

## Cautious intake of food will bear fruit

Ramya Kannan



**A NASTY BITE: Mangoes artificially ripened can cause a lot of health problems.**

CHENNAI: Shiny mango caught your eye at the grocery store? You probably will do well to avoid that seduction. For all you know, that shiny mango is pumped full of arsenic and phosphorus. Recently, the Chennai Corporation had to destroy over 16 tonnes of shiny mangoes, which had been artificially ripened. These fruits had apparently been plucked raw and then packed around cups of calcium carbonate in a godown that ripens it literally overnight.

“What otherwise takes three to four days is ripe within 12 hours straight,” says P. Kugananthan, Corporation Health Officer. Apart from calcium carbonate, a new method is to immerse the fruits in ethylene solution to ripen them faster. Both these compounds are hazardous as they contain arsenic and phosphorous.

“Both these substances can affect the soft tissue of the gastrointestinal tract – the mouth, throat, oesophagus, stomach, intestines. The result would be ulcers,” he adds. Apart from this, gastritis,

vomiting, diarrhoea, and bloody stools can also occur. Over the long term, they can also be carcinogenic.

Actual damage to the person who consumes these foods would depend on the dosage and quantity consumed over a period of time. The toxins can be deposited in the liver and kidney, leading to organ failure too.

The consumer of today is spoilt for choice in the variety of food that lines the shelves of the supermarket. Wet food, dry food, packaged food, fruits, vegetables are all available in a greater variety than before, says K.Sadasivam, joint director, Directorate of Public Health. However, not all this food is safe, he adds.

“Mangoes, bananas and papayas are set to ripen unnaturally. Calcium carbonate is the cheapest and fastest means of doing this, so traders have dropped their earlier practise of letting fruits ripen in rice godowns or when covered with straw,” he explains. Apples are shiny because of a coating of wax. Colour is injected into watermelons to make them look more attractive. As for honey, Dr. Sadasivam says, if it is being made in apiaries, there is a good chance you can find antibiotic residues. Some packets of rice batter were found to be contaminated with bacteria. For consumers, awareness about the possibilities of contamination and health outcomes on consuming certain products is the first step. “Question your vendor. For instance, if idly batter was made in hygienic conditions. Then, the vendors too will perform check the antecedents of the products they are selling,” he says.

Part of this awareness is recognising that a product has been tampered with. Fruits set to ripen artificially will invariably have a shine on them, a dusty coating on the skin and will be of the same colour, explains Dr. Kugananthan.

Whether ripened naturally or unnaturally, a must-do is to wash the fruits thoroughly in running water, and wherever possible, remove the peel, Dr. Kugananthan adds. Another tip for the consumer conscious of what he puts in his mouth is to honour expiry dates mentioned on the pack, especially for wet and canned foods, Dr. Sadasivam insists.

## Sugarcane farmers register bumper crop, thanks to rain

M. Balaganessin

*112 tonnes a hectare recorded at Tirumayankudi village near Lalgudi*

. — Photo:R. Ashok



**raising hope:Small farmers moving their produce on bullock carts near Kumulur to a sugar factory on Thursday**

TIRUCHI: Cane-growers have registered a bumper harvest this season thanks to the timely rain received during October – November last year. The cash crop has brought good returns to even small and marginal farmers . The crop has brought rich dividends to those who have adopted drought-resistant varieties particularly in Marungapuri and Manikandam blocks in the district.

Agriculture Department officials currently conducting crop estimation survey, say that a maximum of 112 tonnes a hectare has been registered so far at Tirumayankudi village near Lalgudi.

Drought-resistant variety

A total of 250 hectares has been brought under sugarcane cultivation this season. Most farmers have cultivated Co-C 86032 variety. In the Marungapuri area, farmers had raised Co-91017, a drought resistant variety. Farmers opted for this variety as it could be de-trashed with less effort.

Farmers who opted for drip irrigation method have also benefited . “The average yield through drip irrigation technique is about 80 tonnes an acre,” the sources said.The department encouraged farmers to go in for drip irrigation and 40 hectares had been brought under the method this season.In a few villages in and around Lalgudi, farmers were resorting to mechanical harvesting for ensuring an expeditious harvest.

A.Christope, a famer of Thatchankurichi, said that he had raised the crop on 1.5 acres and had harvested about 50 per cent of the area so far. He could harvest a bumper yield of 60 tonnes an acre. He said that he was also happy with the price being offered by the sugar factory.Expressing similar views, P.Rangaraj, another farmer from Thatchankurichi said that although the crop suffered some pest attack during its initial period, crop protection strategy adopted by the cane inspectors had helped him adopting corrective measures.

He had raised the ratoon crop and was registering a fairly high yield of 40 tonnes an acre. They had raised the crop in February 2010 and the rain during November had resulted in good yield.

Date:06/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/06/stories/2011050651410300.htm>

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### **Coconut tonic infusion raises nut weight**



**ONE FOR THE PALM: Horticulture officials demonstrating coconut tonic infusion technique at Vilathikulam in Tuticorin district.**

Tuticorin: Coconut tonic, designed by the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU), Coimbatore, infused to coconut trees through roots, increases the size of the nuts and enhances weight.

Coconuts were being cultivated on 5,200 hectares over 12 blocks in the district. Demonstrating the coconut tonic infusion technology in a coconut farm at Guruvarpatti of Vilathikulam block in the district, in the presence of large number of farmers including women farmers, Deputy Director of Horticulture M.Syed Ahamed Miranji said the tonic consisting of macro nutrients, micro nutrients and hormones had been fed to coconut trees to increase the nut weight.

“Tonic has the added advantage of reducing the button shedding, increases the ‘chlorophyll’ content, and protects the coconut from pest and disease attacks. Tonic could be fed to the trees twice a year. S.Raja Mohamed, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Vilathikulam, explained the method of feeding tonic.

“One small polythene pouch is filled with 40 ml of the tonic mixed with 160 ml of good water and is tied up tightly with twine to the cut root in such a way that the root is inside the pouch fully. Heap soil so that the tonic will not ooze out.

The tonic will be absorbed by the root within two hours depending on the dryness of the soil. ”

**Date:06/05/2011 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/06/stories/2011050668251900.htm>**

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## **Food inflation eases to 8.53 %**

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Reversing the fortnight-long upward trend, food inflation eased to 8.53 per cent during the week ended April 23 from 8.76 per cent in the previous week even as prices of all edible items, barring pulses, ruled at higher levels on a year-on-year basis.

The WPI (Wholesale Price Index) data on primary articles released here on Thursday reveals that the downward movement in food inflation may largely be owing to the effect of a high base as it was pegged at 20.91 per cent during the like week last year.

Economic analysts point out that the slight moderation, as per the latest data, should not be any cause for cheer, considering that global commodity prices, especially crude oil, remain at high levels and a hike in the domestic prices petrol and diesel is imminent — likely to be announced after the Assembly polls — which is sure to have a cascading effect on food and overall inflation.

In the event, the Reserve Bank of India may be forced to go in for another round of key policy rate hike later during the year.

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## Agribusiness policy not to take away farmland

*Farmers to be treated as entrepreneurs*

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*Agri-investment corridors to be set up on the lines of the Apparel Park They will be established using the land acquired by the KIADB*

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Bangalore: The Karnataka agribusiness policy, aimed at creating an environment for attracting investment in agro-processing and value addition sectors through public-private partnership, “will not take away one inch of fertile land belonging to farmers”, said N.C. Muniyappa, Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture.

Speaking at an awareness programme here on Thursday, he said that the policy will treat farmers as entrepreneurs and partners themselves, who will have linkages with investors.

Contract farming would be allowed, but there will be safeguards to ensure that the farmers do not lose rights over their land, he said.

Corridors

Mr. Muniyappa said that agri-investment corridors of 5,000 hectares each will be set up using land acquired by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Authority (KIADB) on the lines of the Apparel Park, with an investment of Rs. 10,000 crore each. He said that “commodity parks” – 15 to begin with – would be set up for various crops such as rice, pulses, grape, millets and so on, depending on the local availability of crop.

Mr. Muniyappa said that agri-infrastructure sector is an area with a huge potential that can grow in the years to come. Integrated agri-tourism is also an area which is being seriously considered, he added.

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### Luring farmers to increase tree cover

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*Farmers who grow trees under the scheme will get maintenance subsidy Purpose is to enhance farmers' income by growing medicinal plants: Minister*

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BANGALORE: Minister for Forests C.H. Vijayashankar on Thursday inaugurated the State Government's ambitious Agro Forestry Incentive programme. The department plans to distribute 11 crore saplings to farmers in the next three years for not only increasing tree cover, but also to enhance their income by growing medicinal plants for the pharmaceutical industry.

### Choice

Addressing farmers and officials of his department, Mr. Vijayashankar said farmers who take it up would be given sufficient saplings of their choice.

This year, one crore saplings would be distributed, followed by three crore and seven crore in 2012-13 and 2013-14. He requested the farmers to register their names in prescribed form, with copies of land records and requirement of saplings in advance, so that the saplings could be procured. Applications should be sent to the offices concerned before May 31.

## Subsidy

Mr. Vijayashankar said that efforts were being made to collect saplings from neighbouring States.

Farmers, who grow trees under the scheme, would get Rs.10, Rs. 15 and Rs. 20 each in the first, second and third year as maintenance subsidy. He said a farmer could get subsidy for 400 saplings in one hectare of land.

## Out of list

However, 14 types of trees such as eucalyptus, acacia, oak grown in coffee estates, casurina, casio siomia, glyricidia, cesh bania, erithrina, rubber, subabul, coconut, arecanut, orange and all types of citrus fruit-bearing trees and grafted mango are not eligible for subsidy. Saplings in polythene bags of different sizes would be distributed at subsidised prices of Rs.1, Rs. 3 and Rs. 5 respectively. The saplings would be grown by the Forest Department in coordination with the universities of agriculture and horticulture in the State and would be supplied to the farmers. Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa would distribute saplings to farmers at all divisional headquarters.

## Workshop

Principal Secretary (Forests) Kaushik Mukherji and Revenue Secretary G.S. Narayana Swamy and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Indu B. Srivastava were present. Officials, experts and farmers participated in a daylong workshop to discuss the implementation of the programme.

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**<http://www.thehindu.com/2011/05/06/stories/2011050666500800.htm>**

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## **Need to protect medicinal plants stressed**

HYDERABAD: There is an urgent need to protect the medicinal plant wealth in the country, which is dwindling due to accelerated harvest, observed Principal Secretary and



Agriculture Production Commissioner C. V. S. K. Sarma.

Delivering the inaugural address at the three-day national seminar on medicinal plants here on Thursday, Mr. Sarma underscored the relevance of cultivating these crops by utilising the financial support extended by the Medicinal Plants Board. Chief Executive Director, AP Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Board K.P. Srivasuki gave a presentation on medicinal plants promotion activities in the State. Chief Executive Officer, National Medicine Plants Board stated that Centre was keen on developing this sector in terms of cultivation, marketing and value addition.

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**hindustantimes**



**Press Trust Of India**

New Delhi, May 05, 2011

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### **Food inflation falls to 8.53%**

Food inflation fell to 8.53% 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%. 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% during the corresponding week last year.

During the week under review, wholesale prices of pulses declined by 7.39% on a year-on-year basis.

However, all other commodities witnessed a rise in prices.

Cereals became dearer by 4.42% year-on-year, with rice and wheat becoming more expensive by 2.08% and 0.06%, respectively.

Vegetables prices were overall up by 3.44%. Potatoes became dearer by 0.27% on an annual basis and onions were up by 16.09%.

Fruits and protein-based items continued to become more costly.

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

The rate of price rise of non-food primary articles was 27.84%.

Fibres became more expensive by 85.58% year-on-year, while fuel and power was up by 13.53% and petrol by 21.81%.

The high rate of 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% in March and has been above the 8% 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% during the first half of 2011-12, before falling to around 6% by March, 2012.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/693642.aspx>

## Weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

**Friday, May 6**

Max Min  
40.6° | 26.6°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 47%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:46

Sunset: 18:24

Barometer: 1003.0

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

**Saturday, May 7**

Max Min  
40° | 27°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday

**May 8**



39° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Monday

**May 9**



40° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday

**May 10**



40° | 28°

Sunny

Wednesday

**May 11**



40° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Thursday

**May 12**



40° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

## Food inflation falls to 8.53 per cent



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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 rate of 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.

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**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

**Food inflation at 8.53% year-on-year on April 23**

Surojit Gupta, TNN | May 5, 2011, 12.20pm IST

NEW DELHI: The country's food price index rose an annual 8.53% in the year to April 23 while the fuel and power index stood at 13.53% in the same period, data released by the commerce ministry showed on Thursday.

Food inflation in the year to April 23 was a shade lower than the previous week's 8.76%.

Food prices have moderated in the past few weeks but have stayed above 8% while the wholesale price index has remained around 9% for March. WPI inflation data for April is likely to be released next week.

The primary articles price index rose 12.11%, marginally higher than the previous week's of

12.08%.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised interest rates nine times since March 2010 to tame inflation and has said it is ready to sacrifice growth to tackle price pressures.

6 May, 2011, 06.30AM IST, S Sanandakumar,ET Bureau

### **Short supply fears push Pepper up**

KOCHI: A high degree of volatility has gripped the pepper market as sellers fear that a supply squeeze is round the corner and buyers follow a hand-to-mouth purchase pattern . Since a clear picture on supply position will take some more time to emerge, uncertain trends are likely to dominate the market in the near future. Spot prices of pepper broke a 11-year record to touch Rs 275 per kg on April 25. The previous high price of Rs 272 per kg was seen in November 1999.

The prices saw a further rise in the subsequent days and stood at Rs 283 per kg earlier this week. Industry and trade were expecting a price rise due to the supply squeeze in the market. "But the quantum of increase was beyond our expectations ," said Geemon Korah, chairman, All India Spice Exporters Association. In the futures market, prices have been witnessing a high degree of volatility. The difference between the high and low prices increased up to Rs 1,000 per quintal in the recent period.

The May contract price saw a 11% rise from Rs 263.91 per kg on April 20 to Rs 293.58 per kg on May 3. Prices for the July contract have already reached Rs 305 on the same day. Prices have been looking up due to the uncertainty with regard to supplies, especially from Vietnam, the largest producer of pepper. Vietnam has been releasing only very small quantities of pepper into the market as growers there have been holding stocks making procurement difficult .

The country has exported 40,000 tonne, exporters said. "Growers have been diverting a part of the produce to the more value-added variety called white pepper," said Kishor Shamji, MD,

Kishor Spices. The Sri Lankan crop is said to be lower by almost 25% while the Indonesian crop is not yet ready. In India, supplies have fallen sharply to 15-20 tonne per day compared to 40-50 tonne a few months back. Shamji said pepper-producing countries have been experiencing a shortage.

"This year, even Vietnam bought pepper from us," he said. With supplies remaining uncertain and prices ruling high, buyers have not been taking positions in the market. Korah explained that buyers would earlier buy in advance taking a 5-6 month position.



### **Progress of Kharif farming in D'nal reviewed**

May 06, 2011 11:13:42 AM

#### **PNS | Dhenkanal**

Presiding over a review meeting held at the Collectorate here on the progress of Kharif 2010, Project Director of DRDA Bishnu Charan Prusty assured to make available irrigation facility to at least to 76,071 hectares of cultivable land.

Prusty said that irrigation facilities would be provided to 27,832 hectares of land from major irrigation projects, 12,768 hectares from medium irrigation projects, 16,320 hectares from minor irrigation projects, 5,080 hectares from lift irrigation projects, 6,127 hectares through dug wells, 1,952 hectares from water harvesting projects and 351 hectares through bore wells.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Director of Agriculture Department Laxmidhar Behera said

that whereas 94,940 hectares of land has been identified for paddy cultivation for Kharif this year, 22,005 hectares for cultivation of cereals, 20,590 hectares for oil seeds, 37,294 hectares for vegetables, 5,745 hectares for various spices, 478 hectares for sugarcane and 2,763 hectares for cultivation of miscellaneous crops.

Moreover, adequate arrangement has been made to provide farmers seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and farm equipment like tractors and power tillers at subsidised rates.

### **Excess use of fertilisers affecting agriculture production: CSSRI**

May 06, 2011 11:14:53 AM

**Shiv Rawal | Chandigarh**

The steadfast effects of global warming on weather conditions leading the blatant use of inorganic fertilisers and pesticides have caused serious and adverse impacts on agriculture production, says the latest report of Central Soil Salinity Research Institutes (CSSRI), Karnal.

A CSSRI official said, "A latest report reveals that the frequently changing weather conditions have not affected the agriculture production adversely in past years but also poised a danger for the future of agriculture."

The report also reveals that the agriculture production of major crop is falling dramatically in top agriculture districts of the State. "Sugarcane production which was around 400-450 quintals per acre in 1998, has now dropped to 250-300 quintals per acre. Similarly, the production of wheat has also depleted to 15-17 quintals per acre from 20-21 acres in 2000," added the official.

The report reveals that big changes in the weather have been reported from 2001 to 2009, whereas, "This year (2011) wheat production has fallen 12 quintals per acre, thus resulting a big



lose to the farmers”, said a farmer adding, “Untimely rains and changes in weather and climate conditions are root cause of new diseases in all crops”

When contacted to a senior professor in the Haryana Agriculture University said, “Due to the rising polluting in the coming years the climate conditions may become more severe for agriculture if proper steps are not taken.”

Sultan Gulia, a farmer from Bursham village in Panipat district said, “In past some few years, the production of crops especially of traditional crops like wheat and paddy have down. The wheat production have down from 25 quintals to 17 quintals per acre, similarly the paddy production has also gone so down in past ten years.”

“Most of the farmers are not aware of the use of these inorganic fertilisers and excess of pesticides; as a result the agriculture production has witnessed serious downs. Besides, the unexpected monsoon, excess and less of rains, hailstorms and other natural calamities leading to various and numerous diseases have also bound the farmers to use such fertilisers and plentiful pesticides harming the production capability of soil,” said another experienced and old farmer Om Prakash Tanwar of village Kyodak in district Kaithal.

It is worth mentioning that despite the tall claims of the State Government, the farmers in Haryana have not yet been educates about the bad impacts of excess use of pesticides and benefits of organic fertilisers for improved production of agro products and enhancement of soil fertility.

## Hooda urges Centre to expedite wheat procurement in Haryana

May 06, 2011 11:14:57 AM

### PNS | Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Thursday urged the Union Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Department to expedite the movement of wheat stock procured by various procurement agencies from the State.

Hooda while talking to Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Prof KV Thomas here expressed dissatisfaction over the slow rate of stock movement from the State.

Union Minister Thomas appreciated the procurement process in the State and said that Haryana was doing well. To this, Chief Minister said that we are doing well but are not getting the desired movement of foodgrains, which is very important. The Minister said that compliance in State has also been better in comparison to other States.

Hooda's request regarding distribution of five kg of Bajra to Above Poverty Line (APL) consumers in Haryana for next five months was also accepted by the Union Minister.

Hooda also raised the issue of moisture as per which `80 crore recovery has been made against the Haryana State agencies for extra moisture than the permitted level. He said that grains of wheat gains moisture from its surroundings particularly during the rainy season. Now suddenly based on instructions issued in March 2010, the FCI started deducting the payment already made during the previous years on account of MSP on the excess storage.

The Chief Minister also demanded assistance to set up Silo for storing foodgrains in bulk quantity. He said that the Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board would set up the Silo at some station connected through railways.

He said that the agro-climatic conditions of Haryana and Punjab are similar. Therefore, Haryana and Punjab should be kept at equal footing and our farmers should also get their due.

Hooda said that Haryana has prepared a detailed project report for introduction of smart cards for public distribution system and this has been launched in Ambala, Karnal, Sonapat and Sirsa blocks of the State as a pilot project. After completion of three months, this would be implemented in six districts of the State. He also asked for more allocation under the public distribution system. He requested that APL wheat allocation to Haryana might be increased from 23,590 metric tonnes to 63,000 metric tonnes.

### **Scientists of U'khand discover soil solarisation to help farmers**

May 06, 2011 11:15:22 AM

**Rajendra S Markuna | Haldwani**

The scientists of the GB Pant University Agriculture and Technology claim to have developed a technology called soil solarisation that may help the farmers' even do without pesticides in maintaining the health of their cultivable farm land as well as crops.

In this scientific method the farmers need to cover surface of their land for a month or so with a poly sheet. After that though the farmers need to use other bio-manures and bio-control agents, they need not to use rather harmful pesticides, says J Kumar, head of the plant pathology department, GBPUAT while talking to The Pioneer.

This method is not only very cheaper but also environment friendly. So farmers from hills and plains can use this technique, to save their farm land, from different agrochemicals and pesticides which are being used excessively at present.

As a result of which, Kumar maintains, cultivability of farm land has been drastically deteriorated both in hills and plains as well.

It is worth mention here that in a bit to optimise crop inputs the use of fertilizers per hectare in the hill state has gone upto 400 kg s per hectare, while the ideal use of fertilizers at national level is only around 95 kg. This practice has only worsened the soil conditions in the hill state as

the organic carbon compound in the soil in Uttarakhand has now gone down up to 0.5 per cent which is again very concerning for all of us, added the scientist, saying the level of organic carbon compound in the soil should be 1.5 per cent in the soil.

At the same time, the scientist suggests, there is great scope for improving the soil health by way of applying soil solarisation and other scientific method. Today many progressive farmers have come forward showing interests in adopting these scientific methods of farming. But much needs to be done, he added. Among others things to sustain the soil solarisation method the farmers need to use farm manures and that too in a proper manner.

For that matter we always urge the farmers to use vermicompost as it helps decompose manures in three months time while other composting methods take six months time. Besides to improve microbial level of soil we also recommend use of various kinds of bio control agents like pseudomonas, trichoderma, to name a few.

## Business Standard

Friday, May 06, 2011

### **Cotton yarn exports to be capped again**

**Anindita Dey / Mumbai May 06, 2011, 0:04 IST**

The government has decided to restrict cotton yarn exports again. It has set a limit of 845 million kg for the financial year 2011-12, up from the cap of 720 million kg in the last financial year.

Till now, since March 31, cotton yarn exports were free given some riders for registration of cotton yarn export.

This decision has been taken by a joint committee of ministry of textiles, finance and commerce. To this effect a notification will be issued shortly.

Similar cap is also being contemplated for cotton exports but officials said it is too premature to decide about cotton since crop estimates are yet to come. However, they explained that most mills are running carryover stock of cotton to make yarn this year and exports are going on. Therefore a cap is decided so that there should not be a shortage of yarn in the domestic market till the new crop arrives and to tackle any eventuality.

At the same time to ensure genuine export of cotton yarn, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has also come out with penal measures for breach of rules on registration of contracts for the new financial year. According to these norms, export shall be completed within 30 days from the date of issuance of registration certificate. An exporter failing to do so will be barred from further registration. In addition, a penalty could be imposed upon the exporter, ranging from a Rs 10,000 up to a maximum of five times the value of goods, whichever is more.

Similar norms have been stipulated for export of Assam Comilla cotton which is not a very popular export variety. Sources said as and when cotton exports are allowed for the new financial year, similar strict modalities may be stipulated for cotton export registration as well.

The acreage under cotton crop next season, starting August 2011, is expected to increase 7-10 per cent, following high prices and expectations of higher minimum support price (MSP) from the government.

The acreage may go up from 11.1 million hectares at present (this season) to a high of 12 million hectares. "In fact, acreage under cotton reached a record level in 2009-10 following good prices," said officials.

They explained the increased acreage is happening at the cost of other crops like paddy in the north, soybean, maize and groundnut in the west and tobacco and chilli in the south. "Land is limited and thus farmers are opting for cotton going by high prices both globally and in the domestic market," official sources said.

Meanwhile, the production estimates are likely to hover around 31.2 million bales. In April 2011, the Cotton Advisory Board had revised the crop estimates downwards for the current crop season (2010-11) to 31.2 million bales, as against the earlier estimate of 32.9 million bales.

At the same time, the cotton acreage was reviewed upwards for the current season from 10.3 million hectares to 11.16 million hectares.

The output estimate was revised downwards due to unseasonal rain in December 2010, followed by extreme cold wave in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Khandesh in Maharashtra and Adilabad and in the Warangal region of Andhra Pradesh.

### **Natural rubber prices dip 1.7% in a week on improved supplies**

**George Joseph / Kochi May 06, 2011, 0:02 IST**

The natural rubber (NR) market across the globe is now in a correction mode due to increased production. Both, the domestic and international prices of the commodity have fallen in the current week owing to fresh developments in production and supply of the commodity.

The unusual rainfall in the main producing areas of Kerala has brought in a slight correction in prices as production has gathered momentum. The price of benchmark grade RSS-4 fell Rs 4 a kg compared to last week's price. In spot trading on Thursday in Kochi market, price was Rs 233 a kg which was Rs 237.50, a week back. A month back, Kochi market quoted Rs 243, since production was low due to summer heat. A majority of plantations had stopped tapping then and this resulted in a serious supply crunch in the local market. The abnormal heavy rainfall has now caused a fresh start of tapping and the much higher prices forced growers to re-start tapping well in advance of monsoon. According to ANRPC (Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries) after two successive months of decline, China's import turned positive this March by clocking 1.4 per cent year-to-year growth to 297,000 tonnes.

The Chinese government anticipates a sharp increase in import demand this month. However, the global market had showed signs of correction beginning from the last week of April largely on concerns about the global economy, Japanese Yen appreciation and a marginal drop in crude oil prices. Price for RSS-4 grade in Bangkok market has slipped to Rs 243 a kg as on Wednesday. A month back the market recorded Rs 258 a kg.

Market sources expect that if monsoon would be normal and arrives at the right time, local production would sharply increase, leading to further fall in prices.

The second busiest production season of natural rubber in Kerala is June-August. ANRPC estimates indicate global NR supply is expected to ease in the coming weeks as farmers resume tapping due to widespread rainfall in major producing countries like Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Total supply from the ANRPC member countries is expected to reach 651,000 tonnes in April and 753,000 tonnes in May. In March, the production stood at 580,000 tonnes only. In April-June (Q2), the total global supply is likely to increase 10.5 per cent at 2.3 million tonnes as against 2.08 million tones in the same period last year.

## THE HINDU Business Line

### **Sugar prices see slight movement**



Mumbai, May 5:

Sugar prices at Vashi market on Thursday saw a small-range bound movement due to limited demand and supply. In the spot market, S grade sugar drop by Rs 5, where as M grade was up by Rs 5. Mills are not willing to sell at lower prices as they expect fresh demand for summer in

the coming days. Mr Harakhchand Vora of Kavita Trading Co said that the market ruled unchanged as there was very limited activity in the absence of retail and bulk demand. Since the beginning of the month, naka and mill tender rates have not showed any big up movements because of ample supply from producers. Local demand is need-based because of the summer vacation. On the export front, the sharp decline in international prices have reduced profit margins. For the sugar sector, the domestic market is the main consumer and in the absence of demand, not much is happening. Despite crushing season coming to an end soon and many mills in Maharashtra already closed, the steady sentiment is not changing.

### **International market**

Higher production and exports from Thailand put pressure in the international market. According to an analyst, Thailand's sugar production in the current year reached 98 lakh tonnes compare to 72 lakh tonnes last year. India's sugar production is also expected to be higher at 250 lakh tonnes (last year's production was 190 lakh tonnes). Considering the higher production and supply position, international sugar prices in the last three months declined by nearly 30 per cent to \$600 per tonne on Wednesday. On February 2, international sugar prices touched the \$830 per tonne level, highest since January, 1989. In the Mumbai market, the local demand was hand-to-mouth as it is the vacation period. Arrivals and dispatches were at usual levels. Most of the mills kept a hold on the price and left the tender offer open. About 7-8 needy mills have sold about 35,000-40,000 bags of sugar (100 kg each) to local stockists and one rail rake — about 27,000 bags to eastern side buyer at reduced rates of Rs 2,630- Rs 2,670 for S grade and Rs 2,680- Rs 2,750 for M grade. Arrivals in the market were about 35 truck loads (of 100 bags each) and local dispatches were at the same level.

### **Bombay Sugar Merchants Association sugar rates**

Spot rates: S grade Rs 2,750-Rs 2,791 (Rs 2,756-Rs 2,791) and M grade Rs 2,808-Rs 2,911 (Rs 2,801-Rs 2,911).

Naka delivery rates: S grade Rs 2,710-Rs.2,740 (Rs 2710-Rs 2,740) and M grade was Rs 2,770-Rs 2,860 (Rs 2770-Rs 2,860).



## Pepper down on Vietnam price fall rumours



A file picture of black pepper.

Kochi, May 5:

Bear speculators who had been spreading rumours that Vietnam pepper had dropped by \$300-400 a tonne brought the market down. They got into the driving seat and pulled the prices down in an effort to hit back at the bulls who had been pushing the market up, market sources told *Business Line*. In fact, the prices are reported to have declined only by \$50 a tonne, trade sources claimed.

As the futures market and spot prices are coming in line, some overseas business can be expected. But whether the dealers would sell or not is going to be question, they said.

May contract on the NCDEX fell by Rs 790 to close at Rs 28,160 a quintal. June and July also dropped sharply by Rs 1,026 and Rs 1,166 respectively to close at Rs 28,449 and Rs 28,842 a quintal.

Total turnover increased by 3,569 tonnes to close at 17,804 tonnes. Total open interest increased by 543 tonnes to 18,648 tonnes showing good additional purchases.

May open interest fell by 234 tonnes to 7,835 tonnes. June and July open interest increased by 773 tonnes and two tonnes respectively to 9,573 tonnes and 755 tonnes.

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market dropped by Rs 400 to close at Rs 26,900 (ungarbled) and Rs 27,700 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market dropped to \$6,650 a tonne (c&f) on fall in the futures market coupled with weakening of the rupee against the dollar. It remained in line with other origins. Vietnam has offered FAQ 500 gl at \$5,650-5,700 a tonne while \$550 GL at 5,950-6,000 a tonne (c&f), V Asta at \$6,400 a tonne. Indonesia, which has limited stock, offered 550 GL asta at \$6,900-7,000 a tonne (c&f).

**Will jump in pulses output change India's import pattern?**



Camp: Barcelona (Spain), May 5:

A huge but unanticipated increase in India's pulses production (from 14.7 million tonnes in 2009-10 to 17.3 million tonnes 2010-11) has caused some unease among exporting countries that have been overly dependent on the world's largest importer, producer and consumer.

For the first time in many years, India's pulses output has exceeded the target of 16.5 million tonnes by a good margin. This follows a sizeable expansion in the area devoted to pulses, both in the kharif and rabi seasons, and of course normal monsoon rains.

The unease is because imports into the country have slowed down in recent months. It is estimated that during financial year 2010-11, imports totalled approximately 2.7 million tonnes, down a fifth from the previous year's record 3.6 million tonnes.

Now, the question uppermost in exporters' minds is whether India's pulses production will keep rising at the same rate as last year. On current reckoning, it appears far-fetched that the growth in pulses output would once again record a big jump of 2.6 million tonnes or roundabouts.

This is simply because there is no great or new incentive to expand acreage further. In 2010, open market prices were sky-high and growers did enjoy at least a part of the price premium for a prolonged period of time. In recent months, after the large harvest, open market prices have actually corrected downwards by 25-35 per cent, bringing relief to consumers.

Actually, we should be happy if growers continue to retain last year's pulses acreage. In kharif 2010, the total area planted to pulses was 12.6 million hectares, up by a fifth from the previous two years (10.5 million hectares each) which resulted in a harvest of a record 7.0 million tonnes, far above the target of 5.7 million tonnes and the previous year's actual output of 4.2 million tonnes.

Attempts should be made to raise yields from the current low levels of about 600 kg per hectare, although it is easier said than done given the absence of any genetic breakthrough in seed technology and inadequate input management. So, the big question is: will the pulses acreage in kharif 2011 stay unchanged at close to 13 million hectares? Weather is, of course, a key driver of production. The forecast of a normal monsoon notwithstanding, the India Meteorological Department itself has admitted to uncertainties. So, the situation needs to be closely monitored.

Meanwhile, it is early May, and yet, there has been no announcement of a minimum support price for kharif crops. It is unclear what is holding up the announcement.

India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru may have famously said "Everything can wait except agriculture," but in recent years, agriculture has been kept waiting for policy attention even as many other things have got done expeditiously in our country. On the demand side, the Planning Commission's projections appear outdated.

For 2011-12, the terminal year of the XI Five-Year Plan, the projected demand for pulses is 19.9 million tonnes. It is unclear if the demand includes "seeding demand" in addition to consumption demand. Assuming an average of 25 kg per hectare, seed demand works out to about 6 lakh tonnes. In case of consumption, one has to reckon with milling losses of approximately 20 per cent.

When the numbers are put together, the final availability for consumption works out to 14-15 million tonnes, far below the popularly touted numbers (production plus imports of 17-18 million tonnes.). A lot more scientific work deserves to go into the preparation of S&D for the pulses sector.

### **PEC invites bids for import of 15,000 tonnes of palmolein**

New Delhi, May 5:

State-owned trading firm PEC has invited bids for the import of 15,000 tonnes of RBD palmolein for sale in the domestic market.

The bids will close on May 12 and a decision on awarding the contract will be taken on the same day, the company said on its website.

The company has sought delivery of the consignment at the Chennai and Tuticorin ports in equal quantity (7,500 tonnes) from Indonesia and/or Malaysia, it added.

RBD palmolein is a refined, bleached and deodorised (RBD) form of palm oil that is extracted after crushing palm fruit.

It is used as edible cooking oil. Besides palmolein, palm oil also gives margarine and shortening, which are bakery fats.

MMTC, PEC and STC import edible oils on behalf of the government for distribution through ration shops. India imported over nine million tonnes of vegetable oils in the 2009-10 oil year (November-October), which is more than 50 per cent of its total domestic requirement.

The country imports palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia and soyabean oil from Argentina and Brazil. At present, there is zero duty on import of crude edible oils and 7.5 per cent on refined edible oils.

### **Slack demand holds soya oil steady**



Indore, May 5:

Soya oil ruled steady because of weak global cues and the absence of domestic demand.

In the spot market, soya refined was quoted at Rs 582-585 for 10 kg. But due to lack of domestic demand and weak KLC, soya refined prices declined to Rs 582-583. But even at this rate there were only few takers.

Soya solvent also ruled steady at Rs 550-555 on weak buying interest. In delivery, soya solvent was quoted at Rs 555 but it too had few takers at this rate.

In futures as well, soya oil witnessed grinding on weak Malaysian palm oil futures, besides lack of demand in the physical market. On the NBOT, soya refined May contract which opened at Rs 616.80, closed almost Rs 7 lower at Rs 609.70. Similarly, on the NCDEX soya oil futures closed lower on bearish foreign market.

Soya oil May contract on the NCDEX closed Rs 6.80 lower at Rs 612.20. Soya seeds also ruled firm at Rs 2,270-2,300 a quintal on subdued buying interest. In Indore *mandis*, soya seeds were

quoted at Rs 2,270-2,280 a quintal. Plant deliveries in soya bean were quoted at Rs 2,320-2,340, up Rs 20-25.

Soya DOC on Kandla port ruled steady at Rs 18,200-18,300 a quintal, while in the domestic market, DOC was quoted at Rs 17,200 a quintal.

### **Kerala to ban 20 toxic pesticides**

Thiruvananthapuram, May 5:

In tune with its policy to promote organic farming, the LDF government in Kerala has decided to ban nearly 20 types of highly toxic insecticides.

The decision was taken at a high level meeting convened by Agriculture Minister Mullakara Ratnakaran here yesterday, officials said on Thursday.

Carbonfurn Phorate, Methyl Parathion, Monocrotophons and Methyl Dmaters were some of the pesticides to be banned. Aerial spraying of pesticides will also be banned, they said.

The government is also considering a restriction on use of yellow category pesticides such as profenophos and triazohpos, the officials said.

A decision to grant special educational assistance to children affected by use of endosulfan pesticide in Kasaragod district was also taken in the meeting, they said.

As per the scheme, Rs 1,000 per annum will be given to each student up to seventh standard. Rs 2,000 per annum will be given to those studying in high schools and Rs 2,500 per annum to higher secondary students.

Kerala has been pressing for a nationwide ban on endosulfan pesticide as studies by experts had shown that its use in northern Kasaragod district had caused nearly 500 deaths and chronic health problems to hundreds.