

EU promotes potato to replace rice in Asia



The potato has a 12,000-year-old history but an even brighter future as a crop that is set to replace rice as a staple in the Asian rice-consuming countries. It requires less amount of water compared to other basic food products, without compromising the nutrition value. Potato, therefore, is increasingly being promoted, in the genetically modified organism-free European Union (EU), as the foremost solution for meeting the increased food demand for an estimated 6 billion world population by 2030.

Dutch researchers from the famous Wageningen University — dedicated to bio-based economy in food, feed and chemicals produced from renewable resources — told a visiting press delegation that if prepared in a healthy manner and consumed in the right proportion (balanced reduction of calories), consumers can benefit from the many nutrients and dietary fibres in the tuber.

The advantages of potato over other staples were discussed at the “Potato Potential Conference”, which was followed by a vibrant food exposition organised by the Enterprise

Europe Network and Food Valley that facilitated networking of global companies in the potato business. The EU's focus is now on Eastern Europe and China for processed food markets. The visiting journalists were told that China is already moving towards experiments with replacing rice with potato.

The diverse advantage of potato — the fourth largest consumed food in the world after maize, rice and wheat — is emphasised by studies that have shown potato containing less calories than pasta, rice and bread. The tuber consumes about 30 per cent less water to grow than rice and is being projected as a crop that can contribute to weight loss “if prepared and consumed healthily.”

Researchers and scientists are working towards facilitating higher and sustainable crop yields per hectare that are free from disease and pests.

With an annual export of about eight million tonnes of certified seed potato, the tuber is not only a staple food for the Dutch, but a major contributor to the economy. Netherlands, known for its success in water management, is the world's third largest agriculture exporter, second biggest agri-food exporter and third largest potato exporter.

Quality standards

The Dutch potato sector is constantly breeding, growing and selecting new varieties based on market demands. Simultaneously, processing companies (like Aviko) continuously experiment with the quality and flavour of their potato fries and how to get the best by-products from wastes like potato peels and starch-rich waste water.

The potato crop is normally hit by the most common late blight disease (caused by *phytophthora infestans*), scab, *rhizoctonia*, canker, blackleg, fusarium and viral diseases. All research at Wageningen is in partnership with private and multinational companies and, at the same time, with medical institutions so as to not lose sight of the nutritional and safety aspects in food products.

The EU has laid down stringent standards for member countries for seeds and seed potatoes to coordinate with the demand and supply. The visiting press team saw the high standards maintained by the Netherlands government at the NAK, the Dutch General Inspection Service

for Agriculture Seeds and Seed Potatoes at Emmeloord. Technical Coordinator of Inspections Jaap Haak explained that every seed potato that comes out of a farm must have quality certification from the NAK.

The Plant Protection Service of the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, too, monitors the quality of seed potatoes, especially on phytosanitary issues of health, varietal purity and physiological conditions. Interestingly, the NAK has on its board representatives of farmers, breeders, propagators and traders in a set-up in which the farm sector formulates its own standards in line with international measures. The costs are shared by farmers and traders.

Mr. Haak said that only produce from fields free of nematodes are accepted for inspection. Farmers must also specify the sources of the seed, its variety and class. Inspections are visual, in the labs as well as on-field. As the grower prepares the lots for delivery, NAK inspectors visit the plot at least once a day to ensure that only the approved lots are being delivered.

Nieck's *Witte*

Under its Participatory Potato Breeding programme, the Wageningen University collaborates with farmers in producing required varieties. Niek Vos, an organic farmer-breeder, took 12 years to develop the Bionca variety, by crossing small South Holland potatoes with blight-resistant potatoes from Mexico. His is a white fleshy potato variety, resistant to late blight disease, and he sells it under his own brand name — Niek's *Witte* (Niek's White).

"I turned to organic farming because when I was in conventional farming, my neighbours complained that the late blight afflicting their crop was coming from my field. I thought it was better to grow a variety that has no blight and now I have my own Niek's *Witte*," he said.

He also has an on-farm cold storage of 100 tonnes capacity. He uses cow manure on his well-managed and clean farm and follows the good practice of keeping his 70-hectare field free after every two years to maintain soil health.

The organic potato is three to four times more expensive than the conventional one, but Mr. Vos believes this market is growing.

Mr. Vos has an India connection. After finishing studies, his daughter Michiel travelled to Puducherry “to think out” what she wanted to do in life. She decided to return to Netherlands and join her father in growing potatoes — such is the power of the tuber in Netherlands.

Livestock exhibition

The Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University has appealed to the farmers in the district to participate in the regional-level Livestock and Fisheries exhibition scheduled to be held in Coimbatore from December 28 to 30 and learn new technologies and best practices in livestock production.

Ryots observe fast for Veeranam water

State secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) G. Ramakrishnan has urged the Tamil Nadu government to immediately release water for irrigation from the Veeranam tank.

He was addressing party cadres led by Chidambaram constituency MLA K. Balakrishnan, who observed a fast near the Mahatma Gandhi statue at Chidambaram, seeking water release from the tank, on Tuesday.

Mr. Ramakrishnan told reporters that as of now, water level in the Veeranam tank stood at 43.5 ft against the full level of 47.5 ft. But, the authorities had not released water for irrigation. He said that officials seemed to be more interested in storing water for supplying it to Chennai to see through the summer months rather than catering to the immediate needs of ayacutdars.

Therefore, even while the tank was almost full, standing crops on 85,000 acres were withering. Such a situation was not acceptable, he said. Mr Ramakrishnan also noted that paucity of irrigation water and crop loss had forced farmers to commit suicide.

But, ruling All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam MLAs and MPs were in a self denial both in the Assembly and in Parliament by adopting the stand that no such happenings were reported in Tamil Nadu. He called upon the government to give a compensation of Rs. 25,000 per acre to those farmers who had lost their crops.

Mr. Balakrishnan said it was ironical that while the tank was having good storage, crops on thousands of acres in the ayacut areas were perishing. The tank was meant for irrigating ayacut

areas, but officials seemed to have forgotten it. Therefore, a situation of “scarcity amidst abundance” had been created. It was a cause for concern that Cuddalore was one of the six districts where the Modified National Agriculture Insurance Scheme was being launched on a pilot basis. But, benefits of the scheme were yet to reach the farmers because officials were denying the benefit on some pretext.

Meanwhile, members of the Kollidam-Keelanai Paasana Vivasayigal Sangam and Veeranam Paasana Vivasayigal Sngam staged a demonstration in front of the PWD office at Lalpet on Tuesday seeking tank water for irrigation. Chidambaram Sub-Collector Subramanian pacified them.

Fertilizer subsidy to be paid to ryots directly

Subsidy on fertilizer will be disbursed to farmers on direct benefit transfer (DBT) mode from January onwards. Collector Neetu Prasad, in a statement here on Tuesday, said a decision to this effect was taken at the State-level, as the district had been selected for the pilot project of the DBT.

She said the subsidy amount would be credited directly into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries and to avail the same, the farmers must get ‘Aadhaar’ card and open a bank account.

The Collector asked the agriculture officials to encourage farmers towards Aadhaar enrolment and opening of bank accounts, so that more and more farmers could avail the subsidy.

Dairy farmers’ team from Krishna visits animal hostel in Gujarat

The exposure tour was organised from December 13 to 19



Dairy farmers from Krishna district during their visit to the animal hostel in Gujarat.

Twenty dairy farmers from Krishna district went on a week-long exposure visit to Akodara village in Gujarat to have the first-hand experience of running the first-ever animal hostel of the country that was set up recently.

The trip, sponsored by the NABARD through Nestam Rural and Urban Development Society, was organised as an exposure visit from December 13 to 19.

The organisation selected farmers in consultation with the NABARD Krishna and the Department of Animal Husbandry.

It was to enlighten farmers on the dairy development activities and best practices there, so that they could replicate them in Krishna district too for higher yield and better profits. Animal hostel secretary Jayanthi Patal told the team members that the animal hostel would house all 964 animals of the village when fully functional.

Cattle sheds

This would be managed by public partnership on a cooperative basis by 215 cattle-keeping families. The hostel comprises 36 cattle sheds. Villagers had sown pasturage in 50-hectare land to provide nutritious fodder to animals.

Animal Husbandry Assistant Director Diwakar, Gujarati translator Chandrash Davy, and Nestam director V. Suresh accompanied the farmers on the visit.

Women of Sakhi mandal prepare vermin-compost fertilizer out of animal dung while gobar-gas plant was set up to meet the power needs. A modern dispensary was also established for treatment of animals, said Mr. Suresh.

Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi formally inaugurated the hostel and said that farmers' initiative had shown a new path to the country for quality cattle-rearing. The Nestam Director said that the animal hostel would help increasing milk production besides giving employment to the rural women. It would also lessen the stress of housewives in the village as they would not need to remain engaged with their cattle for the whole day.

The 36 sheds were being maintained with good water availability in a 1-lakh litre water tank, a sump of 80,000 litres. The Akodara milk federation noticed 66,000 litre increase in milk production, he added.

Income from milk was Rs.87.84 lakh in 2009-10 and in 2010-11 it went up to Rs.1.16 crore. Akodara milk federation's secretary Jayantibhai Raychandbhai Patel said that due to animal hostel, his cattle had produced 11,794 more litres of milk in current year which resulted in Rs.2.78 lakh increase in his personal income.

Prices of domestic dry cocoa beans slide



Prices of dry cocoa beans in domestic market has fallen by Rs. 50 a kg this season affecting growers. Prices of wet beans have dropped by more than Rs. 10 a kg, according to market sources.

Cocoa beans are mainly used by chocolate, food, and cosmetic industry. Cocoa is cultivated as an inter-crop in areca plantations in the coastal and Malnad belt.

Prices of dry beans in domestic market hovered between Rs. 173 and Rs. 180 a kg during the same time last year. Now, it fetched between Rs. 123 and Rs. 130 a kg. In the international market, the prices of dry beans varied between Rs. 150 and Rs. 155 a kg now like last year, according to M. Suresh Bhandary, Managing Director, Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Cooperative Ltd. (Campco).

Prices of wet beans which hovered between Rs. 42 and Rs. 45 a kg. during the same time last year has fallen to Rs. 28 and Rs. 33 a kg. now, he told *The Hindu*. Citing reasons for the drop in prices, Mr. Bhandary said that as dry beans in domestic market cost more last year multinational chocolate manufacturers in the country began procuring dry beans from

international market, which costs less. It resulted in less demand and drop in prices for domestic dry beans since March, 2012.

In addition, he said that while procuring the beans from international market, the companies entered into a long-term procurement agreement with the specified government bodies of identified countries. The duration of the agreement extended even up to six months. Using a provision (relating to certificate of origin) under Indian Customs Act, 1962, the companies availed concession for paying customs duty in India. As per the terms of the agreement, the companies would have to import dry beans till the term of the agreement.

Otherwise, they would invite the penalty. Hence even if prices of domestic beans now has fallen to Rs. 130 a kg. which was below the international price of Rs. 150 to Rs. 155 a kg., the companies have been forced to import the beans at higher rate.

Mr. Bhandary said that prices for domestic dry beans were likely to jump again by Rs. 20 in a few months when the term of the agreement of the companies would expire. The domestic price was likely to match with the international price.

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ZP hailed for effective rainwater harvesting

District in-charge Secretary G.S. Narayanaswamy on Monday reviewed various development projects taken up by the zilla panchayat, including the rainwater harvesting programme,

plantation of saplings around the zilla panchayat and hostel for boys from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Lauded

He commended the efforts of chief executive officer of the zilla panchayat K.M. Narayanaswamy for the progress achieved.

Commending the officer for effective implementation of the rainwater harvesting to increase the groundwater, and planting saplings, he said that the officers of all departments should take up similar initiative and shed the tag of drought-affected district.

While speaking to students at the hostel for boys from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Mr. Narayanaswamy enquired about the quality of food being served to them and cleanliness maintained in the hostel.

'Provide facilities'

He instructed the hostel warden to ensure that all necessary facilities were provided to students, along with quality food. Deputy Commissioner V.P. Ikkeri and Superintendent of Police M.N. Nagaraj were present.

Farmers in Bagalkot join hands to irrigate farmland in Athani

Water from Chikkapadasalgi barrage pumped to the other side and stored



Work on the irrigation project is in progress at Chikkapadasalgi barrage in Bagalkot district.

Farmers in Bagalkot district have come together under the banner of the Krishna Teera Raitha Sangha led by the former Union Minister Siddu Nyamagouda to implement a project to irrigate

nearly 60,000 acres of agriculture land and provide drinking water to nearly 3 lakh people in Jamkhandi and seven other villages in Athani taluk in the district.

Mr. Nyamagouda told *The Hindu* that the project would be completed in 30 days and a large number of farmers had offered voluntary labour. The government had cleared it earlier.

According to Mr. Nyamagouda, 1.5 tmcft of water from the Chikkapadasalgi barrage, downstream of the backwaters of Alamatti dam, was pumped to the other side of the barrage and stored. Around 4,200 IP sets with up to 10 HP capacity had been utilised for the purpose.

He said the barrage was self-sufficient nearly 25 years ago and irrigated 35,000 acres of farmland all round the year and also provided drinking water to Jamkhandi town, 21 villages in Jamkhandi taluka and 7 villages in Athani taluk and benefited a population of around 3 lakh.

However, the area under cultivation went up to 60,000-65,000 acres over a period of time and the storage was not sufficient to meet the demand. "We want to use the already available water at the barrage in an efficient way instead of looking towards Maharashtra to release water for our summer requirements."

Basavaraj, son of Mr. Nyamagouda, said it had been proposed to increase the height of the bridge across the barrage by two meters next year so that more quantity of water could be pumped and stored, which would be sufficient enough for the whole year. As per the estimates available from the engineers at the Alamatti dam, the total requirement of water for drinking and irrigation needs of the people in the upstream command area is 0.032 tmcft a day till June 15, 2013. However, as the water downstream would be available only up to February 15, the scheme was conceptualised to lift 1.5 tmcft before January 31, which would be sufficient to meet the water requirement during summer at least till April 15.

Farmers themselves contributed towards the project cost, estimated at Rs.7 crore.

SIMA demands cotton pricing policy

With the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) expected to purchase substantial quantity of cotton from the market this year, the Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA) has said that the corporation should come out with a pricing policy so that the mills can buy cotton from it.

The association chairman S. Dinakaran told *The Hindu* that though the Cotton Advisory Board (CAB) estimated cotton production this year (October 2012 to September 2013) to be 334 lakh bales, it was likely to be just about 310 lakh bales.

The CCI had already purchased eight to 10 lakh bales at the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

The CCI was likely to be a major player in the market this year, and was expected to buy nearly one third of the production so that the prices do not fall below the MSP.

Though it was more than two months since the cotton season started, the daily arrivals were low and quality was a problem. The CCI should not store the cotton that it was purchasing. It should come out with a pricing policy that would benefit the farmers and the textile mills. The policy should be announced at the earliest and the cotton should be sold on a continual basis, he said.

Provide relief to farmers: Nedumaran

P. Nedumaran, president of Thamizhar Desiya Iyakkam, said the Central government should take the responsibility for the samba crop loss in the Cauvery delta districts and provide relief to farmers. He told presspersons that every time the Supreme Court had to intervene in the issue for actions to be taken. Cauvery River Authority (CRA) meeting was convened by the Prime Minister only after the Supreme Court intervened and asked to convene the meeting.

weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Dec 26

Max Min

29.4° | 20.6°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 89

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:28

Sunset: 05:50

Barometer: 1009

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Dec 27

Max Min

29° | 21°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Dec 28	Saturday Dec 29	Sunday Dec 30	Monday Dec 31	Tuesday Jan 1
29° 21° Partly Cloudy	26° 25° Overcast	27° 25° Overcast	26° 26° Overcast	26° 25° Cloudy

Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 100

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 07:12

Sunset: 05:32

Barometer: 1016



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

26.12.2012 A.M

25th dec 2012

Former Canara Bank CMD Raman appointed SEBI wholetime member

S. Raman, erstwhile Chairman and Managing Director of Canara Bank, has been appointed whole-time member of stock market regulator SEBI, according to sources.

A formal announcement is expected soon, they said.

SEBI now has two wholetime members Prashant Saran and Rajeev Kumar Agarwal.

Importers hold back chana stocks

Chana ruled flat at Rs 4100 a quintal, while chana (desi) ruled at Rs 4000 a quintal on scattered buying support. Last week chana (kanta) had declined to Rs 4000-Rs 4025 a quintal amid arrival of 174 containers of imported chana from Australia. However, in the past few days with decline chana prices, importers have held of stock of imported chana with them, leading to marginal rise in chana prices in the past couple of days. However, as the chana prices to go up in coming days as appears, stockists/importers may release stock of imported chana with them in order to book profit at higher rate, said a whole-sale chana trader Mr Prakash Vora.

However, notwithstanding marginal rise, future of chana appears to be bearish amid hope of bumper crop this year. With rise in sowing area and favourable weather condition, chana production this year is expected quiet higher as compared to the last year. Chana dal also declined on slack demand with chana dal (average) in local mandis on Tuesday being quoted at Rs 4825-50 a quintal (down Rs 25), chana dal (medium) at Rs 4900-Rs 4925, while chana dal (bold) declined to Rs 5175-Rs 5200 a quintal

On the other hand, slack domestic and export demand dragged dollar chana prices in the local mandis by about Rs 500 a quintal in the past one week. On Tuesday, dollar chana in local mandis ruled at Rs 4000-Rs 5000 a quintal amid arrival of 3000 bags. In the past fortnight, dollar chana has almost declined by Rs 1000 a quintal amid weak buying support and slack demand. In container also, dollar chana amid slack export demand is down Rs 500 a quintal compared to its prices last week. On Tuesday, dollar chana (42/44 count) ruled at Rs 6400 a quintal, 44/46 count at Rs 6100, while dollar chana (58/60 count) ruled at Rs 4100 a quintal.

Poultry feed prices static as soyameal eases

Following some correction in soyameal and a range-bound trend in prices of its other key ingredients, poultry feed products remained unchanged this week.

The cost of production has come down and feed prices may continue to rule around their previous levels until any major alteration comes in prices of its key ingredients, Aditya Mishra, a commodity expert said.

Soyameal eased by Rs 110 and quoted at Rs 2,900 a quintal.

Bajra remained unchanged and sold at Rs 1,400, while maize quoted down Ra 10 at Rs 1,570. Di-calcium phosphate ruled flat at Rs 36.50 a kg, while meat and bone meal too ruled unchanged at Rs 32.

Broiler concentrates feed quoted at Rs 1,860 for a 50-kg bag while broiler starter mash was at Rs 1,460.

Feed Prices

Broiler pre-starter concentrate 30 per cent sold at Rs 1,600 for a 30-kg bag while layer concentrate quoted at Rs 1,425 for a 50-kg bag.

Pre-lay mash quoted at Rs 1,030 while broiler finisher sold at Rs 1,440 for a 50-kg bag.

Poultry Products

Meanwhile, eggs increased on an increase in demand while broiler and chicken dropped marginally, on Tuesday.

Egg increased marginally by 18 paise and sold at Rs 3.33. Broiler went down by Rs 3 and quoted at Rs 62 a kg, while chick dropped by Rs 2 and sold at Rs 8-10.

Buyers stay away from groundnut oil market



Groundnut oil was traded lower by Rs 10 for 15 kg tin as demand was below normal on Tuesday. Buyers kept out for the retail market as they considered the prices to be too high. Cotton oil also decreased on Tuesday.

Groundnut oil new tin for 15 kg declined Rs 10 to Rs 2,185-2,190, while groundnut oil loose traded flat on Rs 1,285-1,290 for 10 kg. *Teliya* tin stood at Rs 1,970-1,971 for 15 kg. About 80-100 tonnes groundnut oil were traded in Saurashtra.

Similarly, cotton oil also declined on restricted demand and higher availability of the oil. Cotton oil was decreased by Rs 5 to Rs 612-615 for 10 kg and cotton oil new tin was traded at Rs 1,090-1,100 for 15 kg. According to edible oil retail trader, demand in groundnut oil was poor as the price was too high.

According to millers, demand from those making branded oils is limited after price hit a record Rs 2,200 a tin. With this, the availability of groundnut for crushing is also good as export demand for groundnut has declined.

In cotton oil, demand is limited even as crushing has increased.

Cotton arrival in the State is increasing and cotton seed availability is also good so crushers have more than enough stock, it pressurised the cotton oil price.

Undercurrent bearish in sugar



Sugar prices across the country rule steady at lower level on Tuesday. Due to Christmas bank holiday volume was lower at mill level. At Vashi market sugar prices in spot declined further by Rs20 – Rs30 a quintal as stockists released poor quality at lower rates to make room for fresh stocks. Naka and mill tender rates were unchanged as producer hold back to offload stocks at lower rates. Moral was steady said sources.

Vashi based wholesaler said in spot poor quality stocks were offloaded by stockiest at lower rates while they kept price for fair-fine variety unchanged despite routine lower demand in end of the month. Though sugar mills have started selling old stocks at lower price but were not keen to sell mush of new stocks below parity.

Local market has witnessed ample supply this month. Due to continuous selling by mills tender rates already drop by Rs100 - Rs150 till now. Free sale quota of 70 lakh tonnes for Dec – March is sufficient to meet the local demand hence inventory buying sentiment is lacking among traders.

Analyst said, considering higher cost of production after rise in cane price this year either millers will suffer heavy losses if the prices are not stabilise or government may come out with some price supportive measures to protect the sugar industry.

As per Industry estimate cost of production ranges between Rs3300 – Rs3500 while current market price are below that level.

In Vashi market arrivals were 62-63 truck loads (Each of 100 bags) while dispatches were 58–60 truck loads. On Monday about 18-20 mills and sold about 57,000 - 58,000 (Each of 100 kgs)

bags to the local traders at steady price of Rs3,150-3,220 (Rs3,150-3,220) for S-grade and Rs 3,230 - 3,340 (Rs3,230 - 3,340) for M-grade.

Due to Christmas holiday futures markets was closed but under current remained bearish. Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,286– Rs 3,371 (Rs 3,310 – Rs 3,391) and M-grade Rs 3,352 - 3,541 (Rs 3,391- 3,542). Naka delivery rates were: S-grade Rs 3,235 -3,270 (Rs 3,235 -3,270) and M-grade Rs 3,330-3,430 (Rs 3,330-3,430).

Refiners raise RBD palmolein rates

RBD palmolein extended its gains further in the domestic market on Tuesday, marching towards Rs 500-level, tracking a sharp rebound in Malaysian markets. Mumbai edible oils market was officially closed for Christmas holiday but the private trade market witnessed a sharp jump in volume. Local refineries increased their rates for edible oils in line with bullish trends overseas.

In Mumbai, palmolein prices increased by Rs 5-8 for 10 kg and topped Rs 490. Soya, sunflower and rapeseed oil ruled unchanged. Groundnut and cotton oil quoted lower on lack of demand and on expectation of higher crushing coming days.

Mr Shailesh Kataria of Riddhi Brokers told *Business Line* that Malaysian palm oil futures have rebounded by 100 ringgits a tonne in the last three sessions on hopes of higher demand once Malaysia cuts its crude palm oil export tax to zero from January. Hopes are also high of a similar competitive reduction in export tax by Indonesia.

January onwards arrivals of kharif crops will start slowing down and this was reflected in the market sentiments.

More than 3,000 tonnes of palmolein were traded on Tuesday.

Liberty sold about 1,100-1,200 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 493-495; Ruchi sold about 500-600 tonnes at Rs 492-503 for Feb, Adani sold 900-1,000 tonnes at Rs 485 for Jan 1-20. Resellers offloaded about 350-400 tonnes in Rs 485-490 range. Demand for other indigenous oils was lacking.

At Saurashtra – Rajkot groundnut oil prices were Rs 2,020 (Rs 2,030) for *telia tin* and Rs 1,310 (Rs 1,325) for loose (10 kg).

In Mumbai, Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 494-496 for January and Rs 503 for February; super palmolein at Rs 545 for Dec-January; soya refined oil at Rs 678 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 780 up to January.

Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 492 for January and Rs 503 for February; soyabean refined oil at Rs 674 up to January and sunflower refined oil Rs 775 up to January.

Allana's rate for palmolein was Rs 490 and super palmolein Rs 554.

Malaysia's crude palm oil's January contracts settled higher at 2,299 (MYR 2,283), February at MYR 2,378 (MYR2,351) and March closed at MYR2,428 (MYR2,408) a tonne on Monday.

Mumbai nominal spot rates (Rs/10 kg) were: Groundnut oil 1,275 (1,280), soya refined oil 675 (675), sunflower exp. ref. 710 (710), sunflower ref. 780 (780), rapeseed ref. oil 820 (820), rapeseed expeller ref. 790 (790) cottonseed ref. oil 630 (631) and palmolein 490 (485).

Record prices, higher volumes at Coonoor tea sale

The auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association for the year 2012 have ended on a happy note with record prices and high sale volume.

At the final auction for the year, the average price rose to Rs 97.90 a kg from Rs 95.86 last week. This was the highest price earned among all the 51 auctions held in 2012.

Despite prices rising, more volume was bought by traders from the North as the demand for tea has increased there. In all, 13.87 lakh kg was sold in the final auction against 13.37 lakh kg sold in the previous week. This was the highest volume sold in 22 weeks barring 13.91 lakh kg sold on Nov 22.

Consequently, the overall turnover rose to Rs 13.58 crore from Rs 12.82 crore in the previous week. This marked an increase of Rs 76 lakh or 5.93 per cent in one week. This was the highest turnover in 23 weeks, reveals our analysis of the market reports.

Generally, upcountry buyers preferred quality teas here because the limited supply of teas in the North was priced far higher. "Whole leaf orthodox was dearer by Rs 5-10 a kg. High-priced CTC leaf fetched Rs 3-4 more, better mediums Rs 1-2 and plainers up to Rs 3. Primary orthodox and

high-priced CTC dusts were dearer by Rs 5-10 while mediums and plainers up to Rs 3", an auctioneer told Business Line.

On the export front, Pakistan was strong in Rs 90-109 range. The CIS gave fair support at Rs 88-97. There was some purchase for European ports at Rs 93-98.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 86-90 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 110-150 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 85-90 for plain dusts and Rs 105-150 for brighter liquoring dusts.

The market has closed for Christmas and New Year. The first auction for 2013 will be held on Jan 3. (pssundar@sify.com).

Cashew market may revive after holidays



The cashew market last week was nearly sluggish with very limited activities and some stray sales to the US and EU markets. Other markets were also quiet. Indian domestic market saw some inquiries but not much business was done.

China is reported to be buying selectively in Vietnam but volumes are small, market sources said.

Range of prices this week: W240 \$3.70-3.85; W320 \$3.30-3.45; W450 \$3.05-3.15; SW \$2.60-3.10; SSW \$2.40-2.50; Splits \$2.05-2.20 and Pieces \$1.45-1.70 for one lb (f.o.b.).

Despite almost one month of very limited activity, there has not been much change in kernel prices. Most processors were reluctant to sell at lower levels, as they probably expect the

demand to pick up after the holidays, Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*.

He said during the burst of activity in Oct-Nov, most buyers covered a portion of their early 2013 needs but “we feel that there is still a fair amount of buying to be done for shipments in Jan-Apr.

“If Oct-Dec offtake is normal, inventories at end of the year will be low and replenishment demand will add to the volume to be bought. So we would expect market to be steady or move up a bit in January.”

Steady RCN (raw cashew nut) market was steady. Prices ranged from \$850-1,350 a tonne depending upon origin and quality. There was reasonable movement of West African stocks in India and Vietnam plus some new shipments from the origin.

There was brisk buying in the Tanzania auctions – over 40,000 tonnes of RCN have been traded in less than a month.

Small quantities of Mozambique RCN have also been traded this week.

Brazil crop will be much smaller than the last two years which were already significantly lower than last few years' average.

Essar Foundation to help vaccinate Gujarat cattle

Essar Foundation on Tuesday said it will provide medical aid to over 10,000 heads of cattle through vaccination camps and public awareness programmes in 10 villages surrounding the Vadinar refinery in Jamnagar district of Gujarat.

Recently, Essar Foundation in partnership with BAIF-GRISERV, conducted such a programme in two villages in which 1,000 bovine animals were vaccinated, diagnosed and treated at the Gaushala premises, Manoharan Chakrapani, Director (Refinery), Essar Oil Ltd, said in a press release here.

The vaccination camps for the livestock are crucial as sudden death of these animals causes heavy financial loss for the owners of these cattle , he said.

BAIF-GRISERV is an organisation that is into animal husbandry, water resources development, sustainable agriculture, and various rural non-farm activities to give jobs to members of landless families.

It serves more than 45 lakh poor families living in 60,000 villages across 16 states in India

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

26.12.2012 A.M

Pulses catch corporate purses

A virgin market so far, branded pulses are quickly catching the fancy of corporate bigwigs.

It is evident from the increasing number of diversified companies getting into the retailing of



these. The latest entrant, Adani Wilmar, a subsidiary of the Adani Enterprises conglomerate, has set its eyes on a variety of branded pulses including dals. The company has already lined up investments for processing mills.

"We see a big future in branding of all commodities. We anticipate a similar conversion from purchase of loose un-branded pulses to the branded form. We have started with toll mill operations and have plans to invest more than Rs 100 crore in our own milling units in the near future," said a spokesperson of Adani Wilmar.

Currently, India's pulses consumption is estimated at 17.5 million tonnes yearly, while domestic production has stagnated at 14-15 mt. But only one per cent is sold under branded consumer packs; the bulk, including urad, tur, moong and chana are sold in a loose format.

Moong, masoor, arhar, urad, chana and rajma comprise 80 per cent of the pulses market. Adani Wilmar wants all these (whole and split variants) in its portfolio, eventually.

Tata Chemicals had launched branded pulses in December 2010 under an 'i-Shakti Dals' brand name. The company is taking a step forward, to take on the competition. "Post an overwhelming response (to Tata I-Shakti Unpolished Dals) from customers, we are exploring direct-to-home delivery options or 'Dal-on-Call' for customers. We are starting this in Mumbai. We are expecting healthy growth in our branded pulses sales over the next two to three years," said Ashvini Hiran, chief operations officer, consumer products.

Considering the small size of the branded pulses market, regional players have command over national ones. However, companies with a larger retail network and strong supply chain are making efforts for a national presence. While Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Retail, and the Future Group's Food Bazaar do in-house branding of pulses and sell through own retail chains, Tata Chemicals, Adani Wilmar and Lakshmi Overseas Industries sell their brands through the modern format of organised retailing.

The recent approval to foreign direct investment (FDI) in multi-brand retailing could boost the segment. "We think it would bring in a positive change in retailing of all commodities, specially pulses. Customers would have more options to choose from and the overall category would grow, with more companies/brands coming in," said the Adani Wilmar official.

Experts in the sector believe the branding of pulses would bring value addition in the commodity. "If companies are entering branded pulses, we can expect value addition and innovation in the products, as we've seen in spices and beverages like tea, coffee etc," said an industry source in this city.

Maharashtra cotton growers say MSP too low all political parties agree

Caught between a falling price and a rising cost of production, cotton growers in Maharashtra have made a strong pitch for a subsidy, either from the central or state government

The trigger was procurement through the Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Growers Marketing Federation at the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 3,900 a quintal announced by the central government. However, growers say, the cost of production is Rs 5,000-5,500 a qtl.



Cutting across party lines, members from both the ruling Congress-NCP coalition and the opposition Shiv Sena-BJP-MNS had, during the recently concluded winter session of the state legislature, strongly demanded a higher price for cotton growers. They recalled the price had zoomed to Rs 7,000 a qtl

three years earlier, following a spurt in demand from China. They have called for procurement at Rs 6,000 a qtl.

Besides, growers want the state government to immediately stop the buying, legally impermissible, by traders and ginners of cotton at prices ranging between Rs 4,000 and Rs 6,000 a qtl from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. The Cotton Advisory Board in October had projected an all-India production of 33.4 million bales (a bale is 170 kg) during the 2012-13 season, of which Maharashtra's output was expected to be eight million bales. However, officials at the state agriculture department and the Federation estimate lower output, due to inadequate rainfall.

N P Hirani, chairman of the Federation, told Business Standard: "So far, we have procured merely 4,320 quintals at Rs 3,900 a qtl. Cotton Corporation of India's procurement till date has been 11,509 quintals. Growers are facing a genuine problem of a rising gap between the cost of production and MSP, and they are unable to bear it. The per-acre cost of production is Rs 5,000 to Rs 5,500 a qtl, while they are getting a mere Rs 3,900 a qtl." He recalled a subsidy was given to farmers in distress two years earlier.

Hirani said the Federation was not against farmers getting a higher price from private traders and ginning and pressing mills from Andhra and Gujarat. "But it is a totally 'number two' transaction. The government is also losing VAT (value added tax) and this is also affecting the operations of the oil industry in the state. Therefore, the state government will have to urgently intervene and stop such procurement," he said.



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TODAY FARM NEWS

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Two-day agricultural convention for small farmers

JODHPUR: The 37th [Vice-Chancellor Convention](#) on the topic 'How to make Agriculture More Remunerative for Small Farmers' is being organized by the [Rajasthan University](#) of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (RAJUVAS), Bikaner, on December 27-28. The meet is being organized in collaboration with the Indian Agriculture Universities Association at the International Horticulture Innovation and Training Centre ([IHITC](#)) in Jaipur. Harji Ram Burdak, minister for agriculture, animal husbandry & fisheries will inaugurate the convention, while AK Gehlot, V-C, RAJUVAS, will preside over the function.

Vice chancellors from 45 agricultural and veterinary universities, deemed universities and the director general, deputy director general and deans of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research will take part in the two-day convention.

Terming the theme of the meet as quite relevant, V-C Gehlot said we need to value innovations in sustainable agriculture for resource-deficient and small farmers in the developing countries and thereby activate value chains as the major pathway.

The convention will not only bring V-Cs from agriculture, veterinary and allied fields under one umbrella but will also provide an opportunity for deliberations, interaction and exchange of ideas for the overall improvement of small and marginal farmers and their economic and social benefits to mankind.

Four technical sessions and one special session will be organized on the sub-themes of upliftment of small and marginal farmers with horticultural interventions, opportunities of

processing, value addition and marketing for small farmers, complete e-governance of agricultural universities through Integrated Agricultural University Management System (IAUMS), small holders dairy farming and the role of animal husbandry in providing sustainability to agriculture of small farmers, strategies for future agriculture vis-a-vis climate change paradigm shift in agriculture production systems to achieve food security. Besides, issues related to universities will also be discussed.

3,000 subsidized solar pumps for farmers

JAIPUR: Buoyed by the success of [solar water pumps](#) in the first phase, the state government is set to roll out a number of pumps in next phase.

With farmers able to save electricity and fuel (diesel) in as many as 14 districts, the state [horticulture department](#) will be distributing 3,000 solar water pumps across the state.

"We are planning distribute the pumps by the end of the February. The department has already invited expressions of interest from solar pump set manufacturers. Around 12 manufacturers have been shortlisted to supply solar pump sets in rural areas," a senior official said.

Officials claimed the pump will be given to the farmers at a lower price as compared to the earlier distribution. " The 3HP [solar power](#) surface pump would cost Rs 4.25 lakh while the 3HP submersible solar pump with a maximum 75-metre head would cost around Rs 4.85 lakh. "

"Last time the same pump cost around Rs 5.70 lakh. However, prices have come down due to competition," he added.

Under the scheme farmers will get 86% subsidy on the cost of the pump, only having to pay the remaining 14%.

Officials explained that solar pump sets are attached to the water source. The pump's solar panel converts the [solar energy](#) into electrical power, which runs the motor to pump water. A 3HP solar water pump set saves approximately 15-20 units of power every day.

In 2008-2009, the state government had installed 14 pumps on an experimental basis. Later, in 2010-11, 36 pumps were distributed, followed by another 1,675 pumps this year. "So far, the farmers of Ganganagar have taken maximum advantage of the scheme as this district was water sufficient. Last time, 621 solar pumps were distrusted in Ganganagar," the senior government official told TOI.

"A farmer has to majorly fulfill three requirements for a solar pump subsidy - a storage source, a drip system and they should cultivate cash crops," he added.

In this phase, solar lights will also be attached with the solar pumps as it was seen to be a major requirement for farmers working in fields in the dark.

Meanwhile, farmers already using the solar pumps have shown satisfaction with the results. Farmer Kulveer Singh of Ganganagar told TOI, "With the help of the pump, money spent on fuel consumption is saved. In one hour, 2.5 litres of diesel is required, and in a day a generator is run for at least 8 hours. The solar pump is very cost effective."

Greater Noida farmers agree to not obstruct link road work

GREATER NOIDA: The [Greater Noida Authority](#) has claimed that it has resolved all problems obstructing completion of the eight-lane link road to Noida following a meeting with farmers of Greater Noida (West). Work on the delayed link road, slated to provide signal-free connectivity to Noida, Delhi and Greater Noida, will resume at once and the project will be completed by April next year, Authority officials said.

On Monday, a committee of the Authority led by OSD Yogendra Yadav met farmers of Devla,

Khairpur Gurjar and Maicha villages to sort out their grievances. Even though the Greater Noida Master Plan 2021 was approved by the NCR Planning Board earlier this year paving the way for all stalled development work in the region, these farmers have been opposing the Authority's decision to resume work on the 130m road. Farmers had been saying that unless the Authority disburses enhanced compensation, allots 10% developed plots, and carries out rural development work, they will not allow any development work.

"Devla and Khodna Khurd villagers had been demanding development work in the area and we have already begun construction of roads, laying down new sewer networks, building schools, installing streetlights, etc in these areas. Similar development work will be undertaken in eight more villages," said an Authority official.

"The abadi matters and disbursement of compensation cheques too will be completed soon," he said.

The 130m-wide link road is being constructed between Parthala Khanjarpur in Sector 122 of Noida and Sirsa-Kasna in Greater Noida. Work has remained stalled for over a year due to the land row.

Greater Noida Authority CEO [Rama Raman](#) had met farmers and held special camps last month to sort out the matter, but in vain.

However, the Authority claims that with the rural development work already on in some villages, the villagers have agreed to not obstruct the work on the link road any more.

When covering crop damage led to a movie shoot

Life sometimes throws up unexpected surprises. There are certain occasions when you realize how little you know even in this age of internet. These two things happened this September when I was covering the crop damage in Vidarbha due to excessive rainfall in the previous

month.

I had been to Washim district only once during the 2009 Lok Sabha elections. People were in election mood and the oppressive heat did not give much of an opportunity to know about the area.

This time the weather was excellent and we had more time on hand. Still, the discovery of a small scale film industry was just a coincidence. I was travelling to Washim with my colleague. Soon after crossing Malegaon town, we came across the film crew crossing the road for a shoot in a field.

I did not realize that it was a film crew. Why on earth would anybody shoot a film in such a run of the mill place in the middle of nowhere? My photojournalist colleague, however, insisted that it was. And he proved to be right.

The film had two specialities. It was being shot in an interior area and also that the producer, director, script writer, lyricist, choreographer and the hero was the same person. Jamil Khan's looks belied his multi-faced qualities. He was dressed in an unbelievably gaudy costume for a dance sequence in his low budget movie 'Navra Gharat Baeko Bazarat'.

Khan told us that his film was based on the agrarian crisis of Vidarbha. However, as the story unfolded I realized that it had as much relation with the agrarian crisis as the Bollywood movie 'Ashoka' had with the life of the great emperor.

Soon Khan got busy with his shoot and other villagers told us about his films. One villager said that another person from Malegaon produced similar films but was not as successful as Khan. In between the all in one chipped in with some bits of information about his films.

As the information rained on me like a torrent, it took time to sink in. Later in my hotel room in

Washim, I cursed artists from Nagpur. They were all the time complaining about lack of patronage by government as well as viewers. And here Jamil Khan, a sixth grade pass from an obscure village was producing his fourth film.

His films were very low budget, did not have any stars, the cinematography, music, acting and everything else may not suit the tastes of an urban audience. But they were still films and Khan was making money.

Jamil was not only a talented artist but also a very practical man. He knew that his films would be appreciated only in villages and talukas so he doesn't dream of screening them even in Akola. His ticket rates are in the range that can be afforded by the poor. He screens them during religious jattras that last for a few days. The devotees have plenty of time and are more than eager for some entertainment.

When I came back to Nagpur, most people thought that I was talking about Malegaon in Nashik district. On learning that it was in Washim they had a look of disbelief on their faces. I would have felt the same had I not had a first hand experience.

(Ashish Roy questions the powerful and stands up for the powerless but in the reel sense, he had to laptop the action)

ASEAN farmers visit PAU under exchange programme

The members of the delegation visited Museum of Rural History of Punjab, College of Home Science and Crop Museum

A 27-member delegation from ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries visited Punjab Agricultural University on Tuesday.

The delegation comprised one agricultural officer and two farmers each from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Their visit has been sponsored by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, under ASEAN-India exchange programme.

The members of the delegation visited Museum of Rural History of Punjab, College of Home Science and Crop Museum at the Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics. They also visited the research farm of the university to see various crops and interacted with the university scientists.

Dr H S Sehgal, additional director of communication, Centre for Communication and International Linkages, gave them a brief account of the infrastructure, human resource, academic programmes, research accomplishments and ongoing research and transfer of technology programmes of the university.