

Published: January 25, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: January 25, 2012 05:31 IST

TNAU's pest control measures

Staff Reporter

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has made some recommendations to farmers based on the pest and disease incidence forecast for the season.

In the case of rice, there were incidences of leaf folder and stemborer found in Dharmapuri, Kanchipuram, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Thanjavur, Theni, Thiruvarur, Tirunelveli, Thiruvannamalai and Kanyakumari, so spraying of neem seed kernel extract 5 per cent or phosphamidon 40 SL 600 ml / hectare or profenophos 50 EC 1,000 ml / ha, has been suggested.

For brown spot incidence in Sivaganga, farmers are asked to spray Mancozeb 2 gms / litre or edifenphos 1 ml / litre, two to three times at 10 to 15 day intervals based on the intensity of diseases.

Farmers can spray streptomycin sulphate and tetracycline combination 300 gms and copper oxychloride 1.25 kg / ha for bacterial leaf blight found in Dharmapuri, Kanchipuram, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Thanjavur and Thiruvarur.

For cotton, sucking pests' jassids and thrips were noticed in Theni. Farmers are asked to set up yellow sticky traps to monitor the pest population. If needed, farmers may spray Imidacloprid 200 SL at 100 ml / ha or Methyl demeton 25 EC 500 ml / ha. Bollworms were found below the Economic Threshold Level. Farmers can set up pheromone traps to attract and kill adults.

For sugarcane, farmers can release egg parasitoid Trichogramma at 6 cc / acre in the case of borer pest complex in Sivaganga, Thanjavur, Namakkal and Villupuram.

Red rot incidence can be controlled by treating with 0.1 per cent carbendazim or 0.05 per cent Triademefon for 15 minutes.

In Namakkal, leaf miner incidence was recorded. Farmers are advised to monitor using light traps or spray neem seed kernel extract at 5 per cent. For details, contact 0422-6611214 / 6611226.

BANGALORE, January 25, 2012

Veggie prices shoot up again

All prices in rupees per kg on Tuesday			
Vegetable/fruit	Wholesale	Neighbourhood shop	Hopcoms
Ash gourd	5	10	7
Beetroot	14	24	21
Bitter gourd	18	32	29
Bottle gourd	10	20	16
Ridge gourd	20	40	40
Brinjal (long)	20	34	33
Brinjal (round)	14	24	27
Beans (flat)	24	38	42
Beans (double)	28	48	35
Field beans	18	26	33
Cowpea	28	38	34
Cabbage	7	16	11
Tomato	10	16	14
Carrot	18	32	30
Cauliflower	14	24	22
Knol kol	13	32	26
Capsicum	30	42	43
Green chillies	18	48	29
Cucumber	7	24	15
Radish	8	20	15
Okra	30	48	49
Pomegranate	156	186	159
Apple (Fuji)	110	138	146
Musambi	19	48	38
Orange	20	60	49
Banana (Yelakki)	22	40	33
Papaya	5	15	6
Sapota	12	40	18

Bangaloreans were smiling all these days after vegetable prices returned to earth at the beginning of the New Year. Well, that smile has slipped a bit as prices have shot up again, climbing as high as 50 per cent.

Worse is to come as industry experts forecast further increase in prices because of two reasons. The first being the start of the marriage season and other auspicious occasions, and the second — and more serious — depleting arrivals because of destruction/ poor yield due to the cold spell during the last two months.

While the prices of carrot and beans were already high, it is okra that tops the list with Hopcoms selling it at Rs. 49 a kg. Even its wholesale price on Tuesday was Rs. 30.

Blame the cold

G.M. Venkatesh, a senior executive with a vegetable retail chain, blamed the severe winter affecting the vegetable's harvest. He said even beans and cucumber also have taken a beating thanks to the weather.

Sandeep, who looks after Green Fresh at Kenchanahalli Cross on Doddabasti Main Road, predicted that with summer round the corner, prices will only increase.

It has been bad for consumers this past week with prices zooming up. They were moderate at the beginning of the month, said Ranganathan, a vegetable vendor in Sampangiramanagar, who said that such inflation would eat into his profits as he has to spend a good to procure the vegetables from Krishna Rajendra Market. His customers also have cut down on buying, he said.

Terrace garden

Homemaker Uma Hande, who lives in K.R. Puram, confirmed this. "I'm in the middle of creating a terrace garden to beat the price rise. Vegetables like tomato and leafy vegetables could easily be grown in pots."

But she said fruits were a problem, sighing over their exceptionally high prices, especially pomegranate and apple, which are being sold not less than Rs. 180 and Rs. 130 a kg in neighbourhood shops. The only solace is by papaya (Rs. 15 to Rs. 20), yelakki banana (Rs. 30-35) and to some extent sapota (Rs. 30-35), she said.

CHENNAI, January 25, 2012

Fodder resources to be raised inside forest areas

Over the next five years, the Forest Department will create fodder resources inside forest areas to improve wildlife habitats and mitigate human-animal conflict.

As the department pays a huge sum of money as compensation for damage caused to the agricultural crops by wild animals, especially elephants straying into fields, and also for the loss of life and injury to human beings in attacks by animals, the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests came up with the proposal to raise green fodder bank inside the reserve forest areas to prevent the straying of animals into human habitats.

Accepting the proposal, the government has sanctioned Rs.20.87 crore for five years, including Rs.3.45 crore for 2011-12.

Besides, the department plans to construct about 100 percolation ponds and 100 check dams in the next five years to satiate the thirst of the wild animals during summer. Silvicultural operations will be taken up on about 100 places.

In Coimbatore circle, where the human-animal conflict is more pronounced, the Forest Department will establish ten irrigated fodder plots every year.

Egg price drops

January 25, 2012

Wholesale egg price has dropped by 10 paise in Namakkal on Tuesday as it was fixed at Rs. 2.55 – its lowest price in more than three months.

Published: January 25, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: January 25, 2012 04:16 IST

Better price for turmeric sought

Staff Reporter

Govt. asked to procure spice at Rs. 10,000 per quintal

Turmeric auction in all the four markets in Erode district has been hit after farmers, seeking Central and State governments to ensure remunerative price, kept away from selling their produce.

The protest was in response to the nation-wide call issued by the Turmeric Farmers Association of India urging the farmers not to sell their produce in the markets for three days from Tuesday.

Association's All-India President P. K. Deivasigamani said turmeric trading in all the markets in the country was affected due to the protest. "The stir received an overwhelming response from the turmeric farmers across the nation.

First time

"It was the first time turmeric growers in the country came together to launch a nation-wide stir demanding remunerative price for their produce," he said.

Mr. Deivasigamani said the sharp fall in the prices of turmeric had left lakhs of growers in the country to incur huge losses.

"The total turmeric production in the country is expected to be around 30 lakh tonnes. Of which, we want the governments to procure at least 20 lakh tonnes, providing Rs. 10,000 as price per quintal," he said.

"While the price of turmeric hovers around Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 4,000 a quintal in all the major markets in the country, the produce fetches Rs. 10,000 a quintal at the market in Chodavaram near Visakhapatnam. Similarly, the price of turmeric is Rs. 8,000 a quintal in Mumbai," Mr. Deivasigamani said.

He alleged that the traders formed syndicates to keep the prices low.

"We want the governments to take steps on a war-footing to protect the interests of turmeric growers.

"The Tamil Nadu government should initiate steps to procure at least 5 lakh tonnes of turmeric at the rate of Rs. 10,000 a quintal," he demanded.

The association said persons running commission *mandis* had expressed their support for its protest.

Persons running commission mandis had expressed their support for the stir, farmers claimed

Published: January 25, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: January 25, 2012 04:21 IST

Increase support price for sugarcane: farmers

Staff Reporter

Sugarcane growers in the district have appealed to the State Government to raise the minimum support price for the produce as the cost of cultivation has increased several folds in the recent past.

Staging a demonstration under the banner Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam here on Monday, they said the State Government had fixed Rs. 2,100 as the minimum support price for a tonne of sugarcane, including the transportation charges.

“The price is not remunerative as the cost of fertilizer and other inputs had gone up,” they said.

The price of DAP fertilizer, which stood at Rs. 450 for a 50-kg bag, is now being sold at Rs. 920.

Similarly the price of potash increased from Rs. 235 to Rs. 565 a bag.

The farming community is experiencing a severe shortage of labour and it has led to a sharp increase in wages. The State Government should fix Rs. 2,500 a tonne as support price excluding the cutting charges, the farmers said.

They wanted the government to take efforts to ensure remunerative prices for turmeric, tapioca, copra, and various other agriculture produces.

The Union and State Governments should encourage the export of turmeric, cotton, and other agriculture produces that would help farmers get remunerative prices, they said.

The agitators wanted the Centre to import tapioca starch in order to protect the domestic industries and the tapioca growers. Members of various farmers association participated in the demonstration.

Published: January 25, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: January 25, 2012 04:22 IST

Rs. 2.51 crore released for payment of compensation to areca growers

Deputy Director of Horticulture Vishwanath has said that Rs. 2.51 crore released for the district to compensate areca growers who suffered loss owing to yellow leaf disease will be diverted

and used to compensate owners of areca plantations infected with kole roga, band disease, and root grub disease.

“No instance of yellow leaf disease has been reported in the district so far. The Department of Horticulture is planning to utilise the amount to compensate the farmers who have suffered loss due to fungal infection popularly known as kole roga, band disease, and root grub disease. Permission has been sought from the Union Government to divert the amount,” he told presspersons here on Tuesday.

The amount was released for the district under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM). A proposal to divert the amount was submitted in December 2011.

According to research work, the areca leaves turn yellow in the district because of deficiency of nutrients. Such plantations can be rejuvenated by providing nutrient inputs, he said. The plantations in Tirthahalli, Sagar, Hosanagar, and parts of Sorab taluk would be infected with kole roga during monsoon.

-
- *It will be used to pay compensation to owners of plantation affected by kole roga*
 - *Plantations in Tirthahalli, Sagar and Hosanagar are affected by the disease*
-

Published: January 25, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: January 25, 2012 04:23 IST

Farmers stop turmeric auction for three days in Erode market

G. Sathyamoorthi

To attract government's attention to steep fall in prices of their produce



Seeking intervention:Turmeric farmers abstained from selling their produce in the market at Erode on Tuesday.— PHOTO: M. GOVARTHAN

Turmeric farmers in the State are facing a crisis with its prices plummeting and, in a bid to attract the attention of the government, they have stopped auctioning of samples at Erode, one of the biggest turmeric markets in the country, for three days from Tuesday.

“As against Rs.17,000 per quintal quoted in 2010, it fetches only around Rs.4,000 now. If this were to be the situation even before the arrivals, what will happen when the arrivals start?” rues C. Subbu, State co-ordinator, Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham.

P.K. Deivasigmani, national president of the Turmeric Farmers' Association, says the Erode market alone gets on an average of 400 to 500 samples a day and its daily turnover is 2000-3000 quintals.

“Sangli, which is another major market, is also witnessing a steep fall, to the level of Rs.6,000 per quintal.”

In 2008-09, the price was only Rs.8,000-10,000 per quintal. But it shot up to Rs.17,000 the next year. Farmers admit that this resulted in a “mad scramble” for raising turmeric in 2010-11.

The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University warned the farmers as early as July 2011 that they should dispose of the turmeric stocks immediately as the prices had slumped to Rs.6500 -7000 per quintal from the Rs.15,000 level that obtained in June 2010.

It said the downtrend was due to a 25 per cent increase in turmeric area and an increased production of about 45 per cent, resulting in 70 lakh bags of 100 kg each, as against 48 lakh bags in 2009-10. Besides, there was a drop of 14 per cent in export.

It pointed out that the turmeric stock, which was seven lakh bags during 2009-10, has increased to 11 lakh bags in 2010-11. In Tamil Nadu, turmeric area increased to 43,000 hectares. At the same time, its quality suffered due to rains during December 2010.

“Quality of turmeric stocks and less export demand are the factors which form the pull factors of turmeric prices,” it concluded.

K.C. Rathnasamy, State president of the Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham, says in Erode district alone, turmeric has been raised on 26,000 acres yielding 20-22 quintals per acre. The cultivation cost per acre works out to Rs.1.25 lakh.

Mr. Subbu apprehends that the farmers would stand to lose heavily — over Rs.40,000 per acre — if the current rates were to continue. “We bought seedlings when turmeric was quoted around Rs.17,000 per quintal and most of us will be wiped out.” Agricultural Marketing Committee sources said the regulated market in Erode would not be able to intervene because, “we are only facilitators, we do not buy at all.” Official sources, requesting anonymity, said the ball was firmly in the government's court. “As Kerala does for rubber and areacanut, the Tamil Nadu government should also fix remunerative price for turmeric.” Farmers said that as Mysore also happens to be one of the major growing areas, they have requested the respective State government to procure turmeric at Rs.10,000 per quintal.

“We in Tamil Nadu are so demoralised that we want the government to buy at least the new arrivals, though not the old stocks,” they said.

Published: January 25, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: January 25, 2012 04:23 IST

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 88.53 feet on Tuesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 420 cusecs and the discharge, 8,000 cusecs.

Share

© The Hindu

Business Standard

Wednesday, Jan 25, 2012

Guntur to soon get a spice park

George Joseph / Kochi January 25, 2012, 0:03 IST

The Spices Board will complete construction of a Spices Park in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh soon besides ensuring functioning of the quality lab of the Board there. The park will be chilli-based and will work in line with the park at Puttady in Kerala.

The Board had proposed to set up 14 spices parks in various states, based on the spices available in these.

Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh are likely to get spices parks soon.

About 350 chilli farmers from 35 mandals in Guntur and Prakasam districts of Andhra converged at the 'Sugandha Sangamam' programme, an initiative to bring sustainability in development of chillies. The programme is aimed at strengthening the supply chain from farm to exports. This was organised by the Spices Board in collaboration with the World Spice Organisation.

The global demand for chillies has increased and the need to maintain India's position as a leader in this sector is gaining importance.

Spices play a major role in total agricultural exports of the country and a substantial jump was observed in the past five years. But, there is a supply shortage, especially the quantity available for exports. The industry is facing issues due to short supply and quality concerns.

Availability of good quality produce in sufficient quantities, problem of pesticide residues, presence of aflatoxin and illegal dyes are issues that need attention. As a measure to ensure this, the Board has made plans, including promotion of organic cultivation.

Mills likely to consume more cotton

BS Reporter / Mumbai January 25, 2012, 0:01 IST

At a meeting on Tuesday, the Cotton Advisory Board (CAB) said textile mills were likely to consume more cotton than estimated earlier this year. Mills' consumption estimate for the current cotton year (October to September) has been revised marginally upwards from 21 million bales to 21.6 million bales (1 bale equals 170 kg).

CAB said mills had reported a renewed demand for cotton. Analysts see this as a signal for revival of the cotton textile industry.

The consumption estimates for small-scale units have also been revised upwards from two million bales to 2.4 million bales. Together, small and big mills are likely to exceed the earlier

consumption estimate by one million bales. This is despite the total crop forecast being revised downwards by 1.1 million bales.

BETTER TIMES		
	2010 - 11	2011 - 12
Supply		
Opening stock	4.05*	4.83
Crop	33.90	34.50
Imports	0.50	0.60
Total supply	38.45	39.93
Demand		
Mill consumption	22.07	21.60
Small-scale units	2.47	2.40
Non-mill consumption	2.20	2.00
Exports	6.88	8.40
Total demand	33.62	34.40
Closing Stock	4.83	5.53
All figures in million bales and are based on provisional estimates		
* Opening stock for 2010-11 is based on the verified figure		

The rise in consumption, at a time when the total output is expected to decline, signals that cotton prices would remain firm, especially because even exports are pegged higher this year. The estimate for export has also been raised to 8.4 million bales, from eight million bales earlier.

“China, a major exporter of textiles, has turned costlier for importers, since the cost of production has risen in that country. India, therefore, stands to gain, especially because it has

been able to offer competitive prices to importers due to weakening of its currency,” said Technopak Advisors chairman, Arvind Singhal.

“In future, too, the demand on the domestic market is expected to pick up, which is a positive sign for the industry,” Singhal added.

Domestic consumption of raw cotton has considerably increased on the back of good export demand for yarn from China, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Egypt, coupled with strong domestic demand.

“Demand for cotton yarn is expected to be stronger after March. Also, demand from the apparel sector has picked up, both in domestic and international markets,” said D K Nair, secretary-general, Confederation of Indian Textile Industry.

“Even as demand from the euro zone, one of India’s largest export destinations, remains subdued due to the sovereign debt crisis there, demand from the US has risen considerably,” Nair added.

Last year (2010-11), the country’s total cotton production was 32.5 million bales, the highest ever. But, due to crop damage in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, the CAB this year revised production estimates downwards to 34.5 million bales from the 35.6 million bales earlier.

However, despite the reduction, the total production this year is estimated to exceed last year’s output. Therefore, it will remain the highest quantity the country has ever produced.

Tobacco export volumes down by 7.8% in Apr-Nov

Press Trust of India / New Delhi January 24, 2012, 17:06 IST

Tobacco shipments from India, the third-largest exporter in the world, fell by 7.8% to 1,54,171 tonnes during the April-November period of the current fiscal on account of surplus global stock and less competitive prices, the Tobacco Board said.

The country shipped 167,319 tonnes of tobacco overseas in the year-ago period, it said.

“Tobacco exports fell as the contracted price was lower in the wake of surplus availability

in the global market," a senior Tobacco Board official told PTI.

Tobacco shipments, comprising raw tobacco and its products, fell by 7.27% in value terms to Rs 2,523.14 crore during the April-November period of the 2011-12 fiscal from Rs 2,721.04 crore in the year-ago period, he said. While tobacco product exports surged in terms of both value and volume terms, raw tobacco shipments declined.

The country shipped 26,429 tonnes of tobacco products like cigarettes worth Rs 659.59 crore abroad during the review period, as against 24,746 tonnes worth Rs 605.01 crore in the corresponding year-ago period. In contrast, raw tobacco shipments declined marginally in volume terms to 1,27,742 tonnes from 1,42,573 tonnes, while in value terms, exports of raw tobacco fell to Rs 1,863.55 crore from Rs 2,116.03 crore in the period under review. India, with annual production of about 700 million kilograms of tobacco, exports raw tobacco and products to major markets such as Belgium, Russia, Philippines and Germany.

Cultivation of tobacco is controlled by the government. Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are the two major growing states. At present, tobacco prices in Karnataka are ruling at Rs 97.69 per kg in Karnataka on average.

THE HINDU Business Line

Cotton body cuts crop estimate on lower yields

Latha Venkataraman

Mumbai, Jan. 24:

Cotton output estimate for the October-September 2011-2012 season has been revised down to 345 lakh bales of 170 kg each because of falling per-hectare yields, a senior Government official said on Tuesday after a Cotton Advisory Board meeting. It was estimated at 356 lakh bales in November last year.

"There may have been some incidence of pest attacks on crop. Also, there is yield loss in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh," Mr A.B. Joshi, Textile Commissioner, said after the meeting that had representatives from the industry, traders, growers and exporters. In the previous year,

output was 325 lakh bales. But the board maintains its estimate on acreage at 121.91 lakh hectares.

The estimate for Maharashtra's crop has been lowered to 69 lakh bales from the previous estimate of 85 lakh bales.

According to Mr Joshi, the State Government's estimate of the crop is much lower at 64 lakh bales. But the State has not given the reasons for the likely decline in crop. Maharashtra is the second-largest producer after Gujarat producing 82 lakh bales last year. Andhra Pradesh, the third-largest, is likely to harvest a crop of 48 lakh bales, down from the previous estimate of 55 lakh bales. Cotton-growing areas in the State experienced a dry spell during the monsoon, Mr Joshi said.

Estimated yields a hectare for Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have been lowered sharply. In Maharashtra, yield is likely to be 286.45 kg a hectare, down from the previous estimate of 352.87 kg and lower from previous year's 354.53 kg a hectare. In Andhra Pradesh, estimated yield has been revised down to 440.13 kg from 504.31 kg. Last year, it was 505.04 kg. Gujarat is likely to harvest 114 lakh bales of cotton compared with 103 lakh bales in the previous season.

Strong demand from China is expected to augur well for the country's exporters in the current cotton year ending September 30, 2012.

The board has revised up exports estimate for the current year to 84 lakh bales from 80 lakh bales. Last year, the country exported 68 lakh bales.

"Demand from China is looking good. Already 44 lakh bales have been shipped, and of these 39 lakh bales were exported to China," Mr Joshi said.

Domestic mill consumption has also picked up mainly because cotton prices remain buoyant and yarn prices have been gaining, he said.

Mill consumption estimate has been revised up a tad to 216 lakh bales from 210 lakh bales.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 25, 2012)

Frost hits Nilgiris tea

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, Jan. 24:

Frost has hit substantial tea area in the Nilgiris, the largest tea growing district in the south.

The minimum temperature at night in plantation pockets has been ruling in single digits for over 10 days now.

“Our initial reckoning is that about 600 hectares in the Nilgiris have suffered frost bite. In Korakundah region alone, nearly 150 hectares have been hit with minimum temperature dipping to minus 5 degrees Celsius.

“This belt is used to record minus temperature in December, but prolonged minus ruling in mid-January is unusual. We recognise this as fallout of global warming phenomenon,” Mr D. Hegde, President, the United Planters' Association of Southern India, told *Business Line*.

Production loss

“We are collecting data from different regions on plant and crop loss. Already, 12 per cent of large estates have suffered frost bite. With green tea leaf arrival for processing having dwindled drastically, many factories are working only once in two days,” he noted.

“Based on our survey of different tea areas, we anticipate 20 per cent production loss in the Nilgiris this month due to frost,” Tea Board member, Dr S. Ramu, said.

“The frost bite has been both extensive and intensive. Almost every tea growing zone has been affected. The damage is severe in low lying areas. Apart from loss of immediate crop, growers have to wait for at least three months before normal harvest can happen”, he disclosed.

arrivals

The low production is reducing the arrival to the auctions. At Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions held this week, only 11.39 lakh kg was offered which is a 15-week low volume.

The low offer helped average price to rise to Rs 70.66 a kg from Rs 68.30 last week, but the overall earnings dropped to Rs 6.92 crore from Rs 8.56 crore.

This meant that in just one week, auction earnings have dropped by Rs 1.64 crore or 19.16 per cent.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 25, 2012)

Coffee growers support indigenous mechanisation

Anil Urs

Urge Centre to increase incentives for exports, replanting subsidies



Bangalore, Jan. 24:

Coffee growers discussed issues plaguing the plantation sector, including subsidies and mechanisation, with the Union Minister of State for Commerce, Mr Jyotiraditya Scindia, on Tuesday and sought his help.

The delegation consisting of Mr Marvin Rodrigues (Chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association), Mr Sahadev Balakrishna (former Chairman, KPA), Mr Peter Mathias (Chairman, Tea Committee, United Planters' Association of Southern India) and Mr V. Murli (Member, Executive Committee, KPA) apprised Mr Scindia of the need to introduce mechanisation in plantation to address shortage of labour, strengthen research to develop drought-resistant and high-yielding robusta species, increase incentives for export and subsidise replanting.

Mr Rodrigues said while discussing plantation sector problems, the Minister assured the delegation that long-term issues would be included in the 12th Plan.

The coffee delegation in New Delhi also met the Union Additional Secretary, Mr Madhusudan Prasad, and the Director (Plantations) in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Mr Sanoj Kumar Jha.

Coffee growers want development of indigenously manufactured machines suitable for field operations be developed on a war footing. "With low technology and innovative ideas, many of the field operations can be handled mechanically thereby by cutting down manpower," said Mr Rodrigues.

Research and development

According to Mr Balakrishna, there is an urgent need to control the white stem borer. “This is most definitely the final chance for sustained arabica production in India. An effective control measure for the WSB is imperative to prevent the conversion of arabica estates into robusta,” he added.

“Also, there is a need to develop drought-resistant and high-yielding robusta strains which are good in the cup. With severe constraints on water resources, the development of drought-resistant varieties of robusta will mitigate the dependency on irrigation,” explained Mr Rodrigues.

To encourage growers to export, the Commerce Ministry gives Re 2 a kg on value-added coffee and Re 1 a kg on high-value green coffee as incentive. The delegation wants the amounts increased to Rs 3 and Rs 2 respectively.

As for the subsidy for replanting, growers want the cost of replanting set by the Coffee Board to be raised. Consequently, they want a higher rate of subsidy, which is based on the cost set. They also urged the Minister to consider opening the scheme to all sectors, including companies and co-operatives.

anil.u@thehindu.co.in

FOR A STRONGER BREW

- *The Union Minister of State for Commerce, Mr Jyotiraditya Scindia, assured the delegation long-term issues will be included in 12th Five-Year Plan*
- *Growers asked for an “effective control measure” for white stem borer pests*
- *Pressed for development of drought-resistant robusta varieties to reduce dependence on irrigation*

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 25, 2012)

Farmers seek more support to improve chilli quality



Kochi, Jan. 24:

A joint initiative of farmers, exporters, the Spices Board, the Department of Agriculture and agricultural universities is needed to open a new platform and chalk out action plans related to improvement and enhancement of the quality of spices, especially of chillies in Andhra Pradesh, Dr A. Jayathilak, Chairman, Spices Board, said.

Inaugurating the *Sugandha Sangamamat* Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, an initiative to make development of chillies sustainable, he assured that every possible step would be taken to improve the quality of spices produced in Andhra Pradesh and ensure better prices to the farmers. The event was organised by the Spices Board in association with the World Spice Organisation.

Supply Chain

The programme was aimed at strengthening the supply chain from the farm level to the exporters and was organised against the backdrop of falling quality of chillies, a major source of foreign revenue for the country. Global demand for chillies has increased and the need to consolidate and maintain India's position as a world leader in this sector is gaining importance.

Towards this end, the board will complete the construction of the Spices Park in Guntur soon and also make functioning of the quality lab more effective for the benefit of the farmers. Over

350 chilli farmers from 35 mandals in Guntur and Prakasam districts of Andhra Pradesh came to the event.

Farmers who attended the meeting expressed their desire for more supportive programmes from the board in providing alternative mechanisms for hygienic drying of chillies while demanding black silpaulin and tarpaulin sheets. They also demanded supply of IPM (integrated pest management) kits before the sowing season began.

Farmers' demands

They wanted supply of solar driers and solar poly-houses for drying chillies, programmes for drip irrigation and supply of plant-protection equipment like Taiwan sprayers. There was demand to extend the ongoing schemes for chilli farmers to Krishna district also.

Excellence of Indian chillies, involving every segment of the industry, was one of the objectives of *Sugandha Sangamam*. The event will highlight the importance of food safety and traceability — apart from parameters like quantity, quality and price — to make the sector internationally competent. Once prices stabilise, there will be chance for bringing more area under cultivation, thus, strengthening the chilli-farming sector. So there is also an issue of sustainability and a need for a holistic approach to the marketing of spices domestically and internationally.

The meeting was presided over by Dr P. Srinivasalu, Director of Research, Dr YSR Horticulture University, and was addressed by Dr K. Sankar Reddy, Associate Director of Research, Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University, Lam, Guntur. Dr Ramesh Bhatt, an international consultant on sustainability, also spoke. cj@thehindu.co.in

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 25, 2012)

Standstill continues in raw cashew market

G.K. Nair



Kochi, Jan. 24:

The cashew market has shown some buoyancy since the beginning of the year, with the prices moving up by 5-6 per cent from a low range of \$3.10-3.30 to \$3.35-3.50 an lb (fob) last week.

During the past couple of weeks, there was a fair amount of business with several markets and business was done for W240 up to \$3.75-3.80, W320 up to \$3.40-3.50, SW320 up to \$3.25-3.30 an lb (fob), trade sources in Mumbai said.

However, no trading has taken place in other grades. Nominal levels last week were for W450 at around \$3.25, Splits and Butts from \$2.30 to \$2.50, Pieces from \$2.15 to \$2.40 an lb (f.o.b).

Indian domestic market was by and large steady. There was a slight revival in buying but that did not result in any hike in prices during the last fortnight, Mr Pankaj N Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer told *Business Line*. Vietnam domestic market (China) was quiet. China bought lower volumes so far before their New Year, but paid good prices for better quality product, he said.

Raw cashew nut market continued to remain paralysed, he said. Despite lack of buying interest, Tanzania is not reducing their floor price. During the last two weeks, there was a talk of smaller than expected crops in Mozambique and Brazil.

Also, there were reports of possible delay in Vietnam crop. There was no adverse news from West Africa or India, except for the damage in some regions in Northern Tamil Nadu due to the year-end cyclone. All these may not have much impact in a market which has seen lower usage in the last few months besides facing an uncertainty of future usage coupled with adequate RCN stocks for the time being.

As discussed earlier, a reasonable view on 2012 supply will be possible by April/May, and until then, there could be a lot of volatility due to the uncertainty, he said.

The recent activity in the kernel seems to be inventory rebuilding and filling part of the needs for next few months considering that prices have dropped by about 30 per cent from the peak and are close to the average of last 4 years.

“We continue to feel that until there is a better indication of 2012 demand trend and supply and some stability in the economic situation, very little long term business will be done,” he said.

The continued short term buying and selling will keep the market volatile, although the range of movement will be smaller than what we have seen in the last 18 months (up 40 per cent and down 30 per cent to return to old range), Mr Pankaj claimed.

Unless there is a dramatic fall in the RCN price, downside from current range is limited, he said.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 25, 2012)

Share

Chana flat on tepid offtake, weak futures



Indore, Jan. 24:

Chana (gram) ruled flat at Rs 3,275-3,300 a quintal on subdued demand and weak futures.

Chana (desi) sold at Rs 3,225, chana (annagiri) at Rs 3,100-3,200, chana (mausmi) at Rs 3,400-3,500, chana (vishal) at Rs 3,100-3,200, chana (Russian) at Rs 4,800-5,000, chana (Turki) at Rs 5,300-5,500 and chana (American) at Rs 7,200-7,500 a quintal.

Arrival of new chana is picking up, with around 300-400 bags from Barnagar, Ujjain and Agar being offloaded in local mandis and at Rs 2,900-3,000 a quintal.

Rising arrival in the coming days will make chana futures bearish, said a wholesale chana trader Mr Rajkumar Pandya. Chana dal was unchanged despite weak buying support, with chana dal (average) being quoted at Rs 3,925-3,950, chana dal (medium) at Rs 4,025-4,050 chana dal (bold) at Rs 4,175-4,200 a quintal.

Even as arrivals of new dollar chana or chickpea rose to 1,500 bags, it sold at Rs 7,400-7,600 a quintal, while old dollar chana quoted at Rs 7,500-7,800. Dollar chana may remain bearish as arrivals pick up.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 25, 2012)

Dara wheat gains on renewed buying



Karnal, Jan. 24:

Renewed buying coupled with lower supplies pushed up dara wheat prices, while desi wheat ruled flat on lack of buying interest amid low stocks on Tuesday.

Dara prices increased by Rs 10-25 a quintal at Rs 1,225-1,250 on the physical market. Around 80 tonnes of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery of dara was at Rs 1,225 a quintal while delivery at chakki was at Rs 1,230.

Seed quality was trading around Rs 1,250 a quintal, up Rs 25.

The Food Corporation of India released stocks for the below-poverty-line and above-poverty-line card holders. A few flour mills, too, got stocks under the open market sale scheme from Gharonda godown, said market sources.

Among desi wheat varieties, Tohfa quoted at Rs 2,300 a quintal while Red Rose was trading at Rs 2,200.

Wheat for February delivery decreased by Rs 4 to Rs 1,266 a quintal after touching a high at Rs 1,279 earlier in the day on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, while for March delivery dropped by Rs 2 to Rs 1,256.

Flour prices were unchanged at Rs 1,220 for a 90-kg bag. Chokar was flat at Rs 660 for a 49-kg bag.

Bloomberg reports: The Chicago Board of Trade March soya contract fell 0.82 per cent to \$12.08 a bushel by 1200 GMT, after climbing to \$12.19 a bushel on Monday, its highest since January 17. Corn for March delivery fell 0.44 per cent to \$6.17-1/4 a bushel and March wheat also lost 0.61 per cent to \$6.15-3/4 a bushel.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 25, 2012)

Easing palm oil keeps coconut oil on leash

C.J. Punnathara



Kochi, Jan. 24:

Coconut oil prices gravitated lower in Kerala and Tamil Nadu as demand slumped. Markets are expected to remain subdued as prices of imported edible oils are likely to fall further on the back of a firm trend in the rupee, sources in the trade said. As Indian rupee re-gained the psychological Rs 50-mark against the dollar, prices of palm oil and palm kernel oil continue to remain jittery.

Coconut oil was quoting at Rs 7,200 a quintal in Kerala markets against Rs 6,900 in Tamil Nadu. Copra prices also plunged to Rs 5,000 a quintal in Kerala against Rs 4,850 in Tamil Nadu. Palm oil prices ruled at Rs 5,740/quintal, while palm kernel oil quoted Rs 6,800. With the easing trend in palm oil and palm kernel oil prices, which are the direct competitors to edible coconut oil, market sources expected some diversion of demand to these cheaper oils.

There is virtually no activity in coconut oil markets and sources did not expect any resurgence in the immediate future. Futures prices also ruled low at Rs 7,140 a quintal for the February contract and Rs 7,315 for the March contract – not much variance with the spot prices.

While coconut oil and copra supplies from Kerala have dried up with the onset of the lean season, arrivals continue to remain firm in Tamil Nadu. But there are no takers and prices remain depressed.

Traders are also holding good amount of stocks and unless the demand revives, coconut oil prices are expected to remain low, trade sources warned. Demand from Kerala is not expected to perk up since competing edible oil prices are also ruling low. Industrial demand is also not expected to boost prices since they are also holding good amount of stocks and the summer sales of coconut oil-based shampoo, hair oil and soaps are yet to commence. Prospects for rise in coconut oil are not promising at the moment.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 25, 2012)