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United they reap the benefits

M. K. Ananth



The Hindu Members of the Chinnamanali Integrated Farmers Club at the raised goat shed owned by one of its member. Photo: M.K. Ananth

TALES FROM THE HINTERLAND Chinnamanali ryots take up integrated farming to enhance livelihood

“I was frustrated with the poor returns agriculture fetched me over the last 40 years...in fact a question mark loomed over my future as a farmer,” recalled S. Lakshmanan, a sexagenarian farmer in Chinnamanali near Elachipalayam.

It was at this low point that he decided to give integrated farming a try and joined the 'Chinnamanali Integrated Farmers Club' (CIFC) a few months ago. And, as it turned out, it was well worth the try as he has been able to turn around agricultural fortunes with the support of fellow members.

In Namakkal, one of the driest districts in Tamil Nadu where ryots are downbeat over the poor yield in their fields due to poor rainfall and other farm related issues, the CIFC formed by a group of 17 farmers, including six women, is making a difference to the lives of despairing farmers.

Farmer-members of this club —the first of its kind in the State to be established with the support of the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) —have demonstrated the benefits of working shoulder-to-shoulder and of adopting an integrated approach to agriculture.

“Labour shortage and poor prices for the produce are the other main areas of concern for farmers like me who know no other means of livelihood. I have joined this club as a small integrated farmer and now I am getting good returns with a few milch cows and goats, with technical support from other member farmers. I will soon expand to other livestock,” says another member K. Vijayalakshmi (35).

Her club compatriot P. Alagesan attributed the success of this small group to team spirit. “We don't face labour shortage as we work in the farms and fields of other members – along with our families. We have restored the tradition of farmers lending a helping hand to each other in difficult times,” he said.

The CIFC members were inspired by the example set by their pro-active president S. Thiyagarajan, a B. Pharm graduate, who turned away from a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry to embrace agriculture in 2007 by setting up a piggery. Also, he has now got a goat shed with about 100 animals, cows and buffalos, carp fish pond, beehives, few rabbits, egg laying and desi chicken.

And, consider the fact that he was able to make a net profit of about Rs.7 lakh a year without big investments. “Starting the club has been mutually beneficial to all farmers. Most of them have a couple of livestock varieties and are expanding on witnessing the successful outcomes in other members' farms,” said Mr. Thiyagarajan.

There are also members who don't have livestock but have established feeder chains to provide fodder to the cattle, he said.

The CIFIC has also brought in standard operating procedures to farming. “Farmers now have a breakdown of their daily, weekly, monthly and annual expenses and are getting to learn how to meet the expenditure through an integrated approach,” Mr. Alagesan said.

For instance, farmers are mentored to use the income generated from sale of milk for their daily expenses, revenue from chicken for weekly expenses and incomes from other livestock for their other major investments and expenses.

The CIFIC has also made marketing more viable as these small farmers are able to pool their yields and undertake bulk orders for goats, pigs and chicken. “We learnt that selling products in the retail yields more returns than selling it to traders, so we have set our eyes on making value-added livestock products and selling them on our own,” he said.

According to B. Mohan, Head and Programme Coordinator of the KVK in Namakkal, the CIFIC has been linked up with agriculture and related departments such as agricultural engineering, horticulture and animal husbandry besides primary cooperative and nationalised banks from whom the members get guidance from time to time for betterment.

MACHILIPATNAM, June 25, 2012

Excess rainfall a boost to kharif crop

Farmers start raising paddy, sugarcane, cotton, groundnut after first spell of rain



With hope in his heart: A farmer tilling land to sow seed in Chandrala village in Krishna district.—
PHOTO: RAJU. V.

With the district receiving more than average rainfall, farmers are busy in agriculture works during the ongoing kharif season in Krishna district. Farmers started raising paddy, sugarcane, cotton, groundnut and other crops after the first spell of rain.

The district received an average rainfall of 102.9 mm as on date while the normal rainfall for June is 98 mm, said the district officials. The total irrigated area during kharif was about 2.80 lakh hectares in the district and officials were maintaining sufficient quantity of seed, pesticides and fertilizer stocks, said Joint Director (Agriculture) K.S.V. Prasad.

“About 5 lakh farmers will raise paddy in 2.70 lakh hectares, cotton in 55,000 hectares, sugarcane 16,000 hcts, pulses 15,000 hcts, chilly 10,000 hcts, maize and groundnut in about 5,000 hectares each during kharif season in the district”, said the JD. Mr. Prasad said that paddy will be the main crop and farmers will raise BPT-5204 and MTU-1061 varieties in maximum area.

Paddy was being raised in Vijayawada Rural mandal, Pamarru, Gudlavalleru, Movva, Challapalli, Ghantasala, Gudivada, Pedda Parupudi, Kankipadu and Thotlavalluru mandals, he said. Assistant Statistical Officer (Agriculture Department) SK. Mohiuddin said that maximum rainfall was recorded in Tiruvuru, Gampalagudem, Mylavaram, Veerlapadu and other upland mandals. While scanty rainfall occurred in Nandigama, Kanchikacherla and Ibrahimpatnam mandals in the district. Farmers started agriculture works after the first spell of rains, and sowed paddy nurseries in about 700 hectares, sugar cane in 15,000 hcts, cotton in 4,000 hcts. and groundnut in about 2,000 hectares till date. Farmers will also raise green gram, red and black gram along with paddy and other crops, said the ASO.

Meanwhile, the Revenue and Agriculture departments’ officials are arranging awareness meetings on utilisation of all varieties of cotton seed and were distributing seed to the farmers in the district.

THENI, June 25, 2012

Women farm labourers become entrepreneurs

K. RAJU

Thanks to perfect community participation, enthusiasm



INSPIRING: A busy woman member of the Dhanalakshmi Cooperative Milk Federation at Paaluthu in Theni district.— PHOTO: G. KARTHIKEYAN.

: Perfect community participation and abundant enthusiasm transform a group of women agriculture labourers at Paaluthu in Kadamalaigundu union into proud entrepreneurs, thanks to timely financial assistance and effective functioning of Poverty Eradication Society under the control of Pudhu Vaazhvu scheme.

A group of 36 women formed Dhanalakshmi Cooperative Milk Federation as income generation activity.

Initially, the members had no money to buy cows as all were belonging to poorest of the poor category.

Having understood the importance of clusters and combined efforts, these women joined hands and formed a panchayat-level federation to get financial assistance from the government.

Initially, we had received Rs.5 lakhs from the government and later another Rs.3.5 lakhs to buy hybrid cows. Each member shared financial burden and bought one or two hybrid cows depending up on their capability and confidence to repay loan, says team head M. Muthumani of Paaluthu.

“All the cattle have insurance cover to prevent any loss in case of death or disease.”

Now, the total milk production of these members is 240 litres — 130 litres in the morning and 110 litre in the evening — of milk a day.

“We need not worry about marketing our produce. We have a tie-up with Aavin. They procure the entire quantity of milk from us regularly. They also do spot procurement and this helps in saving transport expenses considerably,” she adds.

“From grazing to drawing milk, we do it together.”

The society never faced labour crisis as they have mechanised most of its activities. Milking machines are being used to draw milk from the cattle.

Initially, we were afraid of using machines to draw milk. But some of our members were sent to Erode Aavin for using the machines, says R. Vanathangam another member.

We want to make this dairy a self-reliant in all respects. To meet the cattle feed needs, an SHG group at a nearby village is being encouraged to cultivate fodder and manufacture cattle feed.

Availability feed will slash freight charges considerably and ultimately scale down production costs, she points out.

At present, the society has been producing azola, a natural feed to boost milk yield. These enterprising rural women have several ambitious plans for future development. It plans to re-invest their profit in the society to boost production and for future development. To begin with, their cattle population will be increased to boost milk production.

They have plans to buy agriculture land on its own to produce fodder. The number of members will be increased to handle more cattle.

Value-addition will be their major goal not only to improve profit but also to provide quality products to rural consumers, says Ms. Vanathangam.

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Taking the poison out of our food



Aamir Khan

THE AAMIR KHAN COLUMN I personally feel we have no option but to move gradually towards organic farming.

I am not someone who usually goes shopping for vegetables or even other food stuff. My present professional requirements don't allow me this luxury. But I remember when I was a child I would often accompany my mother or my aunt when they went shopping for vegetables, fruits and other food stuff. I remember being thoroughly bored during these trips. They would spend hours selecting vegetables, examining each fruit or vegetable with great interest, pointing out flaws and insisting on the best quality and the most fresh food, and constantly comparing the quality offered by different sellers. All this while my friends were waiting for me to join them for a game of cricket! Today when I pass Khar market [in Mumbai], or the road that leads to Khar Telephone Exchange on Linking Road, which is lined by vegetable and fruit sellers, I look at all the women doing exactly what my mother and aunt used to do and it takes me down memory lane to those afternoons or evenings spent following them around carrying heavy bags. How much time our homemakers spend in selecting fresh food for us — little do we realise that no matter how fresh the vegetable or fruit maybe, it may still contain high levels of poison in it.

We can test the freshness of a fruit by holding it, smelling it, giving it a soft squeeze, checking for bumps and spots and bruises. But how do we check the level of pesticides contained in it?

Why do we eat food? Obviously, because our body needs the nutrition in order to survive.

Nutritious food contributes to our physical and mental growth, our well-being, our ability to fight diseases, etc. But if we consume large amounts of pesticide along with our food, then along with nutrition we are also consuming poison, and that defeats the very purpose of eating the food in the first place.

Green Revolution

In the 1960s, India experienced what was called the Green Revolution. Policy makers at that time felt that in order to feed the growing population in India, we needed to increase the productivity and per acre yield. In order to achieve this result, interventions were made in traditional natural organic farming — interventions that were big on chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Pests or insects damage our agricultural produce by feeding on it. To destroy or kill these pests we use what are called pesticides. Pesticides are basically poison to kill the insects. Apparently, of all the pesticide sprayed on the crop, only one per cent of it actually falls on the insect. As much as 99 per cent of it falls on the crop, gets absorbed in the soil, and/or water, gets carried a little distance by wind, etc. In this manner it gets into our food and, thereby, into us.

Nature has its own way of keeping a balance and therefore, each one of these pests which destroys our crops, also has predators. So broadly speaking there are two kinds of pests — vegetarian pests or those that feed on our crops, and non-vegetarian pests or those that feed on the pests that feed on our crops. A pesticide does not distinguish between veg and non-veg pests. It's a poison that kills both. So having killed our friend insects we are then left with those pests which have survived the onslaught of the pesticide. Their survival creates resistance in them to these pesticides, and to kill the same insects you have to spray more pesticides. It's a vicious circle. A circle from which we have consistently been removing our friendly insects; a circle which perhaps also results in us consuming more pesticides.

Plight of the farmer

If pesticides in our food affect us, how does it affect our farmers? Well the people spraying pesticides are in the immediate vicinity of the pesticide and therefore are much more exposed to it than us, the consumer. This is cited as one of the major health hazards for persons engaged in farming. Also, one of the stated reasons for farmer indebtedness is the huge cost of pesticides. An experiment with non-pesticide farming done in Andhra Pradesh which began with a few villages on 225 acres has been so successful that it has now spread across 35 lakh acres! And this has been possible because of the effort of a women's collective across villages with the support of the Andhra Pradesh government. Sikkim is the first State in India to go fully organic, with more States seriously looking to make the shift.

The arguments for and against pesticides are many and have been dealt with in great detail on our show. For me, the choice is simple: I personally feel we have no option but to move gradually towards organic farming. And, until such time that we are fully organic, we need a

government regulatory authority to do monthly checks on the food coming into wholesale markets across the country in all the different cities, and to monitor the amount of pesticide in our food.

In the meantime, live with this report from the Centre for Science and Environment: assuming that the pesticide content in each and every food product we consume does not exceed the MRL (Maximum Residue Limit) of pesticide in our food, and is at permissible level, even then, anyone with an average daily intake of various foods, will exceed the ADI (Acceptable Daily Intake) of pesticides by approximately 400 per cent!

CHENNAI, June 25, 2012

Government move to acquire farm land assailed

PMK to stage demonstration on July 9

The Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) has urged the government to give up the move to acquire agricultural land for establishing an industrial cluster at Arakkonam.

In a statement here on Sunday, the party founder, S. Ramadoss, pointed to the reports in circulation that the government was planning to acquire agricultural lands to establish SIPCOT (State Industries Promotion Corporation) in Arakkonam, Vellore district. The party would hold a demonstration on July 9 at Arakkonam against the move, he said.

Dr. Ramadoss alleged that the government also proposed to acquire vast agricultural land measuring around 16,400 acres in six districts to establish industrial clusters. Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had announced that a new land acquisition law would be enacted to protect the rights of the farmers but it had not been implemented yet.

The AIDMK regime's attempt to acquire the land for "rock bottom prices" to hand over it to the multinational companies would go against the mandate of the electorate.

The PMK's state executive committee meeting would be held in Chennai on June 26 to discuss the growth of party and to take decision on various crucial issues, according to G.K. Mani, party president.

The idea is to establish an industrial cluster at Arakkonam

Cauvery issue: farmers demand special law

Special Correspondent



Krishan Bir Chaudhary, national president, Bharatiya Krishak Samaj, (right) at a farmers' association meeting in Tiruchi on Sunday.

Various farmers' associations, which met here on Sunday to jointly chalk out a course of action on the Cauvery issue, requested Chief Minister Jayalalithaa to press the Central government to enact a special law under the Article 262 of the Constitution. They also demanded that 'distress sharing formula' be applied, taking into consideration the entire quantum of water and not after exhausting all the requirements of farmers in Karnataka.

(This meeting was convened in the backdrop of the Mettur Dam not receiving a drop of water from Karnataka and the Tamil Nadu government not opening the dam for delta irrigation on the scheduled date of June 12 thus jeopardising kuruvai crop on four lakh acres and a production of six lakh tonnes of paddy, said Puliur Nagarajan, district president of the Bharatiya Krishak Samaj. Farmers were apprehensive whether they would get water even for samba crop, he added.) The State government need not wait for any verdict from the Supreme Court. Only if the Central government were to intervene effectively as enunciated in this Article, there could be a solution to the vexed Cauvery issue, the farmers contended.

They demanded funds from the Centre to build barrages or construct dams across the Cauvery and Kollidam so that the surplus water available during the rainy season could be stored.

They also condemned indiscriminate sand quarrying in the course of the Cauvery in Tamil Nadu which would further aggravate the situation as it would spell doom for groundwater.

The meeting decided to organise a month-long campaign on “Tamil Nadu river water protection” from July 15. Those who took part included C. Vyapuri, United Agriculturists’ Association, S. Nallasamy, Cauvery Delta Agriculturists Association, Mahadhanapuram Rajaram, Cauvery Delta Farmers’ Welfare Association, Masilamani, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangham (CPI-M) and Siva.Suriyan, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangham (CPI).

June 25, 2012

Weather-based crop insurance scheme extended to kharif crops

Belgaum: The weather-based crop insurance scheme (WBCIS) being implemented for the benefit of agriculture farmers since 2008-09, has been extended to cover kharif crops for the year 2012-13.

According to officials in the Department of Agriculture here, the scheme would be implemented in the hoblis selected for both WBCIS and National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) in the district.

Officials said the scheme was being implemented by Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited and through commercial banks, regional rural banks and primary agriculture co-operative societies. All farmers who have availed themselves of crop loans must insure their crops only under WBCIS. Those who have not availed themselves of crop loans may insure one crop under either of the schemes.

The crops that can be insured, as far Belgaum district is concerned, are ragi, jowar, maize, toor dal, greengram, blackgram, sunflower, soyabean, avare and groundnut (all rain-fed crops).

Commercial and horticultural crops (cotton, onion and chilly) being cultivated on irrigated land and those in rain-fed areas such as cotton, onion, chilly and potato can be insured under the WBCIS.

The hoblis selected for implementation of the WBCIS are Anantpur, Athani, Kagwad, Telsang in Athani taluk; Nagarmunolli, Sadalga in Chikkodi taluk; Bailhongal, Kittur and Nesargi in Bailhongal taluk; Belgaum, Hirebagewadi, Kakti, Uchagon in Belgaum taluk; Arabhavi, Gokak, Kaujalgi in Gokak taluk; Hukkeri, Sankeshwar and Yamkanmardi in Hukkeri taluk; Bidi, Jamboti

and Khanapur in Khanapur taluk; Kudachi and Raibag in Raibag taluk; K. Chandargi, Katkol, Mudkavi, Sureban in Ramdurg taluk; Munvalli, Mukrgod, Saundatti, Yargatti in Saundatti taluk.

The last date for insuring crops under the WBCIS is July 31. The scheme is being extended through HDFC, Cholamandalam, and ICICI Lombard Insurance companies. For details, farmers may contact local commercial banks, Raitha Sampark Kendras and officials of the Department of Agriculture.

HYDERABAD, June 25, 2012

State urged to ensure seed, fertilizer supply

The A.P. State Economically Backward Classes Welfare Association has requested the State government to ensure proper supply of quality seed and fertilizer to the farming community. In a statement, president of the association V. Ravinder Reddy alleged on Sunday that lack of foresight had led to the shortage of the two key inputs.

Taking it as an opportunity, the traders were selling spurious seed and fertilizer to make easy money.

Raids on shops and dealers had come as a delayed measure, he said.

HYDERABAD, June 25, 2012

Village, mandal notified as insurance unit for crops

The government has notified village as the insurance unit for rice, maize and redgram and mandal as insurance unit for most other crops.

For some crops district has been made the insurance unit.

The State government issued orders notifying the crops and areas for implementation under National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS) – kharif 2012 and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) – Kharif 2012 on Saturday.

Indemnity claims

Further, the orders issued by Principal Secretary, Agriculture, V. Nagi Reddy, made it clear that the indemnity claims will be settled on the basis of yield data submitted by the government based on requisite number of Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) conducted under General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES) and not just on the basis of declaration of drought or gazette notification.

The order also notified the extent of damage for various levels of claims for each of the crops.

June 24, 2012

Tel Aviv expo gives farmers tips to tone up yield

Nearly 2,000 Indian farmers visited the 18th International Agricultural Exhibition, which concluded recently in Tel Aviv. They had come to learn of new technologies to increase crop yield.

The exhibition is held every three years.

“From Gujarat and Maharashtra alone, more than 1,200 farmers — 600 from each State — and about 40 from Tamil Nadu visited the fair,” said Sanyal Desai CEO, Radeecal Communications, one of the companies that represented India at the exhibition.

BJP president Nitin Gadkari and Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda also attended the event. The Tamil Nadu delegation was led by organic farming activist Thooran Nambi. “Each of us spent Rs.1,05,000 from our own pocket to attend this exhibition. In Gujarat or Maharashtra it was the government that sponsored the visit. No one from the government informed us. We got to know about this from some sources and then booked tickets through travel agents,” says Mr. Nambi. He reckons that India is better and richer than Israel in natural resources like water. “But in Israel, farmers have been able to succeed because the government supports them. It is fully aware that agriculture is the base of human development, and encourages its farmers.”

Thrifty water use

The delegation members all agree that the visit has made them more aware of the need for thrifty use of water and the importance of farmers’ co-operatives for marketing produce. “Israel has been able to succeed in agriculture because it uses water sparingly and makes full use of

solar energy. Both these have been a thing of contempt and neglect in our country,” says D. Palanisamy, a Coimbatore farmer.

Seek government support

The farmers feel that they can also work wonders, increasing yield or making optimum use of water. All they want is encouragement and motivation from the State government. For details, readers can contact Thooran Nambi at 9443045690.

HASSAN, June 24, 2012

Farmers in Hassan sell seed potato owing to lack of rain

They are selling it for Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 a kg



Desperate step:Famers are selling seed potato to merchants at the APMC yard in Hassan.—

File photo

Owing to lack of rain, potato farmers in the district are selling seed potato for less than half the price for which they were bought.

Potato growers say that even if they start sowing, they will not get any yield even to compensate their expenses. They are selling seeds for Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 a kg. Merchants at the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee yard here said many farmers were seen selling seeds to vegetable vendors. “Farmers, particularly those in rain-fed areas, have lost hopes of getting any yield this year. They sold seeds to us,” Tammannaiah, a merchant, said. They bought around 4 lakh bags, each weighing 50 kg, of seed potato from potato growers from Punjab for Rs. 1,300 a quintal. The price was fixed by the district administration in consultations with farmers’ representatives and people’s representatives. It was sufficient for sowing in 15,000 hectares (ha). Meanwhile, farmers who have irrigation facilities have completed sowing. Shakeel Ahmed, Deputy Director of Horticulture, said sowing was complete in over 10,000 ha. “Owing to lack of

rain, a major chunk of crop has gone waste. In several areas, germinated seeds have dried up. Only those who can water their crop can hope of getting back any yield,” he said.

Mr. Shakeel Ahmed said he was aware of farmers selling seeds. “They must have thought of getting back at least half of the money they spent on seed potato,” he said. Even farmers with irrigation facilities were finding it difficult as many borewells had dried up. For the last four years, farmers had been incurring losses owing to blight. Cold storage unit owners too are a worried lot as potato growers are some of their main clients. Pratap, owner of a cold storage unit here, said many like him were dependant on the yield of potatoes. “If there is no yield, we too will not get any business,” he said.

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Two coconut procurement centres for Theni district

Coconut procurement centres would be established at Periyakulam and Cumbum with the help of Theni District Agriculture Produces Marketing Committee so that farmers got a better price for their produce, said Collector K.S. Palanisamy.

Presiding over a agriculturists’ grievance day meeting at the Collectorate here on Friday evening, he said that a copra processing centre set up recently at Chinnamanur was a boon to coconut growers as value addition would fetch a better price for them. The Department of Cooperatives had set up this solar drier copra unit. Farmers could avail this facility for converting coconut into copra. Coconuts would be processed under a protected atmosphere and loss in processing could be minimised.

Sufficient stock of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides were kept ready at agriculture centres for the first crop of paddy cultivation in double-crop areas of the Cumbum Valley, he said.

When a section of farmers sought quality hybrid paddy seeds, he said that steps were being taken to supply high-quality seeds to the farmers through agriculture extension centres.

Agriculture officials were advised to check quality of inputs, pesticides and fertilizers periodically. A special review meeting in this connection would be convened every fortnight. The Collector would review the work of agriculture officials and pesticide inspectors, besides taking stock of distribution of seeds to farmers.

When a group of farmers said that planting of jackfruit trees in reserve forests would prevent straying of wild animals into villages, the Collector assured to implement their suggestions after consulting with forest officials.

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FCMS to be introduced from samba season

To utilise mobile phone technology; every detail of a farmer to be recorded

Technology to the rescue:Sandeep Saxena, Commissioner for Agriculture and Agri Business, explaining the usage of tablet PC to agriculture department officials in Tiruchi on Saturday.—
PHOTO:R.M. RAJARATHINAM.

The Farm Crop Management System (FCMS) will be introduced in Tiruchi district from the forthcoming samba season, said Sandeep Saxena, Commissioner for Agriculture and Agri Business, here on Saturday.

Addressing agricultural scientists, extension officers and officials from horticulture and agricultural engineering departments at a sensitisation programme on FCMS, he explained the challenges being faced by farmers in the light of various uncertainties, including onset of monsoon, non-availability of seeds, agricultural inputs not to speak of the scarcity of agricultural labourers.

He said the FCMS would put an end to these problems and would even attract rural youth to take to agriculture as an enterprise. "Today, I do not see a young farmer anywhere across the State, indicating that agriculture is not attractive," he said adding that the FCMS would bring a sea-change in this regard.

The goal of the FCMS, he said, was to increase the yield and to ensure attractive returns to the farmers.

Pointing out that lack of follow-up service for individual farmer was the main reason for the present system of extension service, Mr. Saxena said that the FCMS would utilise mobile phone technology. Every detail about the farmer would be recorded-right from the name, bank account number, type of crop cultivated, mode of irrigation adopted, farm inputs requirements so on and so forth.

Explaining the use of a tablet computer, he said that all the details about individual farmers would be entered into the gadget. "It would also include the fisheries, livestock details so that other departments would be able to collect data needed for their schemes," he said.

Compared to the strength of farmers, the number of extension officers or field workers was far less, he said that the FCMS would ensure a close follow-up on crop cultivation technique. The yield would be increased due to improvement in the quality of extension of service.

J. Sekar, Joint Director of Agriculture, in his address, said that Tiruchi was one of the six districts where the FCMS was being introduced. Micro level planning with a thrust on individual farmer was the highlight of the scheme. Soil test was one of the important factors for registering higher yield and the department has so far collected about 70,700 soil samples of which 58,800 had been analysed.

Soil guide had been issued to 20,390 farmers.

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Farmers urged to take up pre-sowing seed treatment

Scientists at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra have urged farmers to take up pre-sowing seed treatment to reduce the chance of crop diseases. Green gram, black gram, red gram and soya seeds need to be treated with rhizobium and phosphate solubilizing bacteria (PSB) for every acre, and each kilogram of seeds should be treated with four grams of trichoderma, they said. Ginger seeds should be soaked in a six-gram solution of metaloxil for half an hour and sown once dried. During sowing, a mixture of one quintal neem cake and one kilogram trichoderma should be scattered in the furrows as a disinfectant. The above mentioned chemicals are available at the KVK;. Details can be had on (08482) 244155, 244178.

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Finance Minister decries fertilizer price hike

Move will hit agricultural production: Mani

Finance Minister K.M. Mani has said that the Centre should be ready to withdraw the hike in prices of chemical fertilizers.

Speaking to reporters here on Saturday, Mr. Mani said that farmers were reeling under the steep rise in prices of chemical fertilizers.

“This will lead to the decrease in the use of fertilizers, which in turn will bring down agricultural production. When the country is going through an economic crisis, an increase in production that would boost GDP is the best option. This action of increasing the prices of fertilizers will not help achieve the food security that is now talked about,” he said.

He termed the hike as ‘an unimaginative step.’ Handing over the charge of increasing the price of fertilizers to fertilizer manufacturing companies was not a right decision, he said.

He expressed the hope that with Chief Minister Oommen Chandy meeting the Prime Minister on July 3 on the issue of hike in fertilizer prices, the Centre would re-consider the hike.

Coming down heavily on the statement of CPI(M) leader T.M. Thomas Isaac that CPI(M) did not believe in ‘Ahimsa,’ Mr. Mani said that the statement had ‘a tone of threat and smacked of violence.’

He said that efforts were on to set up the proposed rice bio-park in Kuttanad soon.

Steps have been taken to start an international research centre on below-sea farming in Kumarakom (as proposed in the Budget).

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- *Chandy to meet Prime Minister to discuss issue*
 - *Efforts on to set up rice bio-park in Kuttanad*
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hindustantimes

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We are what we eat

I am not someone who usually goes shopping for vegetables or even other food stuff. My present professional requirements don't allow me this luxury and nor do my professional

hazards. But I remember when I was a kid I have often accompanied my mom or my aunt when they would go out shopping for vegetables, fruits and other food stuff.

I remember being thoroughly bored during these trips. They would spend hours selecting vegetables, examining each fruit or vegetable with great interest, pointing out flaws and insisting on the best quality and the most fresh food, constantly comparing the quality offered by different sellers. All this, while my friends were waiting for me to join them in the game of cricket!

Today when I pass by Khar market, or the road that leads to Khar Telephone Exchange on Linking Rd, which is lined by vegetable and fruit sellers, I look at all the women doing exactly what my mother and aunt used to do and I am taken down memory lane to those afternoon or evenings when I was made to carry heavy bags and follow them around. How much time our Homemakers spend in selecting fresh food for us...and little do we realize that no matter how fresh the vegetable or fruit maybe, it may still contain a high degree of poison in it.

We can test the freshness of a fruit by holding it, smelling it, giving it a soft squeeze, checking for bumps and spots and bruises, but how do we check the level of pesticides contained in it?

Why do we eat food? Obviously, because our body needs the nutrition in order to survive. Nutritious food contributes to our physical and mental growth, our well-being, our ability to fight diseases etc. But if we consume large amounts of pesticide along with our food, then along with nutrition we are also consuming poison, and that defeats the very purpose of eating the food in the first place.

In the 60's India experienced what was called The Green Revolution in agriculture. Policy makers at that time felt that in order to feed the growing population in India, we need to start chemical farming. Chemical Farming would increase the productivity and per acre yield. And so interventions to the traditional natural organic farming were brought in. Interventions like chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Pests or insects damage our agricultural produce by feeding on it themselves. So to destroy or kill these pests we use what are called pesticides.

Pesticides are basically poison which kill the insects. Apparently, of all the pesticide sprayed on the crop, only 1% of it actually falls on the insect. 99% of it falls on the crop itself, gets absorbed in the soil, and/or water, gets carried a little distance by the wind etc. In this manner it gets into our food and thereby into us.

Nature has its own way of keeping a balance and therefore each of these pests which destroy our crops, also have predators. So broadly speaking there are two kinds of pests... vegetarian pests or those that feed on our crops, and non-vegetarian pests or those that feed on pests that feed on our crops. Pesticides don't distinguish between veg and non-veg pests. It's a poison, which kills both alike. So having killed our friend insects we are then left with those pests who have survived the onslaught of the pesticide. This survival makes them develop resistance to these pesticides, and then to kill the same insects you have to spray more pesticides. It's a vicious circle. A circle from which we have consistently been removing our friendly insects. A circle which perhaps also results in us consuming more pesticides.

If pesticides in our food affects us, how does it affect our farmers? Well the people spraying pesticides are in the immediate vicinity of the pesticide and therefore are much more exposed to it than us the consumers. This is cited as one of the major health hazards for persons engaged in farming. Also, one of the stated reasons for farmer indebtedness is the huge cost of pesticides.

An experiment with non-pesticide farming done in Andhra Pradesh which began with a few villages on two hundred and twenty five acres has been so successful that it has now spread across 35 lakh acres! And this has been possible because of the effort of a Women's Collective across villages with the support of the Andhra Pradesh government. Sikkim is the first state in India to go fully organic with more states seriously looking to make the shift.

The arguments for and against pesticides are many and have been dealt with in great detail on our show. For me the choice is simple, I personally feel we have no option but to move gradually towards organic farming. And, until such time that we are fully organic, we need a government regulatory authority which does monthly checks on the food coming into ALL the various wholesale markets all across the country in all the different cities, and monitors the amount of pesticide in our food.

In the meantime live with this report arrived at by CSE, Centre for Science and Environment: assuming that the pesticide content in each and every food product we consume does not exceed the MRL (Maximum Residue Limit) of pesticide in our food, and are at the permissible level, even then, as per an average diet of daily intake of various foods, we will be exceeding the ADI (Acceptable Daily Intake) of pesticides by approximately 400% !

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Jun 25

Max Min

40.1° | 27.2°

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 6:35

Humidity: 64%

Sunset: 18:03

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1005

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Tuesday, Jun 26

Max Min

35° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Jun 27	Thursday Jun 28	Friday Jun 29	Saturday Jun 30	Sunday Jul 1
33° 28°	32° 27°	33° 27°	33° 27°	31° 26°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

25 JUN, 2012, 06.28AM IST, SUTANUKA GHOSAL & MADHVI SALLY, ET BUREAU

Weak rupee, delayed rains to make oils, pulses costlier

KOLKATA/AHMEDABAD: The next fortnight is critical for edible oil and pulses, the two major imported commodities. If the rupee weakens further and sowing slows down due to a delay in the arrival of monsoon, prices of these two major commodities may move up pinching the

pockets of common man.

Edible oil players like Cargill India, Adani Wilmar and Emami Group are keeping a close watch on price movement and may revise prices in July or August.

Sowing of soyabean, one of the major kharif crops and a source of edible oil, has not picked up due to poor rains. "In some pockets of Maharashtra, there has been some sowing. We are expecting the monsoon to arrive in full vigour by the end of this month. Sowing may pick up in first week of July," said Rajesh Agrawal, spokesperson of the Soyabean Processors Association of India (SOPA). This year, the industry expects to achieve a 5%-7% increase in acreage to 110 lakh hectare. Weather conditions in the US are not favourable for soyabean while China has increased its purchases, putting pressure on prices. "We have seen an increase in demand due to Ramadan. Overall, prices of edible oil have risen 8%-10% in the short term," a trader said.

Malaysian crude palm oil prices have surged to a record since June 1. The September futures contracts on the Bursa Malaysia Derivatives Exchange have risen by 3.2% to 3,041 ringgit (\$964) per tonne. Crude palm oil prices have jumped 15% during the month.

Siraj Chaudhury, chairman of Cargill India, said: "There is sufficient stock of edible oil with the trade as of now. The next 15-20 days are critical for the edible oil industry. If the monsoon is good, there will be no panic in the market. However, we also have to keep a close watch on global markets because India is an importer of edible oil. Any call on prices will be taken after evaluating the entire scenario."

Adani Wilmar COO Angshu Mallick said the business was getting tough and would turn for the worse if rains were delayed. After a recent correction in prices by 75 paise to Rs 2 a litre, edible oil companies are in a fix over the depreciating rupee within a week. Adani Wilmar, which markets the Fortune brand, is the leader in the refined oil in consumer packs market with a volume share of about 15%.

Added Manish Goenka, director of Emami Group: "While rupee devaluation impacts every industry, many other factors such as the rise and fall of commodity prices impact the edible oil industry. Commodity prices have been going down. However, it is premature at this point in time

to evaluate the possible impact of a bad monsoon on our edible oil business."

The prices of pulses have already gone up. In Mumbai markets, the wholesale price of chana is ruling at Rs 44 a kg, masur at Rs 32 a kg, arhar (pigeon pea) at Rs 39 a kg and urad at Rs 34 a kg. "In the past one month, wholesale prices have increased by 5% to 6% while retail prices have gone up 10% to 15%. The weakening rupee has ensured that we import pulses according to our needs," said pulses importer Jindal Overseas Corporation MD Pradeep Jindal. The company annually imports approximately 1 lakh tonnes of pulses.

A crop failure in chana and the slow progress in sowing of arhar, tur and urad pulses across Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra are expected to keep pulses prices firm this year. On the NCDEX, chana for July delivery traded up 0.36% to Rs 4,238 per quintal with an open interest at 95,440 lots on Saturday. "If the rupee strengthens, prices will correct. However with farmers and traders holding the chana crop across Rajasthan in anticipation of good returns, prices are expected to firm up," said a Delhi-based trader.

DECCAN Chronicle

Published on *Deccan Chronicle* (<http://www.deccanchronicle.com>)

Price of eggs rises further

The cost of eggs in the state has reached an all-time high and the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC) on Saturday has fixed the price at Rs3.28 per egg. The poultry industry is reeling under the unchecked inflation and fuel price hike and the cost of egg and chicken in Tamil Nadu would rise further, NECC sources said. The schools have reopened and there is a good demand for eggs under the noon meal scheme. Last week the cost of egg was around

Rs3.20 paise and the price will escalate further because of the demand, Namakkal poultry traders said.

Source URL: <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/business/market/price-eggs-rises-further-505>

THE HINDU Business Line

Chana prices may remain firm due to tight supply

Suresh P. Iyengar

According to preliminary reports, pulses have been sown in 15.11 lakh hectares so far in the current sowing season against the target of 17.49 lakh hectares.

Mumbai, June 25:

Chana prices may remain firm due to lower supply in the domestic market coupled with weak rupee which has made imports costlier.



Besides tight supply, kharif pulses sowing have fallen due to delay in monsoon.

According to the India Meteorological Department, monsoon rains in 2012 would be 96 per cent of the long-term average overall, down from April forecast of 99 per cent.

About 36 per cent of the total pulses in India are grown in the kharif season.

According to preliminary reports, pulses have been sown in 15.11 lakh hectares so far in the current sowing season against the target of 17.49 lakh hectares.

Area, production

In Andhra Pradesh, the area under kharif pulses is down by 92 per cent to 0.07 lakh hectares compared with 0.92 lakh hectares in the same period last year.

Area under kharif pulses in Maharashtra is down by 6 per cent at 94,875 hectares against 1,00,431 hectares in the same period last year.

According to the third advance estimates, pulses output is pegged at 17.02 million tonnes in 2011-12 compared with 18.24 mt produced last year.

Chana output is estimated lower at 7.4 mt against 7.66 mt in the second estimate. Last year, chana production was at 8.22 mt.

Import data

According to the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, 20.23 lakh tonnes of peas, 2.03 lakh tonnes of chana, 4.32 lakh tonnes of urad and moong, 1.12 lakh tonnes of masoor and 4.26 lakh tonnes of tur have been imported between April 2011 and March 2012.

For 2012-13, the MSP of urad has been increased by 30 per cent to Rs 4,300 per quintal. The Government is yet to announce tur and moong MSP.

Gujarat to have first potato dehydration centre soon

PTI



The Centre has proposed to come up with an investment of Rs 19.5 crore in Palanpur town of north Gujarat.

Ahmedabad, June 25:

In a bid to preserve and enhance the shelf-life of potatoes, Gujarat would soon get its first potato dehydration centre in Palanpur town, having a handling capacity of 500 kg per hour.

The Centre has proposed to come up with an investment of Rs 19.5 crore in Palanpur town of north Gujarat, which accounts for the highest potato output in the state.

“A potato dehydration centre has been planned for Deesa near Palanpur, the potato hub of state. It shall have latest machinery to be imported from overseas (may be Switzerland), which can enhance the shelf-life of potatoes,” Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation (GAIC) Managing Director, Mr N.K. Singh, told PTI.

“The site for the project has been finalised. The construction work shall commence soon after the monsoon,” official sources said.

Dehydrated potato flakes can be used in the place of mashed potatoes. They are functionally like fresh potatoes and could be used for making traditional snacks like samosa, dosa, tikki and parathas, industry experts said.

GAIC is the State Government arm which promotes agricultural activities and fosters the development of agro industries in the state.

The move is expected to ease wastage problems during the time of potato glut.

“If a potato dehydration facility is set up here it will benefit the farmers and shall help them fetch better prices for their produce,” Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC,) Deesa’s Director, Mr Babu Mali, said.

On the trail of Mughalsarai's khoa exchange

K. Raghavendra Rao



How they move their cheese!

Recently in Mughalsarai (UP):

There are no trading terminals, clearing houses or clearing banks in this quintessential small town of Mughalsarai in Uttar Pradesh.

Yet, there is an exchange for khoa. For the uninitiated, khoa is dried milk and is a primary raw material for milk-based sweets.

The town, which is also a railway freight hub, has 25-odd licensed intermediaries trading on the exchange.

The business operates much like any stock exchange.

For instance, one can never get a quote from khoa merchants unless the market formally opens in the morning.

The previous day's closing price is used as the reference rate for the next day's market opening.

There was time when the price quoted by the late Shivnath Sardar of Varanasi's famous Kachori Galli used to be taken as the market opening price. "And, prices across the khoa

markets in eastern UP used to fluctuate around his quote,” says Mr Narsingh Singh Yadav, a khoa merchant at Khoa Galli in Mughalsarai.

Nowadays, as soon as the first supply of khoa comes into Mughalsarai from nearby villages, the exchange opens, which is at around 7.30 a.m..

Prices fluctuate intraday depending on the arrivals. There is usually a two per cent spread between the buying and selling prices.

Khoa trades at Rs 75-80 a kg on normal days but prices double or even spiral on supply shortages or during festival seasons.

The Mughalsarai khoa exchange logs a daily volume of about a tonne and during peak season it is over two tonnes. The exchange’s annual turnover is about Rs 4 crore.

Khoa starts decaying after 24 hours and, hence, as evening approaches discounts are given.

Like the stock market, there are times when khoa prices crash. However, there are no losers here as the people switch to selling milk. The weekly holiday for the khoa exchange is on Monday, and it is business as usual on all days other than on Holi and Diwali. About 4.5 litres of buffalo milk yields one kg of khoa, and if cow milk is used, close to seven litres is required, says Mr Yadav. Khoa supplies reduce during *lagan* or the marriage season. “This is because milk has other competing uses, such as to make ghee, white butter, cream, *paneer* and other such products. The exchange participants had their licences renewed in August 2011 and the annual licence fee was hiked from Rs 300 to Rs 2,000.

And they have a grouse against the State Government: “We have also been asked to provide details of our sales, stock positions and the details of raw material sourcing. It is tough as we do not know from whom we will procure until the produce enters the exchange.”

Kerala charts Rs 650-cr plan for fisheries sector

Kochi, June 24:

The State government has initiated steps to implement projects worth Rs 650 crore for the development of fisheries sector. The State Fisheries Minister, Mr K. Babu, said the projects will be implemented this year in association with the Fisheries department, Coastal Areas Development Corporation, Matsyafed, and Fishermen’s Welfare Fund Board. The Minister was

talking after inaugurating the valedictory session of the State-level leadership camp of the Kerala Pradesh Matsya Thozhilali Congress.

Inadequate funds

The fund allocated in the State budget for the fisheries sector is inadequate. Therefore, funds will be mobilised from other agencies for improving infrastructure in the sector, he said. The Minister pointed out that the benefits of Samashawasa project will be distributed through banks. The biometric cards for fishing workers will be distributed in three months. He said that the government is giving high preference for the development of fisheries sector. He alleged that the previous government has done anything for the development of coastal areas despite receiving Rs 1,400 crore under the Tsunami rehabilitation scheme.

About 31% Coonoor tea unsold

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, June 24:

Teas worth about Rs 5.50 crore remained unsold at Sale No: 25 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions as there were no takers for about 31 per cent of the year's highest offer of 20.03 lakh kg despite shedding prices by Rs 5 a kg.

Hittakkal Estate topped the CTC market at Rs 139 a kg. Vigneshwar Estate got Rs 136, Blue Monte speciality Rs 130, Waver Tree Rs 128. Homedale Rs 127, Deepika Supreme and Professor Rs 126 each and Darmona Estate and Kannavarai Estate Rs 125 each. In all, 108 marks got Rs 100 and more.



Among orthodox teas from the corporate sector, Chamraj got Rs 210, Curzon Rs 200, Corsley Rs 162, Havukal, Highfield Estate and Kairbetta Rs 161 each. In all, 25 marks got Rs 100 and more.

“Orthodox leaf market eased Rs 5-10 a kg. High-priced CTC leaf lost as much as Rs 10-15 and better mediums Rs 5-10 while substantial volume of plainers had to be withdrawn for want of bidders despite shedding up to Rs 7. Orthodox dusts eased Rs 5-10. High-priced CTC dusts eased Rs 5-10, better mediums Rs 3-7 and plainers up to Rs 10,” an auctioneer told *Business Line*.

The export transaction was weak with many exporters refraining from buying. Pakistan bought selectively for Rs 70-92 a kg and the CIS, Rs 70-90.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 63-67 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 115-135 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 64-70 for plain dusts and Rs 115-138 for brighter liquoring dusts.

IFFCO sees 25-40% drop in non-urea fertiliser sales

Vishwanath Kulkarni



Poor monsoon, hike in DAP prices due to weak rupee hit off-take

New Delhi, June 24:

IFFCO, the country's largest fertiliser maker, expects a 25-40 per cent drop in demand for non-urea fertilisers in the current year.

This is mainly on account of the recent hike in prices of non-urea complexes such as di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) and others, prompted by the falling rupee and a weak demand due to scanty monsoons.

"The DAP off-take is 50 per cent down so far. Even if the rains improve, we will see a demand destruction of at least 25-40 per cent," said Dr U.S.Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO.

The co-operative, like other private sector fertiliser makers, has increased the maximum retail price of DAP to Rs 24,000 a tonnes from June 1, to offset the impact of a falling rupee.

"The weakening rupee is the biggest challenge faced by IFFCO. Each 10 paise fall in the rupee against the dollar has an impact of Rs 45 a tonne for DAP," Dr Awasthi said.

The rupee has tanked by about 26 per cent against the dollar since April 2011 till date. Since the beginning of current financial year, the rupee has fallen by 12.7 per cent.

The sluggish off-take in the ongoing kharif season has prompted IFFCO to reduce manufacturing of DAP by about 25 per cent. The imports of DAP have been stopped since January this year. Despite this, our stockyards are full, Dr Awasthi said.

Stating that there is enough DAP stock to meet the current kharif sowing demand Dr Awasthi said, "Farmers should look for stocks with earlier prices of Rs 18,000 a tonne printed on the bags before purchasing the new stocks". The co-operative through its member societies is creating awareness among farmers in this regard, he said.

The widening gap between urea and non-urea fertiliser prices would lead to imbalance in application as farmers would prefer to use the cheaper urea, Dr Awasthi said. Urea prices currently rule at Rs 5365 a tonne. IFFCO expects the urea sales to continue to grow by 3-4 per cent this year, Dr Awasthi said.

India planning to export 2 million tonnes of wheat



New Delhi, June 24:

India is planning to export two million tonnes of wheat from government stock involving a subsidy of Rs 1,000 crore and a decision in this regard is expected soon.

The proposal is to be taken up by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) shortly as part of government's moves to offload food grains in view of storage crunch in the country, sources told PTI here.

At present, the government has food grains stock of 82 million tonnes as of June one against the storage capacity of only 63 million tonnes. Sources said the export of two million tonnes of

wheat would entail a subsidy of around Rs 1000 crore as the cost of the food grain in international market is lesser than in India.

In an effort to test the interest of global buyers in Indian wheat stock, state-owned trading firm STC, under the Commerce Ministry, had recently floated a tender and about six-seven bids have been received. The export proposal is based on the recommendation made by the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) Chairman Dr C Rangarajan. The government is in the process of shedding some excess food grains rather than allow these to decay for lack of proper storage. The Empowered Group of Ministers, headed by Finance Minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee, recently decided to offload an additional eight million tonnes of rice and wheat to BPL families and bulk users at subsidised rates, costing Rs 10,000 crore to the exchequer.

Pepper remains hot as demand outstrips supply

G. K. Nair



Kochi, June 24:

The pepper market was in the hands of bullish operators last week and their efforts to jack up the market succeeded before the maturity of the June delivery on Wednesday. Even, thereafter, the market has been on the upward trend. The market fundamentals are appears to be in their favour.

Supply continued to be tight. Arrivals from the primary market remained very thin while availability on the exchange platform was not much.

Domestic consumption is expected to pick up after the onset of monsoon in the north Indian states. The consuming centres there have reportedly depleted their stocks. Hoping that the prices would come down on the arrival of new crop they were drawing from the inventories and buying only what is required. But, nothing of the sort had happened. Now they may, therefore, have no other alternative but to enter the market. The bull operators, probably being aware of such an ensuing situation cornered good quantity of material from the exchange at higher levels.

The interest shown to buy even at Rs 400 a kg gives the impression that there is a shortage of the material everywhere and that had aided the prices to move up, market sources told *Business Line*.

Large operators, who are allegedly pumping in huge funds into the market, are said to have bought over thousand tonnes of pepper from the exchange of June delivery. An estimated 85-90 per cent of the exchange stocks of June are now allegedly held by a major group/groups/cartel and they had built up positions, they said.

Arrivals at the terminal market was also not encouraging. It remained in the range of 10-20 tonnes and traded immediately at prices prevailing then for ungarbled pepper, depending upon the grade and area of production. Often there were more buyers than sellers.

The situation in Karnataka is also said to be tight. A grower/dealer from Chikmagalur told *Business Line* that the selling price was Rs 400 a kg and there were buyers at this rate.

At the same time, imported pepper is unlikely to be cheaper now because of two major factors — first the currency factor — the sharp fall of rupee against the dollar, and the second, prices in other origins mainly Vietnam remained either steady or firmer. Concerted efforts by the bear operators do not seem to have made any impact on the markets so far. Availability of Indian prices on SMS to all the stake holders in other origins under the International Pepper Community (IPC) is facilitating them to keep their prices competitive. Indian parity is about 15 per cent above the other origins.

The projections of higher outputs in all the producing countries do not seem to have clicked so far. On the contrary, prices in the Indian domestic market was heading towards the North on good demand amid limited supply.

Last week activities were limited as is evident from the total turnover while the open interest also showed a slight slip. Spot prices on good demand amid limited supply also went up.

July, August and September contracts on the NCDEX last week increased by Rs 1,135, Rs 860 and Rs 610 respectively to the last traded price of Rs 41,340, Rs 41,350 and Rs 41,400 a quintal at the weekend.

Total turnover decreased by 1,468 tonnes to close at 12,696 tonnes. Total open interest declined by five tonnes to 4,647 tonnes. Spot prices increased by Rs 600 a quintal to close at Rs 38,800 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,300 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market has gone up significantly following the sharp rise in the futures market prices coupled with the historic fall of rupee against the dollar.

Price of major kharif crops to remain stable, says TN Agri varsity



To take sowing decision: A view of maize plants.

Coimbatore, June 24:

Prices of major khariff crops such as maize, gingelly, groundnut and small onion were likely to remain stable and based on which farmers can take their sowing decision during the South-West Monsoon period (khariff or Adipattam in Tamil Nadu), the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University said on Sunday.

The forecast was based on the econometric analysis carried out by the Domestic Export and Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of the university, a release said.

The analysis on maize revealed that the prices will rule around Rs1,100-1,150 a quintal during the arrival season in October-December.

Maize forecast

Good export and domestic demand will help the price to rule around a minimum support price of Rs 980-1,175 a quintal for khariff 2012-13, recently announced by the Centre.

Gingelly

On gingelly, DEMIC analysed 12 years historical prices in Sivagiri Regulated Market, which revealed price of red gingelly is expected to be stable around Rs 5,500-5,800 a quintal, at harvest in September to October.

Small onions

Based on the analysis of small onion (shallot), the price is expected to be Rs15-18 a kg during harvest in September-October, based on which farmers could take their sowing decision.

On groundnut, the analysis revealed farmers can get prices of Rs 46-48 a kg of groundnut kernels for oil extraction purpose, during the harvest period of Oct-November and advised to go for groundnut sowing in khariff.

Govt examining cut in sugar quota for mills

New Delhi, June 24:

The Food Ministry is considering a proposal to reduce the quantity of sugar that mills need to contribute for supply through public distribution system.

At present, sugar mills are required to provide 10 per cent of their total production as levy sugar, which is meant for PDS, at subsidised rates.

Mills supply levy sugar to the government at Rs 19/kg, against the open market price of Rs 30-32 per kg.

“The sugar industry has demanded a reduction in the percentage of levy sugar. We are examining the proposal,” a senior Food Ministry official said.

The sugar industry has sought levy sugar quota to be reduced to 5 per cent from the existing 10 per cent in the 2011-12 marketing year (September-October) to save their inventory costs, sources said.

Though the annual PDS demand for sugar is 24-26 lakh tonnes, the average lifting by the state governments has been only 16 lakh tonnes in the last six years, they said.

In a representation made to the Food Ministry, the sugar industry contended that there is a case for a cut in levy sugar quota as the Government has not been able to lift the entire quota in the last few years and consequently the carry forward stock has increased to 21 lakh tonnes for the 2011-12 marketing year.

Higher carryover stock plus 26 lakh tonnes of levy sugar from this year's output would take total availability of sugar for PDS purpose to 47 lakh tonnes for 2011-12, much higher than the actual requirement, it said.

The country's sugar production is estimated at 26 million tonnes in the 2011-12 marketing year against 24.5 million tonnes in the previous year.