

Published: August 16, 2012 01:44 IST | Updated: August 16, 2012 01:44 IST

## Some tips for managing rodents in the fields

R. K. Murali Baskaran

J. Jayaraj

The breeding rate of most field rodents is minimum during summer with lowest numbers occurring during May-June and hence the acceptability of baits will be maximum as there is a paucity of natural food.

### Kill manually

Dig burrows and kill the rodents manually. Plough the soil deeply two times a year to a depth of 45 cm so as to break the underground burrows. Maintain burrow bunds around the field so that there will be inadequate space for the rat to construct its burrows.

Avoid keeping hay stacks near the fields as they provide excellent harbourage for the rodent. Inundate the fields to submerge the burrows and kill the rats by asphyxiation. Infuse carbon monoxide poison gas in to the burrows by smoking jute cloth.

Set up bamboo bow traps at 25 numbers per acre to capture the rodents in their pathways.

Rodent control operation should be taken up before sowing the seeds.

Active burrows are to be surveyed and pre baiting is to be done on the first and third day to avoid bait shyness by the rodents.

The baiting formula should contain cereal/flour/garins and nuts 97 parts and vegetable oil 3 parts in the form of one gram ball or lump and this is to be placed at the rate of six grams at mouth of active burrows.

On the fifth day Zinc Phosphide with bait material at rate of 1: 49 (2 per cent) is added to this lump and the poisoned bait is placed at the burrow entrance as usual.

This will take care of 70-80 per cent of the field rodents. Remaining residual population (20-30 per cent) can be controlled by fumigation in the burrows.

On the sixth or seventh day all burrow openings must be closed manually and on the eight day 1.5 gms of Aluminium Phosphide tablets must be dropped at the mouth of newly dug burrow openings.

### **Time of operation**

This operation must be done at the beginning of Khariff and Rabi season.

Besides, it is advisable for farmers to encourage natural predators like rat snakes, owls and birds to freely move in the fields and not disturb or kill them.

Farmers can also erect small wooden tree clumps in their fields for birds like owl perch on.

(R.K. Murali Baskaran, HOD, J. Jayaraj, Associate Prof, Department of agricultural entomology, Agricultural college and research Institute, TNAU, Madurai, vu2jrj@rediffmail.com)

Published: August 16, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 16, 2012 04:57 IST

### **Water released from Amaravathi Dam**

R. Vimal Kumar

*Storage position in dam not very promising*

Farmers in Udumalpet, Madathukulam and Dharapuram blocks who have been struggling hard in the last few weeks to save the standing crops owing to extended summer/dry weather conditions, have every reason to heave a sigh of relief.

On Wednesday, the Public Works Department officials released water from Amaravathi Dam through Amaravathi Main Canal on an emergency basis to mitigate the severity of the drought conditions and provide 'life irrigation' to the standing crops.

Though the storage position in the Amaravathi Dam is still not very promising, the release of whatever water available to the farmers cultivating sugarcane, maize, vegetables and coconut over an expanse of 10,000 ha in the command area of Amaravathi Main Canal is going to enable the farmers to reap good harvest with the existing crops.

The water level in the dam stood at 39.46 feet against the total of 90 feet at the time of release of water for irrigation in the district.

“Water is being released at the rate of 440 cusecs and will be continued for a single stretch of 15 days,” PWD (Water Resource Organisation) sources told *The Hindu* .

In the meantime, the Agriculture Department officials are advising those farmers who have vacant plots but gearing up for the oncoming crop season beginning October, to grow green manure crops like sun hemp and daincha in the farm lands using the water released.

“The green manure crops, thus grown, can be cut and ploughed into the soil when they start preparation of land for sowing in the coming season as the green manure crops increase soil fertility tremendously,” P. Thangaraju, joint director of agriculture, said.

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- *Farmers heave a sigh of relief*
  - *Grow green manure crops, farmers told*
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VELLORE, August 16, 2012

### **National rural employment scheme for small farmers too**

*Social audit of PDS throws up complaints from consumers*



Collector Ajay Yadav speaking at a grama sabha meeting at Karungali on Wednesday.— Photo: D. Gopalakrishnan

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has been extended to agricultural activities in the lands of small and marginal farmers, and farmers

belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Castes as per a G.O. issued by the State government, according to Ajay Yadav, Collector of Vellore district.

Participating in a Grama Sabha meeting held at the Karungali village panchayat in Anaicut panchayat union in connection with the Independence Day on Wednesday, Mr. Yadav said that the latest G.O. would address the problems of farmers who have been complaining about the problem of acute shortage of agricultural labour after the introduction of the MGNREGS on account of the agricultural labourers preferring to take up works under the employment guarantee scheme.

Earlier when the public distribution system was subjected to social audit at the meeting, participants complained of difficulties in obtaining kerosene in the fair price shops. One of the participants said only those who went early were able to get kerosene while those who went later in the day or month did not get the commodity. Another participant said the card holders were told that they could buy only one commodity at a time in the fair price shops in Karungali panchayat. Besides, there were worms in the foodgrains supplied at the fair price shops, a participant said.

Srinivasan, Project Director, District Rural Development Agency said the government spent Rs.10,000 on the construction of individual hygienic toilets in the rural houses under the Nirmal Bharat Abhyan (NBA). This comprised the central grant of Rs.3,200 (previously Rs.2,200), State grant of Rs.1,400 (Rs.1,000), beneficiary contribution of Rs.900 (Rs.300) and labour cost of Rs.4,500 which would be given in the form of labour under the MGNREGS. Under the scheme, piped water connection would be given on a priority basis to houses which have individual hygienic toilets.

The water connection would be disconnected if the residents failed to use the toilet, he said.

Mr. Srinivasan said the government was very particular about the implementation of the NBA not only to prevent open defecation but also to prevent the diseases which the rural people got on account of the infection transmitted by the faecal matter, which is a major health problem in the villages. Under NBA, not only persons below the poverty line, but also the categories of people identified as being above the poverty line such as small and marginal farmers, SC/ST residents, differently-abled persons and women-headed families were eligible for assistance, he said.

M. Kalaiarasu, Anaicut MLA wanted the fair price shops and the public distribution system to be streamlined in order to ensure the livelihood of the poor people in the villages under the Tamil Nadu State Rural Livelihood Movement that has been launched in six panchayat unions in Vellore district. Quality should be ensured in the green houses being constructed by the government for the poor people and the essential commodities supplied to them through PDS. Pointing out that public toilets were not maintained properly in the villages, he urged the beneficiaries to take interest in maintaining them properly since the assets belong to the public.

BELGAUM, August 16, 2012

### **'Rs. 19,660 cr. set aside to boost agricultural economy'**

Agriculture Minister Umesh V. Katti has said the State government has set aside Rs. 19,660 crore to boost the agricultural economy and has begun implementing various programmes and schemes announced in the Agriculture Budget.

Addressing the gathering during the Independence Day celebrations and later interacting with the media here on Wednesday, Mr. Katti said that Karnataka was the first State in the country to present a separate budget for agriculture.

He said that 57 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth Rs. 60,000 crore pertaining to the agricultural sector had been signed during the Global Agribusiness and Food Processing Summit last year.

The government had taken up various programmes to improve the economic conditions of the farmers, he said.

### **Suvarna Soudha**

Mr. Katti, who is also the district in-charge Minister, said the government had established the Suvarna Soudha in Belgaum at a cost of over Rs. 374 crore with the aim of holding the winter session of the legislature there every year. President Pranab Mukherjee would be invited to inaugurate the building next month, he said.

### **Drought-hit villages**

The Minister said eight of the 10 taluks in the district were reeling under drought conditions — Hukkeri, Bailhongal, Saundatti, Ramdurg, Chikkodi, Raibag, Athani and Gokak.

He said that steps had been taken in these taluks to supply drinking water and fodder, besides creating employment opportunities. So far, the government had released Rs. 8 crore for relief works in the district.

August 16, 2012

### School drop-out helps preserve traditional paddy seeds

M.J. PRABU

*The State Government conferred the best organic farmer award on him*



Life mission: Jayaraman being felicitated at the recently held delta organic farmers meet.- Photo: Special Arrangement

Adhirangam is a small village in Kattimadu block, Thiruthuraipoondi in Tiruvarur district, Tamil Nadu.

All these years the village, except for its ancient temple, was nondescript. But today the number of people visiting the village has gone up. All of them ask for one name, that of R. Jayaraman.

“It seems the person is a store house of information on native paddy seeds, their availability and cultivation methods,” says a tea shop owner on the outskirts of the village.

**Best choice**

And several farmers and associations around Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, and Nagappattinam vouch for the fact that Mr. Jayaraman is the best choice when it comes to seeking information on some lost and ancient paddy seeds.

Poor financial situation at home compelled him to discontinue studies and take up some odd jobs.

During his late teens he joined Fedcot (Federation of Consumer Organization) and got elevated as agriculture training director.

“I am supposed to be the only person to achieve this position without any academic qualification in agriculture,” he smiles.

Seeing his enthusiasm, an NRI donated his nine acres land for crop cultivation and for organizing training programmes for the benefit of the farming community.

“Since delta districts are predominantly paddy oriented my initial interest was on organic rice production. Later, I realized that the coastal districts are more prone to the climate variations and every year farmers face problems either with flood or cyclone, and seek compensation for their crop loss,” he explains.

He happened to get more information about the diversity of traditional paddy cultivated by coastal farmers and its potential to withstand different climate variations and characteristics of adaptability from Dr. Nammalvar, who inspired him to seek and find.

### **Several varieties**

From that day, he started locating several traditional paddy varieties in the coastal districts as well as in other parts of Tamil Nadu and documenting information about them.

He identified about 15 traditional paddy varieties and started growing all of them on the donated farm.

“I wanted to increase the seed availability to others,” he says.

In 2005, he organized the first traditional paddy seed festival. That year, he distributed 2 kgs of traditional paddy seeds of 15 varieties to more than 300 farmers.

The overwhelming response motivated him to organize more such functions every year. The recently organized traditional paddy seed festival Adhirangam was the eighth, and about 64 different traditional varieties have been distributed to more than 1,000 farmers.

“I distribute these varieties to farmers with a promise that they must return double the quantity of seeds in the next season,” says Mr. Jayaraman.

### **Maintains record**

He maintains records and registers of farmers who benefited from the seed festival.

Some of the important varieties he maintains are *Kattuyanam* (best suited for flood condition), *Poongkar* (suited for saline soil), *Karunguruvai* (best for making biriyani), *Kuzhiyadichan* (for alkaline soil), *Kudavaalai*, *Gauvuni*, *Mappillai Samba* (for high energy), *Samba Mosanam* (best suited for making flat rice), *Arupatham Kuruvai* (short duration variety (60 days)).

All the varieties can be easily cultivated under the SRI (System of Rice Intensification) method.

Since he is well known in the region, mobilizing financial support especially from banks or Nabard proves quite easy for him. In addition, he helps banks to organize debt recovery camps in villages and makes the farmers understand the importance of repaying the loans.

His association with 'Create,' an organization working for consumer awareness based at Thiruthuraipoondi, under the save our rice programme, has motivated him to revive the traditional rice varieties.

He has trained a team of farmers in all the above three districts and regularly updates them on the current issues that affect farmers and encourages them to participate and raise the issues at the farmer's grievance day.

### **Guest lectures**



Last year, the State Government conferred the best 'Organic farmer award' on him.

Till now, he has visited and delivered talks in nearly 300 schools and colleges in the delta district on the importance of preserving native seeds.

Those interested in knowing more can contact Mr. R. Jayaraman at Kattimedu, Adhirangam, Thiruthuraipoondi, Tiruvarur District, Mobile: 094433 20954.

PERAMBALUR, August 15, 2012

### **75% subsidy for drip irrigation**

Farmers in the district would be able to get 75 per cent subsidy even for 12 acres if they were to go in for drip irrigation.

According to a release from P.Sankaralingam, Joint Director of Agriculture, Perambalur is a district which gets only a scanty rainfall of 855 mm.

Most of the crops raised in the district are rain-fed and only 22,500 hectares of land are irrigated using 32,500 wells.

Hence, the government has decided to propagate micro irrigation in this district in a big way.

While 100 per cent subsidy (maximum of Rs.43,816 per acre) is given to small and marginal farmers, other farmers would be able to get 75 per cent subsidy to adopt drip irrigation to cultivate crops like long staple cotton, maize, groundnut and sugarcane.

The Joint Director said that the farmers could utilise this opportunity and go in for a higher area for earning virtually double the income.

In order to get these benefits, they could submit their applications at the Block Extension Centres along with the documents like chitta, adangal and land map, three passport size photographs and a copy of the ration card.

BANGALORE, August 15, 2012

## Rs. 100 cr. for mechanising operations in coffee plantations

NAGESH PRABHU

*Centre to provide subsidy to growers to purchase machinery during the 12th Plan period*



The Coffee Board has estimated output at 3.25 lakh tonnes in 2012-13, which includes 1.04 lakh tonnes of Arabica and 2.21 lakh tonnes of Robusta.— File Photo

The Centre has approved an outlay of Rs. 100 crore in the 12th Five Year Plan for implementing the scheme “Support for mechanisation of farm operations” in coffee estates.

Officials in the Coffee Board told *The Hindu* that the Centre would soon issue an order for implementing the scheme from the current year. The amount would be utilised for providing subsidy to coffee growers to purchase machinery. A sum of Rs. 20 crore would be utilised each year in the Plan period between 2012 and 2017.

### **Subsidy for growers**

While small growers owning less than 25 acres of plantation are eligible to get 50 per cent subsidy (up to Rs. 2 lakh) for purchase of machinery, large farmers are eligible to obtain 25 per cent subsidy (up to Rs. 4.5 lakh). Self-help groups are eligible to get 50 per cent subsidy (up to Rs. five lakh). Nearly 97 per cent of coffee planters own less than 25 acres of estates in Karnataka.

### **Labour shortage**

Officials said acute shortage of labour and rise in wages in traditional coffee growing States such as Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu is impeding expansion of area under coffee. The Board has decided to push for more mechanisation of farm activities in plantations to address the problem of absence of skilled labour.

### **Machinery**

Planters could utilise funds for purchase of machineries such as weed/brush cutter, pit digging machine, telescopic pruner, hand-held/battery operated coffee harvester, sprayers, mini-tractors, power tillers, mini-transporters/rubber track carriers.

The Board has submitted proposals to the Centre seeking Rs. 1,200 crore during the 12th Plan period. The outlay during the 11th Plan period was Rs. 600 crore.

The Planning Commission, Commerce and Finance Ministries would approve various proposals on research and development, area expansion, replanting etc. in the next couple of months, officials said.

### **Rain brings cheer**

Heavy rainfall in the last few weeks is likely to boost the crop prospects in coffee growing districts of Kodagu, Chikmagalur and Hassan. "The situation was alarming a few weeks ago due to deficient rainfall. Heavy rainfall in the last few days helped control spread of the white stem borer disease afflicting coffee plantations," a top Board official said.

White stem borer is one of the deadly pests that infects Arabica coffee plantations. Its larvae bores into the plant's stem causing death of young plants. The older plants may survive but their yield is reduced and susceptibility to diseases increases.

### **Expected yield**

The Coffee Board has estimated output at 3.25 lakh tonnes in 2012-13 (October-September), which includes 1.04 lakh tonnes of Arabica, and 2.21 lakh tonnes of Robusta. "We analyse the output by the end of the monsoon," the official pointed out adding that "it is difficult to estimate the production decline at this juncture".

Karnataka Planters' Association predicted decline in output in 2012-13 on account of poor monsoon rain in traditional coffee growing States.

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- *Rs. 20 crore to be utilised each year from 2012 to 2017*
  - *Growers owning less than 25 acres to get 50 p.c. subsidy*

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MYSORE, August 15, 2012

### **Sugarcane growers demand arrears from factory**

Sugarcane growers from Mysore and Chamarajanagar districts staged a demonstration outside the Deputy Commissioner's office here on Tuesday, urging him to initiate action against a sugar factory for not paying arrears to the growers who had supplied sugarcane in 2010-11 and 2011-12. They also demanded that the price of sugarcane for 2012-13 be fixed before crushing begins.

The farmers, led by Kurubur Shantakumar, demanded that they be paid arrears of Rs. 100 a tonne for 2010-11 and the final instalment of Rs. 500 a tonne for 2011-12. Mr. Shantakumar stated that growers would demand an advance payment of Rs. 3,000 a tonne of sugarcane for 2012-13. The growers would demand the introduction of the State Advised Price (SAP) Act as early as possible to avoid problems in future.

#### **Meeting**

Deputy Commissioner P.S. Vastrad, who heard their grievances, stated that a meeting involving the Minister for Sugar, Sugar Commissioner, representatives of farmers and sugar factories would be convened in Bangalore on August 17 to discuss all outstanding issues relating to sugar.

Mr. Vastrad said a decision on fixing the price of sugarcane for the current year and other grievances would be taken up at the meeting. A separate meeting would be convened to address the problems the growers had with the management of the Bannari Amman Sugar Factory.

PATHANAMTHITTA, August 15, 2012

## Move to revive paddy cultivation

### *Conversion of 'Aranmula puncha' opposed*

The Thiruvarammala Paitruka Grama Karma Samiti (TPGKS) and Kurunthar Padashekhara Samiti have decided to jointly launch paddy cultivation in Aranmula *puncha* (paddy fields).

In a statement issued here on Monday, samiti president Kurunthar Uthaman and former panchayat member K.P. Viswanathan Nair said the full scale cultivation with public participation would be launched on the Farmers' Day on August 17.

A.D. Sheela, Agriculture Officer at Mallappuzhasserry Krishi Bhavan, will formally inaugurate the farmers' movement to revive paddy cultivation in Aranmula *puncha*. Perumpulickal Mohanan Pillai, recipient of this State Award for best farmer in the district, and K.V. Biju, Swadeshi Jagaran Manch South India coordinator, will also attend the function.

Farmers and farm workers have already started preparation of the land for launching cultivation. The programme would be a beginning of a new paddy revolution in Aranmula, organisers said.

Aranmula and surrounding villages would soon witness return of the past farming glory with the revival of cultivation in Aranmula *puncha*, they said.

The samiti leaders said there was no question of permitting conversion of the Aranmula *puncha* and all illegally converted land there should be reverted to its original status.

They have called upon the authorities concerned to initiate prosecution steps against those behind the illegal conversion of the *puncha* and wetlands in Aranmula in the name of a private airport project.

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- *Call for action against illegal conversion of fields, wetland*
  - *Village forums to launch paddy cultivation on August 17*
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GUNTUR, August 15, 2012

## APRS seeks steps to promote alternative crops

The Andhra Pradesh Rythu Saghm (APRS) State executive committee meeting held here on Tuesday demanded that the Government take steps for promoting alternative crops in 350 drought-hit mandals and supplying power for seven hours to help farmers tide over the crisis in agriculture sector caused by rainfall deficit and the resultant fall in water levels in reservoirs. Addressing the meeting, All India Kisan Sabha vice-president S. Malla Reddy said the kharif targets had taken a severe beating due to drought and frequent power-cut and the Government failed in taking remedial action. APRS president V. Subba Rao and general secretary S. Rama Rao said crop loans were being sanctioned in fictitious names on a massive scale while 30 lakh small and marginal farmers and 26 lakh tenant farmers suffered for want of credit.

**hindustantimes**

Thu, 16 Aug 2012

weather

Chennai - INDIA

### Today's Weather



Sunny

Thursday, Aug 16

Max Min

33.2° | 24.8°

Rain: 27

Sunrise: 05:56

Humidity: 89

Sunset: 06:29

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1006

### Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Friday, Aug 17

Max Min

34° | 27°

### Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Aug 18	Sunday Aug 19	Monday Aug 20	Tuesday Aug 21	Wednesday Aug 22
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33°   27°	33°   27°	32°   27°	32°   27°	31°   27°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

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# Business Standard

Thursday, Aug 16, 2012

## Weak monsoon may hit sugarcane yield

Press Trust Of India / New Delhi August 15, 2012, 0:46 IST



The deficient monsoon might affect sugarcane productivity and sugar output in the 2012-13 marketing year, starting October.

However, sugar production would be enough to meet domestic demand, the government said on Tuesday.

“According to the reports received from major sugar producing states, the deficiency in monsoon in some parts of the country may affect sugarcane yield, with consequent reduction in sugar production,” Food Minister K V Thomas said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Rajasthan are facing a drought-like situation this year.

Thomas said the government's estimates for kharif crops, including sugarcane, are yet to be released. "However, as per reports received from state governments concerned and also the sugar industry, likely production of sugar in the country will be sufficient to meet the domestic requirement," he added.

In the current 2011-12 marketing year, sugar production is estimated at 26 million tonnes as against the annual domestic demand of 22 million tonnes.

Replying to a separate question, Thomas said the country had exported 1.35 million tonnes of sugar in the first half of 2011-12 marketing year.

He said the stock would be 6.2 million tonnes at the end of the ongoing marketing year.

### **Cotton yarn spinners hopeful of revival in fortunes**

Rising Chinese demand and moderating prices in global markets may help the Indian textile sector revive

**Komal Amit Gera / Chandigarh August 16, 2012, 0:53 IST**

S P Oswal, chairman and managing director of Vardhaman Group of Industries, one of the largest cotton spinners in north India, is optimistic of a lucrative year for the Indian spinning mills. The rising demand for cotton yarn from China and moderating prices of the commodity in the global markets might help the Indian textile sector revive this year.

"Spinning factories in India are going great guns, as cotton prices in the domestic market have stabilised and most mills are running on full capacity. Although it is slightly premature to predict the impact of the poor monsoon on the cotton crop, we expect a crop size of 32-32.5 million bales (a bale is 170 kg), compared with 34.7 million bales last year. Keeping cognizance of annual domestic consumption of 25.5-26.5 million bales, supplies would be sufficient, but the exportable surplus may come down. If the government keeps a vigil on the export of cotton, there may not be a dearth of cotton for the spinning units," Oswal said.

Last year, due to skyrocketing prices and an inconsistent cotton yarn export policy, spinning mills had to go for a steep cut in production and several of these slipped into huge debt burden.



While banks have been told by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to restructure their debt on a case-to-case basis, improving fortunes of cotton yarn spinners will provide much needed support to them.

The industry finds the current price of cotton at Rs 37,500 a candy (1 candy=356 kg) viable, as yarn prices are also firm.

Manish Bagrodia, managing director of Winsome Textiles Industries Limited, expects pink days for yarn manufacturers, as spinning in China has become uncompetitive due to policy regulations and India is likely to get maximum benefit of that. The provisional figures for the export of 100 per cent cotton yarn from India reflect an encouraging trend.

The industry was earlier apprehensive over the fall in cotton acreage from 12.1 million hectares to 11 million hectares, owing to unstable prices and farmers diverting to alternative crops like guar, paddy, oilseeds and pulses. This was further accentuated by the draught possibility in some states. But the monsoon progressing in Gujarat (the state grows one-third of India's cotton crop) and Maharashtra, the projections regarding availability of cotton have now improved.

According to D K Nair, secretary general of the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry, "There may be a decline of about 10 per cent in cotton acreage, but better yield can compensate that. Last year, the yield was 490 kg per hectare. We had a record yield of 554 kg per hectare in 2007-08. If farmers are able to draw higher yield, the crop size would not be much affected."

V K Goel, executive director and group CEO of SEL Manufacturing Company Ltd, said, "We are expecting to do better this year, as the demand in international markets seem to remain subdued. So, exporters may not have much incentive. Our yarn export destinations (China, Bangladesh and Korea) are likely to give us enough room for exports. So, we project a good year."

India exported close to 12 million bales of cotton last year. But low prices in the global markets may dissuade exporters this year and spinning mills expect to have a smooth sailing this year.

## Govt raises MSP of pulses, but below CACP's recommendation

Anindita Dey / Mumbai August 15, 2012, 0:42 IST

The Union ministry of agriculture has finally revised the minimum support price (MSP) of pulses. The MSP of tur (arhar) and moong were revised to Rs 3,840 a quintal and Rs 4,400 a quintal, respectively, for 2012-13.

While MSP for tur and moong have been revised a tad lower than what was recommended by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), urad was retained at Rs 4,300 a quintal. Last year, the MSP of urad was Rs 3,300 a quintal, moong Rs 3,500 and tur Rs 3,200 a quintal.

CACP and the ministry of agriculture had earlier recommended an MSP of Rs 4,000 a quintal for tur and Rs 4,500 a quintal for moong for 2012-13. Officials said the revised MSPs will be the final one for tur and moong for 2012-13.

Farmers and industry were awaiting the revised MSPs since the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had put on hold the MSP for pulses (arhar, moong and urad) while announcing those for other kharif crops in 2012-13.

Officials said CACP was asked to rework the MSP of pulses due to declining prices in the market and expectation of robust production, close to the 18.1 million tonnes (mt) last year. In addition, in anticipation of demand, there have been heavy imports.

The earlier high prices had hit retail consumption, leaving a lot of stock in the market. Hence, supply was more than the demand, which eases price pressure.

In this scenario, said sources, the high MSP suggested would create an inflated base. This would push up the burden on the exchequer, already facing strained financial conditions, since pulses are both an essential commodity and also covered under the public distribution system of the government. It would create a high base for the decision on next year's MSP, too. Hence, there was a need to rework it, they said.

The food ministry had firmly opposed the proposal for a bonus to growers in at least those commodities where there was government procurement, such as rice and pulses.

MSP is the floor price which sets the base for market prices and procurement. According to the fourth advance estimates released by the ministry of agriculture, total kharif pulse production stands at 930,000 tonnes as against a target of 1.20 mt. Production of tur, primarily a kharif crop, is expected to be 2.65 mt, as against a target of 3.08 mt, while urad production is likely to be 1.28 mt (1.35 mt). Moong, both a rabi and a kharif crop, is expected to see production of 1.7 mt, higher than the set target of 1.27 mt.

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## THE HINDU Business Line

### Castorseed futures ride up on higher demand

Our Bureau



Chennai, Aug. 16:

Castorseed futures across maturities were up 1.5 per cent on renewed buying interest. Export enquiries also aided the bullish trend. India is the largest producer and exporter of castor oil. Castorseed prices have been gaining in the last few weeks due to deficient rain in the growing areas, particularly in Gujarat.

The monsoon has been more than 60 per cent deficient in Gujarat. In Andhra Pradesh, the other major growing State, the growing areas have received rains a little late. This has affected the sowing of castorseed this year.

Castorseed September futures were up 1.4 per cent at Rs 4,408 a quintal, while October futures were up Rs 80 at Rs 4,545. November increased by Rs 89 to Rs 4,634 and December was quoted higher by Rs 92 at Rs 4,717.

The spot prices at Disa, Gujarat, closed at Rs 3,928.35 for a quintal on Tuesday.

### **Chana futures move up**

Mumbai, Aug 16:

Chana futures on NCDEX gained marginally to Rs 4,900 a quintal on renewed buying interest at lower levels.

NCDEX has allocated 2,140 tonnes through staggered delivery under the August contract. Spot prices in Delhi markets were firm at Rs 5,000 a quintal due to strong festival demand. Chana futures may gain further on buying at lower levels.

### **Sugar down**

Mumbai: Sugar futures fell 0.46 per cent to Rs 3,464 a quintal as the area under sugar cane coverage increased substantially in last few days. Besides, revival of monsoon in Maharashtra and Karnataka has also raised trader expectations. The Government has decided to release an additional four lakh tonnes of sugar for sale in open market in August. The government also cautioned sugar mills that if they fail to sell the entire additional quota in August, then the unsold sugar will be converted for sale at a lower price through the Public Distribution System.

Acreage under sugar cane cultivation increased to 5.29 million tonnes as of last weekend against 5.06 million tonnes recorded in the same period last year. Despite the increase in acreage, sugar output this year is expected to be lower by one million tonnes due to deficient monsoon in most sugar cane growing states.

### **Poultry feed prices rule flat**



Karnal, Aug. 15:

Following too much volatility in the prices of its key ingredients, prices of poultry feed remained unchanged on Wednesday.

Soyameal eased by Rs 400 and quoted at around Rs 4,200 a quintal.

Maize prices went up by Rs 80-100 to Rs 1,500.

Bajra rose Rs 100 to Rs 1,300; DCP went for Rs 43 a kg, while fish oil sold at Rs 100 a litre.

Subhash Sharma, Financial Head, Sarvottam Poultry Feed Supply Centre Pvt Ltd, told *Business Line* that despite a fall in the prices of soyameal, prices of poultry feed products were kept unchanged as we were waiting for the soyameal prices to stabilise because there was too much volatility in its and the prices of other ingredients in recent past.

Feed products may decrease marginally by Rs 10-30 for a 30-kg and 50-kg bag in the coming days, he added.

### **Poultry feed products**

After witnessing a fall last week, prices of poultry feed products remained unchanged.

Broiler concentrates feed quoted at Rs 2,010 for a 50-kg bag while Broiler Starter Mash was at Rs 1,490.

“Broiler Pre-Starter Concentrate 30 per cent” sold at Rs 1,700 for a 30-kg bag, while layer concentrate cost Rs 1,530 for a 50-kg bag.

Pre-lay mash quoted at Rs 1,050 while broiler finisher sold at Rs 1,470 for a 50-kg bag.

Meanwhile, after witnessing a fall last week, broiler prices recovered marginally, on Wednesday.

Broiler quoted at Rs 65-70 a kg (Rs 60). Egg price was up by 10 paise to Rs 3 while chick went up by Rs 2 and sold at Rs 13.

### **Sangam Dairy plans ghee exports to Gulf**

Hyderabad, Aug. 15:

Sangam Dairy run by the milk producers' cooperative in Guntur, has sought the Government's permission to export its value-added products to the Gulf countries. The dairy, which registered a turnover of Rs 320 crore in 2011-12, said it is planning to come out with an ice cream product this year.

The co-operative has appointed a consultant to help it prepare a plan for this expansion in business, Dhulipalla Narendra Kumar, Chairman of the cooperative dairy, said.

Addressing reporters here on Wednesday, he said the co-operative had formed groups with some farmers and supplied them quality animals from Haryana. "These animals would give them additional yields. We will bear the cost and deduct from the monthly payments," he said.

The dairy has 600 milk co-operative societies with a combined capacity of three lakh litres day.

On Monday, N. Chandrababu Naidu, former Chief Minister and Telugu Desam Party President, has launched 'Sangam Extra Life' in 200 ml Tetra Pak pouches. The dairy built a production capacity of 40,000 litres a day for this initiative.

Currently restricted to Guntur, Hyderabad and a few other districts, the dairy is hoping to expand its presence across the State.

"With the new value-added products and expanded reach, we are targeting to achieve a turnover of Rs 600 crore in the next three years," Narendra said.

### **'Fertiliser players looking for business prospects abroad'**

G. Chandrashekhara



Mr R.G. Rajan

*“A number of Indian players will come forward ready to make investment to set up new urea plants and no FDI will be required by the Indian industry” – R.G. Rajan, CMD, Rashtriya Chemical Fertilisers*

Rashtriya Chemical Fertilisers, a public sector unit, is one of the leading fertiliser manufacturers in the country. Recently, it won the national award for excellence in cost management.

The company’s Chairman-cum-Managing Director R.G. Rajan in an interview to *Business Line*, outlines the public sector unit’s plans.

The company will introduce a slew of new products next fiscal, while looking to participate in a potash mining project in Canada. It is also setting up an ammonia-based urea plant in Ghana.

Tardy progress of the monsoon this year has left large tracts of land in different parts of the country moisture-stressed. What is the impact of the current situation on the country’s fertiliser market in general and specifically, what is the effect on sales volumes, prices and so on?

The kharif markets for fertilisers normally get rain from the South-West monsoon – predominantly western and central India. Not only was the monsoon delayed, there has been a very long dry spell through most of June and July leaving the farmers literally high and dry.

Sowing of crops has been delayed, in fact, there is likely to be a situation where farmers may shift to late varieties and/or short duration crops.

During April-July 2012, there has been a decline in sales of all fertiliser products including urea in comparison to last year corresponding period. The drop in sales was about 3.5 per cent for Urea while 28.6 per cent, 22.9 per cent and 1.2 per cent decrease in sales was seen in case of DAP, NPK and MOP respectively.

The availability of fertilisers in February-March this year was very good due to the heavy arrivals of imports particularly phosphatic and potassic fertilisers . But the reduction in subsidy levels this fiscal and the weak rupee have resulted in a drastic increase of the farm gate prices of the decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilisers thereby deterring sales.

On the other hand, urea prices have remained stagnant at a low controlled level and farmers are tempted to use urea in place of costlier other fertilisers.

Do you have a market outlook for the Rabi season (October 2012-March 2013)? What would be your strategy to enhance fertiliser sales for Rabi crops?

Rabi sowing is dependent on the moisture content of the soil post South-West monsoon. The deficit in rainfall would certainly cause the water table to deplete further in most parts of the country. The other factor which would have a bearing on the Rabi season would be the arrival of North-East monsoon which might facilitate the Rabi season.

We hope that Rabi season takes off as scheduled. Timely placement of material at the points of consumption would be the key to success of the marketing strategy.

Is RCF working on new, tailor-made or customised products for India's varied agro-climatic conditions? Could you please provide some details?

RCF's projects for more grades of liquid micronutrients, solid micronutrients and customised fertilisers are in the advanced stages and we aim to have the new products introduced in the markets from the next financial year.

With fertiliser prices (except urea) decontrolled, what has been RCF's experience in the decontrolled environment? How have you protected your market share? What strategies have been adopted for expansion of market share?

RCF has been importing small quantities of DAP and higher volumes of MOP since the past few years. This has enabled the company to protect its market share. While the prices have been free, the band of price operated for each product is in the same range. We have been able to maintain our price levels at very competitive rates with respect to the other players in the industry.

Is the Indian fertiliser industry ready for foreign investment – both inbound and outbound? Why do you say so?



The Indian fertiliser industry is not looking for inbound FDI but is ready to make outbound foreign investment in countries where business opportunities are there.

At present, India's total fertiliser consumption is pegged at 58 million tonnes (mt) a year in which the share of major fertilisers Urea, DAP and MOP are around 28 mt, 10 mt and 4 mt, respectively.

As the country is unable to meet its fertiliser requirements from own production, it has to depend on imports to partially meet the requirements of urea and phosphatic fertilisers whereas MOP requirement is fully met through imports.

In the case of urea, non-availability of feedstock and lack of attractive returns, have deterred the industry from making fresh investments for quite sometime thereby increasing the demand-supply gap over the years. It is not because of lack of funds with the Indian fertiliser industry.

The moment environment becomes conducive with appropriate policy in place, a number of Indian players will come forward ready to make investment to set up new urea plants and no FDI will be required by the Indian industry for this purpose.

For phosphatic and potassic fertilisers, as raw material is not available in the country, setting up of new plants is not found to be remunerative and hence not pursued with seriousness by anybody.

At the same time, many Indian companies are exploring the possibilities of setting up new fertiliser plants abroad where raw materials and feedstock are abundantly available at reasonable prices including acquisition of assets such as potash mines.

Does RCF have plans to invest abroad? Would you like to share some details?

RCF plans to invest in fertiliser projects abroad where feedstock and raw material are available at remunerative prices. The company is planning to set up gas-based Ammonia-Urea plants to produce about 1.27 million tonnes per annum at Ghana under the MoOU signed between the Indian and Ghanaian Governments.

For the project, site has been identified and land acquisition by the Ghana Government is underway.

The pre-feasibility study has been completed. We have now engaged agencies for geo-technical study and topography surveys of the site. Various other project-related documents and agreements are under preparation.

Further, RCF is also pursuing to participate in Potash mining project in Canada.

### ITC launches interactive mobile telephony for tobacco farmers

Anil Urs



Bangalore, Aug. 15:

The Indian Leaf Tobacco Development (ILTD) Division of ITC is exploring mobile telephony-based technology tools for personalised farmer communication.

This comes after the popular e-Choupal initiative, which transformed the agricultural procurement value chain in the country.

“We have recently launched ‘*Namma Sandesh*’ – an interactive mobile telephony based communication service to farmers for provision of crop advisory on best agronomy practises, market prices, weather forecast and local news to farmers,” Krishna Kumar, Leaf Manager of ITC Mysore unit, told *Business Line*.

“This platform will provide accurate and timely crop advisory services through mobile phones and the subscribed farmers will regularly receive a combination of voice and SMS messages at regular intervals throughout the crop cycle,” he added.

Mobile phones are now evolving into a powerful communication medium to farmers for improving agricultural productivity and profitability through provision of timely and accurate information.

The project is being rolled out in Mysore district in Karnataka with more than 5,500 farmers who grow tobacco and ragi, with a potential to cover more than 50,000 farmers in the district.

“A dedicated team works on content development and a panel of experts from the Tobacco Board, Central Tobacco Research Institute (CTRI) and ITC scrutinise all the messages before being delivered to the farmers,” explained Mahadeva Swamy, Senior Scientist, CTRI.

The voice messages are in Kannada and are personalised to each farmer – only messages specific to the farmer’s crop cycle reach him/her.

“Timely, crop-specific recommendations, to large section of farmers will improve crop quality and saleability,” said K.N. Vishakantaiah, Regional Manager, Tobacco Board.

### Floor price for areca import hiked to Rs 75/kg

A. J. Vinayak



Mangalore, Aug. 15:

The Government has agreed to one of the demands of arecanut growers to increase minimum price for imported arecanut.

In a notification dated August 14, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has increased the minimum price for import from Rs 35 a kg to Rs 75 a kg.

Terming the DGFT notification as an Independence Day gift to farmers, K. Padmanabha, President of Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative (Campco) Ltd, told *Business Line* that Campco has been demanding the Government to increase minimum floor price on import for so many years.

Thanking the Government for this, he said that now they (Government) will have to control the illegal import.

Ravish Hegde, Managing Director of the Sirsi-based Totagars' Cooperative Sale Society (which is involved in arecanut trade), hoped that this move will boost the prices of the commodity, at least by Rs 10 a kg, in the domestic market.

Seeking strict enforcement of this notification, M. Srinivas Achar, president of All-India Areca Growers' Association, said tax concessions should not be given to any country for arecanut import under different trade agreements.

Ramesh Kaintaje, a farmer from Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, said that the DGFT move will help revise the base price for arecanut. In future, the base price may stay at around Rs 150 a kg for new stocks of white arecanut and at around Rs 200 for old stocks.

It may be mentioned here that the growers and cooperatives in arecanut-growing areas, who were seeking this hike, were stating then that the inferior imported arecanut was available much below the ruling price in the market even after paying a duty of 108 per cent.

In a recent reply to the Member of Parliament from Mangalore, the Union Commerce Ministry had stated that arecanut is being imported from other countries, including Malaysia and Indonesia. It had stated that 76,041.39 tonnes of arecanut worth Rs 258.82 crore were imported from different countries in 2010-11.

Many farmers then stated that this worked out to average price of Rs 33.96 a kg in the market, which is below the minimum price for import then. The average price of import from Indonesia was Rs 22.34 and from Thailand was Rs 25.48 during that year.

On Tuesday, the old stocks of white arecanut were traded at Rs 225 and Rs 239 in Mangalore and Puttur APMCs, respectively.

### Coonoor tea volume hits 10-week low



Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped the CTC leaf market.

Coonoor, Aug. 15:

The declining trend in the offer of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions continues with the volume of 12.91 lakh kg catalogued for Sale No: 33 to be held on Thursday and Friday, being the lowest of the last 10 weeks.

This is about 39,000 kg less than last week's offer.

Of the 12.91 lakh kg on offer, 9.67 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.24 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 12.10 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.81 lakh kg, orthodox variety. In the leaf counter, only 0.52 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 9.15 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.29 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 2.95 lakh kg, CTC.

The substantial portion of this volume comprises fresh teas totalling 12.36 lakh kg. Only about 55,000 kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. Last week, in the leaf tea auction, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) bought good medium varieties. Duncans Tea Ltd showed some interest in brokens. Tata Global Beverages Ltd and Godfrey Philips India Ltd

were selective. In the dust tea auction, HUL and Duncans Tea bought good medium grades. Godfrey Philips was selective while Tata Global did not operate.