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Farm-related information now just a touch away

Special Correspondent



in a jiffy:P. Murugesha Bhoopathi, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, inaugurating the kiosk at Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Vamban near Pudukottai on Wednesday.

A touch-screen kiosk for farmers was inaugurated at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Vamban in Pudukottai district.

The kiosk, which was inaugurated by P.Murugesha Bhoopathi, Vice Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, on Wednesday, would provide a host of farm-related information including marketing information for their products as the kiosk is linked with the agri-portal of TNAU. Internet facility has been provided to facilitate farmers to access other important information. Research programmes being carried out by KVKs across the country could be accessed through the kiosk, according to S.Geetha, project coordinator, KVK.

Earlier, speaking at a scientific advisory committee meeting at the KVK, Mr.Bhoopathi called upon agricultural scientists and extension officials to make more efforts to promote sericulture cultivation in the district.

The area under sericulture cultivation in the district did not match its potential, he said and emphasised the need for bringing more area under sericulture cultivation. Kendra scientists should motivate farmers to take up mulberry cultivation and transfer the technology to potential villages in consultation with the sericulture department.

Dr.Murugesu Bhoopathi also underlined the need for setting up more rain water harvesting structures in the district. Referring to the system tanks provided by the 'samasthanam' era, he said that the setting up of rainwater harvesting structures would ensure proper utilisation of rain water for irrigation.

Emphasising the need for providing latest agricultural technology to farmers, Dr.Murugesu Bhoopathi called upon the Kendra officials to identify a village in the district to be developed into a model village. The Kendra would provide all latest techniques including farm mechanisation to farmers.

Accompanied by scientists, the Vice-Chancellor visited the sugarcane field of Rangarajan at Agarapatti, the first village in the district where the Kendra had introduced sustainable initiative in sugarcane (SSI) technique. The farmer, who had raised Co 86032 variety in one hectare, said he anticipated a bumper harvest of about 100 tonnes an acre against the usual 40 to 50 tonnes.

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Farm query

Exporting guavas

Can you kindly give details on some farmers in Palani area who are exporting guavas?

R. Chandramohan

Tamil Nadu

Twenty five guava farmers at Ayakudi region in Palani, Dindigul district, export about 250 kg of guavas every alternate day to Middle East. The farmers are able to get Rs. 30 to 35 per kg of guava fruits against Rs. 8 to 10 per kg from the local traders.

For more details contact Dr.T.N.Balamohan, Special Officer, Mango and Guava & e-course, Horticultural College & Research Institute for Women, Navalur, Kuttapattu, Trichy:620 009, email: sohort@tnau.ac.in and tnb@tnau.ac.in, Phone : 0431-2918033, mobile : 9442076437.

Self-reliance and diversification may bring in profits

M. J. Prabu



Special Arrangement BRILLIANT IDEA: Sadananda has converted his old scooter into a power sprayer.

A field must be like a kirana store where one can buy practically anything

Farming requires patience and consistence. The development of civilisation and the plough are directly linked.

“Whatever be the development in any sphere, without agriculture it cannot be sustained.

“But the sad fact is, in our country it is the farmers who are being neglected and suffer for no fault of theirs,” says farmer Sadananda from Tapasihalli village, Doddaballapura taluk, Karnataka.

Mr. Sadananda has been conferred several State and national awards in recognition of his work on integrated farming.

The most important features of Mr. Sadananda's farming are, use of own manure, least dependence on external input, and use of family labour.

Income gap

“An IT professional may earn Rs.50,000 in just six months of joining a company whereas a farmer who is growing crops in 10 acres, is not able to afford even Rs. 10,000 to meet some expenditure.

“Even big farmers find it difficult to get their daughters married as they don't have the cash on hand. They need to pledge their lands to raise the money. What to say of small farmers then?” he queries.

“Though today this might not be true for several farmers in the country, I want to differ on this. Look at my area, just 2 acres and some cents, and my annual income is between Rs. 7 lakh and Rs. 8 lakh in a year,” he says.

“Earning money is not a difficult job for farmers.” The secret lies in making use of the available land area and making best use of available resources and technologies according to him.

Mr. Sadananda started cultivating vegetables initially and realized a reasonable income. But he says “the income and marketing did not prove satisfactory”.

He planned the cropping pattern in such a way that it included a combination of perennial, annual, and seasonal crops as well as livestock rearing.

Different crops

Accordingly, he planted 50 coconut trees, most of them around the field borders, and also planted Chikku, Jack (bearing round the year), Agase (fodder trees), Teak, Silver Oak, Pongamia and other trees. In about 20 cents he planted arecanut and adopted organic mulching.

“Till 2003-04, I planned my own cropping pattern including dairy, sheep, and biogas, obtaining a net income of around Rs. 3 lakh. During 2005-06 I came into contact with the Rural Bioresource Complex Project (RBRC) project staff from the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, and acted on their advice to shift the cropping pattern from more of vegetables to floriculture, nursery raising, adding improved breeds of sheep, vermicomposting, backyard poultry, and azolla production,” he explains.

And also animals

The farmer started rearing poultry birds in the arecanut plantation by using shade net as fencing material and planted rose in one acre and twenty cents of land. Subsequently, he started raising a vegetable nursery in an area of 10 cents based on the local demand. Two cross-bred cows

generate 6,000 litres of milk annually. A water storage tank dug at the entrance to the field is used for fish rearing and also for irrigating the crops. "Since I got free cow dung I set up a bio gas plant and also erected drip irrigation to use water judiciously. Since labour is a problem, I modified my old scooter into a power sprayer for spraying, and fertigation for my crops," he adds. According to him, money generation serves as a big energy booster for a farmer. "What farmers in our country need today is finance. Practically all other inputs are available for them. Whatever be the technology, they must be able to deliver results — be practical and feasible. Merely talking cannot solve the problem," is his conviction.

Useless information

He further adds, "If you look at some of the available government and international websites, they give details of the area of sowing, the seasons, cropping, and other information.

"But in reality this information does not help grassroots farmers. Of what use are these data for farmers when they are suffering?" he asks.

There is absolutely no basis for expecting the impossible. Careful study, interacting with other experienced farmers, and experts alone will help, according to him. "A field should be like a kirana store (provision store)," he says. "One can get almost any edible item from the shop. Similarly a farmer must start growing different crops along with fish, poultry, and cattle. "Crops are like long term deposits and animals are for the short term, that mature in some months. Even if one fails, the others will bail him out," he explains.

For more details readers can contact Mr. Sadananda at Tapasihalli village, Doddaballapura taluk, Bangalore rural district, phone: 808-7659151 and mobile No.9342022146.

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Huller – to remove outer skin from tamarind fruit

The unit is priced at Rs.9,800 Harvested tamarind fruits contains 25-30 per cent hull (shell).

For consumption the hull has to be removed. At present tamarind hulling is done using manual labourers.

After harvesting, the tamarind fruits are dried under sun and the hulling is mainly done by woman labourers by beating the fruits with a stick.

This process is time consuming and unhygienic. The problem is compounded as there are no huller machines available for hulling process.

Specific purpose

The Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has developed a machine for this specific purpose.

The unit consists of feed hopper, beater assembly, sieve and outlets. The feed hopper is made of 20 gauge mild steel with a capacity of 2.5 kg.

The beater shaft is made of 25mm diameter and 1000mm long mild steel rod with 20 beaters. The shaft is mounted on ball bearing at both the ends.

A screw of 230 mm diameter is mounted on the shaft for a length of 600 mm. Power is transmitted by 1 hp single phase electric motor through a V belt and pulley.

The entire unit was mounted on m.s.angle 12x5 mm stand. Feed rate can be varied using an adjustable gate provided at the entry point of the huller.

Speed operation

Operating speed can be varied by changing the pulley. At the end of the shaft the hulled fruits with some hulls fall on the weld mesh through which hulls pass through and the fruits collected at the end.

For a feed rate of 100 kg/h maximum hulling efficiency of 92.35 was obtained for a moisture content of 10 per cent.

The cost

The cost of the huller is Rs.9,800 and the cost of operation has been worked out to be Rs.1.0/kg while in manual method the hulling comes to Rs.2.50/kg. Those interested can contact the department at email: deancaekum@tnau.ac.in and phone: 0431- 3202300.

T.Pandiarajan & A. Tajuddin

Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Kumulur, Tiruchi

Priority for farm sector in Annual Credit Plan

Special Correspondent



Cuddalore Collector Rajendra Ratnoo launching the Annual Credit Plan in Cuddalore on Wednesday.— Photo:C.Venkatachalapathy

Collector Rajendra Ratnoo launched the Annual Credit Plan for 2012-2013, with a total outlay of Rs. 2,667.54 crore, here on Wednesday.

He said the size of the Plan was 60.45 per cent higher than the previous year. It had given due attention to revival of agriculture which was badly affected by cyclone 'Thane.'

Therefore, a lion's share of 73.95 per cent of the ACP had been earmarked for the farm sector. With a view to giving thrust to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), an increased allocation of Rs. 74.95 crore had been made. A sum of Rs. 620.59 crore had been set aside for other priority sectors.

Mr. Ratnoo said the plan also accorded importance to programmes meant for the uplift of the poor and downtrodden.

Another notable feature was that a sum of Rs. 158.50 crore had been earmarked for self-help groups.

E. Sundararajan, Zonal Manager, Indian Bank (lead bank), expressed the hope that the annual target for the financial year of 2010-2011 would be surpassed without any problem. In the first three quarters of the said period, a total of Rs. 1,553.71 crore was disbursed against the target of Rs. 1,240.97 crore, registering 125 per cent achievement.

B. Gnanavel, Lead District Officer, Reserve Bank of India, said bankers had achieved the target set for the priority sector – 73 per cent (against the norms of 40 per cent), agriculture sector – 42 per cent (18 per cent) and weaker section advances – 42 per cent (10 per cent).

Under the financial inclusion scheme, farmers and non-farmers were also being brought under the banking system by encouraging them to open no-frills accounts. The bankers also proposed to extend life insurance cover and provide micro pension to villagers in association with the Life Insurance Corporation of India and the General Insurance Company in the district.

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'Free sheep, goats scheme fully implemented in Karur'

Staff Reporter

The Department of Animal Husbandry, heeding to the avowed quest of Chief Minister Jayalalithaa to double the revenue of farmers, has achieved its slated targets for 2011-12 in Karur district. In particular, the free distribution of sheep and goats scheme has seen full implementation in its first year itself.

The scheme was implemented in 24 panchayats in Karur district and a total of 1,842 beneficiaries were given four goats each compounding to 7,368 goats for a total cost of Rs.2.34 crore, according to Collector V.Shobana.

The largesse to each beneficiary costs the exchequer Rs.12,750. The scheme's economic utility has been reinforced by the fact that the donated goats have yielded 511 male kids and 523 female kids to pave the way for sustained revenue generation for the beneficiary families, Ms.Shobana told *The Hindu*.

The free distribution of goats scheme is being implemented in Appipalayam, Zameen Alamarathupatti, Erumarpatti, Ammapatti, Kathaparai, Kadamabankurichi, Attur Poolampalayam, Andankoil East and West, Chinnayampalayam West, Gudalur, Alathur, Athanur, Devarmalai, Balarajapuram, Chinthlavadi and Hiranyamangalam panchayat in Karur district.

To encourage proper maintenance and upkeep of the goats donated, the State government provided incentives by way of concentrated cattle feed to exemplary beneficiaries.

Feed worth Rs.3,000, Rs.2,500 and Rs.2,000 were given away to beneficiaries based on the upkeep of the goats as prizes during the recent Tamil New Year Day Farmers Festival, Regional Joint Director of Animal Husbandry, S.Sivaprakasam said. Besides, the department also honoured three veterinarians with certificates.Under the National Agricultural Development Plan, 20 milch buffaloes were given to five farmers each from Karur, Krishnarayapuram, Thanthoni and Thogamalai blocks at a total cost of Rs.3.69 lakh, Ms.Shobana noted.Through the Special Livestock Protection Scheme, 112 special veterinary camps were conducted throughout the district at a cost of Rs.10.34 lakh.

From de-worming to vaccination several activities were carried out for the benefit of farmers and their cattle, she observed. The Central government sponsored Fodder Development Programme paid rich dividends to farmers as the 50 beneficiaries who were given away Rs.2,200-worth fodder seedlings and saplings each were able to multiply the fodder spread area in their region. ``Cultivation of high yielding fodder crops through assistance from the State government is a success in my farm," says pioneering farmer A.M. Gugan Ram of Vangal Kuppuchipalayam village. The subsidy portion came as an incentive to increase the spread of high yielding fodder crop plantation, he adds. A successful proponent of integrated farming, Mr.Gugan Ram is pioneering rearing of pedigreed Kangeyam breed cows. A special initiative was taken to conduct eight infertility removal camps in Karur district during the year, Ms.Shobana said.

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Proud moment for cattle scheme beneficiaries

Serena Josephine M



Mohana, a beneficiary of the free cattle scheme at Poorigamaanimitta village, is seen with the shield presented by the Collector.

Twenty-three-year old Mohana, one of the beneficiaries of the State government's free cattle scheme at Poorigamaanimitta village in Tirupattur panchayat union, expressed her gratitude to the government by taking proper care of the cattle and supplying 10 litres of milk each day to the Aavin milk cooperative society. This, in fact, brought the District Collector to her house in this small village and she fetched a shield in a gesture of appreciation and encouragement to keep up the good work.

As her home was surrounded by curious villagers, it was a proud moment for Mohana as she received a shield from Collector Ajay Yadav, who asked her to keep up the good work and insisted that the milk be supplied to Aavin and not to private vendors.

Her husband, Veeramani, who is visually challenged, re-canes chairs for a livelihood. "I earn about Rs. 2,000 by re-caning chairs at Tirupattur. After my wife received the cattle under the government scheme in January, we are getting Rs. 1,000 a month. This additional income is helping our family to an extent," he said. On consuming good feed, the cow yielded 10 litres of milk per day, he said, adding, "We are supplying the milk to Aavin and not to private vendors. Getting this reward from the Collector is definitely a source of encouragement to do even better."

Sampathrani, another beneficiary of the scheme at Subbamangalam village, also received the shield from the Collector. She said the additional income obtained from supplying milk to Aavin was of help to her family.

"We spend at least Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 a day on cattle feed. Aavin is procuring milk for Rs. 17.50 per litre. So, we get Rs. 1,000 as income every month," she said. Her husband, Govindan, was a carpenter.

S. Mohandas, Assistant Director, Department of Animal Husbandry, Tirupattur, said there were 650 beneficiaries under the free cattle scheme in Tirupattur division. "Two beneficiaries have received shields for good performance till now. At least 130 animals were yielding more than 10 litres of milk a day. If cattle feed is given properly, the cow yields more milk. Aavin is supplying the concentrate for the feed," he said.

"This shield is given to encourage the beneficiaries to take proper care of the cattle and also motivate other beneficiaries to do well," he added.

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Farmers' fete held at Krishi Vigyan Kendra

Special Correspondent

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) Research Station, Virinjipuram, in association with the Department of Horticulture and Plantation Crops organised Uzhavar Peruvizha (Farmers' Festival) 2012 at the KVK in Virinjipuram near here on Wednesday.

S. Nanthakumar, programme coordinator of the KVK, said the objective of the festival was to update farmers in the K.V. Kuppam block on recent crop varieties and technological interventions in the area of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and allied enterprises.

Paul Sebastian, agricultural scientist demonstrated techniques of producing azolla and vermin compost. Agricultural scientists A. Suganthi, N. Swarnakumari, A.P. Sivamurugan and T. Prabhu demonstrated techniques of mushroom cultivation, seed treatment with *Trichoderma viride*, seed treatment techniques in pulses and nursery techniques respectively to about 250 farmers from K.V. Kuppam block to help them properly adopt the technologie to improve productivity. The scientists also answered queries of the farmers. G. Loganathan, Chairman of K.V. Kuppam Panchayat Union, T.R. Umapathy, vice-chairman of the panchayat union, T. Panneerselvam, president of Kothamangalam village panchayat, A. Balasubramaniam, Joint Director of Agriculture, P. Sridhar, associate professor and Head of the TNAU Research Station in Virinjipuram, H.K. Pandey, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Kundavai, veterinary doctor and Dhasarathan, Assistant Engineer, participated.

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Aavin gets more milk due to free cattle scheme

Staff Reporter

Distribution of 556 milch animals to women has resulted in Aavin getting 1,500 litres of additional milk every day, the Virudhunagar Collector, M. Balaji, has said.

In a statement, he said that 556 poorest of the poor were given free cattle heads in 2011-12 at a cost of Rs. 2.01 crore to improve their economic conditions.

Similarly, during the same year 3,264 women were given 13,056 free goats and sheep at a cost of Rs. 4.16 crore. These animals have given birth to 112 new ones.

The market value of each goat and sheep that was bought for an average rate of Rs. 10,000 has doubled in this period.

Following Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa's announcement on providing incentives to the beneficiaries who have reared the milch animals in the best manner, the Collector gave away prizes to the 10 beneficiaries.

The prize money is Rs. 5,000 (first), Rs. 4,000 (second) and Rs. 3,000 (third) and Rs. 1,000 consolation prize.

Similarly, 15 beneficiaries of free goats and sheep scheme were given incentives of Rs. 3,000 first prize, Rs. 2,500 (second) and Rs. 2,000 consolation prizes.

The prize money would be given as cattle feed through Aavin.

Five veterinary doctors were given certificates of appreciation for their services.

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Call to popularise eco-friendly weed control practices

Staff Reporter

A conference on weed control concluded at the Kerala Agriculture University here on Wednesday called for popularising bio-control practices in weed management of edible crops. The meeting of the Coordinated Research Project also stressed the need for analysis of herbicide residue in food chain, soil and ground water.

Development of eco-friendly weed control practices and preparation of a national database on weed management are top priorities of the All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP), said A. R. Sharma, Director, Directorate of Weed Science Research, Jabalpur. He highlighted the key role played by the AICRP Centres in developing an integrated weed management practice for all crops in the country.

Proposal for studies

Addressing the meeting, P. B. Pushpalatha, the Registrar of the KAU, proposed to conduct studies on isolation of pro-health components and bio-pigments from weeds. She said that such

studies would promote healthy life. The meeting observed that the option of producing vermin-compost from weeds like parthenium and altemanthera was gaining popularity as they contained appreciable quantity of NPK (Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium) elements.

T.R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, KAU, said that the KAU was preparing an effective bio-control measure for water hyacinth. He called for ICAR-supported weedicide residual labs in all State Agricultural Universities. P.V. Balachandran, Director of Extension, KAU, in his presidential address, recalled the age-old weed management techniques and stressed the need for an eco-friendly organic weed management mechanism without hazardous chemicals.

The AICRP meet is followed by a two-day conclave on 'Weed Threat to Agriculture, Biodiversity an Environment'. Around 400 scientists from across the country will attend the programme.

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Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 77.64 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 1,284 cusecs and the discharge 1,400 cusecs.

CHITRADURGA, April 19, 2012

Seminar on medicinal plants

The Government Science College will host a State-level seminar on 'Conservation of medicinal plants: strategies and priorities' on April 19 and 20.

Addressing presspersons here on Wednesday, principal of the college C.K. Maheshwarappa said the programme had been sponsored by the University Grants Commission.

He said the objective of the seminar was to promote and preserve medicinal plants, which were gradually losing their importance..

An exhibition would be held on medicinal plants, and stalls would be set up for vendors who sell traditional medicines.

SIVAGANGA, April 19, 2012

Collector interacts with farmers

Chance for farmers to interact with officials



Good rapport:Collector V. Rajaraman interacting with farmers at Theethanpettai near Manamadurai in Sivaganga district on Tuesday.

: The ongoing farmers' day festival has opened up avenues for popularising the modern farm techniques among farmers, said Collector V. Rajaraman.

Interacting with the farmers and residents of Theethampettai near Manamadurai on Tuesday as part of the festival, he said it was being organised in two revenue villages per day in all 12 panchayat unions in the district. It would be conducted till May 17.

It had enabled the Departments of Agriculture, Horticulture and Agricultural Engineering to bring modern farm equipments, technologies, new discoveries, soil test units and others to the villages along with officials and field staff of departments concerned. They would have to demonstrate before the farmers about the latest technologies including drip irrigation among others. The farmers, who might not have got chance to see them, could be inspired in some way or other by witnessing the demonstration. It would motivate them to follow modern farm techniques from the traditional methods.

Mr. Rajaraman said it had created opportunities for farmers and officials to establish contact with one another. The farmers were being given exposure to the schemes of the State government to promote agricultural activities. The officials were asked to conduct the festival in all selected villages sincerely and properly. They must strive hard to spread the message of the government to the farmers towards another revolution.

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Apr 19

Max Min

36.8° | 26.9°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 89%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 6:35

Sunset: 18:03

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, Apr 20

Max Min

36° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

| Saturday | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| Apr 21 | Apr 22 | Apr 23 | Apr 24 | Apr 25 |
| | | | | |
| 36° 25° | 36° 25° | 35° 25° | 35° 24° | 33° 25° |
| Sunny | Sunny | Partly Cloudy | Partly Cloudy | Cloudy |

'India should buy fert mineral assets abroad'

Agencies Posted online: Wed Apr 18 2012, 16:26 hrs



New Delhi : Amid depleting natural resources globally, a government group has suggested that India should look at buying fertiliser mineral assets in over 20 countries including Belarus and Canada to meet the domestic shortfall.

In view of risk and huge costs involved in acquisitions, the Group also suggested that the government should create a fund with an initial corpus of USD 5 billion.

India imports about six million tonnes each of potash and urea and seven million tonnes of Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP) every year.

"The need to secure various input (fertiliser) assets to ensure manufacturing and growth of the economy becomes more urgent given the limited availability of such inputs and their control by a few countries," said the Working Group set up by the Planning Commission for the 12 Five Year Plan (2012-17).

The Group suggested to the government to facilitate the entry of Indian firms into countries that are not able to exploit their resources optimally to explore options of ownership and sourcing of basic raw-materials like gas, rock phosphate and potash.

It also identified at least 20 resource-rich countries including Belarus and Canada where India can explore strategic investments and secure long term supplies.

The Group recommended the government to ensure financial resources for raw material assets acquisition and creation of funds for the purpose.

To accelerate the pace of acquisition, PSUs can be allowed to entertain proposals from various routes directly or indirectly subject to feasibility, it said.

The Group emphasised that the acquisition of fertiliser mineral assets abroad is "very important" considering a global scenario of depleting natural resources both energy and minerals.

It also pointed out that rising global prices of raw materials and finished fertilisers is making the growing fertiliser subsidies unsustainable.

For example in Belarus, which has one billion tonne of proven deposit of potash, the Group suggested the government to explore buying stake in the state-controlled Belarus Kali, which enjoys complete monopoly on exploration.

India has been in talks with the Belarus government to buy stake in potash miner Belarus Kali for quite some time.

However, no progress has been made yet. In the case of Canada, it said, "One-fifth of Indian import of potash is from Canada. Possibility of setting up joint venture projects in mining and off take of potash to India should be explored."

India is estimated to consume 33.67 million tonne urea, 12.41 million tonne DAP, 4.79 million tonne potash and 11.42 million tonne of complex fertilisers by the end 2016-17 fiscal.

Consumer price inflation jumps to 9.47%

fe Bureau Posted online: Wed Apr 18 2012, 11:32 hrs



NEW DELHI : India's annual consumer price inflation (CPI) index jumped to 9.47% in March--exceeding the wholesale price rise of 6.89% for the period--on a spurt in prices of protein-based food products, oils and fats, clothing materials and fuel items.

The consumer inflation rose sharply from 8.83% in February, reflecting immense price pressures in the economy. Retail prices of food and beverages, which account for almost half of the weighting in the CPI index, rose 8.22% in March from a year before, while the cost of fuel and electricity jumped 11.8%, according to the released by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation on Wednesday. Clothing, bedding and footwear turned dearer by the maximum of 12.5% last month.

Milk and its products led the pack in price rise in the food and beverages segment, with a 15.22% jump in their rates in March, followed by a 14.2% rise in poils and fats and 10.06% in egg, fish and meat. Vegetables turned dearer by 9.55%, while non-alcoholic beverages became more expensive by 10.2%.

The CPI data, launched in February, are important as they factor in rate movements in services, thus giving policymakers a better idea of price rise than the wholesale-price-based inflation that captures price pressures experienced by trade intermediaries. Adequate capturing of inflation at the consumer level with demand-side price movements of both goods and services will help make better policy decisions.

Analysts said the reporting of fuel inflation is still suppressed and the numbers will rise if the government decides to pass on the complete burden of global crude oil spike to consumers. Crude oil poses serious risks to a potential flare-up in domestic prices, if the ongoing tensions between Iran and the West exacerbates.

Factoring in risks to underlying inflationary pressure, the Reserve Bank of India pruned the main lending rate--the repo rate-- on Tuesday by sharper-than-expected 50 basis points to prop up a faltering economy, but cautioned against limited scope to cut the rate further.

Business Standard

Thursday, Apr 19, 2012

Wheat harvesting unaffected by unseasonal showers last week

Komal Amit Gera / Chandigarh April 19, 2012, 0:03 IST

Wheat harvesting has been picking up pace across various states, despite unseasonal showers last week. Farmers say they would delay harvesting to get the excess moisture exhausted and there is not much damage to the quality.

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) expects to procure 31.8 million tonnes (mt) of wheat for the rabi season 2012-13. The procurement done last year was close to 28.3 mt.

The inclement weather in certain areas of Punjab has delayed the arrival of new crop in mandis. The hailstorm and rain on the standing crop last week raised the moisture content.

According to farmers, the permissible limit of humidity in wheat is 12 per cent. "We will have to leave the crop in the sun to lose moisture," said Gurkirat Singh, a farmer from Sirhind.

Officials in the procuring agencies said arrivals would be delayed by at least 10 days.

The procurement of wheat in Punjab till April 17 was about 170,000 tonnes, as compared to 418,000 tonnes on the same day last year.

The officials confirmed no qualitative damage had been done to the crop as wheat loses

moisture quickly.

Punjab is expected to contribute 11-11.5 mt to the central pool this year. Around 11 mt was contributed by Punjab last year. Haryana would contribute about seven mt to the central pool, as compared to 6.9 mt last year.

The procuring agencies had lifted 1.05 mt till April 17 as compared to 437,000 tonnes in the corresponding period last year.

Uttar Pradesh procured 55,000 tonnes, Rajasthan 120,000 tonnes, Madhya Pradesh 2.5 mt and Gujarat 35,000 tonnes till April 12. Madhya Pradesh is expected to procure 6.5 mt this year, substantially higher than last year.

Information with FCI shows all producing states are expected to do quantitatively better than the last year. But, consumption in the non-producing states is also on a rise.

The movement of the foodgrain from producing to consuming states may be a challenge but additional capacities are likely to come up (about 1.2 mt covered storage space by the year-end in Punjab) and there are contingency plans by state agencies for hiring additional storage.

Besides, an approval of 2 mt of silos under public-private partnership would also help in scientific storage of wheat.

Reduction in 10% sugar levy quota may be delayed

Anindita Dey / Mumbai April 19, 2012, 0:02 IST

The sugar industry may have to wait for reduction in the levy quota on sugar sale, as the ministry of consumer affairs is unlikely to take any decision right now. According to official sources, the government would wait for the monsoon and sowing figures for the next season (2012-13) to assess the production estimates before taking a decision.

The industry has been demanding a reduction in levy quota from 10 per cent so that they have minimal carry forward stock in the new 2012-13 season. Besides, further exports, sources said, will also have to wait till the time new season estimates arrive.

Meanwhile, the government is yet to decide on changing the parameters for export of another

one million tonnes. Typically, the government allocates export quota or permits to factories based on their production in the preceding three years. However, a section of sugar millers from the south and west have demanded the quota be allowed on a first-come-first-served basis. This has been referred to EGoM.

The government has so far allowed three million tonnes of exports in the current season under the open general licence.

The government has been following a policy of partial control and dual pricing, under which a certain percentage of sugar produced by factories is to be sold at a price fixed by the government for the Public Distribution System (PDS).

The government also decides the quantity of non-levy (free sale) sugar allowed to be sold.

The compulsory levy obligation of factories was gradually reduced from 40 per cent to 30 per cent from January 1, 2000. From February 1, 2001, this was further reduced to 15 per cent. The obligation has been 10 per cent of production since March 1, 2002. Mills supply levy sugar at 60 per cent of the cost of production, resulting in an annual industry loss of Rs 2,500-3,000 crore.

The country's sugar production has increased 14 per cent to 21.16 mt till March 15 in the current marketing year that started October last year, according to industry data. Maharashtra, the largest producing state, has produced 7.3 mt till March 15, which is 13 per cent higher than last year. Production in Uttar Pradesh is also up by about 13 per cent to six mt. The southern states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have also reported higher output of 3.2 mt and 1.08 mt, respectively. Compared to 419 sugar mills operational on March 15 last year, 476 mills were operational as on March 15, 2012.

Cotton mill consumption pegged at 2.1 mn bales

BS Reporter / Mumbai April 19, 2012, 1:07 IST

Mill consumption this year has been on a decline and is pegged at 2.1 million bales (1 bale= 170 kg) compared to 2.4 million bales last year, according to the ministry of textiles estimates. "Demand has been weak since April last year, production of yarn and fabric has seen negative growth, while cloth has also seen a four to five per cent reduction. But in the last four to five months consumption has been improving," said A B Joshi, textile secretary. The situation at textile mills have been bad

also due to power problems, some mills have been forced to buy power at a rate which is as high as Rs 11 per unit.

THE HINDU Business Line

Pepper declines

G. K. Nair

Kochi, April 18:

The pepper market on Wednesday dropped on bearish sentiments despite having no selling pressure.

It opened on a firmer note on reports of a similar market overseas, but started sliding on bearish activities by some of the operators, allegedly on bearish predictions by some astrologers, trade sources told *Business Line*.

In fact, they said, there was neither any selling pressure nor any demand at higher levels. It has often been the experience that “whenever the overseas markets went up, ours used to fall,” they said.

Because of the margin requirement only genuine buyers were holding on while others were liquidating and moving away. Industry buyers were covering as they have to do it before the onset of the monsoon.

April contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 205 to the last traded price of Rs 37,450 a quintal. May and June dropped by Rs 395 and Rs 460 respectively to the LTP of Rs 38,250 and Rs 38,955 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover increased by 505 tonnes to close at 4,191 tonnes. Total open interest declined by 121 tonnes to close at 6,230 tonnes.

April open interest dropped by 209 tonnes to 792 tonnes while May and June moved up by 77 tonnes and 7 tonnes on switching over.

Spot prices remained unchanged at Rs36,600 (ungarbled) and Rs 38,100 (MG 1) a quintal on limited activities.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$7,550 - \$7,600 a tonne (c&f) for Europe and \$7,850 - \$7,900 a tonne (c&f) for the US and remained above other origins.

Overseas trend

A report from Vietnam today said the pepper market there was firmer. Indications were 500 GL at \$6,300 a tonne (fob) NSW prompt; 550 GL at \$6,600 a tonne while Asta grade was at \$7,050 a tonne (fob). White pepper double washed was at \$9,400 - \$9,425 a tonne.

Ample stocks pound Pusa rice varieties

Our Corresponden



Karnal, April 18:

Prices of Pusa-1121 varieties continued to tumble on Wednesday, while other aromatic and non-basmati varieties were quoted with nominal variations. Domestic demand remained sluggish.

Ample stocks amidst weak demand led prices of Pusa-1121 rice down, said Mr Tara Chand Sharma, proprietor of Tara Chand and Sons. Prices of Pusa-1121 increased by Rs 2,000 a quintal over the last few weeks; and now it is correction time in the market, he said.

In the physical market, prices of Pusa-1121 (steam) eased by Rs 50 and ruled between Rs 5,800 and Rs 5,820 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) sold at Rs 4,830 a quintal, down Rs 20 from previous level.

Pure basmati (raw) traded at Rs 4,900 a quintal, while pure basmati (sela) sold at Rs 4,600 a quintal.

Duplicate basmati sold at Rs 4,510 a quintal. For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar sold at Rs 3,400-3,500, Dubar at Rs 2,700-2,900 while Mongra was trading at Rs 1,900-2,300 a quintal.

Sugandha (steam) went for Rs 3,650-3,730 a quintal while PR-14 (steam) sold at Rs 2,300-2,420 a quintal.

Sharbati varieties continued to rule flat, Sharbati (steam) sold at Rs 3,400-3,600 a quintal while Sharbati (sela) was at Rs 3,500 a quintal.

Permal (raw) sold at Rs 1,900-2,010 a quintal, Permal (sela) at Rs 1,800-2,020, PR-11 (sela) at Rs 2,220-2,350 and PR-11 (raw) at Rs 2,125-2,300 a quintal.

Spot sugar declines as local offtake drops

Our Correspondent



Mumbai:

Spot sugar declined by Rs 8-10 for a quintal on Wednesday on eased local demand.

Naka rates for S-grade lost Rs 10 a quintal and Rs 20 for M-grade on higher sales in the resale market. Among mill tender rates, S-grade firmed up by Rs 10 a quintal while M-grade eased by Rs 10. A leading wholesaler said need-based demand kept volume normal and prices range-bound. Absence of demand from neighbouring States in Maharashtra is forcing local producers to concentrate on local markets where demand is less than supplies due to higher production this year. Freight rates were steady after a recent small hike.

Due to vacations, consumption demand is lower in the west, but it is expected to improve from next month. Summer will also be at its peak then, leading to higher demand across the country. Production in the first six months of the production year that is from October to September increased by 13 per cent to 246.3 lakh tonnes compared with 217.1 lakh tonnes in the year-ago period. Besides, stocks in distribution markets also dampened buying, traders said.

The Union Government has declared 46 lakh tonnes free-sale quota for April-June. Lower demand in the current month will keep producers under pressure to sell allotted quota in due time. In Vashi, while about 50-51 truckloads arrived, about 47-48 truckloads were locally despatched. On Tuesday evening, about 17-18 mills offered tenders and sold 78,000-80,000 bags to local stockists for Rs 2,770-2,820 (Rs 2,750-2,820) for S-grade and for Rs 2,870-2,930 (Rs 2,870-2,940) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 2,882-2,951 (Rs 2,876-2,952) and M-grade Rs 3,021-3,111 (Rs 3,026-3,111).

Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 2,840 -2,880 (Rs 2,840-2,890) and M-grade Rs 2,930-3,030 (Rs 2,950-3,050).

Local, global futures keep edible oils bearish



Mumbai, April 18:

Edible oils remained bearish on Wednesday, tracking sharp decline in Malaysian palmolein and domestic soya oil futures. Volume was need-based even as refiners and resellers lowered rates. Malaysian crude palm oil futures closed lower in cautious trade amid uncertainty over global

economic growth. Traders said imported palmolein and soyabean oil declined by Rs 2-5 for 10 kg each, while groundnut oil, cottonseed refined oil, sunflower seed and rapeseed oil lost Rs 5 for 10 kg each on lack of demand. Resellers traded about 80-100 tonnes of palmolein.

There was no new demand for indigenous oils as most packers and brand-makers have covered enough quantities in advance. Retail demand is generally low during the mid-month, traders said. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 661-662 for April and sunflower refined oil Rs 730-735. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 650-652, soya refined oil at Rs 721-725 and sunflower seed refined oil at Rs 730-735. Resellers offered palmolein at Rs 648-650. In Saurashtra and Rajkot, groundnut oil was Rs 1,860 (Rs 1,865) for a *telia* tin and Rs 1,210 (Rs 1,200) for loose (10 kg).

Malaysian crude palm oil's May contracts closed at 3,500 ringgit (3,515 ringgit), June at 3,489 ringgit (3,513 ringgit) and July at 3,479 ringgit (3,503 ringgit) a tonne. On the National Board of Trade in Indore, soya refined oil for May delivery closed lower on profit booking at Rs 758.50 (Rs 765.50).

Mumbai spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,220 (1,225), soya refined oil 717 (722), sunflower seed exp. ref. 655 (660), sunflower seed ref. 740 (740), rapeseed ref. oil 815 (825), rapeseed expeller ref. 785 (795) cotton seed ref. oil 690 (695) and palmolein 648 (650).

Tur sluggish on slack purchase by millers

Our Correspondent



Indore, April 18:

Tur was sluggish on weak buying support from millers.

In the spot market, tur (Maharashtra) was quoted at Rs 3,725-3,750 a quintal (Rs 3,750-3,775), while tur (Nimari) ruled stable at Rs 3,000-3,500.

Tur prices have declined by Rs 100 a quintal in the past one week on the absence of buying support.

According to traders, bearish sentiment in tur is likely to continue with arrival of new *gulabi* tur in local mandis and large stock of imported tur. Tur dal was stable despite subdued buying support, with full dal being quoted at Rs 5,500-5,600, *sawa* no. dal at Rs 4,800-5,100 and marka at Rs 6,200 a quintal.

Urad

Bearish sentiment prevailed in urad and its dal on lack of buying support. In the spot, bold urad ruled at Rs 3,450-3,600 a quintal, medium ruled at Rs 2,800-3,000. Average urad dal was at Rs 3,800-4,000, bold at Rs 4,700-4,800 and mongar at Rs 5,200-5,500 a quintal.

Moong

Moong and its dal ruled flat on lack of buying. Bold moong ruled at Rs 4,100-4,400 a quintal, while medium quoted at Rs 3,700-4,200 a quintal. Moong dal ruled at Rs 5,100-5,200, bold dal at Rs 5,500-5,600 and moong mongar at Rs 5,200-5,500 a quintal.

Chana

Chana and masoor ruled stable despite slack buying support. Kanta chana was Rs 3,600-3,625, while desi was Rs 3,550. Chana dal ruled steady, with average dal being quoted at Rs 4,400-4,425, medium at Rs 4,500-4,525 and bold at Rs 4,625-4,650 a quintal.

Dollar chana

Despite weak arrival, dollar chana or chickpea was stable at Rs 7,200-7,800 a quintal in *kacchi mandis*, while in the container, it further gained Rs 50 on strong buying support in the export market.

In the container, dollar chana (42/44 count) ruled at Rs 8,500-8,525 a quintal, 46/48 count ruled at Rs 8,275-8,300 a quintal, while 60/62 count ruled at Rs 7,025-7,050 a quintal.

Higher inflow drags castor futures



Rajkot, April 18:

Castor fell on Wednesday following higher arrivals and poor demand.

A trader said the decline trend is likely to continue due to higher arrivals. Lower demand could also pulled down prices in the coming days, he said.

Castorseed's June contract on the Rajkot Commodity Exchange declined by Rs 22 to Rs 3,565 a quintal, while spot castor was down Rs 17.50 to Rs 3,347.50.

The April contract decreased by Rs 24 to Rs 3,470 a quintal with an open interest of 4,380 lots on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, May lost Rs 31 to Rs 3,528 with an open interest of 17,500 lots, and June declined by Rs 39 to Rs 3,583 with an open interest of 5,990 lots.

About 1.1 lakh bags of castorseed arrived in Gujarat and quoted at Rs 665-675 for a *maund* of 20 kg. About 15,000 bags arrived in Saurashtra and sold at Rs 630-667.

Traders said that sluggish demand from consuming industries amid increased supplies at physical markets led to the fall in castor futures.

TN sugarcane farmers hit by co-op mills strike

R. Balaji

Chennai, April 18:

Farmers supplying sugarcane to co-operative sugar mills are stuck with nearly 8 lakh tonnes of cane as a strike has crippled operations at the mills.

Wage hike

According to official sources, work at 14 of the 16 co-operative sugar mills has come to stop as over 5,000 workers have gone on strike demanding a wage hike over the last two weeks.

Over 12 lakh tonnes of sugarcane out of the total 45 lakh tonnes to have been crushed by the co-operative mills are yet to be processed.

The State Government has ordered that the sugarcane be sent to private sector sugar mills. Following a meeting, some of the 26 private sector mills have agreed to take over 5 lakh tonnes of sugarcane.

But that still leaves over 8 lakh tonnes untended in the fields. At the current season's sugarcane price of about Rs 2,100 a tonne that is a potential loss of about Rs 168 crore to the farmers.

The State is facing surplus sugarcane production this season with the total estimated output at about 230 lakh tonnes according to State Government estimates.

Transportation cost

The private sector mills will crush about 165 lakh tonnes of cane available in their own command areas. They have crushed about 95 lakh tonnes as of March 31.

A sugarcane farmers' representative based in Kallakurichi said that sugar mills and transporters were not keen on handling the cane available elsewhere. Farmers will end up selling at less than market price and paying a heavy price for transport if they have to depend on other sugar mills. The sugarcane price includes Rs 100 transportation cost but farmers will be forced to pay much more, he said.

As the cane dries in the field, weight loss and lower sugar recovery erodes the value of the crop. The sugarcane price is linked to 9.5 per cent sugar recovery and prices go up or down in proportion to the sugar yield.

According to a representative of the Tamil Nadu Co-operative and Public Sector Sugar Mill Workers Federation, workers are set on their demand and are planning a procession on April 24 in Chennai.

Since April 5 when the strike started there have been a couple of rounds of discussions with the workers but the State Government is unrelenting.

Spot rubber rules steady

Our Correspondent



Kottayam, April 18:

Spot rubber closed unchanged on Wednesday. The undercurrent was weak but the market managed to sustain at the prevailing levels on supply concerns. According to observers, there were no quantity buyers on any grade to keep the prices firm during closing hours.

Sheet rubber finished flat at Rs 196 a kg, according to traders. The grade firmed up Rs 196.50 (196) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, as quoted by the Rubber Board.

RSS 4 weakened with May contracts dropping to Rs 194.75 (196.24), June to Rs 199.65 (201.28), July to Rs 203 (204.99) and August to Rs 204 (205.50) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

TOCOM rubber futures recaptured a part of its losses after hitting a three-month low on Tuesday, gaining more than two per cent.

RSS 3 (spot) inched up to Rs 197.72 (197.64) a kg at Bangkok. The April futures bounced back to ¥294.7 (Rs 186.93) from ¥286.9 a kg during the day session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 196 (196); RSS-5: 194.25 (194.25); ungraded: 190 (190); ISNR 20: 195 (195) and latex 60 per cent: 127 (127).

Spot turmeric falls on cautious trading



Erode, April 18:

The price of the spot turmeric decreased on Wednesday by Rs 200 a quintal, including the hybrid Salem Crop.

“Farmers are expressing their thanks to the stockists, as for the third day in succession; many stockists have purchased huge turmeric bags. Only because of the purchase by stockists, the prices are in stable condition, failing which prices will go drastically down by Rs 500-1,000 a quintal,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said no bulk buyer and exporter have purchased the turmeric as no demand has been received from North Indian merchants. The present prevailing price may stand for another fortnight. He categorically said prices will remain at Rs 3,500-3,800 a quintal. But prices will go down if arrival of turmeric increases in four markets.

Turmeric grower farmers also very cautious in bringing the turmeric and they said that for their day-to-day expenses, they need money, so they are selling minimum quantity of turmeric.

The trader said there is no possibility of increasing the turmeric price heavily for one or two years. As usual 21,000 bags of turmeric arrived for sale and 70 per cent of the stocks were sold.

Farmers are reluctantly said, “We are aware of the daily decrease in turmeric price. It has necessitated us to raise turmeric again in our lands, as sugarcane is the only alternate crop for

us. But no Sugar mill is cutting our crop in ten months, but is cutting only after 16 months and the payment also irregular as the millers delaying the payment. So we are raising the turmeric again”.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety fetched Rs 2,509 to Rs 3,838 a quintal, root variety Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,495.

Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 3,505 to Rs 4,135, the root variety Rs 3,291 to Rs 3,539. Of a total arrival of 2,320 bags of turmeric, 1,308 bags were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,289 to Rs 3,690, the root variety Rs 3,239 to Rs 3,589. About 1,701 bags of turmeric were sold against the arrival of 1,804 bags.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,090 to Rs 3,859, the root variety Rs 2,896 to Rs 3,526. All the 1,482 bags of turmeric kept for sales were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 2,869 to Rs 3,869 a quintal, the root variety Rs 2,810 to Rs 3,529. All the 394 bags of turmeric kept for sales were sold.

Tea industry to send auction samples to Pakistan

M R Subramani



Chennai, April 18:

The tea industry in the South is planning to send auction samples to the Pakistan Tea Association office in Karachi every month.

This follows a request by Mr Mohammad Hanif Janoo, Chairman of the Pakistan Tea Association, during his visit to Coonoor and Coimbatore with 11 members of his association last week.

The arrangement will be similar to the one that existed in the 1980s with Egypt. The arrangement, which was discontinued after the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa decided to promote Kenyan tea, made a significant impact on good liquoring CTC (crushed, tear and curl) dust teas at Kochi auctions.

The tea trade in the South is keen to get on with the arrangement that is likely to be worked out by the United Planters' Association of Southern India in consultation with the Tea Board.

Samples

If such an arrangement is worked out, then the tea trade will send samples from individual estates to the Pakistan Tea Association. In turn, the association will ask its members, including those from Lahore and Peshawar, to view the samples and take a decision on purchases.

The issue of sending samples cropped up after the Pakistan delegation was impressed with the samples displayed at the tea tasting session at Coimbatore. The delegation told the organisers that they had not attended such a tasting session at any convention.

A visit to Monica tea factory of Tea Estates India Ltd-Woodbriar Group at Anamalais in Coimbatore district encouraged the Pakistan team to seek 'straight line auction' teas. Monica tea factory's commands a premium at Kochi auctions.

Exploring market

According to trade sources, the Pakistan team's visit has provided an opportunity to the Indian industry to explore the quality tea market in the neighbouring country.

The delegation, while expressing concern over the standard of teas being exported from South India, shared equal responsibility in accepting such consignments.

The members said that such teas were meant for a particular segment and not for their actual market.

The south Indian industry was told that Kenya teas, bought at around \$3.20 to \$4.20 a kg, were 'straight line' teas for quality conscious consumers in Pakistan.

The Pakistan delegation has also extended an invitation to the Indian industry to visit the country. A visit to Pakistan by an Indian delegation is likely in the second half of this year.

Sources said that Mr Janoo commanded great respect from his peers, while the delegation itself was seen as having come on a mission to buy quality teas.

The Pakistan team's visit has, in fact, left the Indian industry, particularly the South, confident of achieving 50 million kg exports by 2015.