THE HINDU

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HYDERABAD, September 14, 2011

Food processing sector on fast track

Chief Minister Kiran Kumar Reddy announces five mega food parks

Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy has asked officials to place food-processing industry in the State on fast track to complete the contemplated projects at the earliest by extending cooperation to entrepreneurs in areas of common infrastructure and other forms of assistance.

He announced that another five mega food parks which will provide direct employment to over 2,500 people and engage 7.5 lakh others indirectly, will be set up in the State in addition to the one that came up at Mogili in Chittoor district involving an investment of Rs 125 crore.

Besides, 100 mini product-specific food parks will be established in the State by 2017, each with an investment of Rs 10 crore in districts of Srikakulam, (cashew), Visakhapatnam (sea food), Nizamabad (turmeric), Nalgonda (citrus), Krishna, Chittoor (mango), Kurnool (papaya) and Anantapur (groundnut).

Reviewing the progress made in the food-processing sector following recent initiatives with officials here on Tuesday, Mr Reddy identified fish, milk, vegetables, fruits and pickles as the areas in the State on which emphasis should be laid under the latest policy brought by the Centre, to set up processing units, as they had tremendous potential for employment. “The food-processing sector should be developed on a mission mode”.

The meeting which was attended by C. R. Biswal, Principal Secretary, Industries and others, decided to take up training for self-help groups and unorganised sector people to upscale their operations through capital fusion, technology transfer etc.

- *To provide direct employment to 2,500 people*
- *These will be in addition to the one at Mogili*

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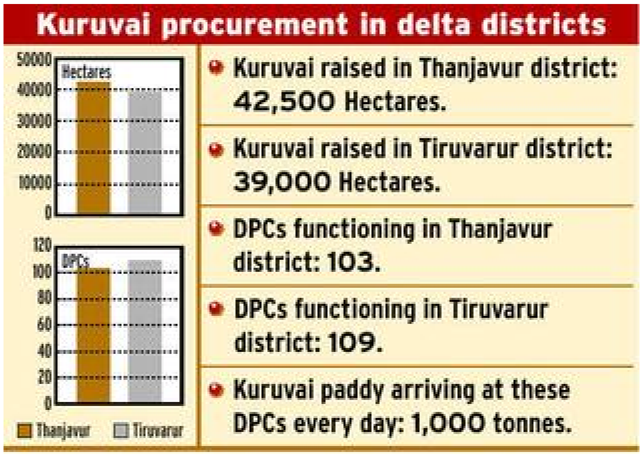
THANJAVUR, September 14, 2011

Procurement of kuruvai paddy at DPCs commences in two districts

Early opening of Mettur dam leads to advanced cultivation



Kuruvai paddy has started arriving at the direct purchase centres (DPCs) of the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC) in Thanjavur and Tiruvarur district.

Early cultivation

With early opening of the Mettur dam, the cultivation was advanced this year.

According to R.Pichai, senior regional manager (SRM), TNCSC, Thanjavur, 1,000 tonnes of kuruvai paddy arrive at the DPCs every day.

There were 46 DPCs functioning in the district and now 57 more have been added.

More centres would be opened depending upon the requirement.

We expect 1,50,000 tonnes of kuruvai paddy to be procured this year in Thanjavur, Mr. Pichai said.

Kuruvai has been raised in 42,500 hectares this year in Thanjavur.

The price is less in the market compared to the price given at the DPCs. TNCSC is paying Rs 1,050 per quintal for common variety of paddy - Rs 1,000 plus Rs 50 as incentive, and Rs 1,100 per quintal for Grade A variety - Rs. 1,030 plus Rs. 70 for fine variety.

T.Thiagarajan, SRM, Tiruvarur, said 1,000 tonnes of paddy reach the DPCs every day. There are 109 DPCs functioning in the district at present.

Fifty seven more would be added from September 15. Paddy with moisture content up to 20 per cent is taken in the DPCs.

Kuruvai has been raised in 39,000 hectares in Tiruvarur this year.

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Arrival of potash comforting to farmers

With the arrival of potash from Israel, farmers in Cumbum valley heaved a sigh of relief hoping that import of fertilizers will ease shortage of agriculture inputs in the district.

At present, the State Government had supplied 400 tonnes of potash to the district to meet the growing demand during this season. Total demand of potash for this season was estimated to be around 800 tonnes.

The district required at least 4,000 tonnes of different varieties of fertilizers every year to cultivate all kinds of crops including vegetables, grains, pulses, cereals, oilseeds and long-term crops like banana and sugarcane.

Another batch of 400 tonnes of potash was expected to reach the district next month.

Published: September 14, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 14, 2011 04:06 IST Pune, September 14, 2011

Onions rot as farmers, traders continue strike in Nashik

Chief Minister Chavan promises to take up the issue with the Centre

Wholesale onion markets in Nashik remained shut for the fifth consecutive day on Tuesday with farmers and traders protesting against the Centre's ban on onion exports refusing to auction their produce.

Promise

Amid fears of the tonnes of onions rotting as a result of the protest, Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan promised that he would take up the issue with the Centre. “The ban on export should be lifted. Maharashtra is ready to follow all the conditions. Farmers must get adequate returns for their produce,” Mr. Chavan said at a public function in Satara.

In Nashik, Pankaj Bhujbal of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) staged a “rasta roko” along with farmers from Nandgaon.

“The farmers are suffering because of the ban, which is not justified. The untimely rains have not helped,” he said.

The Centre had banned the export of onions on Friday. Following the decision, wholesale onion markets run by Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees (APMCs) in Nashik have been shut. Nashik is the largest onion producing district with the wholesale market in Lasalgaon being the largest in Asia.

Lasalgaon APMC employee Narendra Wadhavne told *The Hindu* on Tuesday evening that with the ban, the price of onions crashed to Rs. 500 a quintal. “Before the strike, the price was Rs. 1,000 a quintal. It is almost half now,” he said.

With the export ban, traders lose out on business because of the lack of orders, and hence they bought the produce from farmers at a very low price,

Mr. Wadhavne said. Protesting against the low prices, farmers had refused to sell their produce. “The traders cannot even buy and store, as there is lack of storage space,” he said.

Mr. Wadhavne said seven lakh tonnes of summer crop of onions had been lying in the Lasalgaon market. Much of it was rotting, he said. “If this is not sold by October 15, when the winter produce starts pouring into the market, then the prices will fall even lower,” he said. “The onion farmers in Nashik have become extremely rebellious,” he said.

Onion farmer Sanjay Jadhav said: “This is absolute dictatorship by the Centre. Everyone is suffering due to the ban — the farmers and the traders. We will continue the protests till the ban is lifted.”

Another source said that Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil would be meeting Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Wednesday to discuss the issue.

However, Vikhe Patil could not be reached , as his cell phone was switched off.

- *Price of onion touches Rs. 500 a quintal*
- *7 lakh tonnes lying at Lasalgaon market*

Published: September 14, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 14, 2011 04:16 IST Shimoga, September 14, 2011

30 irrigation projects to be completed this year

They will help irrigate 1.25 lakh hectares of land: Sadananda Gowda

Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda and his wife Datty Sadananda Gowda offering 'bagina' at the Bhadra reservoir near Shimoga on Tuesday. Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Suresh Kumar, and president of the zilla panchayat Shubha Krishnamurthy are seen.

The State government has planned to complete 30 major and medium irrigation projects this year, Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda has said.

Addressing a public meeting after offering “bagina” to the Bhadra reservoir near here on Tuesday, he said 1.25 lakh hectares of land would be irrigated after completion of these projects.

The government had allocated Rs. 6,029 crore for irrigation in this year's budget. Modernisation work in the command areas of the Tunga Bhadra, Bhadra and Kabini reservoirs would save 8 tmcft of water, the Chief Minister said.

Financial assistance had been extended to farmers in Gadag and Haveri districts to undertake drip irrigation, he said.

He promised to develop a garden downstream of the Bhadra reservoir on the model of the Brindavan Gardens at Krishna Raja Sagar near Mysore.

He directed the officials concerned to prepare an action plan for the purpose soon. Storage in major reservoirs of the State was satisfactory this year. Unfortunately, Chitradurga and Bagalkot districts faced scarcity of rain.

Deputy commissioners had been asked to take action to tackle drought, the Chief Minister said.

Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Suresh Kumar, and legislators K.G. Kumaraswamy, M.P. Kumaraswamy, Suresh, and R.K. Siddaramanna were present.

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‘Crop holiday' for sugarcane?

After paddy farmers, it appears to be the turn of sugarcane growers to go for ‘crop holiday'. Members of the Andhra Sugars Reserved Area Sugarcane Suppliers Association served an ultimatum on the management of Andhra Sugars on Monday, expressing their inability to raise sugarcane from the next crop season, beginning November 15 this year. Vexed with the low fair and remunerative price (Rs. 1,410 per tonne), soaring input and labour costs, sugarcane growers under the purview of the three factories run by the Andhra Sugars at Bhimadole, Taduvai and Tanuku took a decision in favour of the crop holiday at a meeting at Tanuku.

The growers in the crop area coming under the jurisdictions of the three factories together, raise 8 to 10 lakh tonnes of sugarcane, less than 50 per cent of the actual potential. The ultimatum is a follow up to a resolution adopted by the associations at Tanuku on August 25 which sought to enforce the crop holiday all over the State. The associations expressed the view that it was very difficult for the growers to undertake sugarcane cultivation if the government failed to fix the FRP (fair and remunerative price) at Rs 3,500 per tonne.

‘Meaningless'

N.V.S. Sarma, secretary of the federation, said the fixation of the FRP at Rs. 1,410 a tonne was meaningless at a time when the factories were offering a price more than Rs 20,000. In border areas such Bodhan in the Telangana region, the factory managements have been offering up to Rs. 2,500 in a bid to prevent migration of the produce into the sugar-rich Maharashtra, he added. The federation wants the government to take stock of a gradual fall in the sugarcane area and take necessary steps for the crop revival. The State produced 1.10 lakh tonnes of sugarcane last year as against the potential of 2 crore tonnes since cultivation proved to be economically unviable for the growers.

The next tormenting problem for the growers is labour, according to Mr. Sarma. The labour cost at the plantation level has doubled this year over the previous year from Rs. 100-150 to 250-300 per hand. An 8-member group demanded a wage of Rs. 2,400 per acre for roping in the current season as against Rs. 1,700-1,800 in the previous year, Mr. Sarma added.

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KARIMNAGAR, September 14, 2011

‘Call off the strike, protect farmers'

Minister for Civil Supplies D. Sridhar Babu has called upon employees, teachers and workers to rethink the general strike in the interest of general public and call it off to protect the farming community.

The fertilizer stocks which had arrived were not distributed to the farmers due to the general strike. The supply of essential commodities should not be affected due to the strike, he maintained.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Mr. Sridhar Babu said majority farmers were relying solely on agricultural wells and bore-wells for irrigation needs in Telangana. The strike would hamper coal production in Singareni and affect power generation at thermal power stations, thus affecting the farmers of the region again, he pointed out appealing to the employees to reconsider the strike.

He charged that TRS president TRS president K. Chandrashekhar Rao had not uttered a word about Telangana when associated with TDP and was now using the sentiment for his selfish gains.

Legislators A. Praveen Reddy and A. Mohan, former ZP chairman A. Laxman Kumar and others were present.

- *Fertilizer stocks which had arrived were not distributed to farmers due to the general strike*
- *Chandrashekhar Rao did not utter a word about Telangana when associated with TDP: Minister*

Published: September 14, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: September 14, 2011 04:05 IST
Chandigarh, September 14, 2011

Haryana cotton growers selling crop in Punjab due to strike

With ginners not showing any sign of withdrawing agitation till their demands are met, cotton growers in Haryana are forced to either offload their crop in neighbouring markets of Punjab or store it at their homes.

Though cotton arrival has not picked up because of the recent downpour, farmers are bringing their crop from Dabwali and Tohana in Haryana to *mandis* of Sardulgarh, Ratia, Mansa and Bareta in Punjab, traders said.

“Almost 100 quintals of crop arrived in Dabwali and Tohana (in Haryana) which was sold in Punjab by farmers,” traders informed.

With the deadlock between ginners and the State authorities continuing, some cotton growers are stocking up their crop at their homes and waiting for the strike to end.

Rally planned

“Our crop is lying at home as ginners are not buying in Haryana,” a Sirsa-based cotton grower Girdhari said.

Even the agents are asking the farmers not to bring their crop to *mandis* in the absence of any buyer.

Cotton growers have decided to hold a rally in Sirsa to urge district authorities to resolve the issue at the earliest. “If the strike of cotton ginners does not come to an end soon, then it will be the farmers who will suffer the most,” a farmer said.

Haryana cotton ginners are not buying crop from farmers in a protest against the high rate of market fee and rural development fund.

“We will continue to be on strike till our demands are met,” Haryana Cotton Ginners Association president Sushil Mittal said on Tuesday.

About 140 cotton ginners are seeking reduction in market fee and rural development fund from 4 per cent to 1 per cent in order to bring charges on par with the rates prevailing in neighbouring States.

Punjab and Rajasthan levy 2 per cent and 1.60 per cent as market fee and rural development fund on cotton, respectively.

“Farmers will get more money for selling their cotton in Haryana if the charges are reduced,” he stressed.

hindustantimes
Wed,14 Sep 2011

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Cloudy

Wednesday, Sep 14

Max	Min
33.6°	23.3°

Rain: 10.0 mm in 24hrs
Humidity: 79%
Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 5:58
Sunset: 18:11
Barometer: 1004

Tomorrow's Forecast

Rainy

Thursday, Sep 15

Max	Min
36°	26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Sep 16	**Sep 17**	**Sep 18**	**Sep 19**	**Sep 20**
31° | 27°	30° | 26°	30° | 26°	30° | 26°	30° | 26°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

DECCAN Chronicle
Published on *Deccan Chronicle* (http://www.deccanchronicle.com)

Seeds of injustice

There is an intense scramble for the earth's resources and ownership of nature. Big oil, big pharma, big food, big seed companies are joining hands to appropriate biodiversity and biomass — the living carbon, thereby extending the age of fossil fuels and dead carbon. Corporations view the 75 per cent biomass used by nature and local communities as "wasted". They would like to appropriate the living wealth of the planet for making biofuels, chemicals and plastics. This will dispossess the poor of the very sources of their lives and livelihoods. The instruments for this new dispossession are technological tools of genetic engineering, synthetic biology and intellectual property rights (IPRs). A patent is supposed to be granted to an invention. But patents and IPRs are being used to own seeds, life forms and traditional knowledge. Piracy of traditional knowledge is not an invention; it is theft — we call it biopiracy. Patents are at the heart of Monsanto's seed monopoly. After the WTO's Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights agreement was signed in 1994, a representative of the world's biggest seed corporation said that Monsanto had been the "patient, diagnostician and physician" in drafting the agreement which forced countries to introduce patents on life and seeds. Monsanto, which began with genetically modified organisms (GMOs), is now patenting non-GM crops. On May 21, 2003, Monsanto was assigned a patent on the Indian variety of wheat, Nap Hal, by the European Patent Office (EPO), Munich, under the simple title "plants". On January 27, 2004, Research Foundation for Science Technology and Ecology, along with Greenpeace and Bharat Krishak Samaj, filed a petition at EPO, challenging the patent rights given to Monsanto. The patent was revoked in October 2004. This was the third consecutive victory on the IPR front after neem and basmati, and it once again established that patents on biodiversity, indigenous knowledge and resources are based on biopiracy. Monsanto has used nine local brinjal (eggplant) varieties to develop its Bt. brinjal. Since the Biological Diversity Act of India, 2002, requires approval for accessing indigenous biodiversity, the Karnataka Biodiversity Board complained to the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA). According to the minutes of the NBA's meeting on June 20, 2011, "NBA may proceed legally against Mahyco/Monsanto, and all others concerned to take the issue to its logical conclusion." Monsanto is also accessing native onion varieties to develop its proprietary hybrids. The company is going to pay `10 lakh to the Indian Institute of Horticulture Research for 25 gms each of Male Sterile (A line) and Maintener (B line) of MS 48 and MS 65 as a one-time licence fee. Is this a just price? In May 2011, Monsanto got a patent on conventionally-bred melons from the EPO. Monsanto has used the natural resistance in Indian melons to certain plant viruses such as the "yellow stunting disorder virus". Using conventional breeding, this resistance was introduced into other melons. While this is biopiracy of a trait evolved by Indian farmers, Monsanto has patented the plant, all parts of the plant (including the seed) and the melon fruit as its "invention". There is an urgent need to ban all patents on life and living organisms, including biodiversity, genes and cell lines. The coalition "No Patents on Seeds" has started a campaign to exclude breeding material, plants and animals, and foods derived thereof from patentability. Industrial globalised agriculture is heavily implicated in climate change. It contributes to the three major greenhouse gases — carbon dioxide from the use of fossil fuels, nitrogen oxide from the use of chemical fertilisers and methane from factory farming. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the global atmospheric concentration of N2O, largely as a result of the use of chemical fertilisers in agriculture, increased from about 270 parts per billion to 319 parts per billion in 2005. Industrial agriculture is also more vulnerable to climate change, which is intensifying droughts and floods. Monocultures lead to more frequent crop failure when rainfall does not come in time, or is too much or too little. Chemically fertilised soils have no capacity to withstand a drought. Genetic engineering is embedded in the industrial model of agriculture based on fossil fuels. It is falsely being offered as a magic bullet for dealing with climate change. Monsanto claims that GMOs are a cure for both, food insecurity and climate change, and has been putting out the following advertisement across the world: "9 billion people to feed. A changing climate Now what? Producing more Conserving more Improving farmers lives That's sustainable agriculture And that's what Monsanto is all about." All the claims this advertisement makes are false. Monsanto claims its GMO Bt. cotton gives 1,500 kg/acre, while the average is 300-400 kg/acre. The claim to increased yield is false because yield, like climate resilience, is a multi-genetic trait. Introducing toxins into a plant through herbicide resistance or Bt. toxin increases the "yield" of toxins, not of food or nutrition. Climate resilient traits are not "inventions" of corporations. They have been evolved by nature and farmers. Farmers in India have been breeding crops for millennia to come up with crops that are resistant to climate extremes. Using farmers' varieties as "genetic material", the biotechnology industry is playing genetic roulette — gambling on which gene complexes are responsible for which trait. Breeding is being replaced by gambling, innovation is giving way to biopiracy, and science is being substituted by propaganda and resource-grab. Over the past 20 years, we at Navdanya, India's biodiversity and organic farming movement, have realised that biodiverse, local, organic systems produce more food and higher farm incomes while reducing water use and risks of crop failure due to climate change. Turning the living wealth of the planet into the property of corporations through patents is a recipe for deepening the poverty and ecological crisis. Biodiversity is the basis of life; it is our living commons. We are a part of nature, not her masters and owners. IPRs on life forms, living resources and living processes are an ethical, ecological and economic perversion. We need to recognise the sovereignty of diverse knowledge systems, including traditional knowledge. And we need to reclaim our biological and intellectual commons for ecological sustainability and economic justice. Dr Vandana Shiva is the executive director of the Navdanya Trust

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Source URL: http://www.deccanchronicle.com/editorial/dc-comment/seeds-injustice-563

Business Standard

Wednesday, Sep 14, 2011

Coffee planters seek higher allocation for mechanisation in 12th Plan

Mahesh Kulkarni / Bangalore September 14, 2011, 0:02 IST

Karnataka-based coffee planters have urged the Union commerce ministry to extend the mechanisation scheme with an investment of Rs 300 crore during the 12th five-year plan starting in 2012.

The scheme was launched with an allocation of Rs 50 crore at the beginning of the current financial year, on a trial basis. The scheme provides for funding of machines at a subsidised rate.

"We have urged the ministry, in consultation with the coffee board, to continue this scheme for the next five years, as mechanisation is inevitable in the days ahead. The scheme should be made applicable to all categories of growers, irrespective of size of holdings, including cooperatives and corporate sector," Sahadev Balakrishna, president of Karnataka Planters' Association (KPA) told Business Standard.

This year, the ministry has launched the scheme only for small growers and has left out medium and big growers. The planters have also demanded inclusion of other implements a subsidy of 50 per cent for all categories, with a maximum limit of Rs 10 lakh, he said.

The KPA recently held a meeting with ministry officials for revamping of several schemes and programmes for the coffee plantation sector during the 12th plan.

They also asked for a substantial increase in allocation for rejuvenation of coffee gardens by removing old trees and plantation of new trees. "Replanting is the important investment for growers which forms the basis for improving production and productivity of the estates, as it ensures replacing aged and low-yielding coffee plants," Balakrishna said.

Presently, the cost of replanting Arabica gardens is Rs 1 lakh per hectare and Rs 70,000 per hectare for Robusta varieties. The planters have sought an increase of 75 per cent in the allocation for Arabica to Rs 1.7 lakh per hectare and a 71.4 per cent rise in the allocation for Robusta at Rs 1.2 lakh per hectare during the 12th plan. The growers have sought revision in the percentage of subsidy from 40 per cent to 60 per cent for coffee holdings up to two hectares and 50 per cent for holdings between two to 10 hectares from the present 30 per cent.

For holdings above 10 hectares, the KPA has sought 40 per cent subsidy as against 25 per cent. It has also urged the ministry to include the co-operative and corporate sector for the replanting subsidy, for the first time. "We request the scheme to be released in three installments and the process for interlining be made more user-friendly and more streamlined," he said.

Normally, the Arabica trees are uprooted and replanted after 35-40 years and Robusta trees are replenished after 60-80 years depending on the yield, Balakrishna added.

Farmers for 50% cane price rise

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai September 14, 2011, 0:00 IST

Encouraged by a significant 17.25 per cent proposed increase in the Fair and Remunerative Prices (FRP), farmers across all major producing states have started demanding a 40-50 per cent rise in sugar cane prices for the upcoming crushing season of October - September, 2011-12.

The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) has recommended the government increase FRP for the next sugar season i.e. 2012-13, to Rs 170 a quintal as against Rs 145 a quintal announced this year. The government had fixed FRP at Rs 139 a quintal in the last crushing season.

Farmers in India's largest sugar producer, Maharashtra, have urged the government to pay the first advance estimates in tune with a price of Rs 180-200 per quintal. A committee chaired by Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, however, has asked co-operative sugar factories to stick to FRP for the first advance payment, generally, done in the first fortnight of October, before harvesting the standing cane crop.

Last year, the average payout by these mills remained at Rs 200 per quintal, nearly 44 per cent above from the FRP.

Similarly, cane growers in Uttar Pradesh have begun asking for a nearly 50 per cent rise in cane prices from last year's average price of Rs 205 a quintal. Sugar mills in the state, however, will commence negotiations with farmers in the next fortnight to arrange the advance payment for cane procurement.

"We do not know what the final prices would be. But some increase in cane prices are likely in 2012, being an election year in Uttar Pradesh," said Abinash Verma, director general, Indian Sugar Mills Association (Isma).

Farmers in other states such as Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Karnataka, Haryana and Punjab have similar views. In Gujarat, farmers have started asking for Rs 300 a quintal as against the average price of Rs 240 a quintal last year. Mills paid Rs 190 a quintal to farmers in Tamil

Nadu, where farmers are asking for Rs 250 a quintal.

“We are yet to negotiate with farmers for cane prices this year. But any increase in cane price will have a negative impact on companies’ topline and bottomline because of no proportionate increase in spot prices,” said Sanjay Tapriya, director (finance), Simbhaoli Sugar Mills.

Sugar mills are currently negotiating with banks to avail working capital for the coming crushing season. But, banks are reluctant to extend the debt limit above last year’s credit flows. Apparently, a majority of banks have denied new loans to borrowers who have not cleared their dues for last year, said an analyst.

MONTHLY SUGAR QUOTA (2011)

Quantity (million tonnes)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Levy quota	0.22	0.22	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.22	0.23
Non-levy quota	1.70	1.62	1.68	1.70	1.75	1.65	1.56	1.70	1.70
Normal quota	1.66	1.30	1.30	1.58	1.55	1.64	1.25	1.70	1.50
Carry over unsold stock	—	0.30	0.35	0.10	0.20		0.30		0.20
White refined sugar*	44.00	23.00	34.00	20.00	5.00	14.00	10.00	3.00	—
Total	1.92	1.84	1.89	1.91	1.97	1.86	1.77	1.93	1.93

* Processed out of imported raw sugar ('000 tonnes)

Source: Agriculture ministry

The average realisation for the current season remained lower than the cost of production. Against the cost of production of Rs 2,700-2,900 a quintal, the average ex-mill realisation Rs 2,650-2,850 a quintal.

India’s sugar production was estimated at 24.2 million tonnes in 2010-11 while output for the next season is forecast at 26.5 million tonnes.

Rice basmati, non-basmati rises on fresh buying

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 13, 2011, 15:26 IST

Rice basmati and non-basmati prices rose by up to Rs 100 per quintal on the wholesale grains market today on emergence of buying by stockists and retailers.

However, barley declined on sluggish demand from consuming industries against adequate stocks.

Traders said fresh buying support from stockists and retailers mainly pushed up prices of basmati and non-basmati rice.

Sluggish demand from consuming industries against adequate stocks helped barley prices to trade lower, they said.

In the national capital, rice basmati Pusa-1121 variety traded higher at Rs 4,075-4,750 from Rs 4,050-4,700 per quintal.

Non-basmati rice, permal raw and wand rose by Rs 25 and Rs 50 to Rs 1,850-1,900 and Rs 1,975-2,025, while sela and Ir-8 edged up to Rs 2,250-2,275 and Rs 1,800-1,825 against last close of Rs 2,150-2,200 and Rs 1,750-1,800 per quintal per quintal, respectively.

On the other hand, barley declined by Rs 20 to Rs 1,170-1,220 per quintal.

Following are today's quotations in Rs per quintal:

Wheat MP (deshi) 1,550-1,800, Wheat dara (for mills) 1,160-1,165 Chakki atta (delivery) 1,170-1,175, atta Rajdhani (10 kg) 180, Shakti bhog (10 kg) 180, Roller flour mill 630-650 (50 kg), Maida 730-740 (50 kg) and Sooji 760-775 (50kg).

Basmati rice (Lal Quila) 9,500, Shri Lal Mahal 9,300, super basmati rice 9,000, Basmati common 5,100-5,200, rice Pusa-(1121) 4,075-4,750, Permal raw 1,850-1,900, Permal wand 1975-2025, Sela 2,250-2,275 and Rice IR-8 1,800-1,825, Bajra 800-810, Jowar yellow 850-

930, white 1,675-1,800, Maize 1,150-1,160, Barley 1,170-1,220 and Rajasthan 1,080-1,090.

Barley futures down on profit booking

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 13, 2011, 15:18 IST

Barley prices fell by Rs 13.60 to Rs 1,157 per quintal in futures trade today following selling pressure at higher levels.

Marketmen said apart from selling, lower physical markets sentiment, mainly led the fall in barley future prices.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, barley prices for near October contractslid by Rs 13.60, or 1.16% to Rs 1,157 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,980 lots.

Most active September contract too declined by Rs 10, or 0.88% to Rs 1,132 per quintal, having an open interest of 3,570 lots.

Chilli gains 1.58% on good spot demand

Press Trust of India / New Delhi September 13, 2011, 15:12 IST

Supported by a good demand at the spot market and lower arrivals, chilli prices rose by Rs 134 to Rs 8,628 per quintal in futures trade today on fresh buying by traders.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, far-month November delivery rose by Rs 134, or 1.58% to Rs 8,628 per quintal with an open interest of 1,905 lots.

Similarly, September delivery gained Rs 62, or 0.73% to Rs 8,564 per quintal in 12,860 lots.

Market analysts said the rise in the chilli futures prices supported by good spot demand, amid lower arrivals from producing region.

Aquaculture output up on better prices, larger area

George Joseph / Kochi September 14, 2011, 0:51 IST

Aquaculture production in India during 2010-11 increased significantly over the previous year, with a 40 per cent rise in output, to 145,600 tonnes, valued at Rs 3,585 crore (a rise of 40 per cent).

A rise in acreage and improved prices are both responsible for the rise. The area under aquaculture rose to 50,000 hectares (ha) by the end of 2010-11, a rise of 10,000 ha over the previous year. The average farm gate price rose to Rs 246 a kg from Rs 200. Of the total exports of marine products of 813,091 tonnes in 2010-11, aquaculture items contributed 18.4 per cent. Last year, this was around 15 per cent. Of the total export value realisation of Rs 12,901 crore, aquaculture contributed 27.5 per cent. This was 20 per cent in 2009-10.

Andhra Pradesh led in aquaculture farming, with a total output of 66,631 tonnes (45 per cent of the total), followed by West Bengal with 42,983 tonnes (30 per cent). A remarkable increase in productivity was noted in Gujarat, from 1.9 tonnes/ha in 2009-10 to 2.9 t/ha.

Compared to the previous year's output of 95,919 tonnes, shrimp production (of the Black Tiger variety) rose 23.6 per cent, with an additional 11,592 ha brought under cultivation. Andhra led with 49,030 tonnes from 42,055 ha, followed by West Bengal with 40,725 tonnes from 47,588 ha. The exports rose to Rs 3,080 crore from Rs 2,398 crore in 2009-10, a growth of 28.4 per cent.

Vannamei shrimp production began for the first time in 2009. This increased to 18,247 tonnes, almost entirely from Andhra. Of the total, 10,000 tonnes were exported, with a value realisation of Rs 365 crore. Scampi production also rose in 2010-11, compared to 2009-10, though the area under scampi farming had reduced. The reduction is attributed mainly to lack of good quality seed for farming and the difficulty in marketing small quantities.

Compared to the previous year's production of 6,567 tonnes, production during 2010-11 was 8,778 tonnes, higher by 33.6 per cent. The total value realisation was Rs 140 crore, an increase of 33 per cent over the previous year. These three varieties and that of tiger shrimp (output of 118,000 tonnes) make for almost the entire aquaculture production in India.

DGFT frees cotton export under OGL for one more season

Anindita Dey / Mumbai September 14, 2011, 0:46 IST

Cotton export has been freed, under Open General Licence (OGL), for one more season starting October. And, with much relaxed criteria, unlike the previous season.

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has done away with the eligibility criteria for exporters and the various other stringent conditions of the previous season. The OGL will be valid for the season starting next month to September 2012. The only condition that remains is the registration certificate for export and reporting details which specify a penal clause for failure to export after getting the certificate. The criterion demanding a performance bank guarantee has also been dropped.

Besides, for rice and wheat, the DGFT has specified no eligibility criteria, except that exports should be made from privately held stocks. India is the second biggest grower of wheat and allowed private companies to export the grain for the first time in four years. A panel of ministers permitted sales of two million tonnes of wheat and 2.1 mt of non-Basmati rice last week.

India banned private companies from shipping wheat in early 2007 and non-Basmati rice in April 2008, to bolster domestic supplies amid a global food crisis. Restrictions were eased, allowing some quantities of wheat, rice and wheat products to be shipped to Africa, as well as Bangladesh and Nepal through state-run companies under government-to-government deals. The panel on July 11 this year put off a decision to end the ban on wheat exports due to non-competitive prices globally, while approving a million tonnes of non-Basmati rice.

In the previous season, DGFT had said a cotton export quota would be granted only if an entity had exported in either of the previous two cotton years (2008-09 and 2009-10), and allocation would be done on pro-rata basis. The pre-conditions were challenged at the high court here, which had ordered DGFT to extend the allocation process to August 8. DGFT challenged the HC order in the Supreme Court; it is still pending.

In October last year, the Centre had set a ceiling for cotton exports at 5.5 million bales (170 kg each) to protect the domestic textile industry in the face of rising raw material prices. An additional million bales were permitted for export in June, after prices had corrected sharply.

Rubber exports rise 280% in April-August

George Joseph / Kochi September 14, 2011, 0:05 IST

Natural rubber (NR) exports from the country increased 280 per cent in the April-August period of this financial year. Total exports were 12,219 tonnes as against 4,364 tonnes in the same period last year.

The increase was mainly due to the low price India held for rubber in that period. NR export from the country was in a pathetic stage for the past couple of years for several reasons, including high prices and inferior quality. Exports were almost nil in some months of 2010.

In August, exports grew to 1,082 tonnes as against 17 tonnes in the same month last year. This July, too, India shipped 779 tonnes as against 24 tonnes in July 2010.

This financial year, Indian price tags were advantageous to global buyers as local tags were lower by Rs 17-19 per g. Hence, it is likely that there would be an increase in exports in the remaining part of this financial year. The main drawback of Indian natural rubber in the global mart is its inferior quality. But if the price is lower by Rs 12-15 per kg, the country would be an attractive destination for foreign buyers. As local consumption is higher, India is not a major player in the rubber export market. So, the country is not having much balance to be shipped, another reason for the poor performance on export.

High prices abroad paralysed import of the commodity in April -August period. During this period, 76,116 tonnes were brought into the country as against 85,058 tonnes last year, registering a drop of 11 per cent.

Though the import duty had been brought down to an effective 7.5 per cent from 20 per cent import is not at all cheap for domestic rubber users.

Due to political constraints, especially from rubber growing states such as Kerala, the Centre is not in a position to allow free import. Therefore, import has been reduced 45 per cent to 14,060 tonnes as against 24,209 tonnes in the same month, last year.

Domestic production of NR maintained 4.5 per cent increase in April -August period and total production crossed 300,000 tonnes, achieving a figure of 311,200 tones as against 297,750 tones.

The prevailing higher price [Rs 215.Kg] is the main reason behind the increase in production as in most of the estates tapping is in full swing during the monsoon season. Domestic consumption in April - August period crossed 400,000 tones mark and touched 400,995 tones as against 388,550 tones in the same period of last FY , registering a growth of 3.2 per cent. But both the monthly production and consumption have dropped for the first time in this fiscal in August. Production dropped to 71,200 tones as against 72,500 tones in the same month of last year while consumption decreased to 77,000 tones from 79,500 tones.

The drop in consumption is mainly due to the set back faced by the tyre companies on the sales front, especially in the original equipment [OE] segment and the crisis faced by the small and medium rubber based units. According to All India Rubber Industries Association [AIRIA] at least 500 such units were closed during last one year period on account of the sharp increase in the price of NR.

The Rubber Board data indicates a total stock of 266,081 tones at the end of August as against 202,798 tones in the same period last financial year. Though the board estimates such a huge stock the industry associations and the rubber traders opine that the actual tradable stock would be in a range of 80,000 -100,000 tones. Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association [ATMA] said that the country is facing serious supply crisis even in the midst of such a huge stock. According to them stock position in the country is too low that badly affects the availability of rubber. The bord's data is rather inflated in order to influence the government decisions on import, they said. But the Rubber Board has clarified that the stock as per their data is not the actual stock ready for trade, but it is a consolidation of stock with the farmers, stockists, inventory of various companies etc.

THE HINDU Business Line

Rain, poor sunlight likely to hit tea output in South

Kochi, Sept. 13:

Persistent rain and low sunlight are expected to take toll on South Indian tea production.

“Rains are often good for the tea crop but they should be interspersed with consistent sunshine to facilitate good plucking operations,” said an official of the United Planters Association of Southern India (UPASI).

South India's tea production till July was down by close to 3.6 million kg on account of lower production in all the States. The only saving grace was that production from Nilgiris, which account for more than 50 per cent of Tamil Nadu's production, had not been affected. But all that seems to be changing now.

“Unlike the previous months, production shortfalls are expected from the Nilgiris region as well in August. With persistent rain continuing into September, the production shortfall period could be further extended in this region,” Mr R. Sanjith, Head of Commodities, UPASI, said.

July tea production in South India, and Tamil Nadu in particular, was higher due to higher output from the Nilgiris region, though lower production was reported from Kerala and other parts of Tamil Nadu.

South Indian tea prices in general have been picking up in recent months, remaining just a notch above last year's levels. Last financial year ended with tea prices ruling firm to dearer at South India's auction centres. During the first quarter of the current year, prices were a tad lower than last year, although not very significantly. Prices have been rising further during the second quarter and the trend is likely to continue in the coming months.

What has been holding the price line has been the lower production from South India. This was despite a huge increase in north Indian tea production by 33 million kg till July 2011. As the two regions, North and South India cater to different segments of the international markets and different taste segments in the domestic market, prices have not been overtly affected.

The huge production shortfall reported from Kenya — estimated at 35-36 million kg — has also helped to keep international prices firm. While earlier reports had indicated that Sri Lankan production had not been much affected, more recent reports suggest that there could be shortfall of 1-1.5 million tonnes from the island nation. This could also go to strengthen the international prices in the short run.

Monsanto bets on biotech to feed growing demand

Genetically Modified (GM) corn (maize)

St Louis (US), Sept. 13:

With increasing population, rising purchasing power, growing food consumption and changing dietary habits, how would the world feed itself, say, 20 years from now? Monsanto Company believes it has the answer.

The route to feeding the world is through innovations in technology today for tomorrow's crops, according to the global life-sciences major.

Unveiling a research-and-development pipeline filled with products that are designed to protect against significant crop-production challenges and increase yield potential, Dr Robb Fraley, Monsanto's Chief Technology Officer, said the company was already working on new products and new technologies targeted at doubling grain production.

Talking specifically about two of the US's largest crops, corn and soyabean, Dr Farley pointed out that compared with a decade ago, the US corn growers are currently using 14 per cent less land.

In case of soya, growers currently use 9 per cent less land, 21 per cent less water and 24 per cent less energy than 2000.

On way towards 2030, there will be more efforts to conserve natural resources and protect the environment, he said.

While transgenic corn today has as many as eight genes for herbicide resistance and insect protection, by 2030, the US corn yields are targeted to almost double to 300 bushels an acre from 155 bushels an acre currently with the use of technology.

Then, modified seeds may carry more than 20 genes to ward off pests and diseases. Currently, as much as 85 per cent of acreage under corn in the US is biotech.

Tea exports trailing in volume, value

Coonoor, Sept. 13:

Tea export in the current calendar is trailing behind last year in respect of both volume shipped and value earned, reveals an analysis of the latest information available with the Tea Board and exporters' organisations.

Between January and July, exports were 89.82 million kg (mkg) against 107.30 mkg. This fall of 17.48 mkg works out to a decline of 16.29 per cent.

But the lower supply helped prices to firm up. On the average, every kg exported fetched Rs 145.76 against Rs 129.92 last year.

This increase of Rs 15.84 a kg means a 12.19 per cent growth.

Nevertheless, this price increase was inadequate to neutralise the loss in the volume shipped.

Consequently, the overall earnings dropped to Rs 1309.27 crore from Rs 1,394 crore.

This reduction of Rs 84.73 crore marked a decline of 6.08 per cent.

Of this, North India exported 47.29 mkg (last year: 54.42 mkg) worth Rs 877.30 crore (Rs 855.77 crore) fetching Rs 185.52 a kg (Rs 163.25).

South India exported 42.53 mkg (54.88 mkg) worth Rs 431.97 crore (Rs 538.22 crore) fetching Rs 101.56 a kg (Rs 98.08 a kg).

Excise duty on rubber raised to Rs 2/kg

Kottayam, Sept. 13:

The Union Government has enhanced the excise duty (cess) on rubber under the Rubber Act, 1947, from Rs 1.50 to Rs 2 a kg with effect from September 1, 2011.

The notification in this regard, dated August 29, 2011, has already appeared in the Gazette of India dated August 30, 2011. Copy of the notification is available in the Rubber Board's Web site — *www. rubberboard.org.in*

Sugar industry seeks extension of export permits

BALANCESHEET

(in million tonnes)

	2011-12 (E)	2010-11
Opening stock as on October 1	5.8	4.98
Production	26	24.2
Domestic consumption	22	20.76
Exports	–	2.6
Closing Stock as on Sept 30	9.8	5.8

Source: ISMA

New Delhi, Sept. 13:

The sugar industry wants the Centre to allow exports over the next four-five months, when peak crushing for the new season starting October takes place.

This, according to it, is necessary on two counts.

First, mills would require substantial cash flows during the time when payments are to be made to growers against cane purchases.

In the current high interest rate regime, it makes sense to minimise dependence on borrowed working capital and generate sufficient internal liquidity, which is possible only with reasonable realisations from sugar.

The need for a better cash position would be even more for mills in Uttar Pradesh in the context of Assembly elections early next year.

The State Government under Ms Mayawati is likely to announce a significant hike in cane prices with an eye on farmer votes. But mills can obviously pay at those levels only if domestic sugar prices are allowed to rise – for which exports are a necessity.

Secondly, the current high global prices are unlikely to sustain after around March, by which time the next crop in Brazil and Thailand would start arriving. In fact, this is apparent from the futures price that suggest a weak trend in the months ahead.

“We are staring at a high sugar production year and require adequate cash flows to start crushing,” said Mr Abinash Verma, Director-General, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA). “We want policy initiatives to help us dispose surplus sugar in the international market,” he said, adding that the current availability situation is more than comfortable. ISMA estimates opening stocks for the new crushing season 2011-12 at 5.8 million tonnes (mt). Production in 2011-12 is estimated to grow by 7.4 per cent to 26 mt, while consumption is seen rising six per cent.

“Managing surplus is important. Otherwise, domestic prices can reach abysmally low levels. It is right time that another half-a-million tonne is allowed to export so that farmers can be supported well,” said Mr Sanjay Taparia, Chief Financial Officer, Simbhaoli Sugars Ltd.

For the current 2010-11 season (October-September), the Centre has permitted 1.5 mt for exports under the open general licence.

Besides, another 1.1 million or so have been allowed as re-export obligations against advance licences issued to mills in the past.

Allowing export of surplus sugar would also help the industry reduce inventories. ISMA's estimates an inventory of 9.8 mt by September 2012.

Global sugar prices are currently ruling at a high and futures prices indicate a weakening trend in the early part of 2012.

White sugar futures in London for October 2011 contract closed at $773.7 a tonne, while that of December 2011 were down at $732.6.

The succeeding contracts for March 2012 and May 2012 were lower at $710.5 and $698 a tonne, respectively.

Similarly, the raw sugar contracts in New York for October 2011 delivery settled at 29.57 cents per pound on Monday.

Succeeding contracts were trading lower at 28.18 cents per pound for March 2012 and 26.83 cents per pound for May 2012.

Pepper remains hot

Kochi, Sept. 13:

The pepper market, after witnessing the usual tug of war, closed with a mixed trend on Tuesday with September prices marginally declining while October and November moving up.

In the afternoon, the prices hit the highest levels of the day and then slid with marginal volatility, market sources told *Business Line*.

Those who were holding stocks for long were showing interest to sell. Some of the national and state level co-ops were also offering to sell as the prices moved above Rs 300 levels. But, as the market moved up, sellers withdrew, they said. The high prices appear to have forced many to go for light berries and even spent pepper, they said. Good liquidation in September was there while additional buying was also good in October and November. Turnover dropped sharply. September contract declined by Rs 8 to close at Rs 33,700 a quintal. October and November moved up by Rs 140 and Rs 141 respectively to close at Rs 34,641 and Rs 35,100 a quintal.

Total turnover dropped by 2,604 tonnes to 7,623 tonnes. Total open interest moved up by 111 tonnes to 12,512 tonnes. September open interest dropped by 930 tonnes to 3,553 tonnes. October and November open interest increased by 875 tonnes and 149 tonnes respectively to close at 8,086 tonnes and 598 tonnes.

Spot prices on matching demand and supply stayed steady at Rs 30,700 (ungarbled) and Rs 31,700 (MG 1) a quintal. Indian parity in the international market was at $7,500 for Europe and $7,700 a tonne (c&f). Drastic fall in the rupee against the dollar has kept the Indian parity is competitive with all other origins except for Brazil, they said.

According to an overseas report from Vietnam today, markets ruled firm/steady with Vietnam reportedly quoting 500 GL at $7,100 a tonne (cfr) Singapore. “Lampong Asta indicated at $7,850/$7,900 a tonne from one origin seller”, it added.

Turmeric drops below Rs 5,000 a quintal

Erode, Sept. 13:

Spot turmeric dropped by Rs 100 a quintal further on Tuesday following poor demand.

“Most of the traders are not getting fresh orders from other States, especially North India. So, turmeric price is decreasing every day. On Tuesday, the hybrid finger variety decreased by Rs 300 a quintal and the hybrid root variety by Rs 500. Similarly, prices have dropped below Rs 5,000 a quintal,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, traders purchased only 20 per cent of the stocks, whereas in other centres, sales were around 60 per cent of the total stock of 8,500 bags which were offered on sale.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,911-4,915 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,636-4,381 a quintal. Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 4,546-5,269, the root variety Rs 4,068-4,511. Totally, of the 2,052 bags kept for sales, 424 were sold.

AP Govt seeks more refinance from NABARD

Hyderabad, Sept 13:

The Andhra Pradesh Government has sought from the Centre initiatives to boost agriculture production from the State through increased refinance from Nabard, reduction in interest rates and interest subvention.

The State Government has requested the Union Finance Minister to include these issues during his schedule regional reviews for southern States scheduled next month.

Justifying the need for the State to get smoother credit flow for agriculture, the AP Minister for Cooperation, Mr K.V. Krishna Reddy, in a letter to the Union Finance Minister, pointed out that the State's food production increased to 200 lakh tonnes in 2010-11 and was expected to touch 300 lakh tonnes by 2013. Further, the State contributes about 65 per cent of the country's hybrid seed production. Also, it is proposed to bring one crore acres to cultivation—it currently has three crore acres under cultivation.

Mr Reddy pointed out that as most of commercial banks were not fully meeting mandatory requirements of 18 per cent direct agricultural credit, they were parking the "massive amounts of shortfall with Nabard".

"In view of the recent thrust on doubling agricultural credit, there is a need for increase in refinance support from Nabard. At present, Nabard is providing 45 per cent refinance to cooperative credit institutions and the remaining 55 per cent of funds have to be raised by these institutions through deposits from public at market rates. As these institutions have to lend to farmers at the mandated rate of seven per cent, there is huge disincentive in the process," the Minister pointed out.

The present interest rate structure of Nabard is also an area of concern. While the Primary Agricultural Credit Societies are required to lend at 7 pc, the Nabard refinances at 4 pc and the margin of 3 pc is not sufficient to meet the costs of disbursing crop loans to farmers. "Therefore Nabard needs to consider reduction of the rates to its original level of 2.5 per cent per annum under crop loans," the letter added.

Dharwad varsity sells seeds worth Rs 70 lakh at Krishi Mela

Hubli, Sept. 13:

The University of Agriculture Sciences-Dharwad (UAS-D) sold 1,442 quintals of seeds worth Rs 70 lakh at the Beeja (seed) Mela held as part of Krishi Mela 2011. According to a university spokesman, the record seed sales were done by university's seed division. Farmers from all the north Karnataka districts bought the seeds for the forthcoming Rabi season. Seeds such as jowar, winter wheat, channa (Bengal gram), sunflower and saff flower were in demand.

In addition to seed sales, farm machinery was also sought after with some of the farmers eagerly booking tractors. Five sugarcane crushers, a new invention priced at Rs. 1.65 lakh and capable of crushing nearly 30 tonnes of sugarcane a day, were booked.

The university book stalls attracted huge numbers as well and saw record sale of books on latest farming technology, organic farming, integrated farming and others related topics.

The four-day mela proved to be a success as it attracted record crowd of over 8 lakh people which included farmers, farm women, extension workers, students and others.

UAS-D Vice-Chancellor Mr R.R. Hanchinaal on the concluding day announced that the agricultural university will hold International level Mela next year.

National conference to discuss rabi crop prospects tomorrow

A farmer looking at the wheat harvested on his land. Will the rabi season help him to get more wheat?
New Delhi, Sept 13:

A two day national conference on agriculture will begin here tomorrow to discuss the rabi (winter) crop prospects this year.

Agriculture Minister Mr Sharad Pawar will inaugurate the conference at the National Agriculture Science Centre (NASC), according to an official statement.

There will be broad-based discussions with state agriculture officers on preparedness for the rabi season, which begins next month. Progress in sowing of crops during the kharif season, which lasts till the end of this month, will also be taken into account, the statement said.

The main rabi crops are wheat, barley, gram, pulses, linseed and mustard. The conference would discuss timely supply of farm inputs such as seeds, fertiliser, credit and insurance to farmers during the season.

It will also discuss the possibility of increasing area under boro rice, pulses and wheat under the National Food Security Mission and will deliberate on covering micro irrigation in the rabi season.

The conference will also look at strengthening the agri- marketing infrastructure and will stress upon the state governments to make amendments to their APMC Act as well as to waive off market fee for perishable horticulture commodities.