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Fish processing units learn quality control measures

Staff Reporter

An industry-institute meet was conducted at the Fisheries College and Research Institute, Tuticorin, a constituent of TANUVAS, on Thursday with a view to bring closer interaction between the FCRI and fish processing industries.

According to a statement, M. Nagoor Meeran, Professor and Head, Department of Fisheries Extension, explained the importance of fisheries education and research for the development of this sector. V.K.Venkatramani, Director, Research and Extension (Fisheries), said that the government was keen to boost exports of fishery products for which high quality standards were essential, especially sending shipments to the U.S, Japan, and European countries. Facilities at the FCRI for checking quality control could be utilised by the fish processing units, he said. He urged those running the fish processing units to help the institute in research of processed products by providing access to their facilities for collection of samples.

Fifteen representatives from local fish processing industries attended the meeting. They emphasized the need for establishing accredited laboratory facilities in Tuticorin to help them avoid delay in getting results for samples.

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Tobacco Board urged to help farmers take up sericulture

Jeevan Chinnappa

The Tobacco Board should provide incentives to farmers to drill borewells so that they take up mulberry cultivation as an alternative to tobacco, said S.M. Siddalingaswamy, Deputy Director of the Department of Sericulture. Farmers could even seek subsidy to take up drip irrigation for cultivating mulberry, he said.

As per the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, tobacco cultivation in the country should be reduced by 2020. Karnataka is the second largest producer of tobacco in the country after Andhra Pradesh, with 2 lakh acres under cultivation. Farmers have been requested to bring it down to at least 1 lakh acres by 2020.

A beginning in this regard was made at a seminar held here on November 20, 2008, when the then Deputy Director of the Department of Sericulture made a presentation suggesting sericulture as an alternative to tobacco. The issue was brought to the notice of the scientists at the Central Tobacco Research Institute, Hunsur, as well, Mr. Siddalingaswamy told *The Hindu*.

Assistant Director of Sericulture B.N. Shantamalleshappa pointed out that mulberry cultivation was an environment-friendly activity too. It would retain water and its leaves could be used as biomass, he said. Mr. Shantamalleshappa, however, said that using tobacco barns as silkworm rearing centres should be avoided as toxins arising out of tobacco drying would have accumulated in the walls of the barns and they could destroy the worms.

The Department of Sericulture gives subsidies to farmers under schemes such as Catalytic Development Project, for which the Centre contributes 90 per cent of the funds and the State government gives the rest. The State government gives funds for taking up drip irrigation and building silkworm rearing houses.

“Cash incentives are also being given to the farmers for producing bivoltine hybrid disease free layings (DFLs) and cross-breed (CB) DFLs.

A sum of Rs. 40 would be given as incentive for each kg of bivoltine hybrid DFL while it is Rs. 10 for CB DFLs. However, the pure bivoltine DFLs are not eligible for incentives as they fetch a good price in the market. Labour shortage has hit sericulture farmers hard,” Mr. Siddalingaswamy said.

Mr. Shantamalleshappa said that taking up sericulture in areas such as H.D. Kote, Periyapatna and Hunsur, where elephant attacks were common, would benefit farmers as elephants might not feed on mulberry leaves.

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- *'Tobacco cultivation in the country should be reduced by 2020'*
 - *Karnataka is the second-largest producer of tobacco in the country after Andhra Pradesh*
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KVK promoting organic farming in a big way

Special Correspondent

Farmers Field School formed for group-based learning

A group-based learning process called Farmers Field School has been effectively utilised by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Kannur, under Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) to promote organic farming among farmers.

According to KVK officials, the activities of the school, started in January this year to encourage organic farming of vegetables among the farmers, include experimental learning which helps them understand the practical aspects of organic farming.

The activities are simple experiments, regular field observations, and group analysis of organic farming practices, said KVK head and Professor K. Abdul Kareem. In this cyclic learning process, farmers develop the expertise that enabled them to make their own organic crop management decisions, he said.

The experiment has been conducted in two acres of land at Paravoor in Kadannappally-Panappuzha panchayat in the district by 20 enthusiastic young farmers of the Star Self-Help Group under the technical guidance of the KVK.

The experimental plot has been divided into two, organic and inorganic. "The key characteristics of organic farming practices are maintaining organic matter levels by addition of organic manure at the rate of 12 tonnes a hectare and thereby encouraging soil biological activity," Dr. Kareem said adding that soil acidity correction by adding lime enabled higher availability of nutrients and sustainable growth of micro flora in soil. Nutrient self-sufficiency was ensured through the use of bio-fertilizers, phosphate solubilising bacteria, and potash mobilising bacteria for efficient utilisation of phosphorus and potassium from soil, he said.

In the inorganic plot, chemical fertilizers and pesticides were applied as per recommendations in packages of practices of the KAU. According Dr. Kareem, the organic crop exhibited slow growth at initial stages to pick up later, while plants in the inorganic plot were healthy at initial stages but withered with higher pest and diseases at later stages.

The harvest of the crops was done on March 29 in a jubilant atmosphere. T. Sulaja, grama panchayat president, inaugurated the harvesting of vegetables. The learning experience was imparted to a large number of farmers.

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- *This will help understand practical aspects of farming*
 - *Experiment done on 2 acres of land in Kannur district*
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Fall in cultivation area under horticulture crops

R. Ramabhadran Pillai

NHM moots programmes to improve situation

The area under cultivation of different horticulture crops in the State has decreased during the period between 2005-06 and 2009-10.

The National Horticulture Mission (NHM) recently conducted a review and suggested new programmes to improve the situation.

Figures released by the Economics and Statistics Department show that the area under mango cultivation registered a decrease of 28 per cent, from 87,965 hectares in 2005-06 to 63,751 hectares in 2009-10.

Banana cultivation dropped from 61,400 hectares to 51,275 hectares, registering a decrease of 16 per cent.

Pineapple cultivation showed a decrease of 23 per cent, with the area under cultivation dropping from 12,775 hectares to 9,827 hectares.

The area under pepper cultivation reduced from 2,37,998 hectares to 1,71,489 hectares, recording a fall of 28 per cent.

Turmeric cultivation registered a 28 per cent decrease in area under cultivation — from 3,384 hectares to 2,438 hectares.

Ginger farming area registered a drop of 56 per cent, with a fall in area of cultivation from 12,226 hectares to 5,408 hectares. The area under cashew cultivation fell from 78,290 hectares to 48,972 hectares, registering a decrease of 37 per cent.

Interestingly, nutmeg registered a rise in area under cultivation from 10,984 hectares to 15,931 hectares, registering an increase of 45 per cent.

Additional areas

During the same period, additional areas were covered under the NHM. Accordingly, mango cultivation was taken up in an additional area of 4,040 hectares; banana in 66,754 hectares; pineapple in 11,594 hectares; pepper in 3,967 hectares; turmeric in 2,384 hectares; ginger in 9,862 hectares; and cashew in 15,180 hectares.

Under the NHM, 103 projects with a total project cost of Rs.1,435.61 lakh were sanctioned to Kerala Agricultural University (KAU). The Centre for Perishable Cargo at the Cochin International Airport was sanctioned NHM assistance of Rs.1,459 lakh to handle a capacity of 25,000 tonnes of perishable commodities annually.

Getting remunerative prices for the produce and availability of loans were key to ensuring that the farming community did not give up agriculture. Formation of cooperatives for pineapple was a key suggestion made by the NHM.

Credit flow

Industry body Assocham, in a recent study conducted in association with Ernst & Young, called for policies to effectively direct credit flow to the agriculture sector and encourage contract farming.

It pointed out that of 148 million rural households, 89 million were farm households and 46 million of these were outside the financial services net.

A total of 9.1 million new farmers were provided bank credit in 2010-11. Banks, including cooperative banks and regional rural banks, met nearly 113 per cent of the government's target of Rs.3.25 lakh crore.

Corporates could play a vital role in risk management and providing an assured market for agriculture produce, which could benefit farmers, banks and the rural economy. There were six lakh un-banked villages in the country.

- *Call for better credit flow to the agriculture sector*
 - *Remunerative prices for produce significant factor*
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National meet on inclusive growth in agriculture

R. Ravikanth Reddy

Putting an end to acquiring agriculture land for non-agriculture purpose and ensuring the empowerment of women from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes providing them the benefits of growth were some of the issues highlighted at a national seminar on 'Inclusive Growth in Agriculture (Measurement and Policy Issues)', organised by the Department of Economics, Osmania University under the UGC-SAP-DSA-III Programme.

Empirical studies

Noted econometrician and former Director of Delhi School of Economics, K.L.Krishna pointed out that the results of the empirical studies carried out in India on inclusive growth would help the policy makers to implement the welfare programs effectively to improve the living conditions of the people.

Distinguished Economist Prof. U.Shankar from Madras School of Economics enlightened that the sustainability of agricultural growth depends on resource endowment while S. Satyanarayana, Vice - Chancellor, Osmania University expressed deep concern over instability of prices of farm commodities.

N.Vijaya from Kakatiya University emphasised that the SCs, STs and women must be empowered and the fruits of growth should reach them. J.Mahender Reddy, Vice - Chancellor, IFHE felt that slow growth in agriculture would affect the food security and inflation.

M.M.Goel of Kurukshetra University pointed out that most of the benefits meant for agriculture were going for large farmers while Prof. A.V.Raja of University of Hyderabad felt that acquisition of land should be meant for agricultural use than for non agriculture use. M. Upender, Seminar Director explained that the seminar was organised with a view to generate empirical information on inclusive growth in agriculture.

Forty five papers on various issues were presented at the seminar.

The OU Vice - Chancellor also released the book entitled 'Estimation of Economic Relationship for Indian Economy' authored by Prof. M. Upendar on the occasion.

R. Ravikanth Reddy

Share

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Shifting of PWD office upsets farmers of Karur

L. Renganathan

Office of executive engineer shifted to Darapuram in Tirupur district

The abrupt and surreptitious shifting of the Public Works Department Amaravathy Division Executive Engineer's office from Karur to Darapuram in Tirupur district has caused consternation among the Amaravathy river ayacutdars in Karur district.

At a time when the rightful share of the river water is being denied shifting of the office due to political manipulation has only added insult to injury, the farmers rue. Effective from Sunday, the office is functioning at Darapuram leaving the tail-end area farmers fretting and fuming.

Amaravathy is a major river that irrigates a registered ayacut of 13,000 acres and another 12,000 acres of unregistered ayacut in Karur district. The river, from the Amaravathy Reservoir, enters Karur district near Chinnadarapuram meandering through Nanjai Kalikurichi, Anaipalayam, Sengalapuram, Pallapalayam, Viswanathapuri, Mochakottampalayam, Govindampalayam, Sellandipalayam, Andankoil, Karur Town, Panjamadevi, Koyampalli, Somur, Sellipalayam, Sanapiratti and Puliur before draining into the River Cauvery at Kattalai. Besides, there is the Pallapalayam Raja Vaikkal that branches off the main river near Pallapalayam and runs to a length of 40 km irrigating several hundred acres on its way.

Along the main course River Amaravathy irrigates a fertile ayacut in which thousands of farmers raise paddy, sugarcane, turmeric, sunflower, tapioca, sorghum, ragi and banana.

As per the original rights of the Karur farmers who form the tail-end area group, only when the water level in the Amaravathy reservoir near Udamalpet rises above 40 feet height, could the ayacut of the Amaravathy main channel that branches off from the reservoir, could be given water. Otherwise the downstream Darapuram areas of erstwhile Erode district as also the entire

Karur district ayacut hold the right to receive water both for drinking water purposes and irrigation needs.

But over the years the Karur district farmers' rights got watered down as the pugnacious political lobby in the core Kongu region of Coimbatore, Erode and Tirupur paid scant respect to the verbal and written assurances of the Madras Presidency Government of those days when the Amaravathy reservoir was constructed. Denied water thus in the past few decades, the tail-end areas of Karur plummeted to single crop pattern from fertile double crop seasons of yonder years.

At present the Karur farmers and public are at the mercy of the upstream administrations for drinking water needs and irrigation requirements from the River Amaravathy.

“At least we had a place to submit our petitions directly in the form of PWD Executive Engineer's Office in Karur. There had been attempts in the past to shift the office but we had petitioned the Chief Minister's Office, the Madras High Court and the senior officials of the department. But everywhere our pleas were turned down as they could not fathom the reason for locating the office in Karur originally. The concept is locating the controlling office downstream as in the case of every system,” points out Panjamadevi Nanjai Ayacutdars Association secretary M.Ramasamy.

Now the PWD had surreptitiously shifted the office without even consulting us and this is a huge setback for not just the farmers but also for other public who depend on River Amaravathy for water as we fear we may not get water at all for any need following the shifting, Mr.Ramasamy observes.

“Already we are receiving water for less than 100 days only in a year. Now Tirupur is going to take the cake and eat it too leaving nothing for Karur. There is none from the district either at the Department's decision-making level or at the political plane to fight for us. The move is definitely fraught with danger for all Karur people,” notes S. Palanisamy, president, Pallapalayam Raja Vaikkal Ayacutdars Association.

We hear that the order was issued on Friday and the shifting effected stealthily on Sunday and that itself betrays the intention of the officials, he concludes.

Turmeric godowns inaugurated

Staff Reporter

Revenue Minister K.A. Sengottaiyan has declared open two godowns at the Integrated Turmeric Complex at Karumandichellipalayam, near Perundurai, on Sunday.

The godowns were constructed at a cost of Rs. 70 lakh to enable the farmers store turmeric safely, the Minister said while speaking on the occasion.

Erode is one of the largest turmeric producing regions in the country. The two godowns would benefit a large number of turmeric growers in the region and protect them from the fluctuations in the turmeric prices as well. The farmers would be able to store the yellow spice in the godowns and sell the produce when the prices go up.

The farming community in the district should take full advantage of the facility, he said.

The Minister said the State Government would continue to give more importance for the development of the agriculture sector and protect the welfare of the farming community. The government had earmarked Rs. 3,800 crore for the agriculture sector in the budget for this year.

The Minister further said that the government would provide free house site pattas to one lakh families this financial year. Steps were being taken to sort out the power crisis in the State, he added.

Later, the Minister distributed welfare assistance to the tune of Rs. 39.27 lakh to 560 beneficiaries selected under various schemes.

Collector V.K. Shanmugam presided. MLAs N.D. Venkatachalam, S.S. Ramanitharan, P.G. Narayanan and R.N. Kittusamy, District Revenue Officer S. Ganesh and senior officials were present.

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Apr 2

Max Min

34.3° | 25.3°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Humidity: 75%

Wind: Normal

Sunrise: 6:35

Sunset: 18:03

Barometer: 1013

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Tuesday, Apr 3

Max Min

32° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Apr 4	Thursday Apr 5	Friday Apr 6	Saturday Apr 7	Sunday Apr 8
33° 24°	33° 24°	34° 24°	34° 23°	34° 23°
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Sunny



Best returns in Oct for tomato growers

SUNDAY, 01 APRIL 2012 22:49

PNS | HALDWANI

Farmers, particularly tomato growers, may make the most money for their produce during the month of October this year. Scientists of the GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology (GBPUAT), Pantnagar, are of the view that given the ongoing marketing trends of the local

Haldwani regulated market, a major market for tomato, it is estimated that prices of tomato may remain maximum in coming October.

The wholesale prices of hill tomato in Haldwani market would be in the range of `900-1,100 per quintal in August and September, 2012, while during October, 2012 these prices are expected to be in the range of `1,100 and `1,250 per quintal, the scientists suggested.

The scientists of the GBPUAT, Pantnagar, have been able to make these predictions at the local market only after conducting a study of the marketing trends prevailing for the past 22 years in the regulated local Haldwani market under the project, 'Establishing and networking of market intelligence centres in India'.

The main purpose behind conducting study of certain agricultural commodities like tomato is to make forecast of these commodities well in advance in fact before or during sowing season so that farmers could get better returns for their produce and take appropriate measures to maximise benefits, the agricultural scientists added.

As the scientists have pointed out, tomatoes are grown on about 47 lakh hectares throughout the world and the production figure is at about 13 crore tonnes. India ranks third amongst top tomato-growing countries contributing around eight per cent of the world's total tomato production. The major tomato-growing States in India are Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka, West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.

These States together accounted for about 82.20 per cent of India's tomato production during the year 2009-10. As tomato is a common vegetable, it is widely produced throughout Uttarakhand.

Business Standard

Monday, Apr 02, 2012

India No.2 in horticulture output, but way behind China

Sanjeeb Mukherjee / New Delhi April 1, 2012, 0:49 IST

India's horticulture production rose 30 per cent in the last five years — an impressive rise, considering growth in the preceding five years stood at about 23 per cent.

This has placed India among the foremost countries in horticulture production, just behind China. However, despite the rise, India is way behind its nearest rival in per-hectare yield and processing of horticulture products.

China's production of fruit and vegetables in 2007 stood at about 680 million tonnes. In other words, about four years earlier, China's annual production was 172 per cent more than India's current production of fruits and vegetables. However, on a segregated basis, India is ahead of China in terms of the production of bananas and mangoes.



In terms of per-hectare yield, the disparity between the two is striking. In 2007, China produced 96.5 million tonnes of fruit from 10 million hectares and 583 million tonnes of vegetables from 18 million hectares.

In India, 218.2 million hectares of land was used to produce almost 240 million tonnes of fruits and vegetables in 2010-11.

“Yes, we are behind China in many respects of horticulture. However, we are either the world’s second- or third-largest producer of about 10 crops. This means there is immense scope for improvement,” Amrik Singh Sidhu, director of Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Horticulture

Research told Business Standard.

The horticulture sector in India is characterised by small, segregated farms with low per-hectare yields and huge post-harvest losses, owing to outdated practices. A recent study by YES Bank showed India stored only two per cent of its horticulture products in temperature-controlled conditions, while China stored 15 per cent and Europe and North America stored 85 per cent of their products in such conditions.

Adequate cold storage facilities are available for just about 10 per cent of India's horticulture production.

Of the total annual production, 30-40 per cent is wasted before consumption. During the peak production period, the gap between the demand and supply of cold storage capacity is a mind-boggling 25 million tonnes.

Shailendra Kumar, director of the National Centre for Cold Chain Development, said, "The maximum biggest wastage happens during the transportation of horticulture products from the farm gate to mandis and thereafter. Storage solutions can be provided only near the mandis, and this does not solve the problem. The answer lies in minimising the wastage that happens during transportation."

He said from a farm gate to a consumer, a horticulture product passed through seven different distribution channels, and in every step, there was a loss of five-seven per cent. "So, you can imagine how big this loss is," he said.

Processing losses also abound. While China processed about 30 per cent of the food (fruits and vegetables) in 2009, the Indian food processing industry has been set a target of raising the level of processing perishable products from six per cent to 20 per cent by 2015. The \$70-billion Indian food processing industry is dominated by small and medium enterprises, which do not have the capacity to undertake large-scale processing of fruits and vegetables.

However, these challenges also present various opportunities. Sanjeev Chopra, director of the National Horticulture Mission, said, "There has been a growing interest in horticulture in the last few years from states, and this is reflected in the massive demand for funding. It shows states

are eager to promote horticulture production.”

He also said as against the budgeted Rs 1,200-1,500 crore, the department has already received proposals amounting to Rs 3,000 crore from states.

“The idea behind the mission is to raise production and farmers’ incomes and cut post-harvest losses,’ he said.

Of the 140 million farmers in the country, horticulture engages about 20 million. And, since it also contributes 25-30 per cent to farm gross domestic product, it should hold a dominant position in India’s farm policy.

THE HINDU Business Line

Export quota divides sugar mills in North, South

R. Balaji



Chennai, April 1:

North and South India are divided over the quota system again. But this time, it is over quota for sugar exports.

South Indian sugar mills want the Centre to do away with the quota system for sugar exports as, they say, it supports only trading in the licenses.

The landlocked north Indian sugar mills that cannot export sugar are demanding the continuation of the system. They can sell their quotas to exporters and make money.

Sugar mills in the South and West – with access to ports – say that the quota system adds to their cost, makes exports unviable, stock builds up in the domestic market and spoils the business for all.

The Government distributes export quotas to sugar mills on the basis of last three years' average production. For instance, last month the Government allowed exports of 10 lakh tonnes (lt). Nearly three-fourths of the licenses are with those who cannot export. At about Rs 2,500 a tonne for the license, mills can make Rs 187 crore on license alone. Last year when international prices were higher the licenses were traded for Rs 3,000-8,000 a tonne.

Sugar production hit a high of 243 lt in 2010-11. This season it is expected to be even higher with industry estimates putting it at around 260 lt against the Government estimate of 252 lt.

Prices are ruling at about Rs 26,000 a tonne and it is essential for mills to sell sugar at least at Rs 30,000 for their operations to be viable. Low prices in the domestic market mean sugar mills will not be able to pay the growers.

'Discriminatory'

Mr M. Manikam, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Sakthi Sugars, said that the sugar mills in the coastal areas are unable to export because of the quota system.

If the export price is Rs 27,000 a tonne, then mills need to buy the quota for about Rs 3,000. This makes exports unviable. Stocks are building up in the domestic market.

The "quota system has not worked out well as it is discriminatory," he said.

Sugar mills in the North can sell sugar at a higher price in the domestic market at about Rs 28,500 because of local market conditions. They are also pushing for the benefit of selling export licenses, he said.

The industry is hoping that the Government comes out with an alternative mechanism, such as a 'first come first served' basis that would let exports happen.

According to an industry representative who did not want to be identified, the South Indian Sugar Mills Association represented its views to the Union Food Ministry last week.

In 2010-11 when sugar exports resumed after a couple of years break, domestic prices increased from about Rs 28,000 a tonne to Rs 30,000 for a couple of weeks. International prices ruled higher by about Rs 3,000-8,000. The quota system helped mills in the North that could not export directly.

With production being high for the second year in succession, the price difference between domestic and export markets is lower.

According to a press release from the Uttar Pradesh-based Dwarikesh Sugars, a delegation of North-based mills has represented to the Food Ministry to continue with the quota system to support mills that are going through a financial crisis because of high sugarcane prices.

Better demand heats up Coonoor tea

P. S. Sundar

Coonoor, April 1:

Nearly 91 per cent of the 11.29 lakh kg was sold at sale No: 13 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions with prices gaining Rs 2 a kg.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC market when Paras Tea Co bought it for Rs 171 a kg. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 158, Hittakkal Estate Rs 149, Shanthi Supreme Rs 148, Darmona Estate Rs 142 and Blue Monte Speciality Rs 141. In all, 109 marks got Rs 100 and more.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 240, Curzon Rs 180, Prammas Rs 166, Tiger Hill clonal Rs 164, Havukal and Kairbetta Rs 162 each and Mailoor Rs 160. In all, 36 marks got Rs 100 and more.

“Orthodox leaf market gained Rs 1-2 a kg. CTC leaf market was irregular. Primary orthodox dust eased Rs 5-10 range. CTC dust market was irregular with prices oscillating up and down Rs 1-2”, an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

On the export front, Pakistan bought selectively for Rs 56-70 a kg and the CIS Rs 56-74.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 50-55 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 100-150 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 56-59 for plain dusts and Rs 90-158 for brighter liquoring dusts.

Wheat harvest delayed; FCI workers on strike in Punjab

Our Correspondent

Karnal, April 1:

Not a single grain of wheat was available in Haryana *mandis* for procurement by Government agencies on Sunday when the Rabi marketing season begins. April 1 marks the beginning of the rabi marketing season and Government agencies begin procuring wheat for buffer stocks. It is the second consecutive time that stocks were not available on April 1. Last year, procurement operations were delayed by a week. Harvesting has started in some parts; but in most places the crop is still not fully matured. Extended cold conditions in the North have resulted in delay of the crop's ripening.

Harvest normally peaks during second and third week of April but this year, it could peak between fourth week of April and first week of May. Mr Sewa Ram, a wheat trader, told *Business Line* that arrivals may start in the second week of April but the moisture level in the crop could be higher. The Haryana Food and Supplies Minister, Mr Mahendra Pratap Singh, said that his State expects a production of 118.61 lakh tonnes (lt) of wheat out of which about 70 lt of wheat would be procured at minimum support price fixed at Rs 1,285 a quintal. He said that the arrangements for purchase of wheat had been made in 371 *mandis* against 367 *mandis* during last season. The farmers have been advised to bring their produce to the market after proper cleaning and drying.

Strike

In Punjab, procurement has been badly affected due to strike by the FCI workers union. About 70 per cent of 15,000 FCI workers in Punjab are on strike since March 15, demanding higher wages. Punjab aims to procure 115 lt of wheat this year against 109.57 lt last year.

Prices gain as arrivals remain low at Kochi tea auction

Kochi, April 1:

Arrivals continued to remain low at the Kochi Tea Auction with 8,10,000 kg reported at the dust auction and 1,33,000 kg at the leaf auction. Good liquoring and popular teas appreciated in value at the CTC dust auction. Prices moved up as the auction progressed. Medium and plain teas followed a similar trend. There was sustained demand by AVT, Tata Global, Vimal Tea,

Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation and Hindustan Unilever at the CTC dust auction for good liquoring grades. Loose tea traders lent fair amount of support. Upcountry buyers evinced interest. There was good export interest. Primary tea grades quoted higher at the orthodox dust auction. Most other grades quoted low and there were some withdrawals. Exporters were active in the market where upcountry buyers lent some support.

Leaf Auction

Good quality whole leaf and broken grades quoted at last week's levels at the orthodox leaf auction. Medium grades remained steady to firm. This week traditional exporters to CIS countries were not very active. There was some decline in quality reported at the auction. HUL was less active. Buyers for the Tunisian market remained subdued. There was some upcountry demand for medium whole leaf grades. Fannings from Nilgiri region was absorbed by exporters, tea bag manufacturers and upcountry buyers. There was good demand at the CTC leaf auction and good liquoring grades remained steady. Some CTC leaf grades revealed weak trends as the auction progressed. Upcountry buyers lent fair amount of support. Exporters were selective. HUL did not operate at the auction. There was local demand for good liquoring teas.

Global coffee exports decline by 2% in Oct-Feb: ICO



New Delhi, April 1:

World coffee exports declined by 2 per cent to 41.5 million bags in the first five months of the current coffee year, despite a rise in shipments in February, International Coffee Organisation (ICO) has said.

The worldwide coffee shipments stood at 42.3 million bags (of 60 kg each), in the same period of the 2010-11 coffee year, the global body on coffee said. Coffee year runs from October to September.

Global shipments of coffee rose by 7 per cent to 9.32 million bags in February 2012 from 8.67 million bags in the year-ago period.

According to market analysts, world coffee shipments have declined from the start of the current season due to low opening stocks on account of record shipments in the 2010-11 coffee year and fall in production in the current crop year.

Coffee stocks in exporting countries declined to 17.4 million bags in the 2011-12 season compared to 18.45 million bags in the last season, their lowest levels since ICO began keeping records, the London-based body of coffee exporting and importing countries had said earlier.

Worldwide shipments of coffee rose by 11 per cent to an all-time high of 104.5 million bags in the 2010-11 coffee year from 94.3 million bags in the 2009-10 coffee year.

ICO has also pegged the production in crop year 2011-12 at 128.5 million bags against 134.3 million bags in the 2010-11 crop year, representing a decline of 4.3 per cent.

The organisation has attributed the decline to the biennial cycle for arabica in Brazil and a fall in output in all other coffee-producing regions, with the exception of Africa.

The low opening stock and a decline in output has been affecting the shipments of coffee right from the first month of the current coffee year, analysts said.

Shipments of the brew declined by 9 per cent to 7.11 million bags in October 2011 against 7.79 million bags in the year-ago period.

Despite a marginal rise in coffee exports in November 2011 to 7.78 million bags from 7.75 million bags in the same period of the previous year, shipments again fell, albeit marginally, to 9.14 million bags in December 2011 from 9.20 million bags in the year-ago period.

Following the downward trend, global shipments of coffee dipped by 10 per cent to 7.99 million bags in January 2012, compared with 8.87 million in January 2011.