

KANNUR, July 30, 2012

'Tanjore Wilt' found in coconut palms in Kannur



•
Disease-hit: A 'Tanjore Wilt' affected coconut palm; (right) the mushroom-shaped fruiting bodies of fungus on the tree trunk.



Scientists ask farmers to destroy seriously affected trees

Agriculture experts have advised coconut growers in the district to manage healthy coconut palms properly so as to ward off the dreaded fungal disease of coconut known as 'Tanjore Wilt' which has been reported here.

The lethal disease, also called basal stem rot, foot rot and Ganoderma wilt, which was first reported in the country in Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu in 1952, has since been reported in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and in various places in Kerala. Now, it has been confirmed in Mayyil panchayat here by an expert group, headed by plant pathologist K.P. Mammooty, from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra-Kannur (KVK).

The team observed dead palms affected by the disease in Kuttyattur and Eachur. Farmers from Kanhirangad, Edakkom and Alappadamba also reported similar symptoms in the palms, they say. KVK has asked farmers to report to it if similar symptoms are noticed.

The affected palm, according to the experts, shows general wilting, yellowing, drying up and drooping of outer leaves in a characteristic skirt-like pattern around the trunk. Gradually, the infection spreads to the top and the younger leaves also become yellow, stunted and brittle,

they say. Stem bleeding at the base of palm, cracks and crevices on the trunk, and peeling of bark are reported. Middle-aged palms are more seriously affected. The affected palm bears profusely just before showing the symptoms.

Gradually, the produce comes down and the tree bears oblong-shaped small barren nuts.

Abnormal button shedding and rotting of inflorescence are also seen. After a year of contracting the disease, mushroom-shaped fruiting bodies of fungus can also be observed on the trunk. The disease spreads through soil. Drought, high soil temperature, less rainfall, flood, hardpan immediately below the soil surface, sandy soil and neglected palms are congenial for the development and spread of this disease, according to the scientists at the KVK.

Solutions

They advise farmers to destroy the seriously affected palms. The proper management methods include application of additional dose of lime and potash, provision of proper drainage facilities in garden, drip irrigation, inter-cropping with banana, and isolation of the affected palms from healthy ones by digging trenches of one-metre depth and half-metre breadth around 1.5 metre away from the base of the palm.

VANDANMEDU (IDUKKI DISTRICT): , July 30, 2012

Call to develop inland fish farming



Many benefits:Water Resources Minister P.J. Joseph inaugurating the Matsya Samruddhi project of the Fisheries Department by depositing fish seeds in a water tank at Vandanmedu in Idukki district on Sunday.

Water Resources Minister P.J. Joseph has said that the district had conditions favourable for inland fish farming and it should be developed in a sustained manner to provide additional income to farmers.

Inaugurating the district-level Matsaya Samruddhi project of the Fisheries Department here on Sunday, Mr. Joseph said that if the fish farming is done hand-in-hand with paddy cultivation, it will provide organic fertilization and help in rejuvenation of the soil.

The Minister said that the curse of the High Ranges was that the overuse of chemical pesticides and fertilizers was destroying the soil and water sources. It is high time to think about organic cultivation and alternative income generation through undertaking ventures along with farming.

He said that the mindset of the farmers should be changed from overuse of chemical pesticides to organic and income generating ventures using modern technology and favourable factors for production diversification. Water and the soil should be effectively used and protected from chemical residue for the future generation, he said, adding that construction of small check dams would help increase the groundwater level. Officials have been directed to prepare a master plan for the district in this regard. He said that such small check dams will help inland fish farming, providing additional income and increasing the fish wealth, which is depleting quickly.

Published: July 30, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2012 04:51 IST

Going back to the farm

Many varsities now offer diploma courses to retain rural youth in farming and livestock rearing



Those interested in continuing the family tradition of farming or animal rearing need not wait for four years to be trained in these fields. A two-year course can equip you with the basic information about them.

Agriculture and veterinary universities in Karnataka are offering undergraduate diploma and short-term courses to provide trained hands to the farming sector or to provide para-technical staff to corporate farms and the food processing industry. These are fast gaining popularity.

Increased demand for the undergraduate course in veterinary science introduced last year forced the Karnataka Veterinary Animal and Fisheries University to start two more polytechnic colleges this year. Similar is the case with the Universities of Agriculture Sciences in Bangalore, Dharwad and Raichur. They are expanding the number of polytechnic colleges and streams in which the course is offered.

The two-year, four-semester courses have an interesting content of 40 per cent theory and 60 per cent practical experience. Students are given a stipend of Rs. 1,000 per month throughout the course. The agriculture diploma curriculum includes lessons in agriculture, horticulture and even a bit of veterinary science.

Veterinary

The two-year diploma course in veterinary and animal husbandry started last year is exclusive for students from rural areas who have passed the SSLC examinations. After a year of theory classes, they undergo practical training for another year in a hospital and livestock farms by rotation. After a positive response to the course in Konehalli in Tumkur district, colleges have been started in Ganjigatti in Haveri district and Dornalli in Yadgir district. The course is residential.

Students are exposed to farms that breed livestock, sheep and goats, chicken and fish. They are also placed in veterinary hospitals by rotation. The first batch of 50 will complete the course in August next year.

“The main idea behind starting diploma courses is to retain rural youth in farming and livestock rearing,” says the former Vice-Chancellor of the KVAFSU, Suresh Honnappagol. Nowadays, there is a huge market for veterinary graduates and fewer veterinarians are attracted towards government service or teaching. The worst sufferers are industries that need middle-level managers. Graduate veterinarians are either not available or might demand higher salaries. This is where the diploma course makes a difference, he said.

He expressed confidence that there was a sustainable market for veterinarians with a diploma in corporate livestock farms, dairy, poultry and fish farms or food-based industries.

“Creating a cadre of para-technical staff in agriculture and allied subjects is very important,” said former Vice-Chancellor R.N. Srinivas Gowda. “The recent trend is that most graduates don’t go back to farming. They either join government departments or food processing companies. It is very difficult to get qualified personnel for jobs that demand low level of technical skills or to traditional farming. We hope diploma graduates will fill an important void in the system,” he said.

“Diploma students have not less than 50 per cent of the course content that is prescribed for graduate students. The two-semester practical training gives the much needed experience,” says Ravi Deshmukh, training coordinator at the Bidar Krishi Vigyan Kendra where the agriculture diploma students will be trained. Starting diploma and short-term courses is among the ideas promoted by the Central Government through its Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana. Diploma courses in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have created an army of agriculture technicians, he said.

“The University of Agriculture Sciences, Raichur, will conduct its courses in Raichur, Bidar, Bheemrayana Gudi in Yadgir and Hagari in Bellary. We have an intake of 35 in each college. We plan to provide 10 per cent reservation to diploma students in B.Sc agriculture courses from next year,” Suresh Patil, professor of UAS-Raichur, said.

Job market

Those who complete their diploma will be absorbed in private food processing industries, fertilizer and seed companies, sugar factories and agriculture and horticulture nurseries. They can also start counselling, he said. He hopes that in a few years, diploma agriculture students may be recruited by government departments.

UAS-Dharwad has polytechnic colleges in Dharwad, Bijapur, Sirsi (Uttara Kannada) Jamkhandi (Bagalkot), Akki Alur (Haveri) and Hukkeri (Belgaum). UAS-Bangalore offers diploma courses in its colleges in Bangalore, Mandya and Hassan. Boys and girls are admitted to both agriculture and veterinary courses.

Course fees are affordable and are in the range of Rs. 2,500 to Rs. 5,000 for two years for students of various categories.

Certificate courses

UAS-Raichur, UAS-Dharwad and UAS-Bangalore offer certificate courses. Courses in agronomy and agriculture marketing can be completed in six months. UAS-Bangalore offers a one-year diploma in Agriculture Extension Services for input dealers (DAESI). The candidates have an option of attending classes only on weekends. UAS-Bangalore offers a diploma in organic farming and a diploma in Bakery Products Technology for rural women.

Other courses

The undergraduate diploma course in animal welfare offered by the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bangalore, is popular among researchers and animal lovers. The Karnataka State Open University offers a one-year diploma in veterinary pharmacy.

KASARAGOD, July 30, 2012

Strap on and climb the palms

C.S. NARAYANAN KUTTY



The Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) here has developed a safety attachment to a coconut climbing device, an essential requirement with coconut climbers hard to come by.

The device, designed by the late Chemberi Joseph, an innovative coconut grower, hitherto did not fully address the safety concerns of the climbers, especially those new to the job.

The safety attachment puts in place two metal loops at the bottom of the handle of the right leg unit of the climbing machine. A six-metre steel rope with hooks at both ends is taken through the loops around the palm to make it a noose, and the free end is connected to a commercially available body harness.

Wire rope

The wire rope moves up and down with the climbing machine while in use. In case of any failure of the machine or if the climber slips out accidentally from the tree, the noose tightens around the coconut trunk and prevents the climber from falling further.

The climber can later lock the machine and step back to it and continue climbing, A.C. Mathew, a CPCRI scientist, told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

The safety attachment is independent of the climbing machine and gives foolproof safety to the climber, he said. It provides confidence, especially for beginners using the “Chemberi model climbing machine.” The wire rope and the modifications to the climbing machine cost Rs. 100. The prices of the body harness types available on the market starts at Rs. 300. The latest modification comes at a time when traditional labourers are hard to come by and charge hefty sums. The new gadget is expected to come to the rescue of farmers.

The CPCRI gives the ‘Chemberi model climbing machine’ safety boosters.

KOCHI, July 30, 2012

Coir expo in Kochi

Coir Board is holding a five-day coir technology exhibition on Marine Drive in the city from August 12 to reveal all coir industry-related technological breakthroughs achieved by research institutions.

The occasion will also be used to propagate a host of new and innovative products made from coir. At a recent press conference by the Coir Board, chairman G. Balachandran unveiled umbrellas and a jacket made from coir.

These are examples of new grounds broken by researchers in coir sectors, said Mr. Balachandran, who announced that a coir bank was being set up to meet the shortage of coir

fibre in the State. This will be the first time that the Coir Board is holding a technology expo and it is part of the efforts to introduce substantial mechanisation of the industry.

Products like coir pith, which earned Rs. 200 crore in exports last year, are new areas to be pursued , he said.

TIRUPUR, July 30, 2012

Farmers condemn demands for regulating cotton export

R. VIMAL KUMAR

'Prices of cotton can crash in the domestic market'

Farmers' community has slammed the demands of the industrial fraternity for regulating the export of cotton and cotton yarn in the wake of increasing prices of raw cotton in the domestic market during the last 10 days, terming the requisitions as 'selfish'.

Recently, the South India Hosiery Manufacturers Association (SIHMA) had made a representation to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh seeking regulation in the exports of both cotton as well as cotton yarn citing the crisis faced by the industry owing to reduction in profit margins because of various reasons.

The Association, in the memorandum, had also attributed the crisis in the sector to the retrograde steps of the Central Government.

K.C.M.Balasubramaniam, a retired agriculture economist from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and now a farmer himself, pointed out that it was ridiculous to ask for restriction on export of cotton at a time when the same apparel manufacturers did not want any barrier for export of their produce or its sale within the country.

"This is an open economy and restricting the export of cotton will affect the farmers as prices could crash in the domestic market," he said.

According to Mr. Balasubramaniam, reduction in profitability has occurred in the textile industry mainly owing to inefficiency of the manufacturers in cutting unwanted costs during production, inability to diversify product portfolio to cater to newer segments in the markets and also due to factors such as substantial increase in power costs.

The agrarian fraternity pointed out that the current increase in prices of cotton was mainly speculative in nature occurred owing to the projections of later arrival of cotton in the coming season beginning on October 1.

“Instead of asking for regulation in exports, the apparel industry should appeal for crackdown on people hoarding cotton within the country,” they said.

July 30, 2012

Hoping for a good harvest



A farmer and his wife carrying paddy saplings to their field for transplantation near Keshpur in Ganjam district on Sunday. Transplantation of paddy has been delayed in the region due to delayed rains.

MYSORE, July 30, 2012

95 p.c. of standing crops damaged in Mysore

Joint Director of Agriculture K.R. Krishnaiah has said that nearly 95 per cent of the standing crops have been damaged owing to deficient rain in the district. Cultivation was done during pre-monsoon showers on two lakh hectares in the district.

“Our assessment says that nearly 95 per cent of standing crops such as jowar, sunflower, groundnut and pulses have been damaged. The crops cannot be revived in case of immediate rains. In the case of crops such as tobacco, 70 per cent of standing crops have been damaged,” he told *The Hindu*.

Owing to good summer showers in April this year, sowing was completed on nearly 50 per cent of agricultural lands in the district and crops suitable for cultivation in pre-monsoon showers were sown. “However, the failure of monsoon hit the crops. Barring some parts of Periyapatna taluk, the scenario in the rest of the district is very bad,” Mr. Krishnaiah said.

DINDIGUL, July 30, 2012

Vegetable market at Gopalpatti

Unutilised bus stand at Gopalpatti will be demolished and a vegetable market will be constructed there for the convenience of farmers living in around Gopalpatti.

A spacious bus shelter will be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs. 30 lakh at Gopalpatti.

Published: July 30, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: July 30, 2012 05:29 IST

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 74.63 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 558 cusecs and the discharge 1,200 cusecs.

KHAMMAM, July 30, 2012

Water released from Kinnerasani reservoir

Kinnerasani reservoir in Palvancha mandal is brimming with water, presenting a picturesque sight for the visitors.

The water level in the reservoir stood at 402 feet as against the full reservoir level of 407 feet on Sunday. The project authorities lifted three crest gates of the reservoir on Saturday night and discharged about 7,600 cusecs of water into the Godavari. However, the gates were closed at 4 a.m. on Sunday.

Visitors from far and near flocked to the project site in Palvancha mandal on Sunday. The visitors spent a gala time watching the scenic surroundings of the reservoir as well as the famous wildlife sanctuary.

Meanwhile, the officials have reportedly reviewed the arrangements for the likely visit of Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy to the project site during his Indiramma Bata programme in the district from August 10-12. Mr. Reddy is expected to formally inaugurate the right canal of the project marking the release of water to nearly 3000 acres in Palvancha mandal. The reservoir was constructed nearly four decades ago for catering to the water requirements of Kothagudem Thermal Power Station (KTPS) at Palvancha.



Mon, 30 Jul 2012

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Jul 30

Max Min

36.1° | 27.7°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 5:45

Humidity: 62%

Sunset: 18:39

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 993

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Jul 31

Max Min

35° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

Aug 1



Thursday

Aug 2



Friday

Aug 3



Saturday

Aug 4



Sunday

Aug 5



34° | 28°

Rainy

33° | 27°

Rainy

33° | 27°

Rainy

33° | 27°

Rainy

33° | 27°

Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

30 JUL, 2012, 12.27AM IST, BLOOMBERG

Sugar traders most bearish since April with Brazil harvest on track

LONDON: Sugar traders are the most bearish in three months on speculation that drier weather will accelerate harvesting in Brazil, the world's largest producer.

Ten of 16 analysts surveyed by Bloomberg said they expect raw sugar to drop next week and three were bullish. A further three were neutral, making the proportion of bears the highest since April 13.

Sugar output in Brazil's centre south, the biggest producing region, rose 2% in the first half of this month, industry group Unica said on July 25. Cane-growing areas will be mostly dry through the start of August, according Somar Meteorologia, a weather forecaster.

Prices rebounded from a 21-month low last month and entered a bull market on July 9 after rain in May and June delayed Brazil's harvesting and exports.

Sugar is now poised for its worst weekly performance since March as the drier weather eased concern about the crop and refocused attention on the prospects for a glut. [Czarnikow Group](#), which traded the commodity in 90 countries last year, is forecasting a second consecutive surplus in the season that starts on October 1.

"The harvest in Brazil is catching up and that is a good bearish signal for the market," said Jonathan Bouchet, a trader at [Boman Capital](#), a Geneva-based hedge fund. "The weather in South America at the moment is adequate to harvest and ship, which will increase supplies and keep pressure on prices."

While raw sugar rose as much as 27% since June 4 on the ICE Futures US exchange, futures are still 3.4% lower for the year at 22.5 cents a pound.

The Standard & Poor's GSCI gauge of 24 commodities fell 1.2% and the MSCI All-Country World Index of equities gained 3.7%. Treasuries returned 3.1%, a Bank of America Corp index shows.

Sugar also jumped in the past several weeks as India's monsoon, which brings 70% of the country's rain, was 22% less than average in the June 1-July 23 period, according to the national weather office.



Weak monsoon takes toll on veggie market

MONDAY, 30 JULY 2012 00:09

TSHECHU BHUTIA | NEW DELHI

Aam admi has started to feel the pinch of weak monsoon. The prices of vegetables and fruits in the national capital have shot through the roof. The last one week saw a leap of at least 20 to 100 per cent in the prices of vegetables and fruits.

Among the key vegetables, tomatoes are selling at `40-60 kg, potatoes at `20-25 kg, and beans at `60-80 kg. Also, green peas were sold at `100 kg and cauliflower at `80 kg. Strangely, though the city Government claimed mechanism to monitor the prices of essential commodities was in placed, there was no control over retail prices of fruits and vegetables in the city.

The increase in prices of vegetables and fruits could be attributed to the increasing demand of seasonal vegetables and their short supply. "Weak monsoons have been the cause for the short supply of vegetables, and the clearance of stocked vegetables is also attributing to increase the prices of vegetables in the market. The Government has also been playing a major role towards inflation in food and essential commodities," said a shopkeeper in Malviya Nagar.

With the price rise in vegetables, the rates of fruits in the city were also found to be sold at steeping prices because of short supply of the stocks from Himachal Pradesh. The Apples were sold at 180-200 per kg and bananas are ranged between `40 and 60 kg. The apples available in the market are mostly imported from foreign countries because there has been no supply from the northern regions. Nisha Thakur, who owns many orchards in Shimla and Manali said, "The uncertain weather in the northern belt has severely damaged the quality of apples and its quantity."

According to the rates published by Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC), Azadpur — which is Asia's largest wholesale market of fruits and vegetables, prices of tomatoes ranges from `20-30 kg while in the local market, they are selling at `50-60 kg.

The hawkers sell vegetables keeping a profit of at least 30 per cent, after being purchased from the retailers in the Azadpur Market. This has also attributed to a steep rise of vegetables in the city. "It might look that inflation has really touched the common man, but the margins between the vendors and the hawkers also attributed to high cost of vegetables," said Amandeep, who owns a wholesale mandi in Azadpur market.

The prices of every commodity for retailers are determined by the quantity of procurement and the area of sales. The retail price of every commodity is quoted higher in posh areas against a middle-class locality.

"The cost of rapidly perishable essential commodities like vegetables is always higher because of high risks in handling and transportation. Therefore, the handling of such commodities, which includes transit and wastage, is generally higher," said Amandeep,

"Retailers suffer a loss of nearly 30 per cent in the weight of rapidly perishable vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower and tomatoes, due to poor handling and spoilage," added Amandeep.

Other additional factors that have contributed to the price rise in fruits and vegetables include the mandi tax, labour costs, transportation charges from the wholesale to the retail market.

Govt plans Rs 600/month food subsidy

SUNDAY, 29 JULY 2012 23:57

To reach out to the poor, an ambitious scheme called 'Dilli Annashree Yojna' is to be launched to provide a food subsidy of Rs 600 per month to two lakh vulnerable household not covered by

BPL and Antyodaya schemes. It is expected to cost the government Rs 150 crore in the current financial year. A proposal to this effect is likely to be brought before the Cabinet meeting on Monday.

The Government is also bringing a proposal to increase loan component upto Rs 5 lakh to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other backward Classes and Minorities. The Government will also give subsidy to 10 per cent of that amount.

Sources in the Government said that 'Dilli Annashree Yojna' is an ambitious project to provide food subsidy of Rs 600 per month as cash transfer to two lakh vulnerable household not covered by BPL and Antodaya schemes. The proposal is likely to be implemented from October 2. According to proposal, the amount would be paid to the senior-most female member of each household. It would be paid through banks. "With this, the government will be able to cater substantially to roti, shiksha and swasthya needs of the poor," said a Delhi Government Minister on the condition of anonymity.

The scheme was announced in the Budget this year too. The scheme may be useful for Public Distribution System as the Government is planning to do away to provide food items through ration shops. The scheme is being targetted to reach out poorest people who is ruling party vote bank in the national Capital. There are several schemes in the past few months initiated by Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit to ensure that the Congress retains to capital in 2013 Assembly polls. The schemes include allotment of flats to slum dwellers, ownership rights to 45 resettlement colonies, 150 anganwadi and gender resource centres, increase in widow pension and SC, ST and OBC pensions, Cooking gas connections to BPL families and financial assistance to madarsas. Some of the programme is to be announced formally from the next months. For instance, to make Delhi a kerosene free city, the project is to be launched from August 18-20 while Bhagidari atta will be launched from September 1.

The SC/ST/ OBC/ Minorities department is bringing a proposal to increase the loan component upto Rs five lakh to them. The department will give subsidy of 10 percent of the total amount. The loan will be available for SC, STs, OBC and Minorities peoples only.

Jharkhand prepares to fight drought with alternative crops

MONDAY, 30 JULY 2012 00:07

To mitigate drought like effects caused by inadequate rain across Bokaro, agricultural officials are on the move for a contingency plan to enable farmers to grow alternative crops.

“We have prepared block-level and panchayat-level plans to promote alternative crops; would take tough steps to ensure adequate fodder to animals”, district officials said.

A workshop was organised at co-operative colony on Friday to aware the farmers with alternative crops where officials stressed on the cultivation of beans, ladyfinger including Soyabeans, Arher, Kurthi and Sargujja as alternative crops.

Scanty rainfall has not only hit the paddy crop but also maize, oilseeds and pulses in the district. In the last nine years, large parts of Jharkhand have been declared drought-hit at least six times.

The problem of farmers can be gauged from the fact that only 12 per cent farmers irrigate their land through canals and other irrigation methods against the national average of 40 per cent. Jharkhand produces only half of the foodgrains of its total

Business Standard

Monday, Jul 30, 2012

Turmeric down 2% on profit-booking

Subdued spot demand, higher margin contribute to fall

Press Trust of India / New Delhi July 30, 2012, 11:23 IST



Amid continued profit-booking by speculators after recent gains and subdued spot demand, turmeric futures prices further fell by 1.99% to Rs 5,826 per quintal today.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), turmeric for delivery in September fell by Rs 118, or 1.99%, to Rs 5,826 per quintal, with an open interest of 15,915 lots.

August turmeric shed Rs 114, or 1.98%, to Rs 5,652 per quintal in 11,755 lots.

Market analysts said sustained profit-booking by speculators at prevailing levels and weak demand in the spot market kept pressure on turmeric prices at the futures market.

Besides, measures by the NCDEX like raising the special margin on long position to 40% from the existing 20% to check excess volatility in the prices, weighed on turmeric, they said.

Pepper prices rise on output concerns

Weak rainfall in cultivating regions strengthens August contract by 0.92%

Press Trust of India / New Delhi July 30, 2012, 11:06 IST



Pepper futures prices rose by Rs 405 to Rs 44,390 per quintal today as speculators created fresh positions over output concerns, following weak rainfall in cultivating regions. At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, pepper for delivery in August rose by Rs 405, or 0.92%, to Rs 44,390 per quintal, with an open interest of 5,480 lots. The September contract moved up by Rs 315, or 0.71%, to Rs 44,545 per quintal in 2,481 lots. Market analysts said speculative positions created by participants over deficient rainfall in key growing regions, which may hurt output, influenced pepper at futures trade.

Sugar up 0.65% on spot demand

Deficient monsoon supports price rise

Press Trust of India / New Delhi July 30, 2012, 10:51 IST



Sugar futures prices today rose by 0.65% to Rs 3,429 per quintal on the back of strong demand from bulk consumers in spot market even as the government released more sugar in the open market.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, sugar for delivery in September traded Rs 22, or 0.65%, higher at Rs 3,429 per quintal, with an open interest for 35,100 lots.

August sugar traded Rs 17, or 0.50%, higher at Rs 3,387 per quintal, with an open interest of 24,160 lots.

Analysts attributed the rise in sugar futures to strong demand in the physical markets, driven by the festive season.

Even the government's decision to release 2.9 lakh tonnes of sugar in the open market failed to check the persistent rise in sugar prices.

Deficient monsoon in almost all key sugar producing regions, which could hurt output next year, supported the upside in prices, they said.

FCI hikes open market wheat price by 10% for bulk users

Move follows ministerial group's nod to sale of 3 mn tonnes to bulk users under open market sales scheme

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

The Food Corporation of India (FCI), the nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains, has increased the prices of wheat being sold to bulk consumers by 10% to Rs 1,285 a quintal, a top official said.

Last month, the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM) had approved the sale of 3 million tonnes of wheat to bulk users (such as flour millers and biscuit makers) under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS).

Subsequently, FCI issued tenders for 13 lakh tonne wheat to be sold during July-September at a base price of Rs 1,170 a quintal.

"As prices in the open market are ruling higher than Rs 1,170 per quintal, we decided to hike the grain price under the scheme to Rs 1,285 per quintal," FCI Chairman and Managing Director Amar Singh told PTI. The order has been issued, he added.

"In last meeting, the EGoM had directed that wheat should be sold at Rs 1,170 per quintal during July-September period and at Rs 1,285 per quintal from October onwards. But the Food Ministry took a decision to implement the price of Rs 1,285 per quintal from now itself," he added.

When asked about reports that tenders for wheat sale under OMSS has been discontinued, Singh said: "The sale of wheat under the OMSS has not been suspended. Of 13 lakh tonne, nearly 7 lakh tonne wheat has been sold through two tenders so far and the rest will continue."

He explained that fresh tenders have not been floated as FCI has sought clarity from Food Ministry on allocation of quantity to those states, which have already exhausted their quota in the first two tenders.

The entire allocated quantity has already been exhausted in Punjab (0.1 million tonne), Andhra Pradesh (18,978 tonne), West Bengal (11,563 tonne), Chattisgarh (10,823 tonne), Assam (10,186 tonne), Rajasthan (5,234 tonne) and Jharkhand (400 tonne), the FCI data showed.

The sale of wheat under OMSS have been slow in Karnataka, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), which have been allocated with maximum quantity of wheat.

Wheat sale to bulk users under the OMSS has been allowed to clear surplus foodgrains stocks in the government godowns, which is overflowing with record 82 million tonne foodgrains, as against the storage capacity of 64 million tonne.

The government's stocks have risen sharply due to record production and procurement in the last few years.

Turmeric, jeera prices hit lower circuit on panic selling

Sharleen D'Souza / Mumbai July 29, 2012, 0:07 IST

Fear of possible action against the price rise for agricultural commodities pulled jeera and turmeric down to the lower circuit on the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) today.

While turmeric contracts due for expiry in the near month plunged to Rs 5,766 a quintal, jeera fell to close at Rs 15,620 a quintal. The two sensitive commodities in the spices complex came under the government's scanner due to exorbitant price rises in the last month. Data compiled by NCDEX showed turmeric prices surged 37 per cent in the last month, while jeera prices rose nine per cent, with intermittent price volatility.

The Ministry of Consumer Affairs has convened a meeting on Tuesday to take stock of the situation. Consumer Affairs Minister K V Thomas had earlier indicated the ministry had guided the Forward Markets Commission (FMC) to take suitable action to curb the price rise for these two sensitive commodities.

The deficient monsoon is also contributing to the rise in prices. The India Meteorological Department has estimated India would miss the rainfall target for July, a crucial month for turmeric sowing, as the commodity requires intermittent rainfall for plant germination.

"The acreage under turmeric is likely to fall 30 per cent this season, apparently due to farmers' disinterest in planting this commodity. Last year, a bumper output helped reduce prices in the spot market to below-production costs. Farmers, therefore, switched to other remunerative crops," said Ajay Kedia, managing director of Kedia Commodities, a city-based research firm. Broadly, the overall sentiment for agricultural commodities is negative, owing to rainfall this season being about 22 per cent below normal.

The jeera market is seeing panic-selling, owing to fear of possible action by FMC to curb prices. Stockists are now considering exiting the market on news the government was closely tracking the movement of agricultural commodities. The FMC, meanwhile, is playing margin games to control prices. The special margin on turmeric has been increased from 20 per cent (in cash) to 40 per cent on the long side on all running, as well as yet-to-be-launched contracts.

“Jeera has also seen heavy profit booking due to the market's concern on the meeting to be held on Tuesday. Another reason for jeera hitting the lower circuit is demand not pouring in at higher levels,” said Fiyaz Hudani, research analyst with Kotak Commodity Services.

“Fundamentals are supportive to a spurt in prices. Therefore, the price of the commodity should rise. But owing to the scheduled meeting on Tuesday, traders are booking profits,” he added.

THE HINDU Business Line

Soyabean futures dip 10% in last one week

Suresh P. Iyengar



As per the Government's fourth advance estimates, soyabean output was pegged at 12.28 mt in 2011-12.

Mumbai, July 30:

Soyabean futures on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) dipped 10 per cent to Rs 4,556 a quintal in the last one week tracking the international price trend.

The special margin of five per cent on NCDEX was increased to 20 per cent on all the contracts.

The spot market price in Indore also fell five per cent to Rs 4,677 a quintal.

Area under oilseeds cultivation improved to 138.33 lakh hectares till July 27 against 134.45 lakh hectares covered in the same period last year.

As per the Government's fourth advance estimates, oilseeds production was pegged at 30.01 million tonnes. Of this, soyabean output was pegged at 12.28 mt in 2011-12. The US oilseeds production is estimated to be lower by 4.2 mt at 92.7 mt.

Refined soya oil on NCDEX and crude palm oil (CPO) on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) settled lower last week. Also, lower demand capped the upside in edible oil prices.

India imported 124,125 tonnes of refined palm oil in June, down nearly 25 per cent from May. Total vegetable oil imports in June were 783,315 tonnes, down 12.7 per cent

Refined soya oil and CPO may trade lower on account of lower than normal demand of edible oil during this festival season.

Pepper remains hot on tight supply

G. K. Nair

Kochi, July 29:

Pepper prices were highly volatile last week on bullish activities. Arrivals of farm grade pepper continued to remain tight.

Availability on the exchange platform was also limited. Domestic demand started picking up following the monsoon in some parts of north India. Buying interest was seen from big investors in commodities to corner whatever material was available anticipating a further shortfall because of unfavourable weather conditions. Meanwhile, there were reports of close monitoring of the market by the Forward Markets Commission (FMC). Latest statements by the Commission and the Union Minister, Prof K.V. Thomas, is said to have created a fear psychosis in the minds of many in the trade. They said if the regulator decides to close down futures trading in pepper because of high volatility and excessive speculation as Indian pepper is out-priced in the world market by nearly \$1,300 a tonne compared with other origin, the decision at this stage "will be suicidal for the genuine hedgers." The black pepper futures delivery market at the national

exchange platform NCDEX traded on Friday with much lower turnover compared with the the previous day and the net open position at close was higher compared with Thursday.

Reports quoted the FMC Chairman and the Consumer Affairs Minister, Prof K.V. Thomas as saying that the regulator would take action when required and, if need be they will ban futures trading in such commodities which are highly volatile and trading speculatively. Prices shot up last week on the exchange. The August, September and October contracts increased by Rs 775, Rs 590 and Rs 485 respectively to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 44,050, Rs 44,240 and Rs 44,660 a quintal. Total turnover increased by 3,060 tonnes to 27,169 tonnes. Total open interest went up by 1,744 tonnes to 8,017 tonnes. Spot prices soared by Rs 800 a quintal to close at Rs 40,900 (ungarbled) and Rs 42,400 (garbled) a quintal on strong buying support. Meanwhile, overseas reports were both bullish and bearish. Some indicated that in Vietnam farmers were being advised to hold back as prices would move up after some time. At the same time, some others were saying that the next Vietnamese crop would be around 1.5 lakh tonnes and hence holding back would be suicidal. However, the actual availability position in all the other origins is still unclear. But prices there were far easier and much below the Malabar parity. For MG 1, there is huge domestic market here. Indian exports during Jan-June 2012 stood at 10,197 tonnes as against 9,059 tonnes in the corresponding period last year. As against this imports during the same period in 2012 were at 6,730 tonnes compared with 6,288 tonnes in Jan- June 2011.

Area under paddy cultivation shrinks in Bengal's rice bowl

Shobha Roy



Weather-driven: Farmers engaged in transplantation work at Boromuriya village of Golsi block in Burdwan district. Transplantation, which usually gets completed by the end of July or early August, has been delayed due to poor monsoon.

Kolkata, July 29:

Sheikh Rabiul of Boromuriya village at Golsi block in Burdwan district has scaled down area under paddy cultivation by over one-third this year.

Of his little over seven acre land, approximately five acres have been used for sowing paddy. Traditionally a rice farmer, he is now considering opportunities to sow cash crop in the rest of the land.

Burdwan is the rice bowl of West Bengal, producing three paddy crops a year. But lack of remunerative prices during the last couple of seasons forced a large number of farmers in the region to reduce sowing area under paddy in this kharif season.

“Last year, I produced close to 300 bags (of 60 kg each) of paddy. I could only sell 100 bags while the rest is still lying with me,” Rabiul told Business Line.

The 35-year-old farmer could not repay the loan last year and is now borrowing money from private lenders to sustain the current season. “Another bad season and I will be in for real trouble,” he says.

Procurement system

Over and above the regular issues related to agri-marketing opportunities, Ms Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal Government’s decision to drive middlemen away from the market and put rice mills in sole charge of procuring paddy from farmers, added to the liquidity crisis.

As the State Government fixed support price for paddy without much back-up on rice procurement end, rice mills landed in a cash crunch and did not pick up the produce from farmers.

In the end, farmers were left at the mercy of the open market. “We are unable to offload our last year’s produce. We are, therefore, holding on to the stock in anticipation of getting better price by selling it in the open market this year,” said Salauddin Mullah.

Poor rains

The steep rise in fertiliser prices and poor rains have only worsened the situation.

“Price of key fertilisers such as di-ammonium phosphate and potash and pesticides has more than doubled in the last one year. The price that we are getting does not even help us cover our production cost,” he said.

The delayed monsoon is also likely to impact productivity of the crop. “Transplantation has to be done within 18-22 days of sowing of the crop; otherwise, yield will get affected. But, for transplantation, we need good rains,” said Nazib Sheikh, another farmer.

According to the District Agricultural Officer, close to 10-15 per cent of the transplantation work has been done in the district till date, against 30-35 per cent last year. “Transplantation will pick up soon as the water from DVC dam will be released this week,” he said.

Traditional rice varieties vanishing in Kerala: Study

PTI



Thiruvananthapuram, July 29:

Traditional rice varieties of Kerala appeared to be vanishing as a study has found as many 55 species of paddy seeds extinct in Wayanad district in northern part of the state due to various reasons.

Nearly 160 varieties of paddy varieties, including 78 traditional ones, were being cultivated in Waynad and the study found 55 of them have become extinct.

The study was conducted by Kerala State Biodiversity Board as part of preparing the People's Biodiversity Registry (PBR) under the Centre's Biodiversity Act-2002.

An analysis of data compiled under the study showed varieties such as 'Anchoodan', 'Chara', 'Cheera' 'Nellu', 'Chuvannaraan', 'Jeerakachanna' and 'Kochandan' have vanished, Biodiversity Board Member-Secretary Mr K P Laladhas told PTI.

Low yield and promotion of high breed variety seeds and high-cost in continuing the cultivation with traditional seeds were some of the reasons for this phenomenon, he said.

Farmers were reluctant to cultivate low yielding varieties. However, the mandate of the Board was to conserve and promote all types of biodiversity whether positive or negative, he said.

He said some farmers still would have stocks of small quantity of traditional seed varieties and the board would approach them and encourage them to cultivate those varieties.

The government should also give some incentives to farmers who take up the cultivation of traditional varieties of paddy, he said.

FCI hikes wheat price by 10% for bulk users

PTI



Wheat sale to bulk users under the Open Market Sale Scheme has been allowed to clear surplus foodgrains stocks in the government godowns, which is overflowing with record 82 mt foodgrains against the storage capacity of 64 mt.

New Delhi, July 29:

The Food Corporation of India, the nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains, has increased the prices of wheat being sold to bulk consumers by 10 per cent to Rs 1,285 a quintal, a top official said.

Last month, the Empowered Group of Ministers had approved the sale of 3 million tonnes of wheat to bulk users (such as flour millers and biscuit makers) under the Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS).

Subsequently, FCI issued tenders for 13 lakh tonne wheat to be sold during July-September at a base price of Rs 1,170 a quintal.

“As prices in the open market are ruling higher than Rs 1,170 per quintal, we decided to hike the grain price under the scheme to Rs 1,285 per quintal,” the FCI Chairman and Managing Director, Mr Amar Singh, told PTI.

The order has been issued, he added.

“In last meeting, the EGoM had directed that wheat should be sold at Rs 1,170 per quintal during July-September period and at Rs 1,285 per quintal from October onwards. But the Food Ministry took a decision to implement the price of Rs 1,285 per quintal from now itself,” he added.

Asked about reports that tenders for wheat sale under OMSS has been discontinued, Mr Singh said: “The sale of wheat under the OMSS has not been suspended. Of 13 lakh tonnes, nearly 7 lakh tonnes wheat has been sold through two tenders so far and the rest will continue.”

He explained that fresh tenders have not been floated as FCI has sought clarity from the Food Ministry on allocation of quantity to those States, which have already exhausted their quota in the first two tenders.

The entire allocated quantity has already been exhausted in Punjab (0.1 million tonne), Andhra Pradesh (18,978 tonne), West Bengal (11,563 tonne), Chhattisgarh (10,823 tonne), Assam (10,186 tonne), Rajasthan (5,234 tonne) and Jharkhand (400 tonne), the FCI data showed.

The sale of wheat under OMSS has been slow in Karnataka, Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), which have been allocated with maximum quantity of wheat.

Wheat sale to bulk users under the OMSS has been allowed to clear surplus foodgrains stocks in the government godowns, which is overflowing with record 82 million tonne foodgrains against the storage capacity of 64 million tonne.

The Government's stocks have risen sharply due to record production and procurement in the last few years.