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TNAU felicitates scientists on Foundation Day

Staff Reporter

Scientists told to be sensitive to the needs of farmers, who are indispensable to the development process of the country



A faculty receiving an award from N. Vijayan Nair, Director, Sugarcane Breeding Institute (third right) at the 42nd Foundation Day of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University here on Friday. P. Murugesha Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU (left) is in the picture.— PHOTO: S.SIVA SARAVANAN.

“Scientists should always remember that they are working for farmers, the vulnerable and poor sections of society, who are indispensable to the development process of the country,” N. Vijayan Nair, Director of Sugarcane Breeding Institute, said here on Friday.

Speaking at the 42nd Foundation Day of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), he said scientists had to be sensitive to the needs of farmers. They needed to maintain high levels of passion for research, as it was a creative activity. It needed a lot of hard work that had to be demonstrated in coming out with innovations and finding solutions for farmers.

“TNAU has made great strides in education, research and extension. Students have done the university proud by securing the maximum number of Agricultural Research Scientist posts. The university has done some pioneering work in terms of introducing novel courses and

contributing many crop varieties. Market intelligence work done by the university is making a big difference in the lives of farmers,” Mr. Nair said.

Speaking on the last working day of his tenure, P. Murugesu Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, recalled the “various important contributions” he had made in the last three years. He pointed out the various achievements the university had witnessed in teaching, research, and extension. He also made a mention of the various awards the university had received, at the State and national levels.

Mr. Nair gave away 21 awards under the best researcher, best teacher, best extension worker, best woman scientist, best team researcher, best research worker, best college, best research station, and best KVK categories.

As many as 69 scientists received awards for completing 25 years of unblemished service and 81 received certificates for receiving research projects worth Rs. 5 lakh and above.

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- *69 scientists receive awards for completing 25 years of service*
 - *'Scientists should maintain high levels of passion for research'*
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Indian scientists in team that sequenced tomato genome

P. Sunderarajan

In what is considered a major step forward in biotechnology research, a group of 300 scientists from across the world, including India, have sequenced the genome of tomato.

The achievement is expected to lower the costs and speed up efforts to improve tomato production, making it better equipped to combat pests and pathogens, and to tolerate droughts.

The work, which has been published in the latest issue of international science journal *Nature*, is also expected to help in efforts to improve the productivity of other crops.

From India, scientists from the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), the National Research Centre on Plant Biotechnology under the Indian Agricultural Research Institute and the Delhi University's South Campus participated in the programme.

Speaking to reporters, director of NIPGR and coordinator of the Indian effort Akhilesh Kumar Tyagi noted that the research would help scientists decipher the relationship between the tomato genes and traits, and broaden their understanding of genetic and environmental factors that interact to determine a crop's health and viability.

Consortium

The 'Tomato Genome Consortium' was established after a scientific conference organised in 2003 in the U.S. Its members were drawn from the U.S., the U.K., China, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, the Netherlands, South Korea, Israel, Spain, Argentina, and Belgium.

Tomato belongs to a family of vegetables called 'Solanaceae,' which have a lot of global importance as they serve as sources of food, spices, medicines and ornamentals.

The other members include potato, pepper and brinjal.

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- *This will aid in efforts to boost tomato production*
 - *Crops can be better equipped to tackle pests and droughts*
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Farm practices

Staff Correspondent

The Horticultural Producers' Co-operative Marketing and Processing Society Ltd. (HOPCOMS), has decided to distribute plastic crates to encourage farmers to adopt good practices in marketing of quality produce.

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NHM offers farm subsidies

The National Horticulture Mission has offered subsidies to farmers to encourage safe cultivation practices and post-harvest technical units in the district.

The farmers are entitled to avail themselves of subsidies to set-up a greenhouse unit (tabular model), purchase machinery, establish a pack-house unit and set up an onion storage unit, a press release from the Deputy Director, Department of Horticulture, stated here.

More information

The department can be contacted for details.

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Rs. 500-cr. loan relief scheme for U.P. farmers

Atiq Khan

A Rs. 500-crore farmers' loan relief scheme to aid debt-ridden agriculturists, many of whom have been forced to commit suicide, and three rural development schemes named after the Samajwadi Party ideologue, Ram Manohar Lohia, are among the 280 new populist measures proposed in the Uttar Pradesh Budget for 2012-13 presented by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Friday.

Mr. Yadav thus followed in the footsteps of his father, Mulayam Singh, who had presented the Budget for 1990-91.

A piquant situation was created in the House when Leader of the Opposition Swamy Prasad Maurya stood up to protest some points raised by the Chief Minister in his Budget speech, even as Speaker Mata Prasad Pandey asked Mr. Maurya to resume his seat. The BSP then staged a walkout.

The people of the State have been spared additional tax burden, but the government plans to increase tax revenue by 22 per cent for meeting the enhanced size of the Budget — Rs. 2,00,110.61 crore.

The Budget size, which represents an increase of 18 per cent over that of 2011-12, is the highest budgetary proposal presented until now. A revenue surplus of Rs. 5884.35 crore is estimated in 2012-13, while the fiscal deficit is estimated at Rs. 21,570.26 crore, which represents 2.96 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

Denying that the government proposed to levy fresh taxes for mobilising additional resources, the Chief Minister told journalists that steps would be taken for increasing the recovery of the

departments. A growth rate of 10 per cent had been fixed in the 12th Five Year Plan. In the 11th Plan, U.P.'s growth was pegged at 6.9 per cent.

Mr. Akhilesh Yadav's first Budget contains a proposal of constructing a park spread over 500 acres in Lucknow, on a priority basis, to be named after another Samajwadi icon, Janeshwar Mishra. While the names of all the 280 new schemes proposed have not been given, a massive budgetary provision of Rs. 56,089 crore has been made for the payment of salaries and arrears of the government employees and teachers of government-aided institutions. Education and infrastructure development follow next in terms of budgetary provision. Mr. Mulayam Singh's flagship scheme of Kanya Vidya Dhan will be relaunched and Rs. 1,000 per month unemployment allowance and tablets and laptops will be given to the jobless and Class 10 and 12 passed students. It had been planned to open model degree colleges in 36 "low gross enrolment ratio" districts, including 23 un-served development blocks and five Muslim-dominated areas.

The education sector gets the lion's share with a provision of Rs. 33,263.39 crore for the extension of education and its quality enhancement, followed by Rs. 23,591.72 crore for infrastructure.

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"Sivaganga, ideal for mulberry cultivation"

As many as 150 women self-help groups (SHG) have been identified in Sivaganga district to be introduced to mulberry cultivation, said Collector V. Rajaraman on Friday.

Addressing a meeting on mulberry cultivation here, he pointed out that sericulture experts had identified Sivaganga as an ideal district for mulberry cultivation and related activities. At present, 80 acres had been brought under mulberry and it was possible to earn Rs. one lakh to Rs. 1.5 lakh per acre through mulberry cultivation. The SHGs, identified for mulberry cultivation, would also be trained in production of value-added products, he said.

Director of Sericulture V. Prabhakaran called for creation of proper awareness of the assistance available for mulberry cultivation among farmers and SHGs. He asked the officials to identify farmers in Sakkottai, Singampunari, S. Pudur, Kalaiyarkoil and Sivaganga panchayat unions to expand mulberry cultivation. The Department of Sericulture would facilitate a meeting of Sivaganga farmers with their successful counterparts in Udamalpet.

According to an official press release, the Director also explained the subsidy available for mulberry farming. Later, Mr. Prabhakaran, accompanied by the Collector and other officials, held a meeting with women SHGs in Ilayankudi and inspected a mulberry farm at Okkoor.

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Chilli growers demand price support mechanism

'Lack of government support will kill the indigenous varieties'

The famed red chilli of Dharwad is likely to disappear from the region if the State government does not announce supportive measures on a far footing, say traditional chilli growers.

Growers cultivating indigenous varieties here are in trouble owing to the inflow of cheap and hybrid varieties and the interference of the middlemen, which resulted in a sharp fall in prices recently. Though the prices rose steadily between 2007 and 2010, they started moving southwards later.

The price per quintal was Rs. 7,000 to Rs. 10,00 in 2007-08, Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 12,000 in 2008-09 and Rs. 15,000 Rs. 20,000 in 2009-10. But it fell to Rs. 6,500 in 2010-11. Though it rose to Rs. 12,000 in January this year, it fell again to Rs. 6,500 last week. The price is somewhere around Rs. 9,000 now and farmers are worried that it would fall again.

Dharwad District Chilli Grower's Association convenor Nagappa B. Mensinkai told *The Hindu* that the crop would vanish if the government did not rush to the rescue of farmers. He said chilli was grown in 25,000 hectares earlier and it had come down to around 8,000 ha now. Moreover, many farmers were switching over to Bt Cotton. "It is not a healthy trend as Bt Cotton affects the soil fertility over the years. The indigenous varieties such as Dyavanur Dabbi and Annigeri deluxe are on the verge of extinction," he said.

Mr. Mensinkai said the government should announce the price support scheme similar to the one launched in Andhra Pradesh. "The Andhra Pradesh government buys chilli whenever there is a fall in the prices and the State and Central governments share the burden on a 50:50 ratio. A similar scheme should be launched here and the government should provide a minimum support price of Rs. 20-25,000 a quintal. The crop insurance scheme should be extended to all chilli growers. Now, it is limited to those who take farm loans, he said.

The University of Horticultural Sciences had set up a chilli research centre in Devihosur near Haveri which was predominantly the sugarcane growing area. It should be shifted to the chilli growing area, he said.

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- *Inflow of cheap and hybrid varieties has led to a sharp fall in prices, say growers*
 - *'Chilli was grown in 25,000 hectares earlier and it has come down to around 8,000 ha now'*
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Officials launch supply of seed to farmers

The district administration on Friday launched supply of seed to farmers for Kharif season in a decentralised manner through seed dealers as well as the primary agriculture cooperative societies in the district.

Protests marred the distribution of seeds at Wyra on the inaugural day as farmers staged a rasta roko on the main road for nearly one hour resenting alleged inadequate arrangements for supply of seed.

According to sources, a section of farmers turned impatient after standing in a long queue at a seed sale point in Wyra. Some of them took to the streets and staged a road blockade in protest against setting up of only one sale counter.

They called off their stir after the officials concerned intervened and opened a few more counters to supply seeds.

Meanwhile, Collector Siddharth Jain inaugurated distribution of seeds at Yerraboinapalli village in Kallur mandal. Speaking on the occasion, he said the government has sanctioned a total of 10.56 lakh packets of cotton seed to the district to meet the demand.

Adequate quantity of all kinds of seeds have been made available at the sale points to ensure their prompt distribution among the farmers, he said adding that a total of 7,000 quintals of green manure seed and more than 27,000 quintals of general seed were allotted to the district for distribution among the farmers on subsidy rates.

2 JUN, 2012, 04.52PM IST, PTI

Wheat falls on adequate supply, reduced offtake

NEW DELHI: Wheat dara prices fell in the wholesale grains market today due to reduced offtake by flour mills against availability of adequate stocks.

However, other grains remained stable in scattered enquiries.

Traders said reduced offtake by flour mills against adequate stocks position mainly led to a fall in wheat dara prices.

In the national capital, wheat dara (for mills) eased to Rs 1,210-1,215 against last close of Rs 1,225-1,235 per quintal.

Atta chakki delivery followed suit and traded lower at Rs 1,215-1,220 from previous level of Rs 1,235-1,240 per 90 kg.

Atta flour mills shed Rs 10 to Rs 630-640 per 50 kg, maida and sooji also weakened by Rs 20 each to Rs 650-680 and Rs 750-780 per 50 kg, respectively.



Wheat falls on adequate supply, reduced offtake

Agencies Posted online: Sat Jun 02 2012, 15:06 hrs

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1,210-1,215, Chakki atta (delivery) 1,215-1,220, Atta Rajdhani (10 kg) 190, Shakti bhog (10 kg) 190, Roller flour mill 630-640 (50 kg), Maida 650-680 (50 kg) and Sooji 750-780 (50kg).

Basmati rice (Lal Quila) 9,500, Shri Lal Mahal 9,500, Super Basmati Rice, 9,000, Basmati common new 6,100-6,200, Rice Pusa-(1121) new 5,200-6,100, Permal raw 2,100-2,150, Permal wand 2,300-2,350, Sela 2,500-2,600 and Rice IR-8 1,600-1,650, Bajra 1,015-1,020, Jowar yellow 1,200-1,250, white 2,000-2,150, Maize 1,070-1,080, Barley 1,320-1,330, Rajasthan 1,080-1,090.

Business Standard

Monday, Jun 04, 2012

Raw sugar reaches lowest price since 2010 as surplus expands

Raw sugar for July delivery was 1.9 per cent down at 19.05 cents a pound on ICE Futures
Bloomberg / London June 2, 2012, 0:39 IST

Raw sugar fell to the lowest level since 2010 in New York, as the harvest in Brazil, the world's largest producer, added to speculation of another surplus next season. Coffee and cocoa retreated.

Brazil's centre-south, which accounts for 90 per cent of the country's sugar production, is harvesting the crop that will be part of the 2012-13 season. Global sugar production will exceed

demand by 4.6 million tonne in that period, the third consecutive surplus, according to Rabobank International. "The lack of significant demand means sugar is coming under harvest pressure from Brazil," Keith Flury, a senior analyst at the bank in London, said by e-mail today.

Raw sugar for July delivery was 1.9 per cent down at 19.05 cents a pound by 8:33 am on ICE Futures US in New York. The price touched 19.03 cents a pound, the lowest since August 18, 2010. White, or refined, sugar for August delivery fell 1.3 per cent to \$551.10 a tonne on NYSE Liffe in London.

Raw sugar has dropped 18 per cent this year. The sweetener slid 27 per cent last year, the most in a decade. Global production will exceed demand by 8.1 mt in the 2011-12 season ending in September after a surplus of 1.7 mt in the 2010-11 crop year, according to Rabobank.

"Asian and Chinese restocking of sugar spurred by lower prices had provided a temporary floor to the market, but the global surplus and large Brazilian harvest will continue to weigh," Kate Tang, an analyst at Barclays Plc, said in a report e-mailed today.

Arabica coffee for July delivery was down 1.8 per cent to \$1.577 a pound in New York. Robusta coffee for July delivery fell 2.9 per cent to \$2,116 a tonne in London. Robusta coffee stockpiles with valid certificates in warehouses monitored by NYSE Liffe were 176,190 tonnes as of May 28, up 2.8 per cent from two weeks earlier, according to data from the exchange on its website yesterday. That was the first time inventories rose since July 11. Cocoa for July delivery was down 2.3 per cent to \$2,035 a tonne in New York. Cocoa for July delivery retreated 1.4 per cent to £1,450 a tonne in London.

FCI's grain stocks to touch 80 mn tonne by June-end

This is two and a half times more than the required norm

Press Trust of India / New Delhi June 1, 2012, 15:36 IST

The government's foodgrain stock is likely to touch 80 million tonnes by the end of this month, which is two-and-a-half times more than the required norms.

As per government rules, the strategic and buffer stock of wheat and rice in the country by June 30 should be 31.9 million tonnes, which includes 26.9 million tonnes as buffer stock and

another 5 million tonnes as strategic reserve.

"We expect the foodgrain stock in the country to touch 80 million tonnes by June end. The foodgrain stock in the country as on May 31 is 75 million tonnes," a senior Food Ministry official said.

According to the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the foodgrain stocks rose by 21% to 71.21 million tonnes as of May 1 from 59.2 million tonnes in the year-ago period.

FCI, the nodal agency for procurement and distribution of foodgrains, has maintained maximum foodgrains stock in northern and southern parts of the country.

The government's grains inventory has build up due to record production and procurement in last few years. This year FCI is targeting to buy a record 35 million tonnes of rice and 32 million tonnes of wheat.

The country is poised for an all time record harvest of rice and wheat at 103.41 million tonnes and 90.23 million tonnes, respectively, this year.

Cotton sowing may fall 10%

Komal Amit Gera / Chandigarh June 2, 2012, 0:32 IST

The area under cotton cultivation in the country is likely to fall 10 per cent this year, said a senior Cotton Corporation of India official. An inconsistent export policy, delay in announcing the minimum support price (MSP), dry and extreme hot weather conditions in the north and high labour costs are expected to result in farmers shifting to other crops.

However, there is some hope the government would increase the MSP and this year's high exports would fetch better prices in the ensuing season.

In 2011-12, sowing rose to 12.2 million hectares, from 11.1 million hectares in 2010-11, owing to positive sentiments in the commodity market.

Farmers in Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana are shifting from cotton to commodities like paddy, guar and pulses. In these states, where the final stages of sowing are underway, a drop of about 20 per cent was recorded in cotton acreage. Farmers Business Standard spoke to in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, said, a similar trend was expected.

Farmers in Maharashtra may devote a part of the cotton acreage to sugarcane, as prices of this crop are stable and payments assured. In Gujarat, crops like pulses and groundnut may be more attractive for farmers, as there has been a substantial rise in the prices.

Another factor dissuading farmers from growing cotton is the rising cost of cotton plucking. "High-wage labour adds to costs, while for crops like sugarcane, millers bear the cost of crop harvest. So, some farmers are diversifying into sugarcane," said Murlidhar, a farmer from Marathwada in Maharashtra.

Currently, cotton prices stand at Rs 32,500 to Rs 33,000 per candy (356 kg) in the domestic market, down 10 per cent in a month. The industry had already indicated supply constraints in August-September. With cotton acreage falling, this season may add to the industry's misery.

India exported about 7.8 million bales (170 kg each) of cotton in 2010-11. According to sources in the ministry of commerce, exports this year had already crossed 12 million bales.

THE HINDU Business Line

Agrimart to expand in Tamil Nadu

L.N. Revathy

Coimbatore, June 2:

Farm and garden care equipment maker Agrimart is looking to expand its presence in Tamil Nadu.

The company is scouting for partners / investors at the district or taluk level in the State to expand its presence.

As part of its promotional efforts, Agrimart, a part of the Ratnagiri Impex group participated in the Agri Intex Fair in Coimbatore.

Mr V. Muralidharan, Retail Adviser, Agrimart, said the company has in the last 12 years, been advocating the small and marginal farmers to take to mechanised farm practices. "It's not been easy; but now, because of non-availability of farm labour and spiralling cost of farm hands, there is some level of acceptance," he said, referring to the use of mechanised equipments in farming.

He observed that Kerala topped in implementation of farm mechanisation. "It is pathetically low in Tamil Nadu. People are willing to buy the equipment only if it is entitled to a subsidy, but this is not so in Kerala and elsewhere. There, a group of farmers come together, bargain and buy the equipment," Mr Muralidharan told *Business Line*.

Stating that the company had around 250 types of farm implements, ranging from Rs 15,000 to Rs 1.5 lakh, he said, "these are multi-purpose machines and available with accessories such as power weeder, power tiller, pole pruner, harvester, land mower and so on. It does not involve huge investment and the savings is phenomenal," he added.

To a query on savings, he said: "manual weeding is not only time consuming, but labour intensive. With the use of power weeder, it would be possible to complete the job in one-tenth the time."

The company has a network of 400 dealers and 100 Agrimart stores across the country. It plans to add 250 to 300 Agrimart store in the next 2 -3 years.

In TN, the company plans to open 45 Agrimart outlets in district and taluk centres in the first phase. It has started operations in Salem, Tiruchi and Madurai districts.

Apart from such sales point, the company is also simultaneously addressing the after-sales service needs of the customer, said Mr Muralidharan.

Pacific typhoon may help 'drag' monsoon into place

Vinson Kurian

Thiruvananthapuram, June 2:

A typhoon in northwest Pacific is expected to have favourable impact on the dynamics associated with onset of southwest monsoon on Kerala coast.

Typhoon Mawar has been tracking initially north-north westwards towards the Philippine archipelago until today.

But global weather models show Mawar being steered north-northeast and away from the Philippines into central Pacific south of Japan over the next few days.

Being the dominant system in the northern hemisphere, 'Mawar' would 'drag' the monsoon current into place over the Arabian Sea and help precipitate the onset over Kerala.

It would also prevent an existing Arabian Sea circulation from straying into north-northwest (Oman-ward) and further delaying the onset.

Instead, the circulation would also be steered to head east and help the onset process.

The flip side is that a chunk of the monsoon flows would get directed into south Bay of Bengal and into adjoining South China Sea/northwest Pacific to feed 'Mawar.'

It is expected to weaken by June 10, subsequent to which the Indian monsoon would come to its own, as per model predictions.