

Published: August 30, 2012 00:43 IST | Updated: August 30, 2012 00:43 IST

A new onion variety that brings tears of joy

M. J. Prabu



Balwan singh in his onion field

The farmer has distributed the seeds to about thousand farmers in Haryana

Seventeen years of painstaking effort in developing and maintaining a new onion variety by a small farmer, Balwan Singh from Haryana, bore fruit when the National Innovation Foundation – India (NIF) under the leadership of Prof Anil Gupta recognised this variety at the national level. NIF honoured the farmer in its sixth biennial award ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi recently.

This onion variety named “Balwan Pyaj” has a longer shelf life as compared to other commercial varieties due to its tightly adhered bulb skin.

The variety’s yield per hectare is over 30 tonnes, and is believed to be resistant to pests and diseases occurring in onion. Its dark red coloured globular shaped bulbs with about 50-60 gm weight, appear more attractive than common ones with firm, bright red coloured, bulbs yielding about 20 tonnes per hectare. That is the new variety developed by the farmers yields nearly 50 tonnes.

Many years back Mr. Balwan Singh brought some onions from a neighbouring village. He observed the bulbs to be large in size, red in colour, and the skin to be tight.

Being an experienced farmer, he knew that good quality plants yield good fruits bulbs hence he started grading and breeding this particular onion through selection, considering parameters such as the plant health, tightly adhered bulb skin, size and well shaped red coloured bulbs. Year after year, he repeated the same process to purify the variety and stabilise its characteristics. After many years of perseverance he could finally develop this variety.

The family also maintained the year wise performance data for the crop, which exhibited good performance. “It is just persistence that kept him going. He did not do it for honours or recognition,” says Prof Gupta about the entire process.

NIF facilitated that the testing of variety at the Vegetable Research Farm, Department of Vegetable Science, Choudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar, Haryana during 2010-11. According to the results, the onion variety showed significantly higher yield (of more than 30 tonnes/ha), bulb weight and bulb diameter, than existing variety named Hisar-2.

Other features, which distinguish this variety, are dark green colour of foliage, good thickness of rings, a predominant axis and symmetrical cross section.

The farmer has distributed the seed of his variety to about a thousand farmers of Haryana and around. He specially recognises the support of scientists of the Haryana Agriculture University who guided him from time to time, and helped him with technological updates.

NIF also provided him an opportunity to display his variety at the Innovations’ Exhibition at the President House in 2011.

He has been participating in different agricultural exhibitions of agricultural products and winning prizes as well. His work has been covered in local as well as national media.

“There are hundreds of brilliant solutions to tackle everyday problems in many villages. What we need is an honest effort to look out for them and then the patience to try them. In fact many of these solutions are simpler and more effective than those provided by formal science. In some cases such grassroots solutions even extend the frontiers of science,” says Mr. Gupta.

The foundation has been systematically documenting several hundreds of innovations from different parts of rural India and providing the innovators with a platform to present their findings. Many of these grassroots developments though appearing to be simple can be easily replicated and used by others.

To know more interested readers can contact the farmer Mr. Balwan Singh, PO: Shivana village: Alakhpura, Bhiwani, Haryana, Mobile: 09992696963 and email Prof Anil Gupta at anilgb@gmail.com

Published: August 30, 2012 00:45 IST | Updated: August 30, 2012 00:45 IST

Integrated management of sweet potato weevil

J. Jayaraj

R. K. Murali Baskaran

Sweet potato weevil causes extensive damage in the field as well as in storage.

Small white legless larvae bore tunnels in the tubers and inside vines. The tunnels are infected with fungi and bacteria that cause the tuber to rot.

Further, the larva feed on the internal tissues and deposit excreta within the tunnels rendering the tubers unfit for consumption.

Larval period

About 165 eggs are laid in the hollows of stem/vines or tubers and hatching takes place within 5-7 days.

Larval period lasts for 14 days and pupation takes place inside the plant lasting about a week.

The entire life cycle is completed in 6-7 weeks and there are 7-8 generations each year. Adult weevil measures 6-8 mm in length and life span is for 2-3 months.

This pest is disseminated from field to field through infested vines and carried over every season by breeding in damaged tubers left in the fields after harvest.

The pest is more abundant during monsoon and remains active throughout the year but population attains peak during March to May.

Adopt crop rotation and use resistant varieties. Select weevil free lands for sweet potato cultivation. Use weevil free planting materials of early maturing varieties.

Planting of deep rooting varieties and irrigating at 7 days interval control the infestation.

Earthing up the plants 50 days after planting reduces the weevil attack. Closing of cracks in the field by periodical hoeing minimizes the weevil infestation.

Mulching with *Eupatorium odoratum* leaves at rate of 3tonnes per hectare 30 days after planting suppresses the weevil attack.

After the harvest the field should be cleaned of trashes. Destruction of infested crop materials and crop residues help to lower pest population.

Pheromone traps

Trap the adult weevils using cross-cut sweet potato pieces of about 6 cm diameter (100g size) kept 5metres apart during 50 to 80 days after planting at 10 days interval.

Use pheromone traps at rate of 5 numbers per acre to attract and kill the male weevils.

Dip the planting slips in 0.05 per cent fenthion solution for 5 to 10 minutes prior to planting .

(J. Jayaraj, associate prof and R.K. Murali Baskaran Professor & Head, Dept of Entomology,Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai 625 104, phone: 0452-2422956 Extn: 214)

August 30, 2012

Farm query

OILPALM CULTIVATION

I am growing oilpalm in my 6 acres land near Orissa. Where can I get authentic information on its cultivation?Mithuraj,*Belgaum*

You can contact Dr. S. Arulraj, Director, Directorate of Oil Palm Research, Pedavegi - 534 450, Andhra Pradesh, email:dopr2009@gmail.com, Phone: 08812-259532 and 259409, mobile: 09491198244 for your details.

JAIPUR, August 30, 2012

New wheat, barley varieties released at scientists' meet

Four new varieties of seeds, two each in wheat and barley, developed by the Agriculture Research Station (ARS) at Durgapura near here, have been approved for country-wide introduction.

The All-India Wheat & Barley Improvement Research Worker's meet, which concluded here the other day, approved a total of 10 varieties developed by various research stations after rejecting 22 others taken up for consideration. Wheat varieties Raj. 4229 and Raj.4238, developed by ARS, passed the muster this time while two of its barley varieties — RD 2786 and RD 2794 — were selected for the current season.

Senior ARS Durgapura breeder Mahesh Shrimali said Raj.4229 was suitable for North-East plains, while Raj.4238 was suitable for the central agro climatic zone. Between the chosen barley varieties, RD 2786 is ideal for the central zone, while RD 2794 is meant for saline soil.

Plant scientists at ARS Durgapura consider this as a major breakthrough as getting approval for release of any new variety of seed is considered a big task. Each variety undergoes trials and experimentation for seven years before it is taken up for consideration.

ARS Durgapura is credited with developing an improved variety of *Lal Bahadur*, which was instrumental in high wheat production during the Green Revolution. Wheat varieties which received approval this time include HP 349, WH 1105 and WHD 948. A front runner in barley research, the ARS Durgapura is credited with varieties including dwarf barley (RDB-1), saline resistant barley (BL-2), nematode resistant barley (Rajkiran and RD 2032), and high yielding, (RD 2552), malt quality (RD 2503 and RD 2668), dual purpose (for grain & green fodder) RD 2715.

About 400 wheat and barley scientists from within the country and outside participated in the meet, organised jointly by Swami Keshwanand Rajasthan Agricultural University and Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Norman Borlaug associate Raja Ram and Arun Joshi of International Institute CIMMYT, Nepal, besides former Indian Council of Agricultural Research Director-General R.S. Paroda were also present.

Dr. Paroda and other senior wheat experts exhorted the scientist community to take up the challenge of reaching 100 million tonne wheat production by 2015. "The target looks more realistic with the country achieving 94 million tonne production this year."

"It can be 120 million tonne in the next 15-20 years. Biologically it is feasible," Dr. Ram supported the argument. "Indian gene programme is the largest in the world. What we need is more investment in the sector."

NEW DELHI, August 30, 2012

Centre allowed to review guidelines on tiger reserves

J. VENKATESAN

Following resistance to the ban on tourism in core areas of tiger reserves by several States, NGOs and interested parties, the Supreme Court on Wednesday permitted the Centre to review existing norms and come up with comprehensive guidelines on 'Tiger Project' and 'sustainable tourism.'

A Bench of Justices A.K. Patnaik and Swatanter Kumar gave this permission after Attorney General G.E. Vahanvati drew the court's attention to the objections received and the Centre's intention to revisit the guidelines framed under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

Mr. Vahanvati said the Centre wanted to promote responsible tourism in the reserves while ensuring the protection of the big cats.

Justice Swatanter Kumar told the Attorney General: "There seems to be some kind of clash, some kind of difference of opinion between the Centre and the States. Please ensure these are resolved. Also identify which activities shall be allowed and not allowed inside core areas."

Justice Kumar urged the Centre to also consult experts before submitting the final guidelines to the Ministry for vetting. “Give us definite projections on how you are going to take care of the tigers,” he said. Mr. Vahanvati submitted that tourism “makes for anti-poaching.” “There is always a watch when tourism is allowed,” the Attorney General said.

The Attorney General, on being asked by the Bench if there could be a complete ban on tourism in the core areas of tiger reserves to protect the animals from poachers, said: “There cannot be two sets of guidelines, one to protect tigers and another to promote tourism. We want to make comprehensive guidelines to promote both. Everybody’s interest will be taken care of.”

Regulated tourism

Justice Kumar wanted the government to regulate tourism in these reserves and said it had been “a free-for-all till now.” He gave the example of about 100 vehicles entering a reserve a day and asked: “Is it necessary to take 100 vehicles into the core areas?” He also sought to know whether the government had any plan regarding maintenance of tigers in zoos.

Senior counsel Raj Panjwani, appearing for petitioner Ajay Dubey, at whose instance the court imposed the ban on July 24, argued that for 22 years the government had done nothing. The Bench, however, made it clear that the interim ban order would continue. It asked the Centre to consult all stakeholders — hotel associations affected by the ban, guides and tour operators, and State governments — while framing the revised guidelines. It agreed to take up all issues, including the plea for lifting the ban, for further hearing on September 27.

ERODE, August 30, 2012

Turmeric traders told to display price tags of Rs.9,000 a quintal



District Revenue Officer S. Ganesh holding talks with turmeric farmers and traders over the row in price fixation for the yellow commodity in Erode on Wednesday.- PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN

Turmeric farmers seem to have won the first round of their battle for remunerative price on Wednesday, with the district administration asking the traders to display the minimum asking price of Rs.9,000 a quintal on the samples at the market. The administration's directive was issued at a tripartite meeting of farmers, traders and official on Wednesday, convened in the wake of the standoff between traders and farmers over the price tag on Tuesday.

Along with the price, the name of the farmer and his contact number should also be displayed on a tag, when the turmeric samples are placed for auction. "It is mandatory to place a tag carrying this information along with the sample lots," District Revenue Officer S. Ganesh said at the meeting.

Turmeric is being auctioned in four markets in Erode, which are run by the Erode and Gobichettipalayam Co-operative Marketing Societies, Regulated Marketing Committee and Erode Turmeric Merchants Association. The farmers formed the Turmeric Farmers Association of India, held a conference recently and fixed the price.

After hearing the arguments of both traders and farmers at the meeting on Wednesday, Mr. Ganesh said the tags must be placed on the stocks kept for the auction also, in addition to the samples. The authorities of the markets should also maintain a record containing the names and photographs of all the farmers participating in the turmeric auction.

Stern action would be initiated if irregularities were found in the auction process. Mr. Ganesh also appointed Revenue Divisional Officer R. Sukumar as the authority responsible for monitoring the conduct of auction.

Association President P.K. Deivasigamani, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association President RKV Ravishankar and senior officials took part in the meeting.

Mr. Deivasigamani welcomed the order passed by the district administration and appealed to farmers not to sell the spice at less than Rs.9,000. The prices of turmeric in the domestic and international markets were likely to increase in the coming weeks, he said.

TIRUCHI, August 30, 2012

'Adopt drip irrigation and get water efficiency of up to 80%'



Every drop counts: A field watered through drip irrigation system at Kumulur in Tiruchi district.—
PHOTO: R.M. RAJARATHINAM.

: Though drip irrigation is ideal for banana and patronised in several parts of the country, it is unfortunate that farmers of the Cauvery delta have not realised its importance, M. M. Mustaffa, Director, National Research Centre for Banana (NRCB), said on Monday.

Talking to press persons at the centre, near here, just ahead of the 19th Foundation Day, he pointed out that an acre of banana normally required 900-1200 millimetre of water. “By opting for drip irrigation you can save as much as 30 per cent to 40 per cent and thus extend your area as well.”

By going in for drip irrigation, the water use efficiency is 80 per cent whereas in the conventional method it is just 20 per cent to 30 per cent. Besides, drip irrigation is ideal for fertigation, which is extremely beneficial for the plants. Above all, drip irrigation helps the farmer monitor the banana garden better.

Mr. Mustaffa said this method of micro-irrigation had become extremely popular in States such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh. In Tamil Nadu, in districts such as Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Theni, Coimbatore, and Erode it had excellent patronage.

Asked why the farmers of the delta region have not been favourably disposed to drip irrigation, G.Ajeethan, general secretary, Tamil Nadu Banana Growers' Federation, said banana is a “water-loving crop.”

“Earlier we had excellent drainage system in the Cauvery flowing regions which helped banana cultivation. Now the available water is inadequate for the crop. While research institutions such as NRCB have excellent technology, it is quite unfortunate that extension wing of the agriculture\horticulture department has not been energetic enough to popularise the same.”

Later, speaking at the function, Mr.Mustaffa appealed to the farming community not to ignore the banana waste which could prove to be a bounty if it were to be converted into vermicompost.

He pointed out that the total banana area in the country is 8.3 lakh hectare producing as much as 298 lakh tonnes of banana. The waste generated works out to 375 lakh tonnes. And Tamil Nadu has the highest banana area in the country – 1.25 lakh hectare – producing 82.5 lakh tonnes of banana. Tamil Nadu’s productivity per hectare is the highest in the country with 65.8 tonnes.

According to him, the cost of fertilizer required to produce 298 lakh tonnes of banana is estimated to be Rs.1,847 crore. And if 375 lakh tonnes of waste are converted into vermicompost and recycled in banana production, the total worth of nutrients is Rs.913 crore (Only about 50 per cent of the total nutrients available in a banana tree goes towards the fruits while the rest remains with the other parts of the tree. Thus 50 per cent of the nutrients could be retained, he explained). Thus, saving in the cost of fertilizer, while recycling the waste through vermicomposting, works out to Rs.934 crore at the national level.

The director said that for an individual farmer vermicomposting could help bring down 50 per cent of the expense on banana cultivation. Besides, by selling the vermicompost, one could earn at least Rs. 5 per kg and for a hectare of banana, the vermicompost alone could fetch Rs.15, 000 to Rs.20,000. Besides, vermiwash that could be used as a spray on the plants could also be produced.

The recipients of the (Siranda Vazhai Vivasayi Virudu) awards at Foundation Day include A. Subramanian, Varadarajapuram, C.Vinayagamurthy, Thottiam, N. Seenivasan, Madurapuri, K. M. Barathraj, Kamayagoundanpatti, and N.Gopalakrishnan, Panikkampatti. A.P.Karuppiah, Theni, won Siranda Vazhai Thozhil Munaivor Virudu.

August 30, 2012

“Display price tags of Rs.9,000 a quintal”

Turmeric farmers seem to have won the first round of battle, with the district administration asking traders to display the minimum price of Rs.9,000 a quintal on samples

CHENNAI, August 30, 2012

Vegetable prices in city take a dip

Residents attempting to keep a tab on their expenses will be delighted with the prices of vegetables this week. There has been a dip of at least Rs. 5 per kg in the cost of most vegetables in the city.

A spurt of arrivals at the Koyambedu wholesale market over the past few days has contributed to the reduction in cost, said wholesale traders. Carrots and broad beans, which were priced up to Rs. 40 a kg in the wholesale market last week, are now sold at Rs. 18-Rs. 20 a kg.

The cost of beans, which has remained high for many months, dropped by half to Rs. 20-Rs. 25 per kg.

Green chillies, brinjals and ladies fingers have also become affordable, with their price plummeting. The cost of potatoes and onions however, has remained stable for a few weeks now.

S. Chandran, a wholesale trader in Koyambedu, said that a bunch of greens, which was sold for Rs. 6 earlier, is available for Rs. 2 at the wholesale market and for Rs. 5 at retail outlets.

Crop harvesting season began in neighbouring states from mid-August. Though rains have not been sufficient, the Koyambedu market is receiving an additional 100 lorry loads of vegetables every day. Residents will be able to enjoy the benefit of the dip in the price for two more months.

DINDIGUL, August 30, 2012

Primary agricultural cooperative bank burgled

An unidentified gang burgled Veerachinnupatti primary agricultural cooperative bank at Manjanaickenpatti village in Natham on Tuesday night.

The police said that the gang entered the bank and stole a laptop and Rs.1 lakh kept in the drawer.

They also attempted to break open the jewel locker but failed.

They escaped with the stolen cash and laptop.

The officials informed that jewels worth more than Rs.2 crore were saved.

NAMAKKAL, August 30, 2012

Egg price stands at new record high of Rs. 3.40

Increase in consumption in Northern States led to price hike: NECC Namakkal Zone chairman

The price of egg in the wholesale market that reached a record high of Rs. 3.34 on Tuesday registered a new record high price of Rs. 3.40. This increase of six paise in one day was announced at the National Egg Coordination Committee's (NECC) rate fixation meeting here on Wednesday.

Namakkal Zone chairman of the NECC P. Selvaraj said that consumption of egg had increased in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Punjab after Shraavan (a month-long festival season when people don't eat non-vegetarian food items) came to an end.

"This increase in consumption led to price hike of egg in those regions and reflected in an increase in the other zones as well," he added.

NECC sources said that the average daily egg movement to Kerala was 105 lakh eggs, which dropped by 25 to 30 lakh eggs a day during Onam. "With the celebration coming to an end on Wednesday we expect the consumption to go up further. Meanwhile, the supply drop to Kerala was compensated by increase in supply to Northern States, Mumbai and Bengaluru."

Drop in production

They also claimed that there was a drop in egg production by 12 to 15 per cent due to use of low-cost feed ingredients to fight the escalating price of traditionally used feed ingredients. There had been a sharp drop in the daily egg production by 41 to 51 lakh eggs from the average production in this zone that was 341 lakh eggs a day in July, 2012.

“This drop in production against increasing demand is another important reason for the price hike.

However, industry sources said that maintaining the price will be decided only after studying market conditions and how the consumers respond to the price hike, in a week or more days,” the official added.

Export to get affected

Though the increasing egg rate has given some hope for poultry farmers to reap better profits, it is expected to affect egg export from this zone.

Egg export in June came down to a 10-year low as only 89.74 lakh eggs were exported in that month (12 per cent of the export in January) when egg rate reached a then record high price of Rs. 3.33. The export saw a mild improvement as 136.97 lakh eggs were exported in July when egg rate plunged to Rs. 2.70. “Increase in wholesale egg price to Rs. 3.40 will hit export if the price is maintained for a few more days. But this will not affect the industry as farmers will be able to fetch a better price in India,” an NECC official said.

Published: August 30, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 30, 2012 05:03 IST

‘Formulate alternate cropping pattern’

Special Correspondent

Memorandum to Chief Minister seeks constitution of a panel of experts

As Cauvery issue has become a perennial headache for Tamil Nadu causing enormous anxiety and untold misery to the farming community, Cauvery Delta Farmers’ Welfare Association has

appealed to the State government to formulate an alternative cropping pattern for the delta region constituting a panel of experts.

In a memorandum to Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, Mahadhanapuram V.Rajaram, working president of the association, pointed out the recent submission of Karnataka before the Supreme Court that no distress sharing formula was evolved at the Cauvery Monitoring Committee on December 4, 2009.

Besides, Karnataka had contended that if it released water to Tamil Nadu “by mechanically applying distress formula up to July 20, 2012 as demanded by Tamil Nadu and goes on following the same pattern till the end of September, Tamil Nadu will end up getting more water than its due share.”

Mr. Rajaram also said that Karnataka had been giving a lot of excuses for denying Tamil Nadu its rightful share in June and July. It had submitted that as on June 1 this water year, the Mettur dam had about 40 tmcft.

“Of the remaining 85 tmcft it required, about 16 tmcft had already gone (to the inter-State border) till August 20 and the remaining 69 tmcft is expected to flow down to inter-State border as measured by the Central Water Commission by the end of December.” One of Karnataka’s major contentions was that it has all the right to take up summer irrigation out of surplus water when the total flows are above 483 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) at the inter-State border (out of 740 tmcft in the basin) or unused water available within its share out of 483 tmcft.

Karnataka’s disquieting attitude that it would continue to go in for summer irrigation thus depleting its reservoirs during March-May period had been continuing since 1974, he lamented.

The CDFWA, which had been instrumental in the constitution of the Cauvery River Waters Tribunal, and which tried to forge an agreement by forming a “Cauvery family”, could not succeed so far because of political interference, he said.

Hence, as Ms. Jayalalithaa has been trying her best to save delta agriculture, Mr. Rajaram urged her to formulate an alternative cropping pattern for Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam district. Besides, instead of kuruvai, paddy cultivation suitable for the season should be introduced on rotational basis. Instead of all the 12 lakh acres in the delta area going in for paddy, 50 per cent of the area could be used to raise various other crops like oil palm which would conserve substantial foreign exchange.

Considering the difficulty in getting labour for agriculture, the government could promote corporate farming clubbing the small holdings and making their owners shareholders of a company. Besides, of the total 60 per cent of the population, only 30 per cent should be involved in agriculture.

As a number of rural youth are now well-educated and unwilling to take up agriculture, the government should come up with programmes to provide them employment.

For introducing such “revolutionary” schemes, it would be ideal to constitute an expert committee, he added.

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- *“By mechanically applying distress formula, Tamil Nadu will get more water than its due”*
 - *50 per cent of paddy growing area could be used to raise other crops such as oil palm*
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Students sensitised to climate change

Special Correspondent



HARD FACTS:R.M.P.Jawahar, Executive Director, TREC-STEP, speaking at a programme on climate change in the city.Photo: M.Moorthy

A two-day training programme on 'climate change, clean coal and carbon capture (3cc) for academia', organised jointly by TREC STEP (Tiruchi Regional Engineering College Science and Technology Entrepreneurs Park) and BHEL was inaugurated here on Monday.

The objective of the programme is to sensitise students of engineering colleges in and around Tiruchi to the challenges ahead in the wake of the climate change and global warming.

R.M.P. Jawahar, executive director of TREC-STEP, in his address, spoke on the project which formed a technology responsive initiative under the European Union sponsored project of 'developing a cluster for clean coal technologies and carbon capture and storage technologies for the Indian thermal power sector'.

He said that India, with its extensive coal reserves, accounted for the world's third largest coal producer. The growth in the use of coal in our country was also on the rise. Obviously, our country's thermal power stations could play a vital role in reduction of carbon dioxide emission.

He said that the academia, industrialists, entrepreneurs research institutions would be sensitised to the importance of clean coal and carbon capture and storage techniques.

S. Sridharan, president of Tiruchi District Tiny and Small Scale Industries Association, in his address, said that the programme would set a trend in creating awareness about climate change among the industrialists. The problem could be surmounted through a proper understanding of the causes and implementing the appropriate precautionary technology.

R. Kumar, General Manager, (in-charge), BHEL, S. Sundararajan, General Manager, Coal Research, BHEL and B. Bindu, project coordinator, TREC-STEP, spoke.

TIRUCHI, August 30, 2012

Three-day training programme on nematode diseases begins

A three-day training programme on diagnosis and management of nematode diseases, organised by Anbli Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute, under the National Agricultural Development Programme for extension officials of the State government began on Wednesday.

The training is to help extension officials of the State government to diagnose nematode diseases on various horticultural crops and integrated management techniques.

Inaugurating the programme, V.Jayabal, Dean of the college, appealed to the extension officials to make use of the latest techniques developed by scientists of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in protecting crops from pests and diseases.

E.I.Jonathan, Director, Centre for Plant Protection Studies, TNAU, Coimbatore, said unlike pests and diseases, farmers cannot easily identify nematodes and the damage caused by them.

Rama Lakshmanan, deputy director of Horticulture, G.Gajendran, head, Department of Plant Protection, K.Senthamizh, assistant professor (Nematology), spoke.

VELLORE, August 30, 2012

Borewells to yield more water for Vellore

The Vellore Corporation has decided to augment the drinking water supply to the residents by five million litres per day (MLD) through the sinking of three infiltration galleries in the headworks of the Ponnai-Palar Integrated Drinking Water Supply Scheme in Thengal and three borewells in the Otteri irrigation lake at an estimated cost of Rs.176 lakh.

A resolution seeking full State government grant for undertaking the work and for obtaining the prior permission of the government for commencing the work was approved by the Vellore Corporation Council at its emergency meeting presided over by P. Karthiyayini, Mayor on Wednesday. The infiltration galleries would cost Rs.50 lakh each while the cost of sinking three borewells and installing electric motors is Rs.19.67 lakh. Other costs including the deposit to the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation would amount to Rs.6.30 lakh.

Earlier participating in the question hour, councillors cutting across party lines expressed grave concern at the acute drinking water facility and the need for streamlining the water supply so that all areas get adequate water for the same duration whenever water is released. J. Ayub Khan (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam), 52nd ward member said that the residents of Kasba and Ramanaickenpalayam were getting water only once in 16 days.

He wanted water supply to commercial establishments such as hotels and lodges to be disconnected in order to ensure adequate supply to the residential areas as was done in the past. The Mayor promised to consider his suggestion.

M. Sunil Kumar (DMK), 7th ward member said that several borewells in the extension areas of the Corporation had dried up, but the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage (TWAD) Board had not taken any step to desilt and deepen the wells. Thangamani Anandan (DMK), 25th ward member said that the Corporation never gave any prior intimation about the timings of drinking

water supply, with the result the residents had to miss the water supply when it was supplied beyond 11 p.m. During the last turn, water was supplied from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. the next day in her ward, but the people missed it. She said that in her capacity as councillor, she ought to be informed about the timings of water supply so that she can inform the residents to be vigilant and fetch water when it is supplied.

The Mayor asked the Corporation Engineer to fix a time-table for water supply in the different wards and publicise the same among the residents so that they did not miss the supply.

Later the council witnessed some tense moments when DMK councillor R. Sathyamoorthy (DMK), 37th ward member demanded an apology from A.P.L. Sundaram (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam), 24th ward member (not present in the house) for allegedly attacking G. Arul (DMK), 21st ward member who questioned his act of breaking open the lock of the gate for the Corporation well from which Mr. Sundaram was allegedly drawing water in his tractor for supply to the residents instead of taking water from a private well as per the contract.

The gate was locked by the public who objected to his act. He wanted to know what action the Corporation was going to take against Mr. Sundaram for his behaviour.

MYSORE, August 30, 2012

53 villages to get Cauvery water

Project, implemented at a cost of Rs. 28 crore, launched



Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar launching the drinking water supply project at Yelwal, near Mysore, on Wednesday.— PHOTO: M.A. SRIRAM

As many as 53 villages in Mysore district are now assured of getting Cauvery water with the Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board launching a drinking water supply project, with grants from the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj.

The project was implemented at a cost of Rs. 28 crore.

Cauvery water was pumped from Balamuri and a treatment plant had been constructed at Aloka near Yelwal (about 15 km from Mysore city) for supplying water through pipelines to 53 villages in Mysore and Hunsur taluks.

The villages that would benefit from the scheme include Gommatagiri, Bettadur, Halladakallahalli, Vaddarahalli, Kommegowdanakoppal, Geresanahalli, Halebeedu, Mudalkoppal, Sabbanahalli, Maidanahalli and Boochahalli (all in Halebeedu Gram Panchayat); Chikkadanahalli, Ankanahalli, Manuganahalli, Hullenahalli, Handanahalli, Boddabeechanahalli, Devarahalli and Kemppamma Hosur (all in Manuganagalli GP); Belikere, Yalachalawadi, Dallal and Dallal Koppal (all in Belikere GP); Chikkanahalli, Mallegowdanahalli, K. Naganahalli and Kallur (all in Anandoor GP); Yelwal, Chikkegowdanakoppal, Bhadregowdana Koppal, Lingadevarakoppal, Halekamanahalli Koppal, Karakanahalli and Eshwaranakoppal.

Speaking after launching the project, Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar said the multi-village drinking water supply scheme would cover the entire State.

Work launch

Earlier, the Chief Minister laid the foundation stones for an Ambedkar Bhavan near Nallappa Thana, Babu Jagjivan Ram Bhavan at Paduvarahalli, and Valmiki Bhavan at Vijayanagar II Stage.

The Chief Minister also took part in the 97th birth anniversary celebrations of Shivarathri Rajendra Swami at Suttur Math (Mysore branch), as well as the Newspaper Day function organised by the Mysore District Journalists' Association.

KAKINADA, August 30, 2012

Scanty rainfall casts shadow over paddy yield in five mandals

Contingency plans being chalked out to help farmers: official



Troubled times: Agriculture workers busy transplanting paddy at Bhatnavilli in the Konaseema region of East Godavari district.

Scanty rainfall registered in five mandals is forcing the East Godavari district administration to declare them as drought-hit and chalk out contingency plans to help farmers.

Even by the last week of August, paddy transplantation could be completed only in an extent of 82 per cent of the total cultivable area in the district.

The scenario casts a doubt over the yield of paddy for the fourth consecutive crop in the district, which is considered to be the rice bowl of the State.

Crop holiday

Though the yield was good, the Jal cyclone hit the standing paddy crop very badly in rabi-2011.

In the subsequent crop season, farmers from the Konaseema region declared crop holiday and stopped transplantation in an extent of close to 25,000 hectares.

For rabi-2012, officials forcibly stopped release of water into the Kakinada and Mandapeta canals on the plea of insufficient water levels in the Godavari and commencement of the long-

pending delta modernisation works. As a result, farmers were forced to give up paddy cultivation for the season in an extent of 66,000 hectares.

“Deficit rainfall has been recorded in Rowthulapudi, Tuni, Kirlampudi, Devipatnam, and Rajavommangi mandals during the current kharif season. We are preparing contingency plans for the farmers of these five mandals,” J. Prameela, Joint Director of Agriculture, told *The Hindu* on Wednesday.

Of the 2.23 lakh hectares, which is cultivable for paddy during the kharif season, transplantation has been done in 1.82 lakh hectares. The agriculture officials feel that it is too early to predict the quantity of yield. But for sure, they say, there will be a drop as compared to the average yield for the season.

Plans are afoot to distribute black gram, green gram, and maize seed weighing 4,900 quintals to farmers in 6,000 hectares initially.

“In all, help is required to farmers in 12,750 hectares, for whom we have chalked out a detailed plan and are awaiting permission from the higher ups,” Ms. Prameela explained.

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- *‘Jal’ cyclone hit the standing paddy crop very badly in rabi-2011*
 - *Plans are afoot to distribute black gram, green gram, and maize seed*

SANGAREDDY, August 30, 2012

Debt trap continues to take lives of farmers

Once again it was the debt trap, which took the life of the 40-year-old, D. Shankaraiah, a farmer belonging to Kongur village in Kolcharam mandal of Medak district. On the fateful day of August 25, he fought with his wife Lalitha over the issue of repayment of the debt amount, which was accumulated to the tune of Rs.2 lakh.

He dug three borewells in 60 kuntas of land belonging to him and his family members. The first two borewell failed to yield any water, incurring a loss of about Rs.60,000 on Sankaraiah. Though the third one, which cost him around Rs.30,000, yielded a little water, it was not

sufficient for the agriculture activity. The extended loans further increased the burden of repayment. According to village revenue assistant K. Lakshman, on last Saturday evening, he went to the farm and committed suicide by hanging himself.

Though the farmers have been digging borewells, they never hire the services of geologists and instead depend on soothsayers, who predict where to dig a bore. "Many of the farmers never approach geologists. They prefer to go to local predictors," says Lakshman, adding that indiscriminate digging of borewells as one of the reasons for farmers falling into debt trap. According to P. Srihari Rao, an activist of the Farmers' Federation district unit, about 16 suicide cases were recorded by them in Medak district since July 3.

"We have recorded these suicides based on the reports published in various newspapers. There are chances that the number may be on the higher side than what we have recorded," he told *The Hindu*. Agreeing that the present power crisis could be one of the reasons for farmer suicides, he felt that accumulated debts for the past few years had forced the farmers to take 'desperate steps'.

VIJAYAWADA, August 30, 2012

'Krishna Milk Union providing quality milk'

The Krishna Milk Union with a near 2 lakh litres per day sale of milk in Vijayawada city alone provides the best quality of its various milk products, said its chairman Mandava Janakiramayya.

At a press conference here on Wednesday, he took strong objection to the unhealthy competition existing in the milk procurement and sale in Krishna District and assured the consumers that the Krishna Union does not compromise either on quantity of milk or its quality of processing.

A cold chain is maintained from the time it is procured from the farmers till it reaches the final consumers. A near 4 degree centigrade temperature is maintained to ensure there was no bacteria build up in the milk, which leads to its spoiling over a few hours.

The Weights and Legal Metrology Department had raided several premises of the Krishna Union and found all its measures and weights as per the prescribed norms and that provides the

confidence levels as the union chilling or processing units was certified for its operations under the ISO 9001-2008 and 2000-2005.

ALLAHABAD, August 29, 2012

Water level at Sangam recedes



Commuters wade through a water-logged street after heavy rain in Bathinda on Tuesday. PTI Photo

After marching rapidly toward the danger mark of 84.73 metres over the past week, the water level at Sangam here has begun to recede. However, according to flood control officials, with the Yamuna rising dangerously high in Delhi, the water level here is expected to rise again in the next 3-4 days.

The Ganga, whose level is measured from two points, recorded 80.37 metres at its Phaphamau bank while its Chatnag bank recorded 79.20 metres on Tuesday, a flood control official said. This was an overnight fall of 24.10 cm and 32 cm.

The Yamuna also receded by 30 cm, recording 79.78 metres at its Naini bank. The danger level for the Yamuna in nearby areas is 78.90 metres.

The alarming rise in the two rivers had created panic among the residents of outlying areas, who after warnings by the flood control department began evacuation. Those living on the banks of the Yamuna have already been moved to safer spots, according to officials.

With heavy rainfall experienced in Uttarakhand, the Ganga here was also on the rise, washing away makeshift huts and tents constructed at the Sangam ghats.

The total flooding of the Sangam ghat could force all the rituals to be conducted at a safer location, meaning a loss of livelihood for at least a week for a few hundred people at the ghats. While the floods disrupt normal life in the nearby villages, it also enriches the fertility of soil by the deposition of rich alluvium.

The flooding of the Sangam is symbolically significant for the dwellers of Allahabad and Hindus alike. Near the Sangam, under the massive Fort of Akbar, is located the Bade Hanuman Temple, the only one to have Lord Hanuman in a reclining position. The unique supine idol, measuring 20 feet by 8 feet, has a portion of it buried underground.

When the Ganga floods the ghats, this temple gets submerged. According to popular sentiments, the level of the Ganga rises so that its waters can touch the feet of Lord Hanuman. Thousands of devotees flock to the temple each year to catch a glimpse of the supine edifice. With the flooding of the temple pending, tourists are already in cue for the spectacle. Photography of the idol, however, is strictly prohibited.

PTI reports from New Delhi:

North India received heavy to moderate rainfall as parts of the region, including Delhi, faced disruptions in normal life due to the downpour. In the Capital, the maximum temperature was recorded at 31.8 degrees Celsius and the minimum 25.3.

Uttar Pradesh received moderate to heavy rainfall over the past 24 hours as monsoon remained active over the State.

Places which received rain include Mahroni, Muzaffarnagar, Rath, Badhuna, Akbarpur, Salon, Meja, Phoolpur, Fatehpur, Amethi, Saharanpur, Deoband, Mahoba, Mawana and Moradabad.

Published: August 29, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 29, 2012 05:07 IST

Rajasthan power panel to hear farmers

Special Correspondent

The Bikaner farmers, as many as 2,237 of them, who filed a joint petition in June against the electricity distribution company Jodhpur Vidyut Vitran Nigam seeking compensation for crop damage due to “irregular, insufficient, erratic and low voltage”, will get a hearing from the

Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission. The farmers have sought Rs.45 crore after calculating individual losses in the kharif 2011 between Rs.2.5 lakh and Rs.3 lakh.

“The matter which has come up before the Commission is the first of its kind and, therefore, it would be pertinent to have a look at various dimensions of this unique case for deciding the further course proceedings...” said the three-member Commission, headed by retired Chief Secretary D.C. Samant, in its order. The defendant’s counsel had questioned the admissibility of the petition for its collective nature and its claim.

“Considering that the petition has been filed jointly for more than 2,200 agricultural consumers of 41 villages of Bikaner district and considering the pleadings in the petition it would first be desirable to have a look at the key issues as that would help in taking a view on the contentious issue of maintainability of the petition,” said the order.

Counsel for the power company, Bipin Gupta, had sought dismissal of the petition on the ground that a joint plea was not maintainable under Regulation 3 of the Regulatory Commission rules as each individual should have petitioned separately paying fee of Rs.500. There was no provision for a waiver to this requirement, he noted. Even if the Commission allowed a joint petition like this each of them should be made to pay Rs.500, he argued.

Manik Chand Surana, former Rajasthan Minister, who brought together the groundnut farmers of tehsils of Nokha, Dungargarh and Bikaner of his home district after the crop failure in 2011 and R.G. Gupta, the authorised person by the farmers, in their submissions sought compensation to farmers under Section 57(2) of the Electricity Act which provides for it if a “licensee fails to meet the standards prescribed”.

The farmers’ counsel, citing provisions of Section 2(49) of the Act, argued that the definition of a person included any company or body corporate or association or body of individuals whether incorporated or not.

Regulation 12 (Transaction of Business) of the Rajasthan Electricity Regulatory Commission provided that any group of consumers could participate in any proceedings before the Commission.

Published: August 29, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 29, 2012 05:00 IST

Cotton conference on September 1

The Indian Cotton Federation will organise here a conference on 'Challenges Facing Cotton Trade and Industry 2013' on September 1.

Chairman of the conference P. Nataraj and president of the association J. Thulasidharan told presspersons here on Tuesday that the purpose of the event was to bring together all stakeholders of the cotton sector – farmers, ginners, traders, and mill owners – and discuss the challenges and opportunities. The frequent fluctuation in cotton prices during the last two years had affected all.

Cotton production in the country was expected to be higher than last year in some areas. But the deficient monsoon was likely to have an impact in some others. Clear data on the area covered under sowing was not yet available. However, globally, cotton was said to be available in surplus and cotton production in other countries was expected to be high this year.

Cotton was still an attractive crop to farmers. Though area under several other crops was shrinking, it had expanded for cotton for the last three years. The sector required a long-term policy. "We need a cotton board as in the case of other commodities," said Mr. Thulasidharan.

About 400 delegates were expected to participate, especially a large-number of ginners. Joint Secretary of the Union Ministry of Textiles V. Srinivas would be the chief guest. Sessions would be held on the current cotton issues, hedging and risk management, cotton quality, cotton farming technology and a panel discussion on cotton trade and cotton crop. At the end of the one-day meeting, the association proposed to come out with resolutions and submit it to the Government, they said.

Published: August 29, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 29, 2012 05:00 IST

IOB focuses on agricultural credit

Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) is observing August and September as "Farmers' Month"

Priority sector

G.V. Koorse, Chief Regional Manager of Indian Overseas Bank, Coimbatore Region, said that every year the bank conducted programmes for farmers to enlarge its credit to the priority

sector. It was looking at increasing the credit to farmers in this region and the focus during these two months would be on agricultural and allied activities.

A.K. Bansal, Executive Director of bank, distributed loans to 283 beneficiaries for agricultural and related activities such as mushroom cultivation, poultry, dairy, and farm machinery.

The bank was also focusing on financial inclusion through its business correspondents.

“Ultra Thin Branch”

It opened an “Ultra Thin Branch” here and planned to open more such branches to take banking to all villages.

Published: August 29, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 29, 2012 05:05 IST

Training programme

Special Correspondent

The Home Science College and Research Institute here will conduct a three-day training programme in ‘dry flower technology’ from September 5.

The training will be in drying, dyeing and bleaching of flowers, making of potpourri, greeting cards, craftwork, and wall hangings from dried flowers and agricultural waste.

Participants will also be trained in making artificial flowers and bouquets. Interested persons can contact P. Parimalam, Head, Department of Family Resource Management, Home Science College and Research Institute, Madurai 625 104, at 0452 2424683 (between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.), 9751331631 and 9159196411.

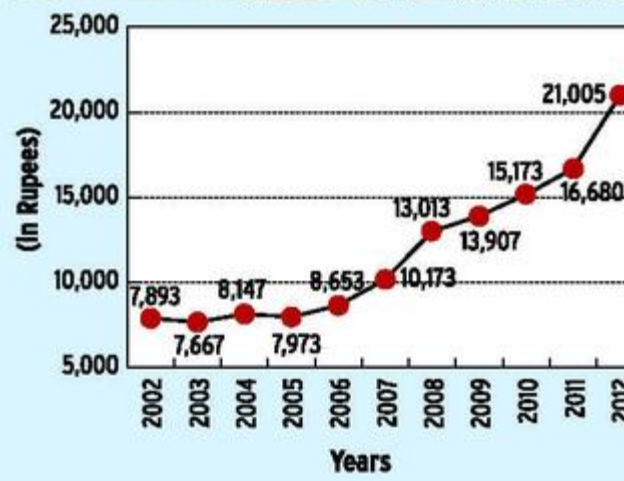
Published: August 29, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 29, 2012 05:10 IST

Poultry farmers turn to alternative feed

M.K. Ananth, *In order to control production cost*

Poultry farmers have started using new feed ingredients such as meat and bone meal (waste from slaughtered animals), guar meal (a by-product after separation of gum), cotton seed cake, coconut cake, gingely oil cake and silk cotton cake for egg-laying chicken.

Cost of a tonne of feed for egg-laying birds (In July)



These have been introduced in place of conventionally accepted materials used for manufacturing feed. Farmers said that they have started using newer feed ingredients as the price of important feed ingredients have gone up in the recent months. Industry sources said traditionally poultry feed comprises 12 to 15 of ingredients such as cereals and protein cakes, the price of which has have gone up steeply, forcing farmers to incur heavy losses in the recent months.

Soya meal is the most important protein ingredient and determines the cost of half a dozen other protein cakes. Its price has gone up by about 125 per cent in a year and has resulted in price hike of other cakes too. Maize is rich in energy, essential fatty acids and gives the yellow colour to the yolk, and decides the price of other cereals. Its price has climbed by over 50 per cent in the same period, farmers lamented.

Statistics from the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal Zone, showed that these factors had led to sharp increase in the cost of a tonne of feed from Rs. 18,627 in June to

Rs. 21,005 in July. This is the steepest hike in the price of feed for layer birds since the abnormal escalation of feed rates from April, 2012.

A tonne of feed that was priced at Rs. 16,923 in March climbed to Rs. 17,924 (up by Rs. 1,001) in April, to Rs. 18,347 in May and to Rs. 18,627 in June before it went up by another Rs. 2,378 to Rs. 21,005 in July. Poultry farmers said that a tonne of feed is now Rs. 4,258 more than its price in February – an increase by more than 20 per cent.

Head of the Animal Feed Analytical and Quality Assurance Laboratory in Namakkal, attached to the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Science University (TANUVAS), Dr. A Natarajan strongly felt that new feed ingredients cannot completely replace the conventionally used ingredients.

NAMAKKAL, August 29, 2012

Drip irrigation scam may not be voluminous: Collector

“A random verification conducted by Agriculture Department officials on the installation of drip irrigation system in the district during the year 2010-11 reveals that there could have been some misappropriation of funds. The scam could not be as voluminous as it was suspected by the petitioner,” Collector J. Kumaragurubaran said.

He made this statement to reporters here on Monday after perusing the report on the preliminary inquiry into the alleged scam – in which petitioner V. Mahalingam claimed that officials in the Horticulture Department and companies that installed the system usurped funds to the tune of a few crores that was allotted for installing the equipment.

“Seven teams checked the fields in 14 blocks and have submitted a report on Monday. The officials came across a few irregularities in Elachipalayam and Mallasamudram blocks in Tiruchengode taluk. Five farmers and the survey number of their fields mentioned in the list of beneficiaries could not be traced in Elachipalayam block.

“It was also found that materials have just arrived for installation in the fields of three farmers in that block, possibly after those involved in it came to know that the district administration was probing into such incidents. Of the 82 fields that were inspected in Mallasamudram block, pipes were not laid in seven fields while three other farmers or their fields were non-traceable,” he noted.

According to him, other incidents that the probing officials came across were variation in the diameter of the pipe to be laid as mentioned in guidelines against the one that was laid – in five farms in Elachipalayam.

Probe

Mr. Kumaragurubaran said that a detailed probe would be conducted in Elachipalayam and Mallasamudram blocks in a week's time and a report would be sent to the Commissioner of Horticulture.

He claimed that the random verification in Erumapatty, Namakkal, Puduchatram, Tiruchengode, Mohanur and Rasipuram blocks showed that drip irrigation system was installed in the farms of the beneficiaries and was functioning properly.

A few farmers in Kabilarmalai and Paramathi blocks claimed that they were not given receipts for their contribution for installation of the system.

The Collector said that a total of 19 companies had been installing the equipment in Namakkal and the companies involved in the scam would be blacklisted.

“Action will also be taken on the Assistant Director of Horticulture in blocks where there was misappropriation as the fields should have been inspected to ensure that the system was properly laid,” he said.

Published: August 29, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 29, 2012 05:00 IST

Traders boycott turmeric auction at Namagiripettai

Staff Reporter

Business to the tune of nearly Rs. one crore was affected at the Rasipuram Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society in Namagiripettai on Tuesday as all the 1,700 bags of turmeric that were brought for auction on that day remained unsold. This was because turmeric traders boycotted weekly turmeric auction stating that they cannot afford the price quoted by the farmers.

“Auction will be held on the same day next week”, Secretary of the of Rasipuram Agricultural Producers Cooperative Marketing Society N. Manivannan told newsmen here after announcing that the auction was cancelled.

Published: August 29, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: August 29, 2012 05:01 IST

Loan waiver: government accused of betraying farmers

Staff Correspondent



Demand: Member of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Rajashekhar Menasinakai addressing farmers near Hubli on Tuesday.

Member of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Rajashekhar Menasinakai has taken exception to the conditions imposed by the State government for the loan waiver scheme for farmers who have taken loans from cooperative societies.

Speaking at a meeting of farmers of the Old Hubli APMC constituency held in Parasapur village on Tuesday,

Mr. Menasinakai said that although the State government had announced the crop loan waiver scheme, many farmers would not benefit because of various conditions imposed.

Even though the State government had said that the scheme was announced to help farmers because of the drought, it had betrayed them by subsequently imposing various conditions, he said.

Several farmers raised the issue of crop insurance compensation not being paid and urged the government for immediate steps to resolve the issue.

Mr. Menasinakai said various farmers' organisations would hold an agitation here on September 3.

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- *'Many farmers will not benefit because of the various conditions imposed'*
 - *'Resolve crop insurance compensation issue'*

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, August 29, 2012

Plea to encourage homestead farming

'Revival of traditional system relevant to meet demand'

The Kerala Environment Congress (KEC 2012) organised by the Centre for Environment and Development (CED) and the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB) here earlier this month has urged the government to promote the traditional system of integrated, homestead farming.

A declaration summing up the deliberations of the Congress said the revival of the traditional system was relevant to meet the domestic demand for vegetables and conserve agro biodiversity. The three-day event, which saw presentations by experts from different sectors, called upon the government to utilise the services of the Hyderabad-based Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) to help the fishermen community with fishing zone advisories and weather information.

Use of technology

“Utilising the technology applications of the INCOIS will ensure safety at sea and better catch,” the declaration said.

It stressed the need to promote environment-friendly methods of aquaculture for sustainable development of fisheries.

The congress emphasised the need to coordinate the activities of departments and agencies to develop a model for integrated watershed management.

It appealed to the government to utilise technology tools such as remote sensing, Geographic Information System (GIS), and Global Positioning System (GPS) to formulate a land policy spelling out the extent and spatial utilisation for agriculture.

It also called for immediate steps to arrest the reclamation of paddy fields and wetlands and encourage paddy farming.

“The agriculture policy of the State, which is under consideration, needs to be incorporated with the abovementioned aspects to deal with the issues related to agriculture. The policy should have an integrated approach covering the fisheries sector, irrigation, soil conservation, horticulture, and animal husbandry. It should also have a participatory approach involving farmers and other stakeholders,” the declaration said.

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- *‘Utilise services of INCOIS to help fishermen’*
 - *Need to promote eco-friendly methods stressed*
-

hindustantimes

Wednesday, August 29, 2012

Indo-Asian News Service

Mumbai, August 29, 2012

First Published: 21:40 IST(29/8/2012)

Last Updated: 21:44 IST(29/8/2012)

Consumption in rural India growing faster than urban areas: CRISIL

For the first time since economic reforms began two decades ago, consumption in rural India is growing faster than in urban areas, a survey by ratings and research firm CRISIL revealed Wednesday. Given the large size of India’s rural population, the value of goods and services consumed has always been greater in rural India, but urban India had narrowed the differential during most of the last decade by growing at a faster pace.

Between 2009-10 and 2011-12, additional spending by rural India was Rs 3,750 billion, significantly higher than Rs 2,994 billion by urbanites.

"Underpinning this growth in rural consumption is a strong increase in rural incomes due to rising non-farm employment opportunities and the government's rural focus through employment generation schemes," Roopa Kudva, managing director of CRISIL, said in a research report.

Growth in rural consumption was fuelled by a rise in household incomes due to greater non-farm job opportunities and government initiated employment generation schemes.

National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) data shows that during 2004-05 to 2009-10 rural construction jobs rose by 88 percent, while the number of people employed in agriculture fell from 249 million to 229 million.

In addition, migrants from villages to urban areas who benefitted from job opportunities in infrastructure and construction projects increased remittances to their families in rural India, which boosted consumption.

A notable phenomenon in rural consumption is a shift from necessities to discretionary goods, the study report said.

About one in every two rural households now has a mobile phone. Even in India's poor states such as Bihar and Orissa, one in three rural households has a mobile phone.

Nearly 42% of rural households owned a television in 2009-10, up from 26% five years earlier.

Similarly, 14% of rural households had a two-wheeler in 2009-10, twice that in 2004-05. For India, a young population, rising income and low penetration of many consumer durables means that rural consumption has the potential to remain an important source of demand.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/921443.aspx>

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Thursday, Aug 30

Max Min

Tomorrow's Forecast








Friday, Aug 31

Max Min

Cloudy	33.8° 27.2°	Rainy	32° 26°
Rain: 0.1	Sunrise: 05:57		
Humidity: 74	Sunset: 06:20		
Wind: normal	Barometer: 1006		

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Sep 1	Sunday Sep 2	Monday Sep 3	Tuesday Sep 4	Wednesday Sep 5
				
32° 26°	30° 26°	31° 26°	32° 26°	32° 27°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

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'More rainfall in Sept, to help rice crop'

Agencies Posted online: Wed Aug 29 2012, 13:58 hrs



New Delhi : Rainfall next month is expected to be better as monsoon is unlikely to be influenced by El Nino weather pattern, helping rice and other kharif crop, Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna said today.

El Nino refers to abnormal warming of surface ocean waters in the Pacific that disrupts weather pattern causing drought and floods in many regions of the world.

"I don't think the September rains will be impacted due to El Nino. Even if El Nino temperature do increase, I do not think, it will impact our monsoon. It may affect other parts of the world," Bahuguna said on the sidelines of a CII event.

So far, monsoon deficit is 13 per cent. However, the seasonal rains have revived because the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), known as Indian Nino, is now favourable, he said.

Better rains in September will help in retaining soil moisture and support sowing of rabi crops, Bahuguna said, adding that kharif crop will also benefit.

He said there may be more rainy days ahead as monsoon could withdraw late from north-west India.

"Normally, monsoon starts withdrawing from north-west India around September 1. This year, it seems withdrawal will be delayed. Onset of monsoon was delayed and withdrawal will also delay. We will have more rainy days," he said.

On Kharif crops situation, Bahuguna said the crop health looks better and the gap in sowing area has been made up due to the recent spell of rains.

Area coverage under rice, oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane is good, though it is slightly lower under coarse cereals and pulses, he said.

"I think, recent spell of rains will help area under coarse cereals to pick up, especially ragi in Karnataka, bajra and jowar in Rajasthan," Bahuguna said.

Although the kharif crop prospects are improving, there will certainly be some impact on overall production and productivity, he noted.

Total area under kharif crops is down at 32.9 million hectare as on August 24, against 34.2 million hectare in the same period last year.

Bahuguna said Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan have officially declared drought in some areas.

"The situation in all of these states is much better than what it was a month ago. Saurashtra region in Gujarat is still bad as it has not received rains at all. Saurashtra is probably the worst affected now," he said.

The Secretary mentioned that a central team is on the job of assessing the situation. A team, which visited Karnataka, has come back and will shortly submit a report. A separate team will visit other three states as well.

To mitigate the impact of drought in these states, the government has already announced some measures like diesel subsidy and will further consider some relief measures in the forthcoming meeting of the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM)

on drought next week, he added.

"We still have few proposals that will be submitted to the EGoM as and when it meets next week. The proposals would be to get measures to support the protective irrigation for orchard crop among others," he added.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

29 AUG, 2012, 03.47PM IST, PTI

Chilli futures fall 1.54 pc on sluggish demand

NEW DELHI: Chilli prices declined by Rs 80 to Rs 5,098 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators reduced positions, tracking a weak trend at spot market on sluggish demand.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chilli for delivery in September declined by Rs 80, or 1.54 per cent, to Rs 509 per quintal, with an open interest of 10,700 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in October lost Rs 86, or 1.50 per cent, to Rs 5,662 per quintal in 4,985 lots.

Market expert said speculators reduced positions on the back of sluggish demand which mainly led to a decline in chilli futures.

29 AUG, 2012, 01.40PM IST, PTI

Pepper futures down 0.51 pc on profit-booking

NEW DELHI: Pepper prices declined by 0.51 per cent to Rs 41,830 per quintal in futures trade today after speculators locked-in gains.

However, thin supplies in the spot markets restricted the fall.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, pepper for delivery in September fell sharply by Rs 215, or 0.51 per cent, to Rs 41,830 per quintal, with an open interest of 4,235 lots.

Similarly, the spice for delivery in October lost Rs 165, or 0.39 per cent, to Rs 42,600 per quintal, with an open interest of 2,705 lots.

Marketmen said besides profit-booking by speculators after recent gains, reports of lower exports as Indian product is offered at higher prices in the global market compared to competitors, attributed to the fall in pepper prices at futures trade.

They, however, said limited supplies from farmers and lower inventories, restricted the losses.

29 AUG, 2012, 01.57PM IST, PTI

Crude palm oil futures weaken on global cues

NEW DELHI: Amid weak global trend and subdued domestic demand, crude palm oil prices traded lower by 0.60 per cent to Rs 559.40 per 10 kg in futures trading today.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in September declined by Rs 3.40, or 0.60 per cent, to Rs 559.40 per 10 kg, with a business turnover of 424 lots.

Similarly, the oil for delivery in August shed Rs 3.10, or 0.55 per cent, to Rs 557 per 10 kg in 49 lots. Marketmen said subdued demand in the spot market and lower trend in the global market mainly influenced crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

Meanwhile, palm oil fell 0.4 per cent to 3,018 ringgit a tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

29 AUG, 2012, 03.52PM IST, PTI

Wheat futures plunge 3 pc on profit-booking

NEW DELHI: After persistent rise, wheat prices fell by almost 3 per cent to Rs 1,532 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators preferred to book at prevailing higher levels. Besides, increased supplies in the mandies (spot markets) also weighed on the grain prices at futures trade. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for delivery in October was trading Rs 47, or 2.98 per cent, down at Rs 1,532 per quintal, with an open interest of 20,140 lots. Likewise, the grain for delivery in September was down by Rs 44, or 2.74 per cent, to Rs 1,560 per quintal, with an open interest of 16,910 lots. Marketmen said apart from profit-booking after persistent rise in the past few sessions, increased supplies in the wholesale markets, attributed to fall in wheat prices at futures trade.

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

'Onashamsakal' gets eventful for Kochiites

Published Date: Aug 29, 2012 11:06 AM, Last Updated: Aug 29, 2012 11:06 AM



Prominent artists, music bands and singers will add colours to the Onam evenings with a variety of cultural programmes, ranging from traditional dance forms to folk songs along with comedy skits and orchestra.

Celebrating the spirit and splendour of Onam, the city is all set to witness the various cultural events in the coming three days. Prominent artists, musicbands and singers will add colours to the Onam evenings with a variety of programmes ranging from traditional dance forms to folk songs along with comedy skits and orchestra. Though multiplexes in Kochi will not feature new Malayalam releases following the ban by Distributors' Association, the huge capacity theatres are ready with starstudded movies to entertain movie lovers this Onam.

On Thiruvonam day, the Comedy Stars team will present Mimics Parade and Ganamela at Ernakulam Marine Drive by 7.30 pm. The fusion classical dance by actor Asha Sharath and team is the major highlight

of Thursday's programme while playback singer and actor-director Vineeth Sreenivasan night is Friday's

attraction at Marine Drive. The District Administration and District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) also has organised grand programmes at MNF Art and Kerala History Museum, Edappally. Asima, the male choir and percussion team which takes inspiration from the diversity of India's rich music heritage that include austere, vedic chanting, Hindusthani and Carnatic music, will perform live at the venue on the Thiruvonam day. The Celebrate Keralam Band including Rex Vijayan (Aviyal), Bijibal (music composer), and John Thomas (Motherjane) will share the stage together on Thursday while the little Band will perform on Friday.

Drama enthusiasts can savour the sweetness of modern theatre flavour at the Nadakakkalam organised at Durbar Hall Ground. Tami I Folk Drama Panchali Shapadham and Apt Drama Group's Etho Chirakadiyochakal will be featured at 6pm and 8.30 pm respectively at Durbar Hall Ground on Thiruvonam day.

Jayaprakash Kuloor's play Koonan and Dhristy Kozhikode 's Vydhehi Paryani runnathu are Thursday's attraction. The drama version of renowned writer Vaikom Mohammed Basheer's Janmadinam and Manjulan's Mazhappattu will be presented on Friday. A Children's Game

Show will be organised at the Ernakulam Children's Park by 5 pm on Wednesday following stage programme.

The Kumbalangi Model Tourism Society (KMTS), by joining hands with the District Tourism Promotion Council, is also organising various cultural events for domestic as well as foreign tourists. The tourists can even be the member in the team which prepare the traditional dishes for the Onasadhya.

Among the movies, Mohanlal's 'Run Baby Run' will hit the screens on Wednesday.

Directed by Joshiy, the movie has Amala Paul playing the female lead. The other major releases Mammooty's Thappana, Dileep's Mr Marumakan and Fahad Fazil's Friday are also screening at various screen in the city. Johnny Antony is the director of Thappana while Mr Marumakan is directed by Sandhya Mohan with Sibi K Thomas and

Udaykrishna penning the script. Debutant Lijin Jose directed the film Friday.

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Fishermen should get direct benefit of schemes for them, says Ajay Vishnoi

WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 2012 23:52

Fishermen's Welfare and Fisheries Development Minister Ajay Vishnoi has directed departmental officers to ensure maximum fish production in view of excessive rainfall in the State. Vishnoi was addressing the 71st meeting of Working Committee of Madhya Pradesh Fisheries Federation (Cooperative) Limited on Wednesday.

Agriculture Production Commissioner MM Upadhyay and Principal Secretary Fisheries Development Saleena Singh were also present on the occasion. Vishnoi directed that that fishermen be assured of direct benefits of the schemes being implemented for their welfare.

He informed that fish production has been started in Rajghat reservoir on Madhya Pradesh-Uttar Pradesh border after decision taken by both the states. So far, 102 tonnes of fish has been produced in the reservoir since March.

He said that a scheme should be chalked out to reward departmental employees who catch people indulging in illegal fishing during off season.

Vishnoi said that fishermen should be provided benefit of accident insurance and social security scheme within the specified time limit. He directed to ensure early action on fishing rights in Sardar Sarovar reservoir.

Vishnoi said that fish seeds produced by fishermen should also be used to increase fish production. At the meeting, fisheries activities were reviewed and revision of fishing charges was endorsed.

Food Minister meets Thomas over shortage of storage, gunny bags

WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 2012 23:45

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Paras Chandra Jain on Wednesday met the Union Food and Civil Supplies Minister Prof KV Thomas and apprised him of the problems related to shortage of storage, gunny bags and marketing issues related to food grains in the State.

Jain requested Thomas to ensure supply of gunny bags during forthcoming kharif season at DGS&D rates. The Union Minister Prof. Thomas assured Shri Jain that the agreed schedule of sending gunny bags will be maintained. In all, total 86 thousand gunny bags will be sent to Madhya Pradesh. About 20 thousand gunny bags will be supplied in the month of September, 30 thousand gunny bags in October and the rest 36 thousand in the month of November 2012.

Jain asked for reimbursement of purchase tax at the rate of 5 per cent instead of 4 per cent to which Union Minister agreed. Jain also asked for reimbursement of once used gunny bags at Rs 10 per bag instead of Rs 8 which has been fixed arbitrarily. Union Minister also agreed for this. Jain asked for granting of reimbursement charges for storage of paddy based on actual mode of storage as is done in the case wheat at the rate of CAPs, irrespective of whether paddy is stored in godowns or not. He also asked for fixing of permissible storage charges for silo-bags. The Union Minister agreed for both.

Jain requested the Union Minister to increase the sale of wheat through OMSS mechanism and also to increase in quantum of lifting of wheat by FCI. The Union Minister instructed FCI to do the needful. He requested the Minister for ad hoc increase in the milling charges for paddy pending for final recommendation with tariff commission for a long time.

Environment Information Centres set up in State

WEDNESDAY, 29 AUGUST 2012 23:45

STAFF REPORTER | BHOPAL

Environment Information Centres have been set up by the Union Forest and Environment Ministry for collection of data pertaining to environment in every State of the country. These centres collect environment-related data in each State and make them available to people through various mediums for augmentation of environment.

This was disclosed by Union Additional Secretary Environment for Forest Nandita Chatterjee at the inaugural function of a national workshop on 'Environment Information Systems' evaluation and discussion' here on Wednesday.

The two-day workshop has been organised by the Union Environment and Forest Ministry with the cooperation of Madhya Pradesh Disaster Management Institute. Representatives

of all the states concerned with environmental issues and scientists from prestigious institutions of the country are participating in the workshop.

Chatterjee informed that 66 Environment Information Centres are being run in the country with the assistance of prestigious institutions, universities and voluntary organisations. Of these, 28 centres collect information as per regional and state-level requirements under prescribed norms whereas 38 centres collect and provide information as per themes and subjects. Environment Information Centre has also been set up at Bhopal-based Disaster Management Institute.

Advisor to Union Environment and Forest Ministry Neelkanth Ghosh informed that the ministry had started work of collecting environmental data based on various parameters since 1982. These sets of information are valuable for planners, policymakers, scientists, environmentalists, researchers etc.

At the outset, Principal Secretary Housing & Environment Shri Iqbal Singh Bains welcomed the guests and participants. He informed that officers, employees etc are imparted training to deal with disasters at Disaster Management Institute since the year 1984.

At the inaugural session, Union Additional Secretary Forest and Environment Nandita Chatterjee and other guests also released a newsletter and calendar published by DMI, Bhopal. Disaster Management Institute Executive Director Manohar Dube threw light on the workshop's objectives. DMI Director RK Dube proposed a vote of thanks.

SP govt returns 895 acres to Irrigation department

TUESDAY, 28 AUGUST 2012 21:01

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE | LUCKNOW

Annuling yet another decision of the previous BSP regime, the Akhilesh Yadav government on Tuesday decided to take back 895.63 acres of land from Noida Industrial Development Authority and restore it to the Irrigation department. The government also decided to take action against officers instrumental in the deal.

A decision to this effect was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday. A government spokesman while confirming that the cabinet decided to return the land tract to the Irrigation department said that action would be initiated against officials who effected the handover. The previous regime had transferred the land tract to Noida with a design to convert the same for housing projects. The then government effected three ordinances on October 22, 2007, July 31, 2008 and October 21, 2008 ordering the transfer of 441 acre land in Janoobi Charagah, 137 acre land along downstream of Yamuna river and 317.63 acre land in Jasaula, Okhla, Madanpur, Jaitpur Aali and Saidabad. The move was opposed by rival parties who questioned the government's wisdom of transferring Irrigation department land for housing projects.

After the cabinet meet, Later Revenue minister Ambika Chaudhry said : "The land now belongs to Irrigation department which was the actual owner. It is people's land which should be used for developmental projects. We are against commercialization of government land." In another decision with adequate political overtone, the SP government decided to increase honorarium of Loktantra Senanis from existing Rs 2000 to Rs 3000 per month from retrospective date of April 1, 2012.

Loktantra Senanis are political prisoners, who were jailed during Emergency between 25 June 1975 and 21 March, 1977 under MISA and DIR. Besides, the government also decided to provide them with free medical facilities and travel in state roadways buses. During his stint as CM, Mulayam Singh Yadav had announced a Rs 1,000 monthly honorarium, free bus travel and medical facilities to 7,000 people who were jailed during Emergency. However, the Mayawati government had scrapped the decision.

The cabinet also decided to constitute a committee headed by Chief Secretary to implement Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. The committee will give its recommendations to implement that Act in the state. It also approved the amendment in Uttar Pradesh Basic Education teachers' service rules to make TET as eligibility exam. In another important decision, the cabinet also decided to provide 36,750 square meter land free of cost in Allahabad to construct residential accommodations for High Court judges.

Other decisions of the cabinet included—implementation of one time settlement scheme for payment of entertainment tax for video game parlour and water parks and constitution of revolving fund for providing medical facilities to Vidhan Parishad secretariat employees in SGPGI.

The state cabinet also decided to constitute Bhoomi Sena Yojana to revive the usar land and also introduce schemes to control pest.

Business Standard

Thursday, Aug 30, 2012

Chana up 0.5% on spot demand

Restricted arrivals, lower output concerns influence prices

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 15:07 IST



Chana prices gained Rs 25 to Rs 4,860 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators created fresh positions, tracking a firm spot market trend.

Restricted arrivals of the commodity in the physical market due to lower estimated output influenced chana prices.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for delivery in November rose by Rs 25, or 0.52%, to Rs 4,860 per quintal, with an open interest of 9,910 lots.

September chana moved up by Rs 15, or 0.32%, to Rs 4,665 per quintal, with an open interest of 61,550 lots.

Marketmen said fresh buying by speculators on the back of a rise in spot market demand and lower estimated output pushed up chana prices at futures market.

Coriander down over 2% on subdued demand

October contract falls 1.98%

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 14:30 IST



Coriander prices moved down by 2.08% to Rs 4,194 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators offloaded their positions, driven by subdued demand in the spot market at prevailing higher levels.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, coriander for delivery in September declined by Rs 89, or 2.08%, to Rs 4,194 per quintal, with an open interest of 24,040 lots.

October coriander lost Rs 88, or 1.98%, to Rs 4,365 per quintal in 12,600 lots.

Marketmen said speculators offloaded their positions, tracking a weak trend at spot market on subdued demand at prevailing higher levels, which pulled down coriander prices at futures trade.

Chilli falls 1.54% on sluggish demand

October contract falls by similar margin

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 14:25 IST



Chilli prices declined by Rs 80 to Rs 5,098 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators reduced positions, tracking a weak trend at spot market on sluggish demand.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chilli for delivery in September declined by Rs 80, or 1.54%, to Rs 509 per quintal, with an open interest of 10,700 lots.

The October contract lost Rs 86, or 1.50%, to Rs 5,662 per quintal in 4,985 lots.

Market experts said speculators reduced positions on the back of sluggish demand, which led to a decline in chilli futures.

Jeera down 0.7% on profit-booking

September contract falls by similar margin

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 14:22 IST



Amid profit-booking by speculators and improved rains in key growing region, jeera prices fell by Rs 110 to Rs 15,060 per quintal in futures trade today as speculators offloaded positions.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, jeera for delivery in October fell by Rs 110, or 0.73%, to Rs 15,060 per quintal, with an open interest of 17,595 lots.

September jeera lost Rs 105, or 0.71%, to Rs 14,660 per quintal, with an open interest of 15,648 lots.

Marketmen attributed the fall in jeera futures to profit-booking after yesterday's gain amid reports of good rains in top producing state, Gujarat, which would help sowing in the season.

Jeera is a winter crop sown from October and farmers depend on rains to moisten the land for sowing.

Potato down 0.76% on adequate supply

Low demand contributes to downtrend

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 14:11 IST



Potato prices declined by 0.76% to Rs 1,158 per quintal in futures trade today on adequate stocks position, following increased arrivals from producing belts against lower demand.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, potato for delivery in September fell by Rs 8.90, or 0.76%, to Rs 1,158 per quintal, with a business turnover of 20 lots.

October potato shed Rs 2.40, or 0.20%, to Rs 1,223 per quintal in 12 lots.

Marketmen said adequate stocks in the market following increased arrivals from producing belts amid lower demand in the spot market led to decline in potato futures.

Crude palm oil weakens 0.6% on global cues

Subdued demand contributes to downtrend

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 13:49 IST



Amid weak global trend and subdued domestic demand, crude palm oil prices traded lower by

0.60% to Rs 559.40 per 10 kg in futures trading today.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil for delivery in September declined by Rs 3.40, or 0.60%, to Rs 559.40 per 10 kg, with a business turnover of 424 lots.

The August contract shed Rs 3.10, or 0.55%, to Rs 557 per 10 kg in 49 lots.

Marketmen said subdued demand in the spot market and lower trend in the global market influenced crude palm oil prices at futures trade.

Meanwhile, palm oil fell 0.4% to 3,018 ringgit a tonne on the Malaysia Derivatives Exchange.

Cardamom rises 1.38% on firm demand

Restricted arrivals influence prices

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 13:36 IST



Cardamom prices rose by Rs 12.90 to Rs 948.20 per kg in futures trading today, largely supported by a firm demand in the spot market against restricted arrivals from producing belts.

At the Multi Commodity Exchange, cardamom for delivery in September moved up by Rs 12.90, or 1.38%, to Rs 948.20 per kg, with a business turnover of 2,424 lots.

October cardamom gained Rs 10.50, or 1.01%, to Rs 1,048.70 per kg in 483 lots.

Marketmen said besides firm demand in the spot market, restricted arrivals from producing regions pushed up cardamom prices at futures trade.

Pepper down 0.5% on profit-booking

Thin supplies restrict losses

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 13:31 IST



Pepper prices declined by 0.51% to Rs 41,830 per quintal in futures trade today after speculators locked-in gains.

However, thin supplies in the spot markets restricted the fall. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, pepper for delivery in September fell sharply by Rs 215, or 0.51%, to Rs 41,830 per quintal, with an open interest of 4,235 lots. October pepper lost Rs 165, or 0.39%, to Rs 42,600 per quintal, with an open interest of 2,705 lots. Marketmen said besides profit-booking by speculators after recent gains, reports of lower exports contributed to the fall in pepper prices at futures trade. The Indian product is offered at higher prices in the global market compared to competitors. They, however, said limited supplies from farmers and lower inventories, restricted the losses.

Sugar up 0.17% on firm demand

Festive demand, deficient rains help rise

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 13:26 IST



Sugar prices rose by 0.17% to Rs 3,576 per quintal in futures trade today, extending yesterday's gain, as speculators engaged in creating positions on hopes of a pick up in demand in the upcoming festival season.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for October delivery traded Rs 6, or 0.17%, higher at Rs 3,576 per quintal, with an open interest for 27,720 lots.

September sugar traded Rs 1, or 0.03%, higher at Rs 3,505 per quintal, with an open interest of 24,070 lots.

Marketmen said the rise in sugar futures was on account of huge positions created by speculators in anticipation that upcoming festivals will boost demand for the sweetener.

Concerns over output due to deficient rains in key cane growing states helped the rise.

However, additional quota of non-levy sugar for the September quarter, limited the rise in spot prices.

Turmeric down 0.9% on profit-booking

Decline in area under cultivation influences prices

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 13:00 IST



Turmeric prices fell by 0.94% to Rs 6,334 per quintal at futures trade today as speculators indulged in booking profits after turmeric hit upper circuit in yesterday's trade.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, turmeric for delivery in October traded Rs 60, or 0.94%, lower at Rs 6,334 per quintal, with an open interest of 11,585 lots.

The September contract fell by Rs 18, or 0.29%, to Rs 6,208 per quintal, with an open interest of 18,645 lots.

The contract had ended 4.01% higher in yesterday's trade at Rs 6,226 per quintal.

Analysts said the fall in turmeric futures was due to emergence of profit-booking after recent gains on the back of a decline in area under cultivation.

Guar sowing area up on monsoon revival

But, overall production may not exceed last year's as erratic rainfall could hit yield

Dilip Kumar Jha & Vikas Sharma / Mumbai/ Chandigarh August 29, 2012, 0:47 IST

Encouraged by record realisations last year, farmers expedited sowing of guar seeds as monsoon showers revived early this month, leading to an increase of about 20 per cent in the acreage of the temperate crop this kharif season.

As a result, the overall area under guar seed is estimated to have topped 3.5 million hectares (ha) this kharif, compared with 2.91 million ha last season.

The prices of both guar seed and gum have collapsed after hitting their respective record high levels of Rs 33,000 a quintal and Rs 1,03,000 a quintal in the first quarter of the current calendar year. The two are currently trading at Rs 5,000 a quintal and Rs 30,000 a quintal, respectively.

The monsoon rainfalls were delayed during the early guar-sowing season, especially the first fortnight of July. But, farmers in three major producing states – Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat – began by irrigating farm land through canals, rivers and wells, thereby covering around 1.5 million ha until the revival in the monsoon early this month. The remaining area was covered with the showers.

“The overall sowing area has gone up by at least 20 per cent this year. Lured by record high prices last year, farmers were keen to bring more area under this crop, amid expectations of better realisations than other crops even this season,” said All India Guargum Manufacturers Association President Purushottam Isaria.

According to a crop assessment report by Rama Industries, a Gujarat-based guar gum powder manufacturer and exporter, late rains improved the new crop situation and quantity. Sowing is complete in Haryana and acreage this season is expected to increase by three times over that the previous year. Report from Rajasthan’s agriculture department shows a marginal two per cent increase in area under guar seed until the second week of August, to 2.66 million ha, compared with 2.61 million in the corresponding period last year.

During the second fortnight of August, however, the overall sowing area in Rajasthan surpassed the last year's figures, said Vikas WSP Ltd Managing Director B D Agarwal. According to agricultural sources in Gujarat, acreage under guar seed in the state as on July this year was reported at 111,000 hectares, compared with 58,100 hectares in the same period last year.

Rajesh Kedia, a trader who deals in guar gum derivatives, forecasts the guar seed acreage this year to reach four million ha, against 2.9 million ha last year.

Guar is a temperate crop that requires four-five spells of intermittent rainfalls through its 90-day period. Deficient as well as excessive of rainfall affects this crop, leading to lower yield.

The ideal time for planting guar is the first fortnight of July. But, late sowing takes place even in the second fortnight of the month. Planting beyond July affects the overall yield.

“Even this season, less than half the sowing area was covered with mechanical irrigation facility. The remaining area was covered with the revival in monsoon rainfall. If the rainfall continues in the coming days, the yield would be better. In case of further dry spells in the remaining monsoon season, the yield would be hit severely. Therefore, we estimate guar seed output to remain at the same level as last year,” said Vikas WSP's Agarwal.

Supporting his views, Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture Director B Venkateswarlu said: “The delay in monsoon and late-season sowing will hit the overall yield. So, we cannot peg this year's output at more than that last year.”

Agarwal believes the prices of both guar gum and seed would stabilise around their current levels.

Last year, the Union agriculture ministry had estimated the total guar seed output to be at 1.25 million tonnes.

India is a major exporter of guar-based derivatives that find their applications mainly in the oil drilling and food industries. The price of guar gum powder, according to traders, has now come down to \$9,000 a tonne, from \$24,000 a tonne around the same time last year.

Milk powder demand pegged at 88,000 tonnes in 2012-13

Milk production in India, the world's biggest producer, is estimated at over 121 million tonnes in 2011

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 28, 2012, 15:42 IST

Demand for milk powder in the country is estimated at 88,000 tonnes during this fiscal as against current availability of 1.12 lakh tonnes, Parliament was informed today.

"The demand projected by major milk federations and Mother Dairy (Delhi) is about 88,000 tonnes for the year 2012-13," Minister of State for Agriculture Charan Das Mahant told in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

The current stock of milk powder with milk federations, Mother Dairy (Delhi) and National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) is around 1,11,646 tonnes, he added.

The minister said that Agriculture Ministry does not have information on the value of the current stock of milk powder in the country but its prices have not crashed due to lack of adequate demand.

"...The average monthly price of milk powder in Khari Baoli wholesale market, Delhi, for 2012-13 is Rs 175 per kg," Mahant added.

The government, in view of adequate availability of milk powder has allowed free export of skimmed milk powder (SMP) through a notification issued on June 8, 2012 and is giving an incentive of 5% for SMP under Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojna (VKGUY), he said.

The government had banned SMP exports in February 2011 to contain rise in domestic milk prices.

Domestic prices of SMP had declined to Rs 150 per kg in May this year as against Rs 190-200 per kg in the same period last year.

Milk production in India, the world's biggest producer, is estimated at over 121 million tonnes in 2011.

Tobacco board expects 10% rise in exports

Prashanth Chintala / Hyderabad August 30, 2012, 0:54 IST

The Tobacco Board, which regulates production of the commodity with regard to the domestic and export markets, expects a 10 per cent rise in the export of tobacco and tobacco products in the current financial year.

"This year, there is an increase in demand for Indian tobacco in the international markets," board Chairman G Kamala Vardhana Rao told Business Standard.

Accordingly, the board had restored its original ceiling on the crop size at 170 million kg (mkg) for Andhra Pradesh and 100 mkg for Karnataka, the main tobacco growing states, for the current crop season. Last year, the crop size was fixed at 162 mkg and 98 mkg for the two states, respectively.

This apart, the board has sought permission from the Union ministry of commerce for distribution of last year's left over crop of 1.76 mkg to the tobacco growing regions equally. Besides the two southern states, tobacco is cultivated in small amounts in Maharashtra and Odisha.

In the past two years, there had been a marginal decline in exports. In 2011-12, India had exported 240,395 tonnes of tobacco and tobacco products worth Rs 4,100 crore. This represented a five per cent decline in volume and three per cent decline in value compared to the previous year's exports. Even in 2010-11, there had been an year-on-year decline of three per cent in quantity and four per cent in the value of exports.

For the quarter ended June 2012, export of tobacco and tobacco products stood at 60,121 tonnes, valued at Rs 1,083 crore. Compared with the corresponding quarter last year, the volume of exports (63,614 tonnes in June 2011) had declined by five per cent, but the value (Rs 1,023 crore in June 2011) increased by six per cent. The increase in value was attributed to the depreciation of the rupee against the dollar.

Nevertheless, Rao said the quantum of exports would pick-up from now. Tobacco auctions would start next month in Karnataka, while they would be held in Andhra Pradesh from the

last week of February 2013.

Europe is the main importer of Indian tobacco, accounting for 51 per cent of total exports from the country last year. The other major importing regions were South and South East Asia (19 per cent of exports), Africa (14 per cent), North and South Americas (nine per cent) and West Asia (seven per cent).

Crushing season in Maharashtra delayed by a month

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai August 30, 2012, 0:52 IST

The sugarcane crushing season for 2012-13 in Maharashtra would begin from November 1 instead of October 1 due to low availability of the commodity, scanty rainfall and diversion of more than 25 million tonne (mt) of sugarcane to fodder.

A ministerial committee chaired by Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan on Wednesday gave its approval in this regard. It was also decided the government would review in early October whether or not the crushing season could be advanced on October 15 in view of the revival of rainfall.

As reported by Business Standard, the state, which contributes more than 30 per cent of the country's sugar output, is expected to crush only 55 mt to produce 6.2 mt of sugar during 2012-13.

A state government official said, "Majority of the sugarcane growing areas of the state have received inadequate rainfall and standing sugarcane has been diverted as fodder. Against this backdrop, the mills will have less cane in their jurisdiction and will have to strive to get it from the adjoining areas. The government has taken a decision not to grant crushing licences to mills where sugarcane availability is less than 50 per cent."

According to the official, production may even dip below six mt, which has been the general sense among the millers.

He said Maharashtra had crushed 77.1 mt of sugarcane to produce 8.99 mt of sugar during 2011-12 at the recovery of 11.67 per cent. About 162 mills comprising 120 cooperative mills had

participated in the last season. However, the number may come down this year for want of sufficient cane.

On the payment of first advance to the growers, the ministerial panel did not take any decision.

However, the office of the state sugar commissioner has already released a directive asking mills that the first advance should not be below fair and remunerative price.

Mentha oil down 0.34% on increased arrivals

Subdued demand, adequate stocks influence prices

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 29, 2012, 13:45 IST



Mentha oil prices fell by Rs 4.50 to Rs 1,048.70 per kg in futures trade today after speculators trimmed their positions amid higher stocks in the physical market due to increased arrivals from producing regions. At the Multi Commodity Exchange, mentha oil for delivery in September fell by Rs 4.50, or 0.34%, to Rs 1,337 per kg, with a business turnover of 642 lots. The August contract lost Rs 4.30, or 0.33%, to Rs 1,316 per kg in 317 lots. Marketmen said adequate supplies due to increased arrivals from Chandousi in Uttar Pradesh against subdued demand kept pressure on mentha oil prices at futures trade.

Fertiliser stocks turn dry as poor demand, high costs weigh

Shares of most firms drop 4-24% since April, Sensex up 1%

Rutam Vora & Anindita Dey / Ahmedabad/ Mumbai August 29, 2012, 0:52 IST

A weak monsoon has not only hampered prospects for farmers, but has also dampened chances of investments in fertiliser companies. Since the start of this financial year, shares of

most of the leading firms have lost in the range of 4 to 24 per cent on the BSE, while the benchmark index, Sensex, has remained almost flat with a loss of around one per cent during the period under consideration.

The weakness in the shares is attributed to the sluggish demand on the back of poor monsoon and costly inputs. Overall, monsoon has remained deficient by 16 per cent so far across the country.

According to the balance sheet compiled by the department of fertilisers, ministry of chemicals & fertilisers, during April to August, the sale of all varieties, including the highly used urea, has fallen compared to last year. The requirement of fertilisers through the season was estimated lower.

Name	BSE price in Rs April 2	August 28	Change %
GSFC	437.70	334.65	-23.54
Chambal Fertilisers	77.65	64.45	-17.00
RCF	58.00	49.70	-14.31
Deepak Fertilisers	150.60	130.44	-13.39
Tata Chemicals	344.20	304.95	-11.40
National Fertilisers	73.30	70.50	-3.82
Sensex	17478.15	17631.71	0.88

Data compiled by BS Research Bureau

This included urea at 9.53 million tonnes (mt) as against 12.1 mt in 2011, DAP (diammonium phosphate) at 4.43 mt against 5.77 mt last year, requirement for muriate of potash or MOP at 1.74 mt against 1.35 mt last year and that for complexes at 3.52 mt against 4.17 mt.

The sale of fertilisers during this period was recorded even lower at 8.85 mt for urea against 9.37 mt last year, 1.93 mt for DAP against 2.92 mt last year, 6.35 mt for MOP against 6.39 mt and 8.98 mt for complexes against 3.96 mt.

Stock prices of fertiliser makers are ruling down since April 1. Gujarat State Fertilisers and Chemicals Ltd fell by close to 24 per cent, while Tata Chemicals lost over 11 per cent since February. Deepak Fertilisers & Petrochemicals Ltd fell by over 13 per cent during the period. While Sensex has lost by 0.88 per cent during the period.

Prices of fertilisers, especially the non-urea variety of DAP and MoP, have been ruling very high throughout the year. Consumption, hence, has stagnated and farmers are using stocked up inventory rather than buying afresh.

"Various state governments have been asked to stock up only need-based requirements and not excess fertiliser following the drought-like condition in this kharif season (July-August). Earlier, they stocked up much in excess," said a central government official.

"This is also to bring down the fertiliser subsidy which the government has to pay once they purchase the stock. This year, since demand was less, the government decided to stock up less fertiliser and order more as and when the need arises."

Apart from the sluggish monsoon, factors such as policy measures for non-urea fertilisers and higher raw material prices adversely affected demand. Lowering of subsidy on non-urea fertilisers led to increase in prices by the companies as high cost of imported raw material left no room for companies to absorb the impact of lowering of subsidy.

"Most of the companies have increased prices in the range of 20-25 per cent since June. Only a few have not passed on the cost burden to the consumers. Margins are strained and demand is low in the current condition," said an industry player.

Companies have not cut prices as they receive subsidy on the market price. They do not want to disturb this at a time when sales are low.

The supply of raw material for DAP, i.e. phosphoric acid, has remained weak, impacting production. "We are importing DAP to meet our requirements. So far, we have imported 100,000 tonnes of DAP, while some more will be imported. Overall consumption for our company has not been impacted so far," informed a senior GSFC official.

"First quarter volumes were impacted mainly due to issues like higher prices for farmers and low demand due to weak monsoon. But from August, demand seems to be picking up as monsoon has been fairly good in the past few days. Rain conditions over the next two months will decide the rabi demand prospects," said an analyst at Edelweiss Financial Services.

According to analysts, profitability for non-urea fertiliser companies may continue to be under pressure due to weak rupee and high raw material cost. Things are not likely to improve much for fertiliser firms before the September quarter.

THE HINDU Business Line

Chana futures gain 1% to Rs 4,948/quintal

Suresh P. Iyengar



December contract opened higher at Rs 4,948 against the previous close of Rs 4,890.

Mumbai, Aug 30:

Chana for December delivery on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) gained one per cent to Rs 4,948 a quintal on Thursday on expectations of higher demand during the ensuing festival season.

December contract opened higher at Rs 4,948 against the previous close of Rs 4,890. The recent fall in prices also aided fresh purchases.

Chana prices have fallen by Rs 200 a quintal from a high of Rs 5,000 in the last one week. Chana crop prospects during the rabi season look bright due to revival of monsoon in the northern and central parts of India.

Spot prices of chana in Indore were quoted at Rs 4,794 a quintal.

India, Australia join hands to develop iron-rich bananas

Our Bureau



Rich dose: A file photo of fresh banana bunches brought from farms at Guntur district, A.P. The project is aimed at helping to prevent maternal mortality in India.

Hyderabad, Aug. 29:

Eating bananas could well be the next best thing in the fight against anaemia soon. Indian and Australian researchers have joined hands to develop iron-rich bananas that could help women with iron deficiency.

Bananas contain vitamin B6, fibre and potassium. Globally more than 100 billion bananas are consumed annually, making it the largest agricultural product after wheat, rice and corn.

The joint effort will see the development of new strains of iron-rich bananas. It will offer an affordable option to tackle iron-deficiency anaemia, a major cause of maternal deaths during childbirth, especially in India and other developing countries.

The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (Birac) under the Department of Biotechnology and the Queensland University of Technology have signed an agreement for the purpose. The project will see an investment of A\$2.6 million or about Rs 14.8 crore.

Birac is providing A\$1.2 million (Rs 6.8 crore) to the University and another A\$1.4 million (Rs 8 crore) towards the cost of the Indian component of the programme, which will address a nutrition deficiency in Indian population, said Managing Director Renu Swarup.

The project will be led by the University's Centre for Tropical Crops and Biocommodities Director James Dale and India's National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute's Rakesh Tuli. Other partners include Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, National Research Centre for Bananas, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and Indian Institute of Horticulture Research.

In a press release, Australian High Commissioner to India Peter Varghese said on Wednesday that it is an important project that would help prevent avoidable maternal mortality in India.

Dales said the project would build upon ongoing research the University was undertaking to increase the nutritional content of bananas in Uganda under the auspices of the Gates Foundation. The Indian banana project would involve an initial four-year development phase. It would then take another four to five years to prepare the bananas for release to Indian farmers.

Poultry feed unchanged amid steady demand

Our Correspondent

Karnal, Aug. 29:

Volatility in soyameal has forced poultry feed products to rule unchanged this week.

Subhash Sharma, Financial Head, Sarvottam Poultry Feed Supply Centre Pvt Ltd, told *Business Line* that following a downtrend last week, poultry units were ready to slash feed prices marginally this week but some recovery in soyameal kept poultry feed products firm.

Prices of other key ingredients of the poultry feed have been ruling range-bound, since the first week of August. Steady demand for feed products is also keeping prices firm, he said.

Soyameal prices recovered by Rs 400 and quoted at around Rs 4,200-4,250 a quintal on Wednesday.

Maize ruled flat and quoted at Rs 1,500, bajra decreased by Rs 100 at Rs 1,200, DCP went down by Re 1 and sold for Rs 42 a kg, while fish oil improved by Rs 2 and went for at Rs 100 a litre.

POULTRY FEED PRODUCTS

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 was Rs 1,050 while broiler finisher sold at Rs 1,470 for a 50-kg bag.

Egg price scales new high

Gayathri G.



Chennai, Aug. 29:

The price of an egg scaled a new high of Rs 3.40 on Wednesday. It is set to rise further in the coming days, driven by escalating feed prices. The farmgate price of egg had touched a high of Rs 3.33 on June 28.

To offset losses

The National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal zone, effected a hike of 15 paise on Wednesday. Its Chairman P. Selvaraj said that this time the hike is not due to rising demand (that is the sole driving force for the increase most of the times), but zooming feed prices.

“We were forced to effect this price rise to make up for the heavy loss incurred by layer farmers in the last few weeks,” he told *Business Line*.

Buyers resistance

On consumer resistance, he said that there won't be much resistance from buyers and the traders as floor rates will not exceed the Rs 4-mark.

Another reason for acceptance of egg despite its price hike is the increasing cost of vegetables and other meat products, he said.

Meanwhile, layer and broiler prices are also up by Re 1 each from their last week levels.

NECC's layer birds are ruling at Rs 37 while the Broiler Coordination Committee has hiked the prices to Rs 69/kg.

Broiler prices touched a record Rs 75 in April 2011.

Profit booking, rain crush castor



Rajkot, Aug. 29:

Castorseed futures continued their bearish run on Wednesday on the back of profit booking by market participants.

However, spot prices of the commodity gained on fresh buying.

According to brokers, good rain in major producer, Gujarat, encouraged the bear operators to sell the castor causing futures to decline.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), castor September contract was down by Rs 81 at Rs 4,096 a quintal, with an open interest of 46,520 lots. October series was down by Rs 124 at Rs 4,210, with an open interest of 89,440 lots. On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX), castor September contract slipped by Rs 124 to Rs 4,184 a quintal, while RCX spot castor moved up by Rs 65 to Rs 4,045. About 20,000-25,000 bags arrived in Gujarat and price was up Rs 10 to Rs 805-815 for 20 kg and around 4,200-4,300 bags arrived in Saurashtra region, price was increased by Rs 12 to Rs 770-806. Meanwhile, castor oil recovered modestly from the recent sharp fall on the back of renewed buying by shippers and soap manufacturers. In Mumbai spot market, castor oil commercial firmed up by Rs 15 for 10 kg to Rs 820 .

Lower purchases pull down tur



Indore, Aug. 29:

Poor demand from stockists and millers pulled down tur in local mandis by Rs 300 a quintal in the past one week.

Tur (Maharashtra) on Wednesday ruled at Rs 4,700 a quintal, while tur (Indore variety) was quoted at at Rs 4,000-4,200 a quintal.

Prices in local mandis this month had gone up as high as Rs 5,100 a quintal on strong buying. Subsequent rain, though, in parts of Madhya Pradesh and lower buying by millers dragged tur thereafter.

However, a smaller crop this year compared with last year will push up prices in the near future.

Erratic rain in growing regions brought down sowing. As a result of this, production is expected to decline by 15 per cent, according to trade sources here.

Besides, lower domestic stock and delay in arrival of the new crop from Karnataka and Maharashtra (expected to hit *mandis* between December and January), will increase dependency on imported tur, leading to higher prices, said pulse trader Hanuman Jain.

Tur dal ruled stable even as demand for pulses remained slack. In the spot market, full dal ruled at Rs 6,600-6,700 a quintal, *sawa* no. dal at Rs 6,200-6,300 and tur marka at Rs 7,500 a quintal.

Compared with last week, tur dal is down Rs 100 a quintal on poor buying.

Moong

Higher buying kept moong firm, with new moong being quoted at Rs 4,500-4,600 a quintal old moong at Rs 4,900.

Though festival demand may lift moong, rising arrivals are likely to cap gains, said a trader.

Moong dal declined on slack demand, with medium dal being quoted at Rs 5,800-5,900 a quintal and bold dal at Rs 6,300-6,400; while moong mongar declined to Rs 6,500-6,600 a quintal.

In the past week, moong dal has declined by Rs 200-400 a quintal on poor buying.

Farmers, traders patch up on turmeric price



Erode, Aug. 29:

No turmeric auctions were held at any of the four sales centres here on Wednesday because of a meeting to resolve the ongoing pricing dispute between traders and farmers.

District Revenue Officer S. Ganesh conducted the meeting. P.K. Deivasigamani, Chairman of Federation of Turmeric Farmers Associations, represented the growers and R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Traders Association, the traders.

After the two-and-a-half hour meeting, both agreed to conduct auctions in the presence of an officer deputed by the Joint Director of Agriculture.

Hereafter, along with the turmeric samples, farmers' mobile numbers will also be provided.

Moreover, farmers may be allowed to visit the trader's godown.

Once a week, the supervising officer appointed by the Revenue Divisional Officer will inspect records containing details of arrivals, sales and prices quoted.

Since Monday, farmers have been demanding at least Rs 9,000 a quintal for turmeric. This was after a conference of Federation of Turmeric Farmers Associations decided on Saturday not to sell below Rs 9,000 a quintal and to request the Union Government to allow the farmers to fix the sale price.

Traders have refused to accept the demand and on Tuesday, more than a quarter of the farmers sold the spice for less than Rs 7,000 a quintal.

Some federation members tried to force farmers who sold at such low prices not to confirm stocks for sale.

Infuriated by this, traders urged the Collector and the Superintendent of Police not to allow Federation or farmers' association representatives into the auction hall.

Following this, a meeting of both parties was called for to break the impasse.

Gur futures fall tracking sugar

G. Gayathri, Chennai, Aug 29:

Gur (jaggery) futures slipped marginally on the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) on Wednesday following a downtrend in the sugar counter. Adequate stocks amid restricted demand from retailers and stockists pulled jaggery prices down. But traders expect the demand to pick up ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi. A lower cane crop projected for the next season could also make supply tight for gur units and the commodity may see an upside soon, analysts felt. September contracts were down by Rs 6 to Rs 1,156.5 for 40 kg on the NCDEX. November were down by Re 1 to Rs 1,182.5 while December futures gained Rs 2 to Rs 1,147.

In the spot market, prices continued to hover around overnight levels in the absence of any moving factors. In the Muzzarfarnagar spot market, gur was quoted flat at Rs 1,139.4.

Castorseed prices drop 10% in a week



Chennai, Aug 29:

With rain lashing growing areas of Gujarat, castorseed futures plunged over 2 per cent on Wednesday. The counter has been witnessing a bear run since the last 10 days with prices dropping over 10 per cent in a week.

The sharp drop is attributed to speculators booking profit with the monsoon gathering pace in August. Rain since the second of week of August covering most parts of the country has shrunk monsoon deficit to 12 per cent at the beginning of this week. Areas such as Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan that witnessed poor monsoon have benefited from the latest showers.

Near-month September contract dipped 2.71 per cent to near Rs 4,000-a-quintal mark. It quoted at Rs 4,064 at noon, down by Rs 113 over Tuesday's close. October contracts were down Rs 118 or 2.72 per cent at Rs 4,216, while November contracts slid 2.03 per cent (Rs 90) to Rs 4,341. December futures slipped Rs 86 (1.91 per cent) to Rs 4,416.

Castorseed prices had rebounded during June-July from the sharp fall during October-May this year. Prices had crashed on record production leading to a supply cut.

Threat of drought in growing areas, lower sowing of castor and export demand buoyed prices.

India is the leading producer of castorseed and castor oil. It accounts for over 80 per cent castor oil production in the world. At least 60 per cent of castor is produced in Gujarat, followed by Andhra Pradesh (19 per cent) and Rajasthan (14 per cent).

During the first quarter of the current fiscal, castor oil exports increased 17.5 per cent.

At the Disa spot market in Gujarat, prices were quoted at Rs 4,023.50 a quintal.

PM's council wants sops on power for agri, canal water to go



Time for a change: C. Rangarajan, Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council. (file photo)

Concern over slow pace of agri reforms; changes mooted in tenancy laws

Chennai, Aug. 29:

The Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) has called for urgent reforms in agriculture and allied sectors to boost farm production. In particular, it has called for an end to subsidies for power in agriculture and canal water for irrigation.

Expressing concern over the slow pace of reforms in agriculture in its Economic Outlook presented earlier this month, the council said that agriculture has benefitted more from reforms in other sectors.

Two major reasons for the slow pace of reforms were the perception that given the large number of farmers being small or marginal, their capacity to absorb "shocks" was limited and the responsibility of reforms in agriculture being vested with the States as it is their subject.

"These arguments today need to be re-examined. There are various forums where the Centre and State can have meaningful dialogue and agree on key reforms," the council said.

There are certain areas where consensus has emerged and these would have to be pursued vigorously, it said.

Tenancy reforms

Liberalising tenancy arrangements, reforming markets and reducing input subsidies require immediate attention, the council, headed by C. Rangarajan, said.

Though seven per cent of the cropped area is shown as leased-in area, it is underestimated. Field studies in several parts of the country have shown that tenancy varies between 15 and 35 per cent of the cultivated area. Over 90 per cent of the tenants are landless and marginal farmers. These tenants benefit from leasing-in since it helps them to expand their miniscule holdings and permits better use of their labour resources.

Unfortunately, the lease markets are heavily restricted in most of the States, some of who have even barred tenancy. Therefore, States should legalise tenancy to safeguard the rights of tenants and register the arrangements.

“It is in the interest of agriculture that the States should remove all restrictions on leasing and make the lease market function effectively,” the council said. On the other hand, to allay fears that this could lead to concentration of land in bigger holdings, provisions of ceiling on land may apply to operational holdings too, it said.

Agri-marketing

On agriculture marketing, the PM’s council said that legal provisions in most States curb marketing arrangements. The Agricultural Produce Marketing Control Act bars direct marketing of produce to traders or processors. This led to collusion among traders and price for agriculture produce is determined in an opaque way, it said.

Suitable models of contract farming should be introduced for different commodities and regions, the council said and called for fair terms for contracting parties and effective adjudication mechanism.

subsidies

Stating that the growing amount of input subsidies was a disturbing feature of the agriculture policy, the council said the subsidies were progressively losing their relevance and becoming an unbearable fiscal burden.

“Three areas where action needs to be taken with some urgency are subsidies on fertilisers, power and surface irrigation,” the outlook said.

To make a beginning, fertiliser subsidy can be dismantled, while suggestions made by the Expenditure Reforms Commission and the council itself should be examined for implementation.

Power subsidies will have to go after reforming the power sector. Though a number of States have implementing reforms, no perceptible result has been attained yet. Inefficiency in power generation and huge transmission losses were the Achilles heel in these reforms. Unless these are set right, it would be hard to remove subsidies on power for agricultural purposes.

“Free power to agriculture is not going to solve these problems; it will only make a bad situation worse,” the outlook said.

The council also called for removing subsidies on canal water, which, according to it, has not attracted serious attention of the policy makers.

“Just like other subsidised inputs, canal water is used in inefficient ways,” it said and called for encouraging involvement of consumers in water and power distribution. Calling for a determined move to end subsidy, the council said “... the system has become addicted to subsidies and therefore, actions in this regard should aim to be a ‘retreat with disarray’.”

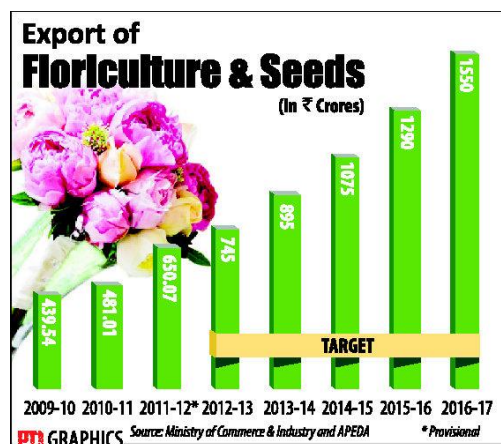
Volume hits 14-week low at Coonor tea auction

P.S. Sundar, Coonor, Aug. 29:

A volume of 10.19 lakh kg has been catalogued for Sale No: 35 of Coonor Tea Trade Association auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of brokers’ listing.

This is the lowest offer in the past 14 weeks. It is as much as 2.81 lakh kg less than last week’s offer and 3.57 lakh kg less than the offer this time last year, Of the 10.19 lakh kg on offer, 7.39 lakh kg belong to the leaf grades and 2.80 lakh kg to the dust grades. As much as 9.57 lakh kg belong to CTC variety and only 0.62 lakh kg to orthodox variety. The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.37 lakh kg belong to orthodox while 7.02 lakh kg to CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.25 lakh kg belong to orthodox while 2.55 lakh kg to CTC. Fresh teas comprise 9.61 lakh kg of the offer. Only about 58,000 kg comprise teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. Last week, in the leaf tea auction, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) and Tata Global Beverages Ltd bought good medium varieties. Duncans Tea Ltd showed some interest in brokens. Godfrey Philips India Ltd was selective. In the dust tea auction, HUL, Godfrey Philips and Duncans Tea were selective while Tata Global did not operate.

Export of Floriculture and Seeds



Govt asks private cos to build strong agri-linkages

New Delhi, Aug 29:

In order to improve food value chain performance, the Agriculture Ministry on Wednesday asked private firms to help build strong linkages between farm production and markets.

“Entry of business houses in agriculture linkages is not clearly having visible impact on farmers because backward linkages are not complete. There is a lot of room to grow,” Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna said at the CII summit on cold chain development.

“I suggest you (private companies) to come up with a strong policy to build backward linkages,” he said, adding that the ministry is looking forward for an effective model that addresses all issues from farm-to-fork.

Stating that strong backward linkages will help both farmers and consumers, Bahuguna recommended private companies to roll out a model in states and demonstrate its efficacy.

He also said that addressing one particular bottleneck in the food value chain will not serve the purpose, the entire linkages between farm to market need to be strengthened to see its visible impact on farmers and consumers.

Echoing similar views, Planning Commission member Saumitra Chaudhuri said that there are multiple challenges in agriculture. “Solving one problem will not help. We need to address all issues holistically,” he emphasised.

National Horticulture Mission Director and Joint Secretary in Agriculture Ministry, Sanjeev Chopra said that the government has schemes to provide sufficient fund support for development and upgradation of cold chain infrastructure.

So far, cold chains were for storing potato only but now new investment are required to establish cold chain infrastructure for other farm produce, he said.

About 50 per cent of the country total cold chain capacity has been established in last ten years, he added.

K. Ramasamy is TNAU new Vice-Chancellor

L. N. Revathy



TNAU Vice-Chancellor K. Ramasamy.

Coimbatore, Aug 29:

K. Ramasamy, Member, Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission, has taken over as the tenth Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU). A native of Aranthangi in Pudukottai district of Tamil Nadu, Ramasamy joined TNAU in 1970 and served in various capacities for over 36 years. He completed his UG and PG programme at the Annamalai University, before proceeding to Belgium to do his post-doctoral research. He did his Masters in Fermentation Technology and Doctorate in Industrial Microbiology at Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. He obtained his Post-Doctoral experience in Electron Microscopy from the same university and later at the Michigan State University, USA, on Gene Cloning.

'Better rains to support sowing of rabi crops'

New Delhi, Aug 29:

Rainfall is expected to be better next month as monsoon is unlikely to be influenced by El Nino weather pattern, helping rice and other kharif crops, Agriculture Secretary Ashish Bahuguna said today.

El Nino refers to abnormal warming of surface ocean waters in the Pacific that disrupts the weather pattern causing drought and floods in many regions of the world.

“I don’t think the September rains will be impacted due to El Nino. Even if El Nino temperature do increase, I do not think, it will impact our monsoon. It may affect other parts of the world,” Bahuguna said on the sidelines of a CII event.

So far, monsoon deficit is 13 per cent. However, the seasonal rains have revived because the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), known as Indian Nino, is now favourable, he said.

Better rains in September will help in retaining soil moisture and support the sowing of rabi crops, Bahuguna said, adding that kharif crop will also benefit.

He said there may be more rainy days ahead as monsoon could withdraw late from north-west India.

“Normally, monsoon starts withdrawing from north-west India around September 1. This year, it seems withdrawal will be delayed. Onset of monsoon was delayed and withdrawal will also delay. We will have more rainy days,” he said.

On kharif crops situation, Bahuguna said the crop health looks better and the gap in sowing area has been made up due to the recent spell of rains.

Area coverage under rice, oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane is good, though it is slightly lower under coarse cereals and pulses.

“I think the recent spell of rains will help area under coarse cereals to pick up, especially ragi in Karnataka, bajra and jowar in Rajasthan,” Bahuguna said.

Although the kharif crop prospects are improving, there will certainly be some impact on overall production and productivity, he noted.

Total area under kharif crops is down at 32.9 million hectares as on August 24 against 34.2 million ha. in the same period last year.

Dhara to offer olive oil from Italy, Spain soon, plans cottonseed oil sale

Heena Khan

New Delhi, Aug 29:

Dhara, the edible oil brand from Mother Dairy’s stable, will soon begin imports of refined olive oil from Italy and Spain. So far, Dhara was only into making indigenous variety of oils

“Though volumes at present are small, the olive oil market is seeing 40 per cent growth annually. It is a pan-India category, with 95 per cent of business coming from modern trade,” said Dinesh Agrawal, Chief Operating Officer, Dhara.

The company would soon be launching three more variants – gingelly oil, cottonseed oil and olive oil. These would be available before the end of current fiscal. At present, Dhara sells seven variants of edible oils.

Besides olive oil, which would be available on a pan-India basis, the company will target regional markets with cottonseed and gingelly oil

“For production of gingelly oil, the company would be getting into third party production in Andhra Pradesh or Karnataka. We want to penetrate the southern markets,” Agrawal said.

Cottonseed oil would be manufactured in the company’s Palampur facility in Gujarat. The product would be produced exclusively for the Gujarat and Maharashtra markets.

“The idea is to penetrate into regional markets. Cottonseed oil is a substitute for groundnut oil, which is predominantly consumed in Gujarat and Maharashtra,” said Agrawal.

Dhara, at present, has 10 per cent share in the mustard oil segment and 12 per cent share in groundnut oil, both being indigenous varieties.