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Clearing pending stock worries farmers as egg price drops again

M.K. Ananth

'Due to prevailing dull market wholesale price will be fixed on a daily basis'

Steady decrease in wholesale egg price has badly hit poultry farmers as they would incur a loss of 10 to 15 paise per egg. The National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) of Namakkal Zone reduced its price from Rs. 2.55 on Tuesday to Rs. 2.45 on Wednesday.

Committee sources told *The Hindu* that there was no better option but to reduce price to clear the stocks that got stagnated during Pongal. Wholesale price of the commodity reached a record high Rs. 3.20 on December 26 and remained at the same level till January 7 before it started to drop.

The first reduction was by 15 paise on January 8, followed by another 10 paise the following day to stand at Rs. 2.95.

"This price was maintained for the next 10 days before it was brought down to Rs. 2.70, Rs. 2.65, Rs. 2.55 and Rs. 2.45 – an overall drop of 75 paise in 18 days," a poultry farmer noted.

"Usually 20 paise is deducted by traders from the NECC board rate towards packing, handling and transportation charges but the heavy piling up of stocks has forced farmers to increase this deduction by up to 75 per cent – 35 paise per egg," the farmer added.

According to him the production cost of an egg is around Rs. 2.30 and deduction of 35 paise will bring down the realisation price to Rs. 2.10 which means a loss of 20 paise per piece. The officials said that the retail price of egg that touched Rs. 4 when its wholesale price notched the record price is now below Rs. 3 and as low as Rs. 2.50 in some parts of Tamil Nadu.

"Consumption is now picking up and we expect the accumulated stocks to be cleared in the next five days," an NECC official said and added that the existing price (Rs. 2.45) will continue till Sunday while further decision on increasing or reducing price will be taken at the rate fixation meeting on Monday.

Zonal Chairman of NECC P. Selvaraj stated that egg price in other zones were also brought down drastically as vegetable prices had come down heavily and attracted a better consumer market. "The reduction in egg rates is expected to help egg get back its consumption market," he added.

Dr. Selvaraj said that due to prevailing dull market conditions the wholesale price would be fixed on a daily basis – unlike the routine wherein it used to be fixed thrice a week.

He made it clear that this was only a temporary arrangement till the price and market stabilises.

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- *Production cost of an egg is around Rs. 2.30*
 - *'Consumption is now picking up'*
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'Steps taken to improve the lot of farmers'

A string of cultural programmes and display of development achieved in the district in the form of tableaux marked the Republic Day celebrations at the Police Parade Ground here on Thursday.

Unfurling the National Flag, Collector V.N. Vishnu said the sacrifices of those who achieved independence should not be forgotten.

India became a Republic with the effort of many selfless politicians, intellectuals and people in general he observed and called for protecting the country's freedom and integrity. Mr. Vishnu later narrated the progress achieved by the district on agriculture, education, public health and other fronts.

Steps were taken to improve the lot of farmers who were facing a crisis caused by a decline in returns on investments and a steep increase in production costs.

Pulichintala project

The Pulichintala project which was aimed at stabilising an ayacut of 13.08 lakh acres would be completed by the end of this year.

Women empowerment was on top of the Government's agenda. Accordingly, 'Sthree Nidhi' and others schemes are being implemented.

Mr. Vishnu distributed bank loans amounting to Rs 5 crore to self-help groups and financial assistance to the physically challenged and weaker sections.

Children of Sri Venkateswara Bala Kuteer, St. Ann's School, Central Public School, Bandlamudi Hanumayamma High School, Government Boys' and Girls' High Schools and other educational institutions enthralled the audience with their cultural performances.

MLCs K.S. Lakshman Rao, Rayapati Srinivas, Singam Basavapunniah, MLA Sk. Mastan Vali, Joint Collector N. Yuvaraj, Superintendents of Police S. Syam Sundar and A. Ravi Chandra and others participated.

HYDERABAD, January 27, 2012

Kiran opens five-day horticulture show



Attracting sight:Andhra Pradesh Horti-Expo 2012 that was opened in city on Thursday.—Photo: Mohd. Yousuf

Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy inaugurated 'Horti Expo-2012', the annual event of Horticulture Department, here on Thursday.

Horticulture farmers from across the State kept their best produce, fruits and vegetables, on display. Several companies making agriculture and allied equipment and other inputs also set up their stalls at the expo. The Chief Minister went round the stalls and learnt the details of their produce from several farmers.

A group of graduates of horticulture course staged a protest by raising slogans when the Chief Minister was entering the venue and demanded the latter to fill vacancies in the Horticulture Department. They requested the Chief Minister to fill the vacancies on permanent basis instead of contract employment as there had been no recruitment in the department for long.

However, the officials and police pacified them and allowed them to submit their representation to the Chief Minister.

Speaking to reporters later, Minister for Horticulture R. Venkata Reddy announced that filling of vacancies in the department would be taken up within a month under Rajiv Yuva Kiranalu scheme. The Chief Minister had agreed to increase the budget for the department to Rs. 1,000 crore for 2012-13, the Minister stated.

The government had decided to provide 200 vans (vehicles) on subsidy to vegetable farmers' groups to sell their produce. The government would give 50 per cent subsidy in the vehicle cost of Rs. 4 lakh each and the remaining amount would be arranged as bank loans.

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- *Budget for Horticulture Department increased to Rs. 1,000 crore for 2012-13*
 - *200 vans to be given on subsidy to vegetable farmer groups to sell their produce*
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Published: January 26, 2012 01:44 IST | Updated: January 26, 2012 01:44 IST

Integrated farming system offers work for more number of days

M. J. Prabu



The Hindu Some of the beneficiary farmers who have freed themselves from debt. Photo: M.J. Prabu

Farmers who committed suicides owed only some thousands as debt

There is no such thing as a free lunch in the world. Everything has an unseen tag, a hidden agenda attached to it. And so, for farmer's seeds, inputs, labour, all of them have a cost.

"Where do we go for all these expenditures? Naturally, towards the local money lender. The lender lives in our village or nearby town, knows us well and demands no big procedures like filling forms or collateral.

"All he insists is our thumb impression on a blank unwritten promissory paper for doling out the money," says a farmer Nagaraju.

Living nightmare

But when the crops fail and interest repayment defaults the same money lender becomes a living nightmare for the farmer.

"With nobody to help and not being in a position to explain his side of the story, the farmer suffers in mute agony due to the verbal humiliations hurled on him, and in some cases on the families as well.

"The mental trauma, social attention, and whisper campaigns behind his back as though he committed a national offence, forces him to end his life to escape the humiliation," says Dr. K.

Jagadeeshwara, Associate Director of Extension, University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bangalore.

The question of solving this becomes all the more acute when one deals with agricultural labourers. These people are also into the debt web and getting them out of it poses a real challenge.

Under Vice Chancellor Dr. K. Narayana Gowda, the department of extension chalked out a comprehensive and practicable programme called Integrated farming system approach (IFS) model for 17 districts in south Karnataka, in 56 villages involving 650 farm families, to ease their debt burden.

“We selected the beneficiaries on the basis of permanent residency, possession of some acreage of land, records properly maintained, a drive to properly utilize the inputs, with a willingness to take risks, ability to maintain a record of work being done, and provide feedback as and when required.

Pilot model

“This project is a pilot model for us to assess and judge the impact of our intervention. We found the reception to be awesome. Now several farmers are demanding to be included in similar projects as income levels have doubled,” says Dr. K. Jagadeshwara.

“Usually a farmer works for 75 and odd days (during season) and for the remaining period remains idle. But we hope through this project to engage him in work for nearly 300 days a year,” explains Dr. Gowda.

Important role

Apart from helping them to generate income, the project also played an important role in scaling down caste feelings in all the villages it is being implemented.

Farmers are now learning to work in co-operation as they realise that working together can help raise income levels.

“I worked as a tender coconut seller at the railway station. Today I own animals, do some farming in my meagre lands, and this project has given me hope, added some respect to my life,” says Mr. Narasimiah another beneficiary-farmer.

“Politicians remember us only during elections. I thought my life was doomed. I worked whenever I got some menial work. Mostly it was hunger, debt and frustration. But today thanks to IFS I can also say I am a farmer,” says Mr. Venkatesh

“One thing the project taught me was that suicides are not the answer to our problems. I am confident today because I get moral support and encouragement from the University. When I have a doubt I approach them for guidance. Previously it proved tough for me to maintain the struggle against odds and support my family,” he says.

Ironies

“The ironies in these suicides are that farmers who ended their lives owed only a couple of thousands as repayment. A pro-active approach, right suggestions, and personal interaction could have helped prevent this. But there is no use in doing a post mortem. We want to help our farmers and are doing all that is possible to ensure that they are happy,” says Dr. Gowda.

When this project was discussed with a secretary rank official in the government, the person, requesting anonymity said:

Try to replicate

“The Central Government can try and replicate this model in different villages across the country to study the impact on a national level. But who is to decide on this? Not farmers or scientists but the agriculture Minister at Delhi. Whether he acts or sits on it as usual is a million dollar question.”

For more information readers can contact Dr. K. Jagadeeshwara at email: jagadeeshade@rediffmail.com, mobile: 09844998799 and Dr. Narayana Gowda at knarayanagowda@yahoo.co.in, phone: 080-233332442.

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More vegetable arrivals push prices down

K. Lakshmi



WELCOME CHANGE: The sale of vegetables has picked up, following the drop in prices.—

Photo: S. S. Kumar

: Prices of many vegetables have dropped by as much as 30 per cent compared to the rates last month in the Koyambedu market. The change, which is bound to bring cheer to households, has been made possible in view of more arrivals, which traders at the market attribute to the bountiful rainfall.

Tomatoes, which come from Krishnagiri and Andhra Pradesh, are sold anywhere between Rs.8 and Rs.10 per kg at the market. Ten days ago, the cost was Rs.15 per kg. Onions from Bellary in Karnataka are priced at Rs.8 a kg. A retail trader in Koyambedu said onions from Maharashtra cost Rs.13 a kg.

On Wednesday, D.Abirami, a resident of Ayanavaram, said: "I bought twice the quantity of beans, onions, tomatoes and potatoes when I shopped for vegetables. Many of them were priced below Rs.20 a kg. I am also purchasing lot of seasonal vegetables as they have turned cheaper."

Green peas, usually sold for Rs.80-100 a kg, were priced at Rs.25. Cabbage and cauliflowers were also priced around Rs.10 a kg. Many customers like Vimala Jayapal of Tiruvottiyur, however, felt that some of the frequently used vegetables such as brinjal and ladies fingers continued to remain out of reach, priced around Rs.50 a kg.

V.R.Soundararajan, a wholesale trader, said: "We expect the prices to dip further as the market is receiving nearly 50 more lorries than the usual 350 lorries daily." Some of the locally grown vegetables such as brinjals, drumsticks and ladies fingers were expensive in view of the damage to produce in the Thane cyclone.

S.Srinivasan, president of Chennai Fruit Commission Agents Association, said that the market would start receiving oranges from Maharashtra in February. Fewer arrivals of apples from Himachal Pradesh also led to increase in the cost.

While apples cost Rs.150 per kg, oranges are priced nearly Rs.40 a kg. Pomegranates cost Rs.80 a kg. There has been a sharp rise in the cost owing to escalating transportation charges.

“I have to pay Rs.32,000 for a lorry trip from Maharashtra now. Earlier, the charges were Rs.25,000 per trip,” he added.

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Farm query

Book on youth in agriculture

Can you please guide me as to whom I should contact at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore to get a copy titled 'Attracting Youth Towards Agriculture'?

Mohanakrishnan

Tamil Nadu

You can contact the Director of Extension Education, Dr. P. Kalasiselvan, phone: 0422-6611522, email: dee@tnau.ac.in at the University for your copy. The book carries stories about successful farmers and farming practices along with contact details and phone numbers of farmers and scientists. The book serves as a guide for youth interested to do farming.

Coconut water

January 26, 2012

How does coconut water form in a coconut?

K. PREETAM REDDY, *Hyderabad*

Coconut water is the endosperm part of the coconut plant. It is the nutritive tissue for the development of embryos in angiosperms and develops as post-fertilisation structure from the primary endosperm nucleus.

Three types of endosperm have been recognised: nuclear, cellular, helobial.

The coconut endosperm is a nuclear type. In very young coconut fruit, the endosperm is found as a clear fluid in which float numerous nuclei of various sizes.

This fluid compactly fills the embryo sac in which the embryo is developing.

At a later stage, the suspension shows, in addition to free nuclei, several cells enclosing variable number of nuclei.

Gradually these cells and free nuclei start settling at the periphery of the cavity and layers of cellular endosperm start appearing.

This forms the coconut meat. This meat is very tender enclosing the fluid content called coconut water. At this stage the nut is called tender coconut.

The quantity of the cellular endosperm increases further by the divisions of the cells.

In mature coconut the liquid endosperm becomes milky enclosed by the cellular part called kernel and it does not contain free nuclei or cells.

The percentages of arginine, alanine, cystine and serine in the protein are higher than those in cow's milk.

At the stage in which the coconut water is consumed as a beverage the concentration of sugar is at its maximum and total solids is less when compared with the water found in nut with kernel. The principal constituent is the Potash, the concentration of which is markedly influenced by potash manuring. The concentration of ascorbic acid ranges from 2.2 to 3.7 mg/100cc. The concentration is high in the water of green nut with soft pulp and gradually diminishes as the nut ripens.

RASHMI JAIN, *Gr Noida, Uttar Pradesh*

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Cattle shed waste for composite fish culture

It helps improve production

Composite fish culture has emerged as a vital activity in recent years owing to high net return realized from this enterprise. Nevertheless, there still exists a large gap in the demand and supply of fish.

Intensive aquaculture is not feasible for the rural people as it is expensive and involves more risk.

The low input mixed farming systems in which fish culture is a component, using and regenerating the physical and biological resources efficiently, are more suitable as they are less risky and at the same time give more fish production because of easy adaptability.

Can be increased

The current aquaculture production can be increased to a greater extent if it can be integrated with dairy.

Fish cum dairy farming is considered as an excellent innovation for effective utilization of organic wastes.

Composite fish culture comprising rohu, catla, mrigal and common carp can be fed with biogas slurry, cattle shed washings and other organic wastes for reducing the cost of feeding and to improve the growth and yield.

Organic wastes on application help in the production of desired planktons, which is basic food for fish and these wastes serve as fertilizer nutrients and are also consumed directly as source of feed. It also help increase production.

Experiments conducted at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore revealed that application of biogas slurry from the biogas plant at 15,000 kg hectare of fish pond and cattle shed washings at 260 litres day for 73 days as fish feed recorded 40.45 kg and 45.92 kg, respectively from 80m pond.

Improved nutrient

Feeding the fish with improved nutrient status, especially organic carbon and plankton status of fish pond, resulted in highest productivity.

Excess supply of cattle shed washings to fish pond resulted in mortality of fish due to high water temperature, carbon dioxide, alkalinity and low dissolved oxygen content of water in the fish pond. A.P. Sivamurugan, S. Paul Sebastian, & S. Nanthakumar

Krishi Vigyan Kendra Virinjipuram, Vellore Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, 632-104

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Bengal organising farmer credit societies: Guv

FRIDAY, 27 JANUARY 2012 00:04

PTI | KOLKATA

The Mamata Banerjee Government in West Bengal is organising farmers under 500 agri-credit societies to enable them to get “desirable” prices, Governor M K Narayanan said today.

“To ensure that farmers get a desirable price for their produce, agricultural producers are being organised under 500 agricultural credit societies. A sum of Rs 15 crore has been allotted for the purpose,” the Governor said in his Republic Day address.

Another Rs 15 crore had been earmarked for setting up organisations of farmer-producers residing in 500 most economically-backward villages, he said. The Agricultural Marketing Department has also earmarked 500 rural market complexes for upgradation, he said.

Claiming that as many as 20 farmers had committed suicide during the present regime, the CPI(M)-led Opposition had accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of not doing enough to ensure minimum support price (MSP) for paddy and other agricultural produce.

Giving a shot in the arm to the opposition, Narayanan had recently said that farmers’ suicide was indeed taking place and steps have to be taken to ensure that these did not occur.

Narayanan said the state government has decided to set up Paschimbanga Agri-Marketing Corporation to procure directly from farmers.

"To promote the export of potatoes, the government has announced a transport subsidy through the sea route at Rupees two per kg for non-registered containers and rupees three for registered ones. A sum of Rs 10.75 crore has been allotted for the purpose. The government is also striving for more systematic development of the food processing and horticulture sectors," he said.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Commodities

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27 JAN, 2012, 03.08AM IST, BLOOMBERG

Wheat climbs on dwindling Russian supply

SINGAPORE: Wheat advanced for a sixth day on Thursday to the highest price in more than three weeks as Russia may have to slow shipments of the grain as exportable supply declines. Corn and soyabeans gained.

Wheat stockpiles held by farmers in Russia's main exporting regions in the south have dropped below last year's levels, declining as much as 50% in some areas, SovEcon, a Moscow-based agricultural researcher, said on Wednesday. The country banned exports in August 2010 after its worst drought in half a century. The ban was lifted in July.

"Russia could potentially put some export curbs in place, but nothing is for certain," said Sudakshina Unnikrishnan, an analyst at [Barclays Capital](#) in London. "For grains we have quite a bit of fundamental support."

Wheat for March delivery climbed 1.8% to \$6.525 a bushel at 11:07 am London time on the [Chicago Board of Trade](#). The price rose to \$6.53 earlier Thursday, the highest since January 4. A close higher would mark the longest winning streak since prices gained for eight straight sessions ending on December 28. Milling wheat for March delivery advanced 0.6% to 209.25 euros (\$275.44) a tonne on NYSE Liffe in Paris.

Inventories with farmers in the Krasnodar region, home to Russia's main export hub at

Novorossiysk, have halved, SovEcon said. In the Southern Federal District, farmers held 40% less grain than in 2011, while inventories held by producers in the Rostov region fell 42%, it said.

Russia's three major grain-exporting provinces have shipped most of their supplies and that will lead to a "dramatic" slowdown in shipments from now through June, the US Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service said on January 19. US wheat inspected for export gained 27% in the week ended January 19 from a week earlier, USDA said on January 23.

Corn advanced for a sixth straight day, the longest winning streak in four weeks, as crop losses from a drought in Mexico deepened, potentially boosting demand for US supplies. The country is the world's second-largest importer after Japan and the second-biggest buyer of US corn. Acreage damage almost doubled after the worst drought on record. Losses covered 1.15 million hectares as of December 31 for the season ending in March, compared with 630,170 hectares a year earlier, according to data from the nation's Agriculture Ministry posted on Wednesday.

27 JAN, 2012, 03.02AM IST, PK KRISHNAKUMAR,ET BUREAU

Coconut oil prices slip on tepid demand

KOCHI: Coconut oil brands have cut prices to shore up flagging demand. Coconut oil saw the steepest rise in prices last year and the industry is now keen to hold the price line on the back of a good harvest.

Earlier, soaring prices had forced coconut oil companies to pass it on to the consumers. The open market price of coconut oil rose to an all-time high of Rs 106 per kg in May 2011. It has now dropped to Rs 70 per kg.

Some of the companies have already slashed the retail prices. This is most visible in the edible coconut oil category. Major producers of coconut oil for toiletry purposes like Marico haven't taken any decision yet. KLF Nirmal Industries has brought down the price of its one litre pack to Rs 90 recently. The price of KLF Nirmal oil had shot up to Rs 125-130 last year. "Any further reduction will depend on the market conditions," said managing director Sunny Francis.

An indication of good production and lack of demand are pulling down the prices. "There is

hardly any upcountry demand. The new season will start in Tamil Nadu in February. A bumper production is also expected from the northern districts of Kerala. All these have contributed to the price fall," said Talath Mehmood, president of the Cochin Oil Merchants Association.

When the arrivals from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka -- the major producers of coconut -- increase, the price of coconut oil may fall further. However, an increase in demand could stabilize it at a reasonable level. N Ananthan, former secretary of the association, suggested upgradation of technology for multiple use of coconut oil in value-added products like glycerine, lauric acid, industrial alcohol etc.

Till the end of Sabarimala pilgrimage in the middle of January, there was a good demand for coconut oil, according to Denny John, managing director of KPL Oil Mills. "High prices of some oils, which were used to mix with coconut oil, led to the disappearance of several unbranded coconut oils from the market. This sustained the demand for our products when the prices soared last year," he said.

Business Standard

Friday, Jan 27, 2012

Gujarat rabi sowing up 17% wheat area dips

Rutam Vora / Ahmedabad January 26, 2012, 0:13 IST

Rabi sowing in Gujarat has jumped 17 per cent to 3.64 million hectares (ha) as of on Wednesday, against 3.1 million ha reported during the same period last year. However, the area under wheat cultivation fell as a delayed monsoon and weather conditions prompted farmers to take up alternative crops like potato.

According to data released by the state government on Wednesday, wheat sowing for the current rabi season has fallen from 1.2 million ha last year to 1.1 million ha. The area

under potato has increased from 52,000 ha last year to 78,100 ha this rabi season.

“Wheat acreage has fallen but that of vegetables like potato and onion has gained significantly. Overall sowing in the rabi season has been good and we expect good yield this year,” said D Z Patel, joint director of agriculture. However, the country’s overall wheat acreage was 29.4 million ha, up by 300,000 ha over last year. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand reported higher acreage for wheat at 602,000 ha, 311,000 ha and 65,000 ha, respectively. Farmers from Gujarat and mainly from Ahmedabad district said lower realisations had led to a shift from wheat to other crops.

“Monsoon was delayed and there was not enough moisture in the land. Hence, many farmers in the Bhaal region (southern part of Ahmedabad) avoided sowing wheat this season. High farm input cost and low returns from selling is affecting the farmers badly, mainly the wheat farmers,” said Hasmukhbhai Dabhi, secretary (Ahmedabad), Bharatiya Kisan Sangh.

Meanwhile, recent weather extremities in Kutch and Saurashtra have raised concern among jeera and castor farmers. Unseasonal rain and hailstorm was reported last week in Kutch and Jamnagar district of Saurashtra. Contrary to fear of a possible damage to crops, local state government offices have not reported any such damage so far.

“We have not received any report of damage in jeera or castor crop in this region. The overall crop condition for jeera as well as for castor is good and we can expect more production than last year,” said an official from the agriculture department.

Jeera prices were at Rs 15,500 a quintal in the spot market. Arrivals at the Unjha market were 4,000 bags (a bag = 55 kg). “This year, about 500,000 bags of carryover stock is expected for jeera. The crop is likely to remain around 4 million bags, against 4.5 million bags last year. Domestic consumption is likely to remain around 3.5 million bags and export demand of about 500,000 bags. Prices are likely to remain firm till fresh arrivals start in February,” said Arvind Patel, jeera analyst at Unjha.

THE HINDU Business Line

Ample stocks pound Dara wheat

Karnal, Jan. 26:

The wheat market witnessed a mixed trend on Thursday.

The *daravariety* saw some correction after the price rise earlier this week, while *desivarieties* managed to remain at previous levels amid slack trading.

Sufficient stocks coupled with reduced off-take mainly dragged *dara* and flour prices, said Mr Sewa Ram, a wheat trader.

Arrivals of stock meant for the below poverty line and above poverty line categories in the open market put pressure on the market, he said. The fall was anticipated and *dara* and flour prices may decrease further in the coming days, said Mr Ram.

In the physical market, *dara* prices fell by up to Rs 10-15 and sold at Rs 1,210-1,215 a quintal.

Following reduced off-take, arrivals from Uttar Pradesh dropped substantially to just around 40 tonnes.

About 20 tonnes of *dara* were offloaded by local stockists and directly delivered at the mills.

The mill delivery rate of *dara* was Rs 1,210 a quintal while that of *chakki* was at Rs 1,215.

There were no fresh arrivals of seed quality on Thursday.

Among the *desi* wheat, Tohfa quoted at Rs 2,300 a quintal and Red Rose, at Rs 2,200.

Being a national holiday, there was no trading on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange and the Multi-Commodity Exchange on Thursday.

Flour Prices

With a fall in both wheat prices and flour demand, the prices eased by Rs 20 and quoted at Rs 1,200 for a 90-kg bag.

Similarly, *choka* decreased by Rs 10 and sold at Rs 650 for a 49-kg bag.

(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 27, 2012)

Volume hits 11-month low at Coonoor tea auction

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, Jan. 26:

As the market remained closed on account of Republic Day, the weekly leaf tea auction normally held on Thursdays was not conducted this week. Instead, it will be held along with the dust tea auction of Sale No: 4 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association on Friday.

Nevertheless, only 10.22 lakh kg would be offered. This is the lowest volume since March 4 last year. It is 1.17 lakh kg less than last week's offer but 2.13 lakh kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 10.22 lakh kg on offer, 7.36 lakh kg belong to the leaf grades and 2.86 lakh kg belong to the dust grades. As much as 9.55 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.67 lakh kg, orthodox variety.

The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.31 lakh kg belong to orthodox while 7.05 lakh kg, CTC.

Among the dusts, only 0.36 lakh kg belong to orthodox while 2.50 lakh kg, CTC.

In the 10.22 lakh kg, fresh teas account for 9.26 lakh kg. Only 96,000 kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions.

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(This article was published in the Business Line print edition dated January 27, 2012)

Sugarcane area gains from ratoon crop in AP

K. V. Kurmanath



Hyderabad, Jan. 26:

Disproving estimates, sugarcane area in Andhra Pradesh increased by 11.57 per cent last season that ended in September, due to strong gains from ratoon (sprouts that come out after cane is cut. Farmers generally go for 2-3 ratoon crops.).

Despite a steep fall in plantings (by 23 per cent) at 82,293 hectare, the total area has increased to two lakh hectares against 1.79 lakh hectares as ratoon plantation has gone up by 65 per cent.

This has resulted in an average growth of 11.57 per cent in area for this crushing season.

The sugarcane crushing season in Andhra Pradesh has entered the peak phase, with factories crushing a total of 52 lakh tonnes of sugarcane so far against 41.47 lakh tonnes during the same time last year.

The State, with 37 factories, produced 47 lakh quintals (36 lakh quintals) of sugar.

Recovery rate has gone up to 9.03 per cent (quantity of sugar generated per tonne) this year as against 8.76 per cent, Mr Sudhender Rao, Deputy Commissioner of Sugar (Government of Andhra Pradesh), told *Business Line*.

Farmers, however, are not a happy lot.

UNHAPPY FARMERS

Despite their protests and Government's diktat to factories that they should pay Rs 2,500 for a tonne of sugarcane, almost all factories are paying in the range of Rs 1,700-Rs 2,200. Factories in the cooperative sector are paying the lowest rate.

The private sector, with 26 factories, topped the list with 43.47 lakh tonnes (34 lakh tonnes) of cane crushed. Factories in the sector achieved a higher at 9.33 per cent (9 per cent) as they produced 39.63 lakh quintals (30 lakh quintals) so far.

One of the three Andhra Sugars units clocked the highest recovery rate of 10.63 per cent (10.03 per cent) in the State, followed by Krishnaveni Sugars with 10.54 per cent

COOPERATIVE SECTOR

The ailing cooperative sector, with nine functional factories, continues to show poor record on recovery rate with a poor average of 8.14 per cent. It registered crushing of 5.28 lakh tonnes (4.48 lakh tonnes) of cane and produced 4.42 lakhs quintals (3.49 lakh quintals) of sugar.

The three joint venture factories fared well by crushing 3.14 lakh tonnes (2.92 lt) of cane and producing 2.88 lakh quintals (2.58 lakh quintals) of sugar so far. Their average recover rate stood at 9.62 per cent as against State average of 9.03 per cent.kurmanath@thehindu.co.in

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Chinese potato



Tuber crop: A vendor sells Chinese potato or Koorka (*Coleus parvyflorus*) in Kochi. Koorka is the smallest tuber crop cultivated widely in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, especially in paddy fields and low-lying areas where water is available. Until recently, it was cultivated on dry lands. The full potential of commercial cultivation of the crop is yet to be tapped. The produce is sold at Rs 30 a kg in the local market, slightly lower than the price during the same time a year ago. — K. K. Mustafah

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Spot rubber improves further

Our Correspondent

Kottayam, Jan. 25:

Spot rubber prices improved further on Wednesday. According to observers, prices firmed up following the news on Thailand's move to prop up prices.

The changing season and the lack of quantity sellers kept the market on the positive side though major manufacturers were either inactive or kept a very low profile.

The under current was bullish on early trades but the commodity remained under pressure on buyer resistance during late hours possibly due to a weak closing in domestic futures on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 191.50 (191) a kg, according to traders. The grade increased to Rs 192 (191.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

The February series closed at Rs 193.96 (194.08), March at Rs 197.80 (197.99), April at Rs 204.05 (204.55), May at Rs 206.75 (207.00), July at Rs 206.99 (206.01) and June at Rs 207.45 (209.40) a kg on the NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) firmed up further to Rs 199.90 (194.97) a kg at Bangkok.

The January futures expired at ¥302 (Rs 193.60) a kg while the February futures improved to ¥306 (Rs 196.16) from ¥301 a kg during the day session but then dropped to ¥303.3 (Rs 194.44) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 191.50 (191); RSS-5: 188 (187); ungraded: 182 (181); ISNR 20: 190.50 (189.50) and latex 60 per cent: 110.50 (109.50).

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Sluggish demand drags Maharashtra tur



Indore, Jan. 25:

Sluggish demand and higher arrivals dragged down tur (Maharashtra) on the spot market to Rs 4,000-4,050 a quintal (Rs 4,050-4,100).

Tur (Karnataka) declined to Rs 3,950-4,000 a quintal (Rs 4,000-4100) on weak demand. Old tur (Nimari), on the other hand, was firm at Rs 2,500-3,000 a quintal, while new tur (Nimari) quoted at Rs 3,400-3,500. Tur prices soared to Rs 4,200 a quintal as the minimum support price was raised to Rs 4,000 a quintal in Karnataka. But a rise in arrivals and weak demand from millers have brought down the prices.

Because of large carryover stocks of imported tur and pressure of increased arrivals of new tur, traders here rule out any bullish trend in tur, unless speculators drive up prices, said a wholesale pulse trader Mr Prakash Vora.

Tur dal was firm as new buying interest in tur dal picked up, with retail consumers beginning annual stocking. Tur dal (full) quoted at Rs 5,500-5,550, tur dal (*sawano.*) at Rs 4,800-4,850 and tur (marka) at Rs 6,200 a quintal. Urad and its dal were firm despite subdued buying support. Urad (best quality) quoted at Rs 3,650-3,700 a quintal, while urad (medium) quoted at Rs 2,500-2,900.

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Rice range-bound in tepid market



Karnal, Jan. 25:

Rice prices remained range-bound in a dull market on Wednesday. After witnessing a mixed trend earlier this week, aromatic and non-basmati varieties managed to maintain their previous levels.

The market moving range-bound within a negative territory, said Mr Amit Chandna, Proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company. Retail traders are buying limited quantity because of the continuous fall in prices and sluggish domestic demand, he said.

Current levels of almost all rice varieties are below levels that they were ruling at during the corresponding period last year.

Pusa-1121 (steam) quoted at Rs 4,100 a quintal, while Pusa-1121 (sela) was at Rs 3,400-3,425. Duplicate basmati sold at Rs 3,175-3,200 a quintal. Pure basmati (raw) sold at Rs 4,500-4,550 a quintal, while pure basmati (sela) sold at Rs 4,100. For the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar sold at Rs 3,320, Dubar (Rs 2,800, while Mongra was trading at Rs 2,250.

Permal (sela) sold at Rs 2,150-2,200 a quintal, while Permal (raw) quoted at Rs 2,100-2,200.

Around 1,500 bags of aromatic paddy varieties arrived at the Karnal grain market terminal.

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Boycott of turmeric sales by farmers total



Erode, Jan. 25:

The boycott of turmeric markets by farmers and the subsequent closure of the four markets in Erode has affected the sales of Rs 5 crore worth turmeric.

For the second day in succession on Wednesday, all the 5,000 and odd turmeric farmers did not place samples in the four markets and boycotted the sales. According to the decision taken by the Turmeric Farmers Association of India, turmeric farmers boycotted the sale demanding the Union and State Governments to procure turmeric at Rs 10,000/quintal. Mr P.K. Deivasigamani, President of the Association, said: "The boycott is total and all the 15 lakh turmeric farmers in

India have joined the two-day strike and did not place take part in sales conducted at various places in India”.

He hoped that the Government will consider their plea for procuring the turmeric directly from farmers.

The turmeric Traders Association declared holiday for the markets for three days from Tuesday. Traders said that because of the closure of three day sales, they are expecting heavy arrival of turmeric on Friday and prices are likely to decrease.

Turmeric farmers also accept this. The new crop from Mysore and its surrounding areas such as Gundelpet, Chamrajnagar have started arriving for sale. Similarly, fresh crop from Chennampatty and parts of Gobichettipalayam have also started arriving for sale. Mr Deivasigamani said that on behalf of the Turmeric Farmers Association of India representations would be sent to all MLAs, MPs representing the turmeric-growing centres such as Erode, Mysore, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and other places, urging them to highlight the plight of turmeric farmers.

He said last year the turmeric fetched a record Rs 17,000 a quintal and now it is selling below Rs 4,000. The decrease is due to cartel formed by the traders, he charged.

Still, demand for Erode turmeric is high in north Indian towns as the curcumin content is high here. He said already the turmeric farmers in Sangli are on strike, staying away from markets for the past 11 days and also in Nizamabad the turmeric sales have been stopped for three days till January 26.

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