THE HINDU

Published: November 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 12, 2011 04:21 IST

Exhibition showcases benefits of organic cotton

Staff Reporter

Visitors examining the various exhibits at the 'Cotton -- A Way Forward' Exhibition at Maison Colombani on Friday — Photo: T. Singaravelou

Most people wear cotton clothes, especially in summer, but how many stop to think where it comes from, how the cotton plant gets transformed during the industrial process and the difference that organic cotton could make.

The ‘Cotton – A way forward' exhibition at Maison Colombani does just that. With an installation that shows the different stages of the industry from the organic seeds to clothes we wear, this exhibition attempts to raise awareness of the need for organic cotton, which presently accounts for only 1 per cent of the cotton production in the country, according to organiser Uma Haimvathi.

There is also a set of photograph panels that show the life cycle of organic cotton versus genetically modified and other non-organically farmed cotton as well as a ‘Cotton Room', where visitors can sit on cotton pillows and watch a presentation of Kapas, the organic cotton project by Upasana in Auroville.

Although the yield of organic cotton is half of that of non-organic cotton, there are several advantages. Organic cotton is not only better for the environment, but the cost of production is much less than that of non-organic cotton as the amount of irrigation and pesticides necessary is much lesser, Ms. Haimvathi said.

“Through this exhibition, we are trying to raise awareness about organic cotton and its benefits amongst the people. We hope to change their way of thinking and realise how much organic cotton farming helps the entire community,” she said.

The exhibition will be on display until Sunday and is open for visitors between 11am and 8pm.

Published: November 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 12, 2011 04:24 IST

Training on farm equipment operation

Special Correspondent

The Agricultural Engineering Department would conduct training programmes on operation of farm equipment for rural youth and farmers in the district.

The week-long training would be conducted in four batches, with 20 trainees in each batch.

Youth and farmers, literate in Tamil and in the age group of 18 to 40, can participate in the camp. The training would cover operation of farm equipment, micro irrigation systems and crop protection equipment.

Interested persons from Tiruchi, Srirangam and Manapparai taluks can contact the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer, Agricultural Engineering Department, Jail Corner, Tiruchi, and those from Thottiyam, Musiri and Thuraiyur taluks can contact the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer, VII Cross, Parvathipuram, Musiri. Candidates from Lalgudi and Manachanallur taluks can contact the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer, V Cross, Paramasivapuram, Lalgudi, Collector Jayashree Muralidharan said in a press release.

Published: November 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 12, 2011 04:22 IST

Drought decreases demand for crop loans

Special Correspondent

Demand from farmers for crop loans which are being disbursed by the Government-run cooperative banks and societies declined this year following drought in more than 90 taluks in the State.

The Government has issued an order for sanctioning short-term crop loans by cooperatives at 1 per cent rate of interest to farmers from April 1, 2011.

Farmers are eligible to borrow short-term loans up to Rs. 3 lakh from cooperative societies.

Deficit reainfall

Minister for Cooperation Laxman S. Savadi told presspersons here on Friday that despite availability of funds with the cooperatives, crop loans to the tune of Rs. 1,000 crore have not been borrowed by farmers owing to deficit rainfall in several districts of southern and northern Karnataka. So far only Rs. 3,700 crore had been disbursed by district cooperative credit (DCC) banks and primary agricultural cooperative societies (PACS) during first six months of the year.

A target of Rs. 7,000 crore has been set for cooperatives to disburse loans at 1 per cent rate of interest in 2011-12.

Mr. Savadi said he was optimistic of achieving the target of loan disbursement as sugarcane growers just commenced cane plantation in north Karnataka districts. “Now farmers have been demanding loans for cane plantation and plantation will go on till December end,” the Minister said.The government has decided to reschedule loans borrowed by farmers in drought-hit districts. Based on the reports of DCC banks and the Revenue Department, the loans would be rescheduled, he said.

Cooperative Week

Mr. Savadi said Cooperative Week would be celebrated all over the State from November 14 to 20. A retired department official and five cooperatives would be honoured with “Sahakara Ratna” by the Chief Minister at a function at Nelamangala on November 14.

- *Loans to the tune of Rs. 1,000 crore have not been borrowed by farmers*
- *Cooperative Week to be celebrated all over the State from November 14*

Published: November 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 12, 2011 04:16 IST

Four districts in State chosen for subsidised grain scheme: Kharge

"The Centre has selected Gulbarga, Chitradurga, Davangere and Bidar districts for distribution of 35 kg of foodgrains every month at Rs. 3 a kg to below the poverty linefamilies," Union Labour and Employment Minister M. Mallikarjun Kharge said here on Friday.

He made the announcement after inaugurating the scheme by distributing the foodgrains at a ration shop at Rajapur locality. Mr. Kharge said the Union Government had selected 200 districts in the country for the scheme . The Minister said the scheme would ensure food security to BPL families.

He said that families covered under the Antyodaya scheme would also be covered. "I will monitor the implementation of the scheme. Laxity by officials in the implementation of the programme will not be tolerated," he said.

Aruna Chandrashekhar Patil, MLA for Gulbarga South, presided over the function.

Gulbarga Development Authority chairman Vidyasagar Kulkarni and former Mayor Ravindranath Honnalli were present.

- *Gulbarga, Chitradurga, Davangere and Bidar are the selected districts*
- *Implementation of the scheme will be closely monitored, says Kharge*

Published: November 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 12, 2011 04:16 IST

Horticulture, Agriculture departments get Rs. 92 crore

Special Correspondent

The Union Government has sanctioned Rs. 92.15 crore under the National Mission on Micro Irrigation for Horticulture and Agriculture departments, according to official sources here.

They said that under the scheme, drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation sets would be distributed to farmers at subsidised prices to boost agricultural production and prevent wastage of water.

They said the Horticulture Department would get 70 per cent of the funds allocated under the National Mission on Micro Irrigation, while the remaining had been allocated to the Agriculture Department.

They said farmers who got the sprinkler irrigation sets had to pay only 25 per cent of the total cost while the rest would be borne by the Union and State governments.

They said that for the drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation sets, 75 per cent subsidy would be provided to all categories of farmers up to a maximum of 2 ha per family and 50 per cent subsidy for farmers with holdings between 2 ha to 5 ha.

Sources said that the sprinkler irrigation sets would be supplied only for those crops where drip irrigation is uneconomical.

The Horticulture Department had set itself a target of covering 33,538 ha of land under drip irrigation under the National Mission on Micro Irrigation and 2,880 ha under the sprinkler irrigation.

They said the subsidy would be extended to all types of drip irrigation systemsand other low discharge irrigation systems.

Published: November 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 12, 2011 04:19 IST

Sugarcane farmers end agitation in Baramati

Staff Correspondent

The first instalment may be divided in two parts, says Patil

The 10-day agitation by sugarcane farmers across Maharashtra ended on Friday with the Maharashtra Government and farmers' organisations reaching a compromise on the price for sugarcane after a final meeting in Pune.

The Maharashtra Government agreed to give a higher price as the first advance than the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of Rs. 1,450 as decided by the Centre, and farmers agreed for a lower price starting from Rs. 1,800 instead of Rs. 2,350 that they had initially demanded.

Maharashtra Cooperation Minister Harshwardhan Patil, who held talks with farmers' organisations, made the announcement of the truce on the third-day of the deliberations. Different rates, based on the recovery rate of sugar in different regions, were decided. “Factories in Kolhapur region with a high recovery rate of sugar (13 per cent) will get Rs. 2,050 a tonne, Pune, Ahmednagar and Solapur region (with 11.5 per cent) will get Rs. 1,850 a tonne and those in Khandesh, Vidarbha, and Maharashtra will get Rs. 1,800 a tonne,” Mr. Patil said.

The second and the third instalments would be decided by the factories as per the final output. A government resolution would be brought into effect by the Sugar Commissionerate to ensure proper implementation of the decision, Mr. Patil said.

Mr. Patil's announcement came with a rider. “We will tell the banks to dispose the advance for the instalment as soon as possible. But the first instalment might be divided in two parts,” he said. To that, angry farmers said they would shutdown the factories if the decision was not implemented in totality. Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghtana, led by Raju Shetty, Shetkari Sanghtana led by Raghunath Patil, and Shetkari Sanghtana led by Sharad Joshi participated in the talks.

The decision signalled an end to Mr. Shetty's four-day hunger strike in Baramati. “We have called for a practical solution. The proposal by the State government is acceptable to us. Our struggle will continue to bring about major decisions for the benefit of farmers. We will fight for lifting the export ban on sugar,” Mr. Shetty said upon hearing the news of the decision. Hundreds of sugarcane farmers across the State had joined Mr. Shetty in Baramati.

Mr. Patil supported lifting the ban on sugar export, upon consultation with the Centre. Policy level issues need to be worked on by both the parties, Mr. Patil said. “We (State government) will meet Union Minister for Agriculture and the Prime Minister and demand for lifting the ban on sugar export. We will ask for a cut on the levy on sugar, which at present stands at 10 per cent. The method of devising the FRP needed to be revised,” Mr. Patil said. He mooted decontrol of the sugar industry. He said the State Government would demand for a reduction in the excise duty.

Mr. Patil said if ethanol, a by-product of sugarcane, was given a better rate by the Government, then it would benefit the farmers. “The existing rate of Rs. 27 a litre for ethanol should be increased to Rs. 35 and the amount of ethanol mixed with petrol and diesel should be increased from 5 per cent to 10 per cent,” Mr. Patil said.

Mr. Patil said the cases against agitating farmers filed by the State police over the last 10 days would be withdrawn. “I will request Home Minister R.R. Patil to withdraw the cases,” he said.

- *Cases against farmers filed by the State police will be withdrawn*
- *Patil says State government will urge Centre to lift the export ban*

Published: November 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 12, 2011 04:24 IST

State government to ensure adequate supply of fertilizers

Special Correspondent

The State government has decided to ensure the supply of adequate quantities of fertilizers to farmers at a reasonable price.

Agriculture Minister S. Damodaran, who reviewed the working of his department, advised joint directors in all districts to see to it that the inputs were being supplied in full measure.

A release issued on Friday stated that the government had assessed the requirements of the State.

For interacting with farmers and disseminating information regarding latest technological developments in agriculture, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had sanctioned the purchase of 213 vehicles at a cost of Rs.16.29 crore. Initially, 100 vehicles would be procured at a cost of Rs.6.51 crore.

The release stated that compared to the previous year, an additional 65,000 hectares was harvested for the kuruvai crop this year, as the date of release of water from the Mettur dam for irrigation was advanced by six days. The productivity was 6.5 tonnes per hectare in some trial cases.

Published: November 12, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: November 12, 2011 04:24 IST

Joint working group on fisheries to meet soon

R.K. Radhakrishnan

The Joint Working Group on Fisheries, which India and Sri Lanka set up to resolve the vexatious problem related to fishing in the narrow stretch of waters separating the two countries, will soon meet in Colombo, officials said.

“We are looking at dates in December. Both sides are still working out suitable dates,” said an official, who is part of the Group.

An earlier meeting of the Group, scheduled for last month, was called off. “There was a bit of a scheduling problem last time. There was no substantive issue last time… We would also like to ensure that a representative from Tamil Nadu is also included," Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai said, asked about the postponement.

The fishermen's associations have held meetings earlier too, and the Sri Lankan side has wanted Indian fishermen out of its waters. "I have not seen the details, but there is one version… that the meetings which took place earlier did not really directly involve the fishermen, but there were some people from some NGOs and others claiming to represent fishermen who were also part of the groups who may not have focused entirely only on the fishermen's particular concerns. The idea is to see whether there is a limited amount of water between our two countries, and there are fishermen communities on both sides," he said.

Statistical chart

Mr. Mathai recalled that when he was in Jaffna recently the government agent showed him a statistical chart showing how fishing had been affected by the large-scale crossings from India, and the difficulties faced by the Sri Lankan fishermen.

"The Sri Lankans will always put it that the real issue they face is with the large trawlers which do bottom-trawling. The ordinary small boats, they do not really have too much of problem there.

So, what can be discussed between the fishermen is, is there a possibility for both countries… to assist their fishermen's groups to go a little beyond these restricted waters into the wider area of the Indian Ocean where there are foreign fishing fleets actually harvesting a lot of the fish which really belongs to this region? So these are the kinds of issues we thought if the fishermen's associations would come up with some specific suggestions, maybe the governments could take some action to help on both sides."

During Thursday's meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Mahinda Rajapaksa, the issue of internally displaced persons also came up.

Business Standard

Monday, Nov 14, 2011

Mills may take Rs 400-cr hit on cane payments

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai November 12, 2011, 0:04 IST

Maharashtra's ailing sugar industry on Friday heaved a sigh of relief after the agitating trade unions representing sugarcane growers and the state government arrived at an agreement over the payment of first advance to cane growers in the current crushing season.

A senior minister told Business Standard: "According to the consensus formula, sugar mills from Kolhapur, Sangli and Satara would pay a first advance of Rs 2,050 a tonne (last year they paid Rs 2,000), while mills from under-developed Vidarbha, Marathwada and Khandesh would pay Rs 1,800 a tonne (Rs 1,750). And, Rs 1,850 a tonne (Rs 1,800) is to be paid by mills in Pune, Ahmadnagar, Nashik and Solapur."

With Friday's agreement, the first advance payment would be higher than the central government's fixed fair and remunerative price (FRP) of Rs 1,450 a tonne at 9.5 per cent recovery for Maharashtra. Mills are expected to take a hit of at least Rs 400 crore with Friday's agreement.

The government, which was firm on the FRP of Rs 1,450 a tonne, was forced to change its stand in view of farmers' outrage. Trade unions also relaxed their demand of payment of a first advance of Rs 2,350 a tonne and a final payment of Rs 3,300 a tonne.

The Uttar Pradesh government has increased its state advisory price for sugarcane to Rs 2,500 a tonne from Rs 2,100 a tonne. The ongoing agitation and the prolonged monsoon session had already delayed crushing.

Only 40 out of 150 mills had commenced crushing and the industry as a whole has so far incurred a loss of Rs 600 crore. On an average, mills are incurring a loss of Rs 625 a tonne. In Maharashtra, the daily crushing capacity in operation is 510,000 tonnes.

Despite revision in the sugar production estimates by the state government, mills would have to strive to crush 7.5 million tonnes of sugarcane to produce 8.7 million tonnes of sugar. Earlier, the government had projected sugar production of 9.3 million tonnes by crushing 8.2 million tonnes of sugarcane.

Guarseed futures plunge on heavy selling

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 11, 2011, 12:25 IST

Guarseed futures prices fell by Rs 110 to Rs 3,996 per quintal today, as traders offloaded their holdings tracking weak spot market sentiments.

Market analysts said increased supply of new crops and weak demand from guargum making industries mainly pulled down the prices.At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange platform, guarseed for current month November's contract plummeted by Rs 110, or 2.68%, to Rs 3,996 per quintal, clocking an open interest of 55,990 lots.
Most active December contract also declined by Rs 12, or 0.30%, to Rs 4,044 per quintal, revealing an open interest of 1,80,390 lots.

THE HINDU Business Line

High prices could trip basmati exports

Vishwanath Kulkarni

Also pose a risk of buyers shifting to Pakistan

RISING EXPORTS

	Quantity (million tonnes)	Value (Rs crore)
2010-11	2.18	10,578
2009-10	2.01	10,889
2008-09	1.55	9,477

Source: Apeda & DGCIS

New Delhi, Nov. 11:

A minimum export price (MEP) of $900 a tonne for basmati rice, considered high in the current global market, may spoil the party for Indian exporters.

The exporters want the Government to either revise the MEP for basmati in line with prevailing global prices or abolish it completely and leave the pricing to market forces.

Prices of basmati in the past one year have crashed from an average of $1,100 to $650 a tonne. This crash has been triggered by factors such as a consecutive bumper harvest in key producer India and huge carry forward stocks, weakening demand from the financial crisis hit European Union and the US, and payments issues surrounding Iran, the biggest buyer for the premium Pusa 1121 variety.

Unless the Government intervenes now, exporters said they face the risk of losing their market share to rival Pakistan.

“There is no rationale to keep the MEP as the Government has already opened up exports of non-basmati rice,” said Mr Anil Mittal, CMD of KRBL Ltd, the country's largest exporter. MEP was introduced a couple of years ago to ensure that non-basmati rice is not exported as basmati.

As prices of paddy have dropped by 20-25 per cent this year on account of a 10-15 per cent increase in crop size, the buyer is not willing to pay a high price. “If the Government does not (do a) rethink on high MEP, buyers are bound to shift to other suppliers like Pakistan,” Mr Mittal said.

Low realisation

The All India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA) has already written to the Government to resolve this issue as importers are hesitant to sign new contracts. With paddy arrivals in full swing, farmers are realising a price of just Rs 14-16 a kg, against Rs 21-23 last year. Shipments of the rice from the new crop are likely to start in the next two to three weeks, exporters said.

“Exporting at a high is becoming difficult as no business is getting concluded,” said Mr Vijay Sethia, President, AIREA. Unless, it is revised downwards, there could be a delay in shipments and payment cycles, he added.

Basmati shipments in October are already down 38 per cent over the corresponding period last year. In September, the shipments were down 22 per cent, Mr Sethia said while expressing confidence that the overall exports will be at last year's levels.

India exported 2.18 million tonnes of basmati in 2010-11 mainly to West Asia, the United States and the European Union.

“MEP is proving a bottleneck. It should be done away with as it has nothing to do with the pricing that's driven by demand-supply situation,” said Mr Gurnam Arora, Joint Managing Director, Kohinoor Foods Ltd. The company is targeting a 30 per cent increase in exports to 1 lakh tonnes this fiscal.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Rubber production increases 8.4% in Oct

C.J. Punnathara

Kochi, Nov. 11:

Rubber production in the country rose 8.4 per cent to 89,300 tonnes during October. The spurt in production was across all geographies of the rubber-growing belt in the country, sources in the Rubber Board said. Clear skies in October after bounteous rains during September were the principal reason behind the sharp rise in production.

Going by the early indications, production during the current month is also expected to look up as weather has remained favourable so far. Given the remunerative prices prevailing in the market, farmers are also putting in extra effort to boost production. The tapping intensity has increased along with growing area coming under rain guarding.

With the onset of the North-East monsoon, rain guarding is also expected to enable greater tapping operations, which is likely to boost production during the current month.

Consumption of rubber dipped 6.3 per cent to 76,000 tonnes. However, there has been an improvement of 2,000 tonnes over the consumption last month. Rubber Board sources attributed the fall in consumption to reduced off-take by automobile companies in the Indian market and global uncertainties. The problem has been compounded by a major slack in consumption by one specific Indian company, sources said.

However, the overall consumption for the first seven months of the current fiscal still remains positive. The reduced off-take by automobile companies is just beginning to bite and things will turn positive if the automobile market rebounds in the coming months, the sources pointed out. Rubber production increased by five per cent to 4,80,700 tonnes during April-October 2011.

Rubber imports remained lower during April-October as against the corresponding period of last year. This was in contrast to the export sector which witnessed a strident growth. Rubber stocks at the end of October was 2,47,000 tonnes as against 2,53,877 tonnes last year.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Cotton blooms on hopes of rising demand

Our Correspondent

Rajkot, Nov. 11:

Hopes of local and export demand rising from next week checked the fall in cotton prices on Friday.

The Sankar-6 variety was traded at Rs 38,000-38,500 a candy of 356 kg. While 33,000-35,000 bales of 170 kg each arrived in Gujarat, 1.1-1.2 lakh bales arrived in rest of the country on Friday. Raw cotton or *kapas* fetched Rs 821-910 for a *maund* of 20 kg while for delivery to ginners it sold at Rs 920-925 for a *maund*.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, the December contract increased by Rs 300 at Rs 17,800 a bale while January gained Rs 290 at Rs 17,800 a bale.

Local and export demand is likely to be higher in the coming days and reports on Chinese imports may push up prices next week, a Rajkot-based broker said. Though arrivals may cap the gains, prices will not fall at present, he added.

According to traders' estimate, so far 24 lakh bales have arrived in the current season. Seven to eight lakh bales have arrived in Gujarat, seven lakh bales in the North zone and three to four lakh bales in Maharashtra.

Meanwhile, the Union Minister of State for Textiles, Ms Panabaaka Lakshmi, said the Cotton Corporation of India would open over 275 purchase centres across the country, of which 75 would come up in Andhra Pradesh. She said farmers were getting Rs 3,800 a quintal from private buyers and the corporation's intervention was not needed now.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Spot rubber rules steady

Our Correspondent
Kottayam, Nov. 11:

Physical rubber prices finished almost unchanged on Friday. Though the domestic futures were still in a declining phase in near months, the cash market managed to sustain at the prevailing levels since it ruled much below the November series on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

Sheet rubber recovered marginally to Rs 186 (185) a kg according to traders. The grade finished flat at Rs 186 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi according to Rubber Board.

The November series weakened to Rs 190.70 (196.23) and December to Rs 191.70 (191.86) while the January series moved up to Rs 193 (192.82), February to Rs 195.02 (194.13), March to Rs 197 (195.57) and April to Rs 201.50 (199.86) a kg on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 161.82 (165.87) a kg at Bangkok. The November futures improved to ¥248.5 (Rs 161.17) from ¥244 a kg during the day session and then to ¥254 (Rs 164.72) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 186 (185); RSS-5: 181 (181); ungraded: 172 (172); ISNR 20: 171 (171) and latex 60 per cent: 108 (108).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Consensus on global research centre eludes cotton community

M.R. SUBRAMANI

Mumbai, Nov. 11:
The global cotton community has been unable to find a consensus to form an International Cotton Research Centre and, instead, has decided to form a network of cotton researchers, organisations and institutions.

A resolution to this effect was unanimously passed at the end of the Fifth World Cotton Research Conference here on Friday and this will now be sent to the International Cotton Advisory Council (ICAC) which had asked research personnel to take the lead in forming the centre.

Logjam

However, the proposal, made in 2009 during a meet in South Africa, ran into problem with countries such as the US, Brazil and Australia questioning the need for such a centre on the grounds that a lot of research on cotton has been done so far.

On the other hand, India, Pakistan and some African countries were in favour of such a centre.

An ad hoc committee was formed during the conference here and 20 individuals from 13 countries aired their views for and against the setting up of such a centre.

With consensus eluding the setting up of a centre, it was finally decided that cotton growing nations will strengthen global cooperation among themselves, research personnel, organisations and institutions through a network.

Meanwhile, the ICAC also has decided to hand over to research personnel the responsibility of running the World Cotton Research Conferences.

The ICAC Executive Director, Mr Terry P. Townsend, told at the valedictory session that the council will still extend secretarial services while the Association of Cotton Research will take over the conduct of the conferences.

Participation in the association will be voluntary and the ICAC will soon spell out the norms.

BRAZIL TO HOST

Brazil has won the right to hold the sixth World Cotton Research Conference. It will held during June 20-24, 2016 at Goiania in Goias State, some 200 km from the Brasilia.

The current conference saw the participation of 31 countries, including India, with 135 foreign delegates and 440 Indian delegates taking part in the proceedings.

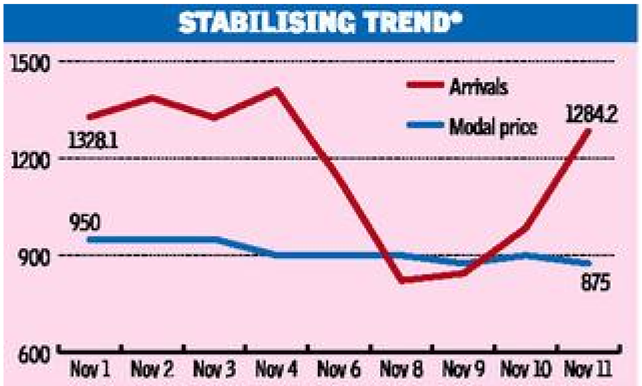
In his address, the Maharashtra Agriculture Secretary, Dr Sudhir Goyal, called on research scientists and industry to come together to take the findings of the lab to the land.

He also said new ways had to be found to help farmers cut costs and improve production.

While the US, Brazil and Australia question the need for such a centre, India, Pakistan and some African countries are in its favour.

Onions steady as supply matches demand

M.R. Subramani



*Arrivals in tonnes; price in Rs/quintal at Pune APMC in Maharashtra

Mumbai, Nov. 11:

Onion prices were stable this week in markets around growing areas on increased arrivals and constant demand.

“Prices were stable as nearly 17,400 tonnes of onion arrived in various markets in Maharashtra in the last three days,” said Mr Rupesh Jaju, Director of United Pacific Agro Pvt Ltd that ships onions.

Prices ruled between Rs 500 and 1,200 a quintal depending on quality but most of the trades took place between Rs 900 and Rs 1,000 a quintal.

“Arrivals are good in Karnataka, too, and the quality of arrivals is good,” said Mr Madan Prakash, Director of Chennai-based Rajathi Group of Companies that exports agri-produce.

One of the reasons arrivals have improved is because rains have ended for the time being.

“Some quantity of the new crop in Maharashtra is arriving near Pune. The quality of this is good,” said Mr Prakash. These are somewhat red in colour and is preferred by some Malaysian buyers. Since these have a shorter shelf life, they are exported in bags and reefer containers.

“Demand is constant in the domestic market. But there are good enquiries from the Gulf, Malaysia and Singapore,” said Mr Jaju.

Demand could rise if the Government cuts the minimum export price (MEP) of $475 a tonne set by the Government in September after it lifted a ban on its shipments.

Earlier this week, the Union Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, said that his Ministry will write to the Commerce Ministry this week to consider a cut in the MEP.

Supplies could decline in the next couple of weeks and onion prices could rise, said Mr Jaju.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Palmolein flares up on Malaysian cues

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Nov. 11:

Barring palmolein which shot up by Rs 12 for 10 kg, indigenous edible oils weakened on Friday.

A local refiner increased the palmolein price by Rs 12, tracking strong crude palm oil (CPO) futures while other refiners increased it by Rs 3. They raised the soya oil price by Rs 3.

Groundnut oil, soya oil and sunflower oil were unchanged, rapeseed oil lost Re 1 and cotton oil dropped by Rs 7 for 10 kg as selling in North Indian markets increased. Volumes in the local market were negligible because of poor demand.

Resellers quoted palmolein at Rs 545-547. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 558-560 for November delivery, super palmolein at Rs 588 and soya refined oil at Rs 615. Ruchi offered palmolein at Rs 546-550 for November delivery, soya refined oil at Rs 610 for November delivery and sunflower refined oil at Rs 673 for delivery between November 20 and 30. Allana quoted palmolein at Rs 548 for delivery on November 20. In Saurashtra and Rajkot, groundnut oil rose by Rs 5 to Rs 1,280 for a *telia* tin and to Rs 830 for loose (10 kg). Cotton (wash) oil was at Rs 575-576 (Rs 583).

Malaysia's BMD CPO's December contracts closed at MYR3,146 (MYR3,136) and January at MYR3,135 (MYR3,119) a tonne. Soya oil for November delivery closed at Rs 622.50 (Rs 620.80) while for December was at Rs 623.40 (Rs 618.70) on National Board of Trade in Indore.

Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil — 840 (840); soya refined oil — 605 (605); sunflower exp. ref. — 620 (620); sunflower ref. — 680 (680); rapeseed ref. oil

— 695 (696); rapeseed expeller ref. — 666 (665); cotton ref. oil — 598 (605); and palmolein — 545 (533).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Pulses flat despite slack buying

Our Correspondent

Indore, Nov. 11:

Except for tur, most pulse seeds and pulses were flat on Friday despite sluggish demand.

In the spot market, chana (kanta) sold at Rs 3,450-3,475 a quintal, while chana (desi) was quoted at Rs 3,400. Chana dal (average) sold at at Rs 4,250-4,275, chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,375-4,400 and chana dal (bold) at Rs 4,475-4,500. Masoor (bold) sold at Rs 2,875-2,900, while masoor (medium) sold at Rs 2,625-2,700. Masoor dal (average) fetched Rs 3,275-3,300, masoor dal (medium) Rs 3,400-3,425 and masoor dal (bold) Rs 3,500-3,525.

Tur (Maharashtra) declined marginally at Rs 3,550-3,600 (Rs 3,600-3,625) on sluggish demand, while tur (Nimari) was stable at Rs 2,500-2,800 despite slack demand. Tur dal, on the other hand, was flat despite slack demand, with tur marka being quoted at Rs 6,400, tur dal (*sawa* no.) at Rs 4,700-4,725 and tur dal (full) at Rs 5,600-5,650.

Urad and moong remained unchanged on steady demand. Urad (bold) was at Rs 3,600. Urad (medium) was at Rs 2,800-3,000. A thousand bags of urad arrived in local mandis. Urad dal was unchanged despite weak buying support, with urad (mongar) at Rs 6,000-6,200, urad dal (medium) at Rs 4,900 and urad dal (average) at Rs 4,200-4,300.

Moong and its dal were unchanged despite subdued demand. Five to six hundred bags of moong arrived in local mandis. Moong (bold) sold at Rs 4,200-4,400, while moong (medium) sold at Rs 3,800-4,000. Moong (mongar) was flat at Rs 5,700-5,800, moong dal (bold) at Rs 5,450-5,500 and moong dal (medium) at Rs 5,100-5,150.

Dollar chana was firm at Rs 7,600-8,100 a quintal even as 1,000 bags arrived.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Full-grain rice may fall further on new stock

Our Correspondent

Karnal, Nov. 11:

Despite restricted trading, the rice market witnessed a steady trend on Friday, with prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice remaining mostly unchanged.

Prices of full-grain rice were range bound but in the negative territory. Retail traders are buying in limited quantity because of the continuous fall in prices, said Mr Amit Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company.

Full-grain rice prices may decrease further when new stock arrives, but a major drop in the prices of broken rice is unlikely, as domestic demand for broken rice is good at present, said Mr Chandna.

Prices of Pusa-1121 (steam) was quoted at Rs 4,450-4,500 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) was at Rs 3,450-3,500 a quintal. Pure basmati (raw) sold at Rs 5,350 a quintal, while basmati sela was sold at Rs 3,700 a quintal.

Among the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar sold at Rs 3,400, Dubar at Rs 3,000 and Mongra at Rs 2,400.

PR-11 (sela) sold at Rs 2,100-2,170, while PR-11 (raw) quoted at Rs 1,900-2,100.

Permal (sela) sold at Rs 1,800-1,950, Permal (steam) at Rs 2,030 and Permal (raw) at Rs 1,900.

Around 1.05 lakh bags arrived at the Karnal grain market terminal.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Sugar extends gains on export hopes

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Nov. 11:

Sugar prices at the Vashi market extended gains for the fourth consecutive day by Rs 25-30 a quintal on Friday at all levels, taking the total increase to Rs 170 in the spot market this month.

Mill tender rates shot up by Rs 150-175 this week, leading to a total rise of Rs 200 this month till Friday.

A wholesaler said firm trend continued at the upper level and producers were not willing to sell at lower price on expectations that the Centre will allow more exports and higher cost of production if cane price was raised by the State Government in line with Uttar Pradesh.

M-grade fine-quality sugar was sold at Rs 3,200 a quintal in the retail market.

On Thursday evening, 18-20 mills sold nearly one lakh bags, including a rail rake of 27,000 bags sold to buyers in the East, at Rs 2,880-2,930 (Rs 2,850-2,900) for S-grade and Rs 3,000-3,080 (Rs 2,970-3,050) for M-grade. Arrivals and local dispatches in the Vashi market were 50-52 truckloads each.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade — Rs 2,991-3,041 (Rs 2,868-3,012); and M-grade — Rs 3,036-3,192 (Rs 3,021-3,162).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade — Rs 2,960-3,020 (Rs 2,950-3,000); and M grade — Rs 3,040-3,150 (Rs 3,020-3,120).

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)

Lack of new orders drags turmeric

Our Correspondent

Erode, Nov. 11:

Turmeric bags arrived in plenty on Friday, driving down the prices by Rs 150-200 a quintal.

"Because of the weekend, close to 14,000 bags were brought to the market. But the farmers were disappointed as only 45 per cent of the stocks were sold as traders did not receive new orders.

The winter has begun in many parts of North India and no trader there has placed new orders. Sales at the Nizamabad and Sangli markets are also poor," said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

The conditions drove farmers to limit selling to only 40-50 per cent of the stocks. Traders also bought just so to fulfil orders, averting the risk of excess stocking up.Enquiries for the hybrid turmeric were few, sending the prices down by Rs 200 a quintal. Sale of the variety was also poor, said farmers.

Arrivals are expected to decrease on Monday. Minimum price for turmeric at all markets have fallen below Rs 4,000 a quintal.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,449-4,736 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 3,229-4,376 a quintal.

Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,869-5,276 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 4,398-4,699 a quintal. Only 701 bags of the 3,412 that arrived were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,219-4,709 a quintal and the root variety at Rs 3,039-4,389 a quintal. All the 650 bags kept for sale were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,082-4,789 a quintal and the root variety Rs 3,822-4,549 a quintal. Out of 1,138 bags that arrived for sales, 1,062 were sold.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated November 12, 2011)