 17 million tonne. The Planning Commission pegs this year's demand at 19 million tonne. As the gap narrows, premiums are evaporating.

Cotton prices hit a 140-year high in March on the back of the world market and then crashed by Rs 20,000 per candy within two months. Textile mills can't absorb the record harvest. In crop after crop, output is higher. In West Bengal, farmers have put 60% of their potato in cold storage, hoping prices will improve. And a 15% jump in onion harvest has pushed wholesale prices in Maharashtra back to Rs 5 per kilo. In January, we paid Rs 70.

What has changed? It's the classic case of overstimulation by high price expectation. Net returns in most crops were so high that farmers left no stone unturned to maximize gains. They tilled every available inch of land. An extra 2.5 million hectares was cultivated last winter. One million hectares was added to wheat. Area under pulses touched 130% of the normal. Sugarcane acreage rose 15%. This June, farmers intend to plant another million hectares with "white gold" cotton.

Along with area, productivity increased. Farmers invested heavily in best seed, irrigation and crop inputs. High crop prices make it easier to adopt new technology. Erratic weather was the only party pooper. Within a few short months, the farmer has proved that with enough money on the table, India can overcome its supply side constraints.

Unfortunately, demand failed to keep pace. It never does. Despite what economists and politicians believe, middle class demand is not endless.

30 May, 2011, 01.06AM IST, Nidhi Nath Srinivas,ET Bureau

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30 May, 2011, 01.03AM IST, Sarah Jacob, Madhvi Sally & Sutanuka Ghosal,ET Bureau

Fall in cotton price unlikely to impact garment prices

BANGALORE | AHMEDABAD | KOLKATA: Though cotton prices are down 30% in two months, large clothing companies have no plans to reduce prices and pass on the benefit to consumers for propping up falling demand.

"When commodity prices change, the difference is only as good as the amount passed on through the last leg of production," said Arun Sirdeshmukh, chief executive of the 47-store value apparel chain Reliance Trends, to explain why mill owners and garment units are not lowering prices. "Unless prices remain steady for a while, there may not be a change in pricing," Sirdeshmukh said.

Raw material costs have been the biggest concern for apparel makers since August as cotton prices increased over 50% due to a global production shortfall. Raw materials account for around 80% of the garment production cost.

In May, the prices of cotton softened from Rs 64, 000 a candy (one candy is equal to 356 kg) two months ago to Rs 45, 000 a candy. The industry believes this could be a minor correction and the prices could peak again as cotton acreage has not kept pace with global demand over the past five years.

The apparel industry also faces a time lag of seven months from sourcing yarn for fabric to production and retail sale. Prices can drop at the earliest only from next February. "When cotton prices rose, we did not take up prices across the board. If we do consider a price decrease, it will be in certain categories," Skumars Nationwide's president-apparel and retail Ashesh Amin said.

"We will have to wait and watch on the extent of price drop being passed on but we expect a drop at the fabric unit level to happen in October," said J Suresh, MD and CEO of Arvind Lifestyle Brands and Retail.

Besides this, the apparel industry has been directed to pay 10.3% excise duty under the Union Budget this year. National retail chains say by July they will know clearly whether high prices have made an impact on consumer purchase. Smaller players are already seeing a drop in demand after the retail price rise.

Pankaj Jain, retail head of Kewal Kiran Clothing, which manufactures jeans under the brand name Killer and shirts, T shirts and trousers under the brand name Lawman, Easies and Integriti, said, "Demand for shirts, T shirts and trousers has gone down by 8% to 9%."

Ludhiana-based Duke Fashions that sells men's readymade apparel under the Duke brand has seen a fall in orders in both domestic and export market. "Export orders are down 15% to 20% with stiff competition from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and China. In the domestic market,

the customer is not ready to spend, leading to over supply," said chairman Komal Kumar Jain.



'FCI not paying due wheat price to farmers in UP'

May 30, 2011 12:26:29 PM

Pioneer News Service | Lucknow

Accusing the Food Corporation of India (FCI) for not paying due wheat price to farmers in time, the State Government on Sunday said non-cooperation by the FCI officials was adversely impacting wheat procurement in Uttar Pradesh.

Owing to "non-cooperation and lax functioning" of the FCI, so far only 37,000 metric tonnes of wheat have been purchased while the Central agency was given purchase target of one lakh metric tonnes in this season, a State Government spokesperson said in Lucknow.

The spokesperson stated, "The FCI was delaying payments made against billing and `362.50 crore of farmers were lying due on it."

Moreover, out of 49 FCI depots in the State, as many as 11 were non-functional as the agency was facing problems in hiring enough number of labourers to start storage work there.

Reportedly at several FCI godowns in the State, labourers were coming late in morning, which was causing delay in storage, he said.

It may be noted that the FCI is the agency responsible for the storage and payment on purchased wheat in the State. Seeing problem of storage in Basti, Gorakhpur, Bareilly and

Azamgarh divisions, the spokes person said, the State Government had asked FCI to shift the purchased wheat in these divisions to other places of state but no steps in this direction has been taken so far.

On the other hand, after roping in nine purchase agencies, the State Governments was conducting 4,565 wheat purchase centres in 72 districts and 21.76 LMT wheat has been purchased till Saturday.

Seeing a large number of farmers reaching every day at purchase centres to sell their produce, officials in the State administration had sought attention of higher FCI officials towards laxity and poor functioning at its depots but no action has been taken in this regard, he said.

Kharif crop seeds available in sufficient quantity

May 30, 2011 12:35:13 PM

Staff Reporter | Bhopal

Seeds distribution facility has been ensured more than target for Kharif crop this year in Madhya Pradesh. A total of 14 lakh 85 thousand 490 quintal seeds have been targeted to be distributed this year. However, 20 lakh 10 thousand 167 quintal seeds have been made available from all sources. A total 11 lakh 55 thousand 167 quintal seeds were distributed in 2010. The seeds include paddy, maize, pulses, oilseeds, soyabean, cottons.

The State Government is also providing subsidy on standard seeds under various schemes.

Under the National Food Security Mission, a subsidy of Rs. 500 is being provided in 9 districts on paddy seeds of less than ten years while subsidy in other districts will be given under ICDP coarse cereal scheme. Besides, subsidy of Rs. 300 per quintal will be given on paddy seeds of

more than ten years. On soyabean, subsidy of Rs. 500 per quintal for general category farmers and Rs. 700 per quintal for the farmers of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes on JS 335.

On varieties of soyabean other than J.S. 335, general category farmers and SC/ST farmers will be provided subsidies of Rs. 400 and Rs. 600 per quintal. Subsidy worth Rs. 1200 per quintal will be given on main pulses crops of moong, urad and arhar, which will be made available from National Food Security Mission for varieties up to 10 years old and from National Agriculture Development Scheme for varieties more than 10 years old. Subsidy worth Rs. 400 on maize and Rs. 1200 per quintal will be given on groundnut and linseed respectively from ICOPAM Scheme while Rs. 400 per quintal subsidy will be given on millet and other coarse cereals from ICDP's Coarse Cereal Scheme. Equal subsidy will be granted under the National Agriculture Development if there are varieties in the use for ten years.

A farmer will be provided seeds for sowing requirements for a maximum of five hectare.

Instructions have been given to the seed distribution agencies to maintain records of farmers in prescribed proforma, on whose basis only the agencies will be able to get subsidy through the District Deputy Director.

Business Standard

Monday, May 30, 2011

Talala APMC starts mango pack house

Vimukt Dave / Chennai/ Rajkot May 30, 2011, 0:55 IST

Known for Kesar mango auction in the state, Talala Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) has started a mango pack house at Talala to boost exports of mango from Saurashtra, which mainly grows popular mango variety called Kesar.

The Rs 4.50 crore plant has already begun operations since May 20 and it is specially commissioned for mango exports with a storage capacity of 200 kg. The pack house is well equipped with technology and processes to meet export norms. It has washing, grading, lining and waxing facilities with a capacity of 50 tonnes per day.

"So far, the exports of Kesar mango from the region were not substantial. However, with the new pack house in place, the exports from here would get a major boost", Vallabh Chothani, chairman, Talala APMC, said, adding, "We have been getting inquiries of mango export by some export agents. Moreover, farmers and traders also directly approached the exporters to export mangoes from here. Recently a farmer even exported kesar mango to Dubai."

At present, about 30000-31000 boxes (each box contain 10 kg mango) a day arrive for auction at Talala APMC and the price is about Rs 180 to Rs 280 per box.

It may be mentioned here that Kesar mango production in the Saurashtra and Kutch region is likely to decrease by 75 percent this year.

Tobacco growers plan stir from June 2

D Gopi / Chennai/ Guntur May 30, 2011, 0:11 IST

Tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh are planning to launch an agitation from June 2, seeking higher price. The agitation would start with hunger strike at auction platforms and tobacco companies in the state.

The growers, who met at the auction platform in Ongole, have expressed concern over the fall in tobacco price and alleged that the Tobacco Board and the Centre were siding with the traders. They also met Tobacco Board chairman G Kamalavardhana Rao in this regard.

The growers said leaving the auction platforms only for traders was the reason for lower prices and wanted the intervention of the state government for involving the State Trading Corporation (STC) in auctions.

"We have asked the board to rope in state and central governments and thus put up competition so as to make the traders increase the price," said Sivaji, a representative of the tobacco growers.

He said each grower from his tobacco barren would give five bales (each bale contains 135 kg) of tobacco to the board to stock it. There are 150,000 tobacco barrens. "If the board keeps this out of auction, then there would be shortage of the product and this would force the traders to play an active role in auctions. We are not asking the board to pay money to the growers right now. It can pay only after these stocks are sold," Sivaji said.

Meanwhile, the board chairman said he had requested the traders to pay better price to growers. "Last season, by now, we had sold 61 million kg, while this year, we could sell only 41 million kg. However, the average price offered to the grower is comparatively on the higher side. Last year, it was Rs 102, while this year it's Rs 113. The only problem is with the black soil from Prakasam district, where the crop was damaged due to rains in December," he said.

THE HINDU Business Line

Quality protein maize fails to make commercial headway

Nutrition Comparison: Normal versus QPM		
	Normal	QPM
Lysine*	160-180	256-300
Tryptophan*	30-40	60-100
Leucine*	827	507
Isoleucine*	206	193
True protein digestibility+	82	92
Biological value+	45	80

***In mg/gram of nitrogen; +In per cent.**

Intellectual property rights issues stall private participation

New Delhi, May 29:

Some fifteen years ago, it was touted as a significant nutritional breakthrough that could be a cheap and natural source of quality protein for the masses. However, Quality Protein Maize (QPM) is yet to deliver on its promise in Indian farmers' fields.

Dr Sain Dass, former head of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research's Directorate of Maize Research here, estimates the annual seed production of QPM hybrids at 4,000 quintal, which suffices for planting in just 48,000 acres. That is a fraction of the country's total 20 million-plus acres under maize.

QPM is basically maize having high lysine and tryptophan content. Normal maize is deficient in both these essential amino acids – the building blocks of proteins – while being surplus in two others, leucine and isoleucine. The imbalanced amino acid composition means only around 82 per cent of the protein in the grain gets digested – and of which 45 per cent is retained or “used” by the body for various metabolic functions.

Magic gene

QPM hybrids incorporate an “opaque-2” gene – identified from mutants within maize – which reduces the concentration of prolamine, the dominant protein fraction in regular maize kernels that are high in leucine and isoleucine. As a result, QPMs contain nearly twice as much lysine and tryptophan as in common maize, translating into a protein digestibility of 92 per cent and a biological value of 80 per cent, comparable to the 96 per cent and 86 per cent in milk.

“Moreover, they look and taste like normal maize, with more or less same yields of 6-7 tonnes a hectare,” claimed Dr Dass, who has bred QPM single-cross hybrids such as HQPM-1, HQPM-5 and HQPM-7, using modified opaque-2 germplasm obtained from the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre or CIMMYT in Mexico.

So why has QPM, despite all these positives, not really found takers among farmers or even animal feed manufacturers – who stand to gain if it helps reduce their use of costlier protein sources such as soyabean or fish meal? (A broiler chicken typically requires 1.6-1.7 kg of compound feed for every one kg live bird weight, with half of this being maize and the balance comprising protein meal, bran, minerals, vitamins and supplements)

“We would certainly be keen to buy high-lysine maize and even pay a premium for it. But the problem is that the maize we get is in bulk and undifferentiated. There is no segregation between varieties in the market and farmers, too, have little incentive to supply better quality grain,” said Mr Balram Yadav, Managing Director of Godrej Agrovet Ltd, which produces one million tonnes (mt) of poultry, cattle and aqua feed and consumes 0.5 mt of maize every year.

Filling the gaps

According to Dr Dass, the main constraint in QPM taking off is non-availability of seeds for cultivation. And that has to do with the absence of an active seed production programme, which has been the bane of public sector farm research in recent times. “There is no dearth of good publicly-bred hybrid seed material in maize, be it QPM or normal single-crosses. But these cannot reach the farmer unless we have a strong public-private partnership for their large-scale production and multiplication,” he pointed out.

But why is the private sector not taking the lead itself? “Well, there are intellectual property rights issues, because we would like the hybrids developed in the public sector to be assigned to firms on an exclusive basis. There is no incentive, otherwise, to take up production and marketing of hybrids that are not our own proprietary material,” noted an official from a leading seed company. Dr Dass felt that the Food Corporation of India should be directed to procure QPM for the public distribution system, with the objective of providing a market for farmers as well as meeting broader nutritional security goals.

Climate change takes toll on global coconut production



The Hindu Business Line Falling output: Coconut and Coconut oil on sale on a street in Kochi in Kerala. — K.K. Mustafah

Shortfall likely to be higher than initial estimates

Kochi, May 29:

Declining production in Kerala along with global shortfalls in coconut and lauric oil production is expected to keep coconut prices firm this year.

A study conducted by the Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre of the Kerala Agricultural University had earlier predicted that Kerala's coconut production would fall by 15-20 per cent this year.

However, a reassessment of the coconut production scenario indicates that the shortfall will be more than the initial estimates because of area reduction and declining productivity.

In Kerala, the area under coconut has been shrinking continuously from 2001 due to a host of factors such as depressed price for nuts, high wage rates, shortage of labour, high incidence of diseases and pests, land diversion for urbanisation, as well as decline in productivity and profitability.

Quoting from the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community, the study, by Dr Satheesh Babu and Ms Swapna Surendran, points out that global climate change has hit coconut production hard in all the major producing countries, including the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka.

Drawing a parallel with local production cycles, the study states: "The shifts in climatic patterns due to erratic rains and non-availability of labour in time have affected the crop management in Kerala, with the result that crop seasons are slowly disappearing."

Lankan output

Sri Lankan production has recorded a 15-year low of 2.533 billion nuts in 2010 against an annual average production of 2.7 billion nuts. The consequent rise in domestic price has

compelled the Sri Lankan Government to ban export of coconuts and felling of coconut trees. It had to resort to imports to stem the price spurt.

With the Sri Lankan source drying up, countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and the Gulf had to source fresh nuts from India. Consequently, the price of coconuts has ruled firm in Indian markets despite the onset of the peak production season in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The price of substitute oils such as palm oil have also remained buoyant amidst conflicting reports about the extent of La Nina effect on Indonesian and Malaysian output, the study said.

However, China, the biggest user of cooking oil, is importing more than 7.85 lakh tonnes of lauric oils which could counter possible bearish trend in the coconut oil market.

To add to the woes of the Indian consumers, the area under coconut palms in Kerala, the biggest coconut producing region in the country, has been declining. The area under coconut fell from 9.26 lakh hectares in 2000-01 to 7.79 lakh hectares in 2009-10, a fall of close to 16 per cent.

However, due to certain productivity enhancement measures, the total production grew by around three per cent to 5,667 million nuts, up from 5,536 million nuts in 2000-01.

Bayer BioScience launches rice hybrid

Hyderabad, May 29:

Bayer BioScience, an arm of multi-national agriculture science company Bayer CropScience, has joined the bandwagon of seed firms that are rolling out rice hybrids. The company launched Arize 6444 Gold, a rice hybrid.

This seed would offer protection from BLB or bacterial leaf blight disease that causes yield losses in the range of 20-60 per cent annually, the company said here in a press release.

“It is a major breakthrough. In India, BLB affects 6-7 million hectares annually and causes losses to the tune of six million tonnes. The disease can afflict the rice plant in any of its growing stages and cause visible wilting of seedlings, yellowing and drying of leaves,” it said.

9 lakh tonnes of rice procured in AP so far

Rajahmundry, May 29:

The Civil Supplies Commissioner, Mr Hari Preet Singh, today said necessary efforts were being made to pay Minimum Support Price (MSP) to the paddy cultivators in Andhra Pradesh. Mr A. Dinakaran Babu, Director, Civil Supplies, who accompanied the Commissioner on visit to purchasing centre at Rajanagaram here, said 1,289 purchasing centres have been opened in the State, and 9 lakh tonnes of rice has been purchased so far.

Interacting with the farmers, Mr Singh said there was no shortage of godowns to store the rice in the State, and money would be paid to the farmers immediately at the purchasing centres. While talking about new ration cards, the commissioner said 32 lakh applications were received during 'Rachbanda programme' in the State for new ration cards, three lakh from East Godavari district alone.

Turmeric storage godown at Perundurai in TN

Erode, May 29:

The construction of turmeric storage godown for the Regulated Marketing Committee is nearing completion at Karumandichellipalayam in Perundurai, the Agriculture Minister, Mr K A Sengottian, said on Saturday. Only turmeric storage would be done at the new place and turmeric sale would be conducted at Erode as usual, he said. Fertilisers and pesticides would be distributed to farmers without any shortage, he added. District Collector, Mr C. Kamaraj, and other Agricultural Department officials were present.

Busier weather may unfold over monsoon-hit area

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, May 30:

With a strong onset of monsoon having established over Kerala and the Bay of Bengal, India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned of even busier weather unfolding over most of the impacted areas.

A weather warning issued on Monday morning said that isolated heavy rainfall would be unleashed over Lakshadweep and Kerala until Wednesday.

A warning issued for the same period for east and northeast India where the pre-monsoon is still playing out said that isolated thunder squalls would break out over the Northeastern states, West Bengal, Sikkim, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa.

And to complete the picture, yet another of a westerly disturbances entering northwest India from across the border could spark isolated dust storms or thunderstorms over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh.

Along with this, some hostile heating of the land could also be on view over Pakistan and adjoining northwest India, helping set the north-south pressure gradient for the monsoon current to glide on.

As expected, southeast Arabian Sea has tossed up an upper air cyclonic circulation off Kerala coast, the IMD said. The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting sees the system anchoring the monsoon flows and helping the cause of the progress of rains along the coast to the north.

The system could descend into lower heights and set up a low-pressure area off coastal Karnataka where the ocean water temperatures are well above 30 degree Celsius. In comparison, the seas off Kerala to just south are cooler.

But an anti-cyclone let loose by the intervening westerly system could scare away the 'low' from approaching India coast, and the southeasterlies associated with the anti-cyclone could drive the same

out into central Arabian Sea.

Still international models indicate the monsoon system conducting itself well during the onset phase. The International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University is vouching for a sustained strong band of convection holding itself up across southeast Arabian Sea and into Bay of Bengal from southwest to northeast.

Satellite picture early on Monday showed convective (rain-bearing) clouds rising over parts of east Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, south Maharashtra, coastal Karnataka, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Lakshadweep, east-central and southeast Bay of Bengal, south Andaman Sea and central and southeast Arabian Sea.

A short-term forecast said that the western disturbance could bring with it isolated rain or thundershowers over western Himalayas and adjoining plains of northwest India until Wednesday and increase thereafter. An extended outlook valid until Saturday spoke about the possibility of widespread rain or thundershowers over extreme south peninsula, Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Fairly widespread rain or thundershowers would occur over the Northeastern States and adjoining east India. Fairly widespread rain or thundershowers accompanied with isolated thunder squalls would occur over northwest India.

Coonoor's fruit show hails heritage



Business Line Fruity marvel: Mr N. Mani, Assistant Director of Horticulture, describing the features of the 'Musumbi' Coonoor railway station. — Photo: P.S. Sundar
Coonoor, May 29:

Coonoor Railway Station was built in 1897. Coonoor Sim's Park was established even earlier – in 1874. It was, therefore, interesting to see the heritage Park celebrating the heritage station which is part of the heritage site status accorded by the Unesco.

This happened at the two-day 53rd Fruit Show which concluded at Sim's Park, Coonoor, on Sunday.

The star attraction was a 'fruit replica' of Coonoor railway station. Nilgiris Horticulture department built it right at the first lawn close to the entrance. "We have used nearly 25,000 musumbis (sweet lime) weighing five tonnes to create this. We have given cocoa border. The model measures 35' long, 15' high and 15' wide", Assistant Director of Horticulture, Mr N. Mani, told *Business Line*.

The department also created an imposing welcome arch with varieties of fruits. Its stall exhibited spices and hill vegetables besides fruits. There were information charts on the nutritious values of fruits. Visitors benefited from the flow charts on preparing jams, jellies, juices and pickles.

Horticulture departments' units from Coimbatore, Kanyakumari, Theni, Velur, Krishnagiri, Thirunelveli, Salem, Dharmapuri, Dindugal and Madurai displayed hundreds of fruit varieties. The officials gave scientific explanations on growing and using these fruits. There were guidelines on the next generation fruits to be created with extensive research. Much stress was laid on organic cultivation and reduction of chemical inputs in general fields.

Adding to visual treat were Hogenakkal waterfalls made with 3,750 mangoes, Mickey mouse with 400 kg grapes, tower with 1,000 mangoes, Madurai Meenakshi Temple with thousands of fruits, fruit human silhouettes and fruit carvings. A number of articles made with banana fibre also caught attention.

Nearly 30,000 visitors witnessed the two-day show.