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FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

Technology for ripening fruits as important as marketing them

M.J. PRABU

Farmers are guided to use ethylene gas in pressurized cans for ripening



Simple technique:Selvarajan demonstrating the method of ripening.

“How many times, have the bright red colour of the apples or the golden colored mangoes attracted you to buying them from the shelves?”

“For all that gloss and glitter: in reality the bright colour can contain lethal toxins dangerous for human health. The method used for ripening fruits must be given due care by farmers and traders as it decides the end use of the fruits — those consuming it,” says Dr. M. Selvarajan, Professor and Head, Department of fruit crops, Horticultural college and research institute, Periyakulam, Tamil Nadu.

“Lack of easier and rapid methods for uniform ripening poses a major problem in the fruit industry. Almost all methods of ripening, either conventional or the modern chemical methods, come with their own merits and demerits,” he explains.

Technologies

There are several technologies and methods available today for farmers for proper ripening.

Normally the number of days taken for edible ripening varies for different fruits and prevailing climatic conditions.

For instance, it takes about 5 to 6 days for mangoes and 6 to 7 days for sapotas to ripen. Under natural conditions, ethylene, a ripening hormone produced by the plant plays a major physiological role in the ripening process.

A simple technology practiced in households to trigger ripening is to keep un-ripened and ripened fruits together inside an air tight container.

Since the already ripened fruits release ethylene, ripening will be faster. Another method is to place the fruits intended for ripening inside an air tight room and induce ripening through smoking inside smoke chambers.

Smoking chamber

Smoke emanates acetylene gas. Several fruit traders follow this technique to achieve uniform ripening especially in banana and mango.

“But the major drawback of this method is that the fruits do not attain uniform colour and flavour. In addition the persistence of smoke odour on the product impairs its quality,” adds Dr. Selvarajan.

In yet another practice some farmers dip unripe mature fruits in 0.1 per cent ethrel solution (1 ml of ethrel solution in 1 litre of water) and wipe it dry.

The fruits are then spread over a newspaper without touching each other and a thin cotton cloth is covered over this. The fruits ripen in two days.

Spreading unripe fruits as layers over paddy husk or wheat straw for a week to ripen is another alternative.

But these conventional methods possess some disadvantages like longer duration for ripening, high degree of spoilage due to excessive handling and lack of uniformity in colour development. About one-fourth of the fruits are spoilt by these methods, according to him.

In one of the simple and harmless techniques, 10 ml of ethrel and 2 gm of sodium hydroxide pellets are mixed in five litres of water taken in a wide mouthed vessel.

Ripening time

This vessel is placed inside the ripening chamber near the fruits and the room is sealed air tight. About a third of the room is filled with fruits leaving the remaining area for air circulation. Ripening of fruits takes place in about 12 to 24 hours.

“In order to reduce the cost of chemical, some ethylene releasing fruits such as papaya and banana can also kept in the same room. Since ethrel is a plant hormone and hastens the ripening process by the release of ethylene in the atmosphere this practice may be the safest method,” explains Dr. S.P. Thamaraiselvi, Assistant Professor of the Institute..

Dangerous effect

Today many growers and traders use calcium carbide that emits acetylene gas. Fruits ripened using calcium carbide are carcinogenic and should not be consumed. Farmers and traders should become more aware about the dangerous effects in using the chemical.

“At our institute we are guiding farmers desirous of exporting their products using ethylene gas filled in pressurized cans for fruit ripening in 24-48 hours,” says Dr. Selvarajan.

For more information contact Dr. M. Selvarajan, Professor and Head, Department of fruit crops, Horticultural college and research institute, Periyakulam, Tamil Nadu, email: smselva8@gmail.com, mobile: 9003027732, phone: 04546-231726.

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Meet on ready foods, market opportunities

A three-day “Global Symposium on Ready-to-Eat (RTE) Foods: Opportunities for R&D, Entrepreneurship and Markets” was organized by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) in association with ASSOCOM India and with support from the Ministry of Food Processing, Government of India.

Consumer trends

With shifting consumer trends and changing eating patterns worldwide, the meet sought to promote RTE foods to a wider market through the transfer of technologies to entrepreneurs.

It also addressed various food challenges such as meeting the demands for innovative, healthy and safe meal solutions for a busy lifestyle.

The role of micro, small- and medium-scale enterprises was highlighted as vital in improving people's livelihood opportunities and increasing their participation in the agro-food industry.

Food safety

Tackling the issue of food safety in the Indian food industry, Mr. P.I. Suvrathan, Chairperson, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), spoke on the new Food Safety and Standards Act and how it “shall revolutionize the way food safety is perceived by the food industry and the consumers alike, in India.”

He stressed that safety of foods is the primary responsibility of the food business operators. “This global symposium on ready-to-eat foods is a step towards exploring new markets and

creating demand for a wider diversity of higher-value foodstuffs and in reducing poverty by fostering agro-enterprises,” said ICRISAT Director General William Dar.

Goals

The goals of the symposium, he added, are consistent with the Institute's Inclusive Market-Oriented Development or IMOD strategy which focuses on helping the farming poor to access markets to increase their food supplies and incomes.

Innovation platform

Mr. Dave Hoisington, ICRISAT Deputy Director General (Research), expounded on the Institute's Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP) where inclusive growth and innovation is the key.

He pointed out that NutriPlus Knowledge Program, one of the three components of AIP, aims to engage with the public sector, the private sector food industry, and advanced food research institutes to promote the cause of smallholder farmers of the semi-arid tropics.

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FARM QUERY

Fertilizer application

Our mango trees have not been manured with NPK fertilizer for the past several months. As the season is starting can we apply it now?

Jaya Vignesh, Tamil Nadu

Applying the fertilizers now will not be effective for the present season. The application must be done at the right time before the season starts and at regular intervals especially for mango trees to help prevent flower drop and increase fruit formation.

'Issue Farmer Cards to horticulturists'

Staff Reporter

Official Interacts with tribal persons in different hamlets

'Income generated through employment guarantee scheme will be reflected in Farmer Cards'

Officials told to lay roads before June under Rozgar Yojana

Photo: S. Rambabu



Bull's eye! Tribal Welfare Commissioner Santha Kumari and ITDA P.O. Ronald Rose taking aim with arrows in Kanivada in Rampachodavaram Agency on Wednesday. —

RAMPACHODAVARAM: Commissioner for Tribal Welfare Ms. Shantakumari has asked the officials concerned to provide 'Farmer Cards' to tribal horticulturists. The Commissioner toured Kanivada, Kudur, Jalagalova, Chalamatipakalu and Utlabandha hamlets on Wednesday along with ITDA Project Officer Ronald Rose.

Interacting with tribal persons in different hamlets, she said that there were no restrictions on horticulture in Agency areas and the government was giving subsidies to these cultivators to encourage other forms of agriculture. She said that the income generated through the employment guarantee scheme would be reflected in Farmer Cards.

She said that tribal persons who cultivate plants, nurseries that are connected to different varieties of fruits would be given subsidy up to three years and in the case of rubber it would be seven years. She asked officials to lay roads before June under Rozgar Yojana, and made it clear that there should be not be any compromise on quality.

She visited Boduluru, Maredumilli Primary Health Centres during her tour and instructed the doctors to increase institutional deliveries and also ensure sanitation in villages.

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NABARD sanctions Rs.11.46 crore works

SANGAREDDY: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned 14 works worth Rs. 11.46 crore to Medak district. These works include construction of bridges from Mylaram to Arepally in Chinnakodur mandal (Rs. 35 lakh) , Kammarpally to Kondengalkunta Rs. (35 lakh), Junegav village in Jarasangam mandal (Rs. 1.8 crore), laying of roads from Tukkapur sub-station to Ghanapur in Toguta mandal Rs (1.1 crore), from Malkapur to Sangareddy (Rs. 56 lakh), from Natnaypally to Sherkhanpally (Rs. 60 lakh), from Jinnaram to Kodakanchi (Rs. 60 lakh), from Peddaknjarla to Kodakanchi (Rs. 60 lakh) and other major works.

According to Collector S. Suresh Kumar, these works were sanctioned under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund.

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Farmers to finalise action plan on May 9

Special Correspondent

HYDERABAD: Representatives of farmers' organisations will meet to finalise an action plan for getting fair price for paddy here on May 9.

Disclosing this to reporters here on Wednesday, Lok Satta Party president Jayaprakash Narayan and leaders of independent farmers' organisations said that the farmers, irrespective of their party affiliations, region and crops, would join hands to get a fair price for foodgrains.

Dr. Narayan said that despite repeated representations to the Centre for the last seven months, nothing significant had been done to rescue the farmers from the miserable plight and ensure that they were paid the minimum support price for their produce.

Though the MSP of Rs.1,030 per quintal of paddy was not enough and would barely meet the cultivation cost of owner-farmers, with the tenant farmers ending in incurring losses, the farmers in the State were not getting paid even this amount.

He said that with the country having double the stocks required for food security, good rabi yield, the Centre should allow rice exports as the foodgrains commanded good price overseas because of crop failure in Russia and China.

Farmer leaders Y.Nagendranath and Dasaradharami were present.

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Seafood festival from tomorrow

Special Correspondent

PHOTO: V. RAJU



Irresistible!:Foreigners relishing seafood preparations at The Gateway Hotel in Vijayawada on Wednesday.

VIJAYAWADA: The Hotel Gateway will launch a fortnight-long Sea Food Bazaar – a food festival dedicated to dishes prepared in different styles.

At a preview of the Sea Food Festival to be launched on Friday, regular customers and guests of the hotel had a feel of the upcoming festival where they can binge on a variety of fish, prawns, crab and shrimps. The best part of the food festival being launched is that a guest could pick up any of the fish, crab or lobster live on display and order a particular way of cooking to relish the dish.

The State has a long history of making different kinds of seafood dishes from cray fish, crabs, squids and prawns, which were being adopted into the menu, said Chief Chef Satya Brata Jana.

Botchu, Tellapia, Mud Crab, corameen, Lady fish masala from Visakhapatnam would be some of the main course items, while Rayalaseema seafood varieties that received good patronage last month in another food festival would also make their presence.

Chilly fish, chilly crab from Singapore, Bommidala pulusu, and Tellapia from Hong Kong were some of the delicacies served on Wednesday.

Gateway Hotel General Manager Srinivas Lahiri said rice and dosa would be the part of the main course. Also on offer would be ragi roti, latcha, Sanket and nans to savour the seafood dishes.

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Crop loss compensation should be hiked: Shobha

Special Correspondent

CHICKBALLAPUR: Minister for Energy, Food and Civil Supplies Shobha Karandlaje on Wednesday said the Union and State governments should hike the rate of crop loss compensation paid to farmers.

After distributing compensation cheques to 73 farmers in Chickballapur taluk, whose crops were destroyed by rain and winds, Ms. Karandlaje said the quantum of compensation the governments were paying was inadequate compared to the losses suffered by farmers.

She said the Centre and State governments should hold discussions with insurance companies on increasing the rate of compensation.

The State Government would seriously contemplate the issue and take it forward, she said.

Damage from rain

She said crops worth Rs. 3 crore were destroyed in Chickballapur taluk on Monday night. Grapes, beans, tomatoes, ridge guard and bitter guard, cultivated on 225 acres of land, had been destroyed in Talahalli, Nakkalahalli, Towdanahalli, Kanithanahalli and other villages. A compensation of Rs. 3.36 lakh was paid to the affected farmers.

Chickballapur MP and Union Minister for Law and Justice M. Veerappa Moily also visited these villages on Wednesday to assess the situation.

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'Areca nut growers in the doldrums'

Special Correspondent

BANGALORE: Congress leader B.K. Chandrashekar on Wednesday said that more than 10 areca nut growers in Chikmagalur district committed suicide in the last one year as they found it difficult to carry on due to the steep decline in the production of areca nut. The production came down to three quintals from 60 quintals a hectare in the last couple of years.

Speaking to presspersons, Prof. Chandrashekar, who is also the Congress spokesman, said that the areca nut crop was hit by the Yellow Leaf disease.

Nearly 7,000 growers had been issued notices in March last by cooperative and other banks for their failure to repay the loans they had taken for agricultural operations. He demanded that the

loan repayment be postponed for two years and rescheduled and no interest be imposed for that period.

Prof. Chandrasekhar urged the Minister for Horticulture S.A. Ravindranath to direct experts at the agricultural university to conduct research and find a solution to combat the disease.

Prof. Chandrasekhar also urged the Minister to visit the district, listen to the grievances of growers and announce relief for crop loss.

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'Avoid potato cultivation'

Staff Correspondent

Hassan: Deputy Commissioner Naveen Raj Singh has told farmers not to cultivate potato in the district for some more years as the traces of fungus causing blight disease were still active.

He was addressing farmers and traders at the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) here on Wednesday.

Farmers, who cultivated potato in the last couple of years, suffered losses as the crop was affected by blight disease.

The Deputy Commissioner suggested farmers to go for alternative crops for a couple of years so that the fungus becomes inactive.

Purchase

Mr. Singh said those who want to go for potato, should purchase the seed potatoes from the APMC. The administration would take disciplinary action against unauthorised shops selling seeds.

He said the APMC had sufficient stock of seed potatoes and the sale would begin on May 9.

A committee, comprising representatives of farmers and scientists, had been constituted to check the quality of seed potatoes.

The committee had been asked to submit a report in three days, he said.

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Paddy farmers block State Highway

State urged to procure paddy Price of produce has fallen due to lack of demand

Raichur: Traffic on the State Highway between Raichur and Koppal came to a standstill for nearly three hours on Wednesday as members of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha staged a protest at Pothanal.

The 'rasta roko' at the village in Manvi taluk was in protest against what they called the failure of the Government to begin procurement of paddy from farmers.

Farmers, led by vice-president of the State unit of the sangha Chamarasa Malipatil, said for the past month, farmers had been urging the Government to establish paddy procurement centres in Raichur, Manvi and Sindhanur. They also sought the procurement of paddy at minimum support price (MSP). But, there was no response even as the harvesting season came to an end.

The price of paddy had fallen to Rs. 620 a bag (75 kg) from Rs. 750 a bag, due to lack of demand in the market. Farmers would face losses if they sold at the prevailing rate, Mr. Malipatil said.

The farmers withdrew their dharna after the tahsildar of Manvi promised to take up their

demand.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Thursday, May 5

Max Min

39.9° | 27.7°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 75%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:47

Sunset: 18:24

Barometer: 1003.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, May 6

Max Min

39° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

May 7



39° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

May 8



39° | 28°

Cloudy

Monday

May 9



40° | 28°

Cloudy

Tuesday

May 10



40° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday

May 11



40° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

4 black bucks die after feeding on pesticide-laced crop

May 05, 2011 12:39:39 PM

Vivek Trivedi | Bhopal

Four black bucks succumbed after feeding on sown crops on which pesticides was sprayed in Khirkiya area in Harda forest division on Tuesday. On Thursday the Forest Department received report of another casualty in the evening.

The Sub Divisional Officer Harda (South) RB Siddh told The Pioneer that pesticide was sprayed on the moong daal crop in Khirkiya area and few black bucks had fed on the crops. The pesticide affected the animals as the effect of the pesticide remains on the leaves for around 24 hours, claimed Siddh.

Three black bucks were found dead on Tuesday evening, while another black buck, found in a critical condition, died during the treatment, said Siddh. The post-mortem report suggested that these endangered antelopes had died after consuming poisonous content, the forest officer said.

He added that reports of another black buck's carcass were received on Thursday evening and added that Forest Department employees were sent for ascertaining the claims. The SDO said that the deceased antelope were found in and around revenue villages - Sarangpur, Kaud and Dhapada, and they liked to feed on sown crop.

Siddh said that the Bishnoi community in the area was saddened by the incident. "We have asked the farmers to be careful in using pesticides for the moong dal sown in the area, as a lot of black bucks are found in the nearby forests," he added.

The forest officer claimed that by nature, the black bucks like to roam around human habitations and they seldom are found in dense forest areas. He added that viscera of the dead animals have been preserved for further investigation.

Business Standard

Thursday, May 05, 2011

New effluent norms for rubber industry soon

Anindita Dey / Mumbai May 05, 2011, 0:41 IST

The ministry of environment and forests, for the first time has chalked out comprehensive effluent standard norms for the rubber industry across all product categories.

According to official sources this measure will check the pollution problem arising from rubber parks coming up in the country. While one was situated only in Kerala since the last seven-eight years, some are coming up in Tripura now.

Effluent standard is a type of limit imposed by the environment ministry or any other government agency on quantities, rates and concentrations of materials/pollutants in waste water discharges. While the order has been passed upon the intervention of the court, another salient feature of this order is that this rule sets precedence for other industries as well.

Earlier central government used to make broad guidelines for the pollution norms and the respective state pollution boards used to frame laws. Now, with the interim order of the High

Court of Punjab and Haryana, if the state laws are found deficient or lacking strength to combat the pollution issues in a respective industry, central government could frame the respective pollution norms - air and water, and states have to abide by them and state pollution control boards will have to monitor it.

Secondly, while the earlier emission norms were only applicable for natural rubber - processing and product industry, these new guidelines have covered all categories of rubber industry- tyre, tube and synthetic rubber industry.

According to official sources, the court has observed that many states have either stopped framing pollution control norms or have been toning down the guidelines issued by the central government. According to the Act, they are not allowed to relax the pollution control norms; rather they can only tighten the norms depending on the seriousness of the issue over and above the norms issued by central government.

These norms are however not applicable to small scale industry (SSI). SSI is defined as one where investment in plant and machinery where held on ownership terms or on lease or by hire purchase does not exceed Rs 1 crore.

According to officials in rubber board, while these norms are not detrimental for the industry, they have definitely standardised the effluent norms for the entire sector.

Some time back, the ministry had come down heavily on organic chemical manufacturing industry which had to undergo a complete makeover to comply with the new standards on effluent treatment and emission standards for hazardous wastes.

Industry experts said earlier, from time to time, the ministry used to amend the Environment Protection Act for individual chemicals. Now it has been bringing out comprehensive guidelines. Prior to rubber, it was host of chemicals like dye, dyestuff, organic chemicals for better compliance.

Guar gum exports likely to be at record this year

Rutam Vora & Sharleen Dsouza / Ahmedabad/mumbai May 05, 2011, 0:39 IST

Guar gum exports from India are expected to be at record high in the current year amid robust demand from oil producing countries. The soaring overseas demand is believed to spurt the prices of the commodity, which is used as a lubricant in exploration wells and also used for fracturing of oil wells.

According to the latest figures provided by Agriculture and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda), so far India's guar gum exports for the period April-December 2010 surged 82 per cent to 279,197 tonnes as compared to 153,404 tonnes recorded during the same period last year. The rise in exports has come as a booster for the gum prices, which have shot up to Rs 9,050 a quintal in the Bikaner spot market - one of the prominent markets for the commodity. Prices have gained nearly 12 per cent in the past one month.

At present guar gum prices are hovering in the range of Rs 8,700-9,050 a quintal at Jodhpur and Bikaner markets, the industry sources informed. Besides higher overseas demand, low carryover stock also led to the rise in the price of the commodity.

Market participants informed that the carryover stock of guar gum had reached a record low level for the current year, which may trigger prices to shoot up further. "Demand from oil exploring countries is high as crude prices have sustained higher levels. As long as crude prices stay above \$90 per barrel, we see robust demand for guar gum in the overseas market. Also, the carryover stock is expected to be around 150,000 tonnes - a record low in the past 10-12 years. So, there is no indication of any fall in prices in the near future," said a leading guar gum trader and exporter from Jodhpur.

"Guar futures are expected to recover on robust export demand. The India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its initial forecast, has not shown any probability of deficient or excess rain for the monsoon season June-September 2012," said Ajay Kedia of Kedia Commodities.

Meanwhile, industry insiders also hinted at a possible speculative trading taking place in guar gum, which was artificially keeping the prices up. "There is a record high production of guar gum this year. In spite of this, the price trend has remained bullish. Though there is high demand from overseas markets but the commodity has become highly speculative now, so there can't be any certainty about the future price trend," said a Palanpur-based trader.

India is the largest producer of guar gum in the world and exports nearly 70 per cent of its produce to the oil producing countries including Gulf countries, the US and European nations. Exports are expected to remain firm owing to an increase in demand from the oil sector with the rise in crude oil prices and lower supplies from Pakistan, the second-largest producer of guar seed as its crop was destroyed due to floods.

THE HINDU Business Line

Food inflation eases to 8.53% on cheaper pulses



Business Line Pulses displayed for sale at a shop in Kochi, Kerala (file photo). -- Photo K.K. Mustafah
New Delhi, May 5:

Food inflation fell to 8.53 per cent for the week ended April 23 on the back of fall in prices of pulses, reversing the upward trend seen in the previous fortnight.

Food inflation in the previous week was 8.76 per cent. The latest numbers are likely to come as a relief to the Government and the RBI, especially at a time when the central bank's monetary policy for the fiscal, released earlier this week, was almost exclusively focused on fighting price rise.

Food inflation stood at 20.91 per cent during the corresponding week last year. During the week under review, wholesale prices of pulses declined by 7.39 per cent on a year-on-year basis.

However, all other commodities witnessed a rise in prices. Cereals became dearer by 4.42 per cent year-on-year, with rice and wheat becoming more expensive by 2.08 per cent and 0.06 per cent, respectively.

Vegetables prices were overall up by 3.44 per cent. Potatoes became dearer by 0.27 per cent on an annual basis and onions were up by 16.09 per cent. Fruits and protein-based items continued to become more costly.

Fruits became dearer by 32.69 per cent year-on-year, while milk was up by 5.16 per cent and eggs, meat and fish by 5.13 per cent.

The rate of price rise of non-food primary articles was 27.84 per cent. Fibres became more expensive by 85.58 per cent year-on-year, while fuel and power was up by 13.53 per cent and petrol by 21.81 per cent.

The high price rise of food items was one of the reasons for inflationary pressure last fiscal. However, the Government had exuded confidence that food inflation would moderate in the months to come on account of the record crop of wheat and pulses during the 2010-11 crop year (July-June).

Headline inflation was 8.98 per cent in March and has been above the 8 per cent mark since January, 2010.

In its monetary policy report released earlier this week, the RBI said inflationary pressure would remain a concern during the first fiscal, with core inflation (which does not take into account the

rise in food prices) heating up on account of spiralling oil and commodity prices in the international market.

The RBI said inflation would remain at an average of 9 per cent during the first half of 2011-12, before falling to around 6 per cent by March, 2012.

Dakshina Kannada milk co-op plans to modify supply chain

Mangalore, May 4:

Milk is an essential commodity that always commands demand from customers, and the milkman who delivers milk to your doorsteps is the vital link in its supply chain.

Labour shortage is now creating problems for this link of supply chain, leading to erratic supply of milk in some cases and overcharging in some others.

Considering these factors in mind, the Dakshina Kannada Cooperative Milk Producers' Union Ltd is now planning to change a part of its production and packaging process to long shelf-life milk packets.

To be built at a cost of Rs 20 crore, the construction of this unit would begin on May 8 and would be completed in two years.

With this plan, around 70,000 litres a day of production would be replaced with long shelf-life milk. The union, which meets the demands of milk in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts, has a daily demand of around 3.5 lakh litres of milk.

Manpower crunch

Mr Raviraja Hegde, President of Dakshina Kannada Cooperative Milk Producers' Union, told *Business Line* that whenever he met dealers on several occasions, manpower shortage in supply chain figured prominently in their discussions. There were also complaints from customers that some milkmen charge more than MRP (maximum retail price).

The normal milk having a shelf-life of day or two costs between Rs 22 and Rs 27 a litre. The existing long shelf-life brand can be stored for three months and is available at Rs 17 for 500 ml pack.

Considering the need for striking a balance between these two, the union is planning focus on producing milk packets having a shelf-life of one month. Asked about its pricing, he said these factors are yet to be worked out. “However, it will be below the existing long shelf-life brand,” he said.

“After experiencing labour shortage in this sector, I think the future of milk supply chain will depend on the availability of long shelf-life milk packets,” Mr Hegde said.

After the completion of the unit at Mangalore, the long shelf-life milk packets would be available at the nearby grocery shops. Once implemented, customers can buy their requirements for a week or 10 days together. This packet of milk can be stored in normal room temperature, he added.

AP gives nod for rice exports to other States



Hyderabad, May 4:

With rice stocks overflowing and rabi produce beginning to arrive, the Andhra Pradesh Government has given its nod to export boiled rice to other States, besides allowing export of raw rice for a limited period of two months. While it put no conditions on export of boiled rice, the Government said it would monitor price situation during the two-month permission given to export of raw rice.

At a review meeting held on Wednesday, Mr N Kiran Kumar Reddy, the Chief Minister, asked officials to prepare procurement plan and godown space to ensure Minimum Support Price for farmers. He would discuss the issue with Union Government on Thursday in Delhi.

With almost all of the storage capacity in State filled up by buffer stocks, farmers and Members of Parliament had been asking the Government to allow farmers to sell the produce outside of Andhra Pradesh.

Keeping view of criticism that millers were not giving MSP to farmers, the Chief Minister asked the officials to protect the interests of farmers. "No one should be allowed to take advantage of the market situation. The Food Corporation of India, Civil Supplies Department, Markefed and Indira Kranthi Patham should work in tandem to see that the farmers get the MSP," he said.

"If officials certify that farmers are given MSP without verifying it on the ground level, we will take stringent action," he said.

The Chief Minister also directed the FCI to monitor the procurement and godown space availability in districts and see to it that there are no complaints from the farmers.

The total production of rice during the year 2010-11 is expected to be 140.65 lakh tonnes, an increase of 32.27 lakh tonnes over the production last year. FCI, State agencies such as Civil Supplies Corporation and IKP groups opened 1,187 purchase centres.

"To prevent distress sale by the farmers, the paddy offered by farmers at MSP to the IKP groups may be allowed to be kept on farmers' account without charging any rent for three months or till payment is made to them," a statement by Chief Minister's Office said.

The Chief Minister wanted the Railways to allot more rakes to the FCI during May and June for movement of rice.

Mango prices in Vijayawada rule firm



Vijayawada, May 4:

Mango prices are ruling steady at the main wholesale market at Nunna near here with trade sources saying the price levels may hold till month-end. There may be a slight spurt towards the end of the season in June, with decline in arrivals.

The Banganapalli variety ruled in the range of Rs 7,000 a tonne to Rs 16,000 a tonne and Rs 6,000-8,000 a tonne for the Totapuri variety. Prices were considerably higher in April with the best variety of Banganapalli ruling well over Rs 20,000 a tonne once, but after that there was a correction. Throughout May the arrivals at the market yard will be good and then they may taper off from the first week of June.

The fruits are despatched to upcountry markets in trucks from the Nunna market yard and in rakes from the Nuzvid railway station in Krishna district. Seven rakes of the Banganapalli and Totapuri have been sent to the northern States so far.

The Vijayawada Divisional Railway Manager, Mr Anurag, said there was no dearth of rakes and as soon as the requisition was given by the trade, it was being made available at Nuzvid railway

station within a day. The number of Box Closed Wagons (BCN) per rake has been increased to 42 and each wagon can carry 30 tonnes.

Andhra Fruit Growers' and Merchants' Association gets the rakes placed and loaded when mango boxes arrive at Nuzivid railway loading point near Hanuman Junction close to National Highway No.5. According to the Association president, Mr Shaik Allaiddin, last year 25,000 tonnes of mangoes were sent to Gujarat, Maharashtra, the North-East, and other northern States.

Rains in March damaged the crop and also reduced the yield. Despite that, the growers expect to export at least 35,000 tonnes during the current season.

“We hope there will be no more summer showers and gales during May. We hope nature will be kind to us,” he said. Mr Shaik Allaiddin expressed happiness at the prompt and qualitative service offered by the Railways at Nuzivid.

The rakes were reaching their destination on the fourth day, and the raw mangoes loaded here would be ready for consumption by the time they reached the selling point, he added.

The rail freight is also 50 per cent of normal rates, as agricultural produce is given concession. Each rake generates Rs 18.5 lakh revenue for the railways.



Erode, May 4:

Spot turmeric decreased by about Rs 1,000 a quintal on Wednesday.

“There is no demand from North India for the Erode turmeric and the price decrease witnessed in the Sangli and Nizamabad markets also reflected in Erode spot price. The buyers here quoted low price, but not willing to settle for the price, most of the farmers refused to sell their produce”, said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric merchants Association, on Wednesday.

“Usually during the election, the North Indian traders will not buy or take orders from buyers. Even they will not open the shops in Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

Now election is on at West Bengal, which is one of the bulk turmeric consumers. So the bulk demand for the commodity had sharply decreased and automatically the prices declined”, he added.

Turmeric grower-farmers, expecting increased prices, brought more than 15,000 bags on Wednesday, but due to low rate many farmers did not confirm the sale.

In connection with the Traders Day, to be observed today, the Turmeric Market declared holiday and the next sale of turmeric would be conducted tomorrow.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants' Association sales yard, finger variety was sold at Rs 7,199-8,989 a quintal and root variety at Rs 7,009-8,239 a quintal.

Salem Crop: Finger variety was sold at Rs 9,139-10,310 ; root variety at Rs 8,009-8,722 a quintal. Out of total arrivals of 4,765 bags, 505 bags were sold.

In Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing society, finger variety was sold at Rs 7,507-9,169; root variety at Rs 7,369-8,420 a quintal. Out of 406 bags, 339 bags were sold.

In the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 7,559-9,225;, root variety at Rs 7,346-8,502 a quintal. Of the 1,528 bags , 1,382 bags were sold.

In the Regulated Marketing Committee, finger variety fetched Rs 8,639-9,292; root variety at Rs 7,989-8,409 a quintal. Out of 1,449 bags arrived, 1,042 bags were sold.

North America and EU at war over herbicide glyphosate in pulses



Business Line Farmer sprays pesticide to ward off rampant pest attack

Recently in Barcelona:

With the recent discovery of unacceptable levels of an agro-chemical by name glyphosate in lentils imported into the European Union, a huge controversy between exporters from North America (the US and Canada) and importers from Europe has erupted, with potential to disrupt trade between the two regions in the short term.

While the US and Canada have set maximum residue limit (MRL) for glyphosate at 5 and 4 ppm (parts per million) respectively, the EU has authorised use of the chemical on various crops, but not done so for lentils. In the event, as a 'detection of use' standard, MRL of 0.1 ppm for glyphosate on lentils has been set by the EU.

Health impact

Asserting that glyphosate does not pose a human health risk, representatives of North American pulses export promotion organisations – Pulse Canada and the US Dry Pea and Lentil Council – were at pains to explain to buyers around the world here during the annual convention that scientific studies showed no adverse health impact.

Even as the US and Canadian lentil industries along with appropriate regulatory agencies are working closely with the EU authorities to seek a timely, science-based solution to the problem,

unfortunately for the exporting countries, it may take 12 months or more for the EU to go through its process of reviewing the herbicide residue tolerance.

The chemical

Glyphosate (N-(phosphonomethyl) glycine) is a broad-spectrum systemic herbicide used to control weeds that compete with other crops. Initially sold under the trade name Roundup, glyphosate is now sold under various trade names. Incidentally, the life science major Monsanto is the owner of the trade name and the chemical is extensively used for cultivation of genetically modified soyabean (Roundup Ready).

Meanwhile, lentil growers have been cautioned about use of the herbicide heading into the 2011 growing season. The 18,000-strong association of Saskatchewan Pulse Growers has been cautioned about the fact that while use of the chemical on lentil crop may meet the Canadian glyphosate MRL of 4 ppm, it will not meet the EU MRL of 0.1 ppm.

American demand

Buyers may ask producers to sign a declaration regarding their pre-harvest glyphosate use on lentils for the 2011 growing season. North American representatives are demanding that EU change its MRL standard soon so as not to disrupt trade; but the EU is unlikely to budge anytime soon, claim others.

The controversy over MRL for glyphosate seems to be a renewal of a late-1990s acrimonious war between the US and Europe over trade in genetically modified crops such as soyabean. While the US claims to stand by 'sound science', the EU is obsessed with 'precautionary principle'.

Indian scene

In India, which is the largest importer of various pulses including lentils, there is hardly any awareness about use of agro-chemicals in growing countries. India's border controls are not only tardy but ill-equipped to detect unacceptable levels of agro-chemicals. May be it is time for plant quarantine authorities here to study the issue more closely and put in place appropriate systems and procedures to ensure imported foods are not too loaded with chemicals.

The MRL restriction on glyphosate in the EU may eventually turn out to be a temporary non-tariff barrier; but helps to highlight how countries are progressively tightening their food safety and quality regulations.

Volume offered for Coonoor tea auction falls



Coonoor, May 4:

Amidst concerns of huge volumes remaining unsold in the recent weeks, as much as 3.14 lakh kg of teas that had remained unsold in previous auctions is being offered for resale at Sale No: 18 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be conducted on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of the listing by brokers.

Together with the fresh teas accounting for 10.88 lakh kg, the total offer this week is 14.02 lakh kg – some 12,000 kg less than last week's offer and as much as 7.21 lakh kg less than the huge offer this time last year.

Of the 14.02 lakh kg on offer, 9.79 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 4.23 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 13.23 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.79 lakh kg to orthodox variety. The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades.

In the leaf counter, only 0.37 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 9.42 lakh kg belongs to CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.42 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 3.81 lakh kg to CTC.

Producers are concerned that the sale percentage is low despite shedding prices and have called for aggressive promotion strategies to activate demand.

Acute labour shortage in farm sector is matter of concern

Kochi, May 4:

Mr Justice C.N. Ramachandran Nair, Judge, Kerala High Court, has said that acute shortage of labour in the farm sector is a matter of concern.

Inaugurating a workshop on National Rural Employment Guarantee Act -2005 at Udayamperoor, near here, he suggested that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Project (NREGP) should be moulded in such a way that the status of the beneficiaries as well as that of the society improves.

The Judge also criticised the “*nokku kooli*” (wages for just watching things being loaded or unloaded) charged by a section of labourers.

The workshop, organised jointly by the Ernakulam District Legal Service Authority and the Union Bank of India (Lead Bank for Ernakulam), was presided over by Mr B. Kemal Pasha (District Judge, Chairman DLSA, Ernakulam),

Mr Mayank Mehta (Deputy General Manager, Union Bank of India), Adv Reez Puthenveetil (President, Mulnthuruthy Block Panchayat), Mr George Merlopallath (President, Bar Association, Ernakulam), Ms Ajitha Salam (President, Udayamperoor Gram Panchayat), Mr V. G. Raveendran (Vice-President, Udayamperoor Gram Panchayat) and Mr K. Sathyan (Principal Sub-judge and Secretary, DLSA, Ernakulam) spoke on the occasion.

Govt mulls creation of buffer stock of fertilisers

New Delhi, May 4:

To ensure adequate supply of fertilisers during the peak season, the government is planning to create a buffer stock of key farm nutrients di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), muriate of potash (MoP) and urea.

“We operated buffer stock till 2010. Unfortunately, this issue was not addressed in the Nutrient—Based subsidy (NBS) policy. We are again trying to create buffer stock of three fertilisers,” said a senior Fertiliser Ministry official.

The Department of Fertilisers (DoF) is preparing a Cabinet proposal to “maintain buffer stock of 10 per cent of the total requirement of DAP and MoP and 5 per cent of the total requirement of urea,” the official said.

This means, about 14 lakh tonnes of urea, 10 lakh tonnes of DAP and over four lakh tonnes of MoP would be maintained as buffer stock every year to obviate any shortages at the local level during the peak sowing seasons, the official added.

Earlier, the government used to create buffer stock of only 5 per cent of the country’s demand of urea, DAP and MoP.

According to government estimates, the average demand for urea, DAP and MoP in the country is estimated at 281 lakh tonnes, 107 lakh tonnes and 44 lakh tonnes, respectively.

“We are feeling that we should maintain buffer stock because global prices are going up and we are dependent almost 90—100 per cent on import of DAP and MoP,” the official said.
