THE HINDU

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Farmer's Notebook: Prudent practices to generate more income

M. J. Prabu

LOCAL KNOWLDEGE: D. Bharani at his vermicompost unit at Mayilladuturai. - Photo: M.J. PRABU

Sourcing raw materials for manure proves to be a daunting task

A Mayiladuthurai farmer shows how easy it is to make a simple vermicompost shed using local materials.

Be it organic or chemical farming, farmers in Tamil Nadu always have the habit of applying some truckloads of cow dung manure or vermicompost to their fields before planting their crops.

Sourcing problem

“Today it is a common knowledge that sourcing the raw materials for this manure proves a daunting task for many farmers. Cow dung or vermicompost is not easily available. And if it is available then the seller decides the price. I would suggest to farmers that they try to make their own compost/manure for their farms making use of locally available material in and around their fields,” says a progressive organic farmer, Mr. D. Bharani of Mayiladuthurai taluka in Tamil Nadu’s Nagapattinam district.

Usually farmers across the country build a roof either with thatched straw or asbestos sheets as a cover for their vermicompost manufacturing unit. The bottom of the unit will either have sand or plain cement or sometimes toughened red soil.

But Mr. Bharani has used locally available cut tree trunks for the four poles supporting his rudimentary compost unit.

The tree trunks absorb the moisture from the compost unit and grow as individual trees. For the roof, he has used the climbing tendrils of vegetable plants growing near the compost unit. The plants grow well, absorbing the required moisture from the unit and their leaves provide shade to the manufacturing unit.

Extra income

“In addition to making the compost which I sell at Rs 5-8 per kg, I am also able to sell vegetables such as bhendi, brinjal, snake gourd and bitter gourd grown on the roof of the compost shed,” he says.

“Farmers, instead of spending money on constructing thatched sheds and asbestos, can follow simple methods like this.

“By doing so, they can get double income from the compost unit and the vegetables,” he adds.

He is also cultivating rasthali banana variety in about four acres.” Commercially, rasthali has a good demand in the market compared with other varieties and if consumers know that it is grown organically,then the farmer need not search for buyers. It will be vice-versa,” hesays.

Plantain variety

Strong winds often uproot banana trees and farmers have to tie each tree to a wooden pole to prevent the tree from falling or getting uprooted.

Rasthali variety does not grow quite high and is often sturdy against strong winds.

“Secondly organic practices are found ideal for my banana orchard as banana is often found susceptible to wilt disease which is a major and fatal infestation. Chemical control methods have not been found successful in controlling this infestation, compared to organic methods,” he explained.

For an acre, about 780-800 pits at 8x8 feet (row to row and plant to plant) were dug and the suckers were planted in them. About 3 kg of farm yard manure (FYM) was also applied for each pit.

The FYM was applied a little distance away from the pit, because if it were applied directly into the pit or near the suckers it would spoil the plant growth due to heat generation. Panchangavya spray was done once every month till the crop was about 5 months old.

He was able to harvest his first yield in about 14 months after planting and this variety can be maintained for two years.

Selling price

“One bunch was sold for Rs. 120-130 and I was able to get a net income of Rs. 80,000 annually. The expenditure for maintaining one tree comes to about Rs. 35 and after deducting the expenses for all my plants I am still able to get a net profit of Rs. 50,000 annually.” he said.

According to the farmer a lakh of rupees invested for a year in a bank cannot get you a good interest compared to the same amount spent for an acre in farming.

“One lakh rupees invested for growing a crop, in 5-6 months will double provided one gets a good market for the produce,” he says.

For more information Mr. D. Bharani can be contacted at Kothangudi village, Komal post, Mayiladuthurai taluka, Nagapattinam district, Tamil Nadu: 609-805, phone: 04364-228711 and 04364-237415 and mobile:9486278569.

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Labour saving tool for sugarcane cultivation

G. Kathiresan

The device aids more tiller growth

Periodical pruning of branches in fruit trees is important for getting a good yield. In crops like cotton, castor, sesame, the practice of nipping is essential for enhancing the number of branches.

Similarly in sugarcane, pruning of the mother shoot is an important practice to be followed by farmers.

Scarce labour

Though this practice is being advocated, many farmers are not following this due to labour scarcity.

But some of them use a sickle or other available farm tools to prune the main shoot.

Existing tools available today are not much popular because the user needs to bend down and hold the stem to prune the sugarcane.

While doing so the probabilities of injuring the hands due to presence of sharp spines on the stem or the serrated margin of the leaves pose a problem.

Practical problem

These make labourers slow down the operation. To address these practical problems the Planning and Monitoring department, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore has fabricated a tool.

Named cane seedling pruner, the device has two parts, one a handle and another hook with an internal knife.

The upper portion of the hook has a two inch length pipe to hold the handle stick.

A labourer can handle the tool with the help of the handle and place the main shoot in the inner portion of the knife. With just one pull, the stem can be pruned. Using this tool a person can cover an entire sugarcane field without bending his body.

Advantages

According to Dr. G. Kathiresan, Director, Planning and Monitoring department the farmer can save the two thirds of money required for pruning, it is easy to use, aids growth of more tillers from the pruned cane seedlings, can be used to harvest fruits like papaya, drumstick, sapota and the like, by changing the length of the handle.

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Grow your greens

T. SARAVANAN

HEALTHY VEGETATION: All for green cover. Photo: Special Arrangement

Agriculturist Gopalakrishnan promotes healthy eco system by motivating children to cultivate green leafy vegetables

What would you do if dandruff bothers you? Either you apply a hair conditioner or seek medical advice. But A. Muthumari of Chathirapatti uses the leaves of ‘Poduthalai' herb to get rid of the trouble permanently. In fact, most of the people in rural areas turn to nature for any health problem.

“Not many in the cities bother,” says E. Gopalakrishnan, an agriculturist. “Even if the people are told, they refuse to accept the benefits of medicinal herbs or organic farming and brush it aside as not worthy. The common knowledge of rural populace is found lacking among the urbanites,” he rues.

“Poduthalai does not stop with dandruff eradication. This medicinal herb is also used to cure piles and diarrhoea. It is grown in paddy fields and does not require any big investment. Natural resources are abundant in countryside” he says.

City-bred people find it difficult to understand nature bit go for the nutritionists' recommendations to eat leafy vegetables and greens. Since he failed to enthuse urban adults, Gopalakrishnan now takes the message to the children as he believes motivating the kids will bring about the desired result.

Bridging the gap

Also, in an effort to educate the city-bred children on urban farming and bridge the widening gap between the urban and rural children and create a better networking, he has formed the ‘Sevai Children Trust'. “The trust gives need based training to the children and promote gardening activities in small scale,” says Gopalakrishnan.

An ‘agripreneur' (an entrepreneur involved in agriculture business and agriculture extension services) himself, he emphasises the need to go for traditional agricultural practices. “We are trying to initiate an understanding of farming,” he says. “A child raised in a city has no other go but to live in the concrete jungle. He never gets an opportunity to know the benefits of green environment. Through our trust we try to enlighten the kids on growing the “c4” plants (that absorbs more of carbon dioxide and carbon mono oxide),” he adds.

The trust creates awareness among the children in Government and Corporation schools in Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Virudhunagar and Theni. He does not scare them with complicated vegetation techniques but explains the advantages of growing their own greens and leafy vegetables through some simple practices.“People are often confused when it comes to gardening,” he says. “Most of them think that sprawling space is a must to start gardening. But, you only need the mindset to begin. I tell my wards to grow plants in a plastic bag filled with street sand and vegetable wastes from the kitchen. A little water and plenty of sunlight can do wonders,” he adds.

Through his networking of rural and urban children he also facilitates sharing of information. He encourages the children by giving the seeds free of cost and never fails to follow up what the children have done. “We collect children's name and parents' mobile numbers and follow up what they have done. We have also formed children groups to spread the awareness in their locality,” he says.

He does not advocate tuberous vegetables but encourages the children to eat bottle gourd, bitter gourd and greens. “These vegetables facilitate fast removal of metabolic wastes from the body,” he says. “In all my programs I motivate children to cultivate green leafy vegetables in their homes by converting daily household wastes into manure. The children get enthused to see the seeds sprouting. Also by this action, children will come to know more plant species, their uses, ecological benefits, carbon reduction and value of organic farming,” he adds.

New campaign

To mark the World Environment Day (June 5), he has launched a new campaign to create awareness on plant biodiversity among the children of Corporation, Government and Matriculation Schools. He has also developed a curriculum on this topic.

“We have already approached the schools and they have responded positively. Only through such attempts we can spread the green cover and I can now envisage a healthy future generation,” Gopalakrishnan says.

Medicinal herbs

Chakravarthy Keerai (Chenopodium Album) - its mucous helps in curing all kinds of stomach ulcers.

Ceylon Pasalai (Basella Alba) - rich source of soluble fibre

Siru Keerai: (Amaranthus Polygonoides) – rich in iron content

Red Amaranthus: (Amaranthus Tricolor) - Anti oxidant activity is enhanced, decreases body weight.

Thoothuvalai (Solanum Trilobatum) - cures tuberculosis, cough, asthma, anti inflammatory and anti-microbial.

Vellai Karisalai: (Eclipta Alba) - Promotes hair growth and rejuvenates hair, teeth, bones, memory, sight and hearing, promotes deep sleep, cures kidney and liver disorders.

Nattu Ponnanganni (Alternanthera Sessilis) – Removes blood clots, cures gastro intestinal disorders, high blood pressure and cures chronic liver ailments.

Arai Keerai (Amaranthus Dubius) – Improves RBC count, 30 per cent higher digestible protein than other plant sources.

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Sharp fall in price hits betel farmers

B. Madhu Gopal

A farmer sorting out betel leaves to pack them in baskets for export at Satyavaram village in Visakhapatnam district.—Photo: C.V. Subrahmanyam

Notwithstanding a good crop, the betel farmers of Satyavaram village of this mandal are in distress. The growing production and overhead costs coupled with the fall in prices in upcountry markets are their major causes of worry.

Lack of marketing and cold storage facilities and the apathy of the successive governments towards their problems have prompted several farmers to sell away their lands. The realtors are converting the agricultural lands into housing layouts in a bid to make a fast buck.

The betel leaf grown in Satyavaram tastes good and has a greater shelf life compared to that produced in other States. Around 4,000 people in Satyavaram are dependent on betel farming either directly or indirectly.

An old tiled shed greets visitors at Satyavaram junction. Workers can be seen sorting the betel leaves plucked at the nearby farms.

The leaves are washed, neatly arranged by deft hands, bundled and packed in cane baskets and sent to the nearby Tuni for onward transport by train or by RTC buses or by trucks directly to Maharashtra, Chattisgarh and other places.

“I have lost crop in five acres due to the leaf disease (‘vemparla tegulu'). The leaf turns ripe (yellow) rendering it unfit for consumption,” said S. Ramu, who was overseeing the packing process at the shed and simultaneously answering calls on his mobile from betel traders in Maharashtra, in Hindi.

“The yield is quite good this year. But, the rate has come down drastically from around Rs.50 for 100 leaves last year to a mere Rs.15 this year. The decline in prices is due to the decline in demand as a result of bumper crop in other States,” he says.

The high price of the leaf last year is, however, attributed by some to the scarcity of betel leaf as large extent of crop in Satyavaram was destroyed in the December 2010 cyclone.

“Betel crop has to be grown for about eight months after which the leaves can be cut once a month. The land lease rates have also gone up to Rs.25,000 an acre for a year in Satyavaram compounding the problem,” says Satti Babu, who has taken 20 cents of land on lease.

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Weed removal works taken up

G.Srinivasan

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) has been put to effective use to remove weeds that hindered water flow in rivers and canals in Tiruvarur district.Weeds such as Neyveli Kattamanakku and water hyacinth were cleared from Harischandranathi, a branch of Korayar and a major irrigation-cum-drainage canal, for a distance of 27 km.Landless labourers of villages along the river have been employed under MNREGS for removing weeds.On Tuesday, 145 landless labourers including 85 women removed the weeds in the last phase at Sethamangalam village in Kottur panchayat union. Collector S.Natarajan and Block Development Officer of Kottur Venkatachalam inspected the works. Participants said that they liked the work as it contributed to the improvement of the river in their area. "

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Chilli farmers take out rally seeking compensation

Staff Reporter

They suffered huge loss as fire in a cold storage unit destroyed stock in May

On the warpath:Farmers and CPI(M) activists taking out a rally at Madhira in Khammam district on Wednesday. —PHOTO: G.N. RAO

Chilli farmers, who lost their stock in a devastating fire at a cold storage in Madhira over two weeks ago, took out a rally in Madhira on Wednesday demanding compensation. Earlier, the aggrieved farmers from Bonakal, Yerrupalem, Chintakani, and Madhira and a few other mandals in the district as well as the neighbouring mandals in Krishna district participated in a meeting organised by the CPI (M)-affiliated A.P. Rytu Sangham in Madhira. The farmers recalled the plight they had to undergo following destruction of the stock in a major blaze at Sri Lakshmi Vallabha cold storage on May 20.

Foul play suspected

Expressing doubt over the claims of the cold storage owners that the fire occurred due to electrical short-circuit, several farmers suspected foul play.

They pointed out that 1.23 lakh chilli tikkies were gutted, inflicting a loss of Rs. 25 crore on them. A section of the growers deplored that the cold storage management was keeping them in the dark on facts relating to insurance cover and bank loans.

Addressing the farmers, sangham State committee member Nunna Nageswara Rao demanded that the officials concerned ensure payment of compensation to all the farmers by recovering the amount from the management of the cold storage.

Stir threat

The sangham would launch an agitation if the authorities failed to render justice to the farmers at the earliest, he said, and added that the farmers would lay a siege to the Revenue Divisional Office in Khammam in a day or two seeking compensation. Sangham district secretary M. Ramesh spoke.Later, the farmers took out a rally and submitted a memorandum to the revenue officials demanding payment of compensation.

June 7, 2012

Farm querY

CLAY PELLETS

Where can I get inputs on inserting paddy seeds in clay pellets?

Shanmugarajeshwaran, *Tamil Nadu*

A farmer Ram Abhilash Patel from Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh developed a concept of sowing paddy seeds inserted in clay pellets.

The farmer claims that he got this idea from within the household. The seeds can be easily inserted inside clay and remain safe during sowing and later germinate well. The pellets can be sown manually or by using a seed drill.

For more details contact Mr. Ram Abhilash Patel, Vill. Tikari, Po. Kanti, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh 212107, Mobile: 08127199855.

KARIMNAGAR, June 7, 2012

Relocate vegetable and fruit vendors: Lok Satta

Expressing concern over the frequent traffic snarls and inconvenience to the road users due to sale of vegetables and fruits on the footpaths and roads in the town, the Lok Satta district unit has urged the district administration to relocate all the vegetable and fruit vendors into the spacious Model Rythu Bazaar, which is lying idle since its construction a decade ago at Gandhi road.

Official lethargy

In a press note here on Wednesday, Lok Satta district president N. Srinivas and general secretary T. Rajamouli said that the model rythu bazaar was constructed with all amenities including sheds, toilets, drinking water, parking lots, children's play items etc, but it was being unused due to lethargy on the part of the district authorities concerned. On the other hand, the parking lots allocated for the rythu bazaar at Gandhi road in the town had been encroached by the land sharks and set up wholesale shops, they alleged.

They appealed to the district administration, municipal authorities, agricultural market committee authorities and the district police machinery to relocate all the roadside vegetable and fruit vendors to the Model rythu bazaar. The shifting of road side vendors would definitely ease the traffic congestion in the town, they added.

'Model Rythu Bazaar lying idle since its construction a decade ago'

hindustantimes

Thu,07 Jun 2012

weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather	
Sunny	Thursday, Jun 7
	Max Min
	41.1° | 29.5°
Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs	**Sunrise:** 6:35
Humidity: 52%	**Sunset:** 18:03
Wind: Normal	**Barometer:** 1003

Tomorrow's Forecast	
Rainy	Friday, Jun 8
	Max Min
	36° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Jun 9	Jun 10	Jun 11	Jun 12	Jun 13
36° | 29°	35° | 29°	35° | 29°	38° | 29°	38° | 30°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Cloudy	Rainy

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

7 JUN, 2012, 04.46AM IST, AP

Commodities prices follow the stock market higher

Commodities jumped across the board on Wednesday, mimicking the sharp U-turn the stock market made. Metals rose, including a 3 per cent jump in copper, which is an important gauge of manufacturing activity. So did the benchmark US price for oil, which had been falling steadily since early May.

Agricultural commodities, including July contracts for wheat, corn and soybeans, also rose. Wheat jumped 11 cents, or nearly 2 per cent, to $6.2425 a bushel. Soybeans rose 36.75 cents, or nearly 3 per cent, to $13.8625. Corn rose 18.75 cents, or more than 3 per cent, to $5.8625.

The jump in agricultural futures was set off by reports predicting warm, dry weather for the next two weeks, a crucial period for US crops, said Steve Wagner, a grain broker at Country Hedging in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Agricultural commodities were also helped by a weakening of the dollar. That makes wheat, soybeans and corn cheaper for buyers in other countries because they're denominated in dollars. Wagner said that some investors who had been selling corn for the past couple of weeks as the price dropped returned to buying this week.

``We saw that yesterday, we saw that today and more likely than not we'll see that again tomorrow,'' Wagner said.

Commodities prices took their cue from the jump on Wall Street, a welcome change from the malaise that has permeated the market the past few weeks. Investors were hopeful after a report suggested that Germany and the European Union were working on a way to rescue Spain's crippled banks. A Federal Reserve official who suggested that the government might do more to boost the US economy also contributed to the rally.

Metals rose across the board, most notably in silver.

Gold for August delivery rose about 1 per cent, or $17.30, to $1,634.20 per ounce. July silver jumped nearly 4 per cent, or $1.083, to $29.488 per ounce.

July copper rose nearly 3 per cent, or 9 cents, to $3.379 per pound. September palladium rose just more than 2 per cent, or $13, to $632.80 per ounce. July platinum rose 2 per cent, or $28.70, to $1,469.20 per ounce.

Energy prices, which like metals are also used to gauge manufacturing and other economic activity, climbed.

Benchmark oil rose 73 cents to finish at $85.02 per barrel Wednesday in New York. That's a change from previous weeks. Concerns about the slowing global economy and its impact on future demand for oil and other energy products have hurt oil prices, which have fallen nearly 23 per cent from the year's high of $109.77 per barrel in February.

Brent crude, which is used to price varieties of international oil, gained $1.80 to end at $100.64 per barrel in London.

In other trading, heating oil rose 3.81 cents to end at $2.6717 per gallon and gasoline increased 0.56 cent to $2.6903 per gallon. Natural gas dropped 2.5 cents to $2.421 per 1,000 cubic feet.

7 JUN, 2012, 03.38AM IST, ET BUREAU

Commodity market crash: All pain, no gain

When the prices of crude oil, food, metals and gold skyrocketed in 2008 and singed our wallets, they said it's because of a 'commodities boom'.

With prices having nosedived to multi-year lows in May, have commodities gone bust? More importantly, will we get to pay less for these primary building blocks of our world? Not so fast.

What we see is a market caught in the grip of fear and panic. Very soon, the bargain hunters will be out. ET helps you join the dots.

When commodity prices rose in 2008, the fuel was exceptional demand in China that was building infrastructure at a frenzied pace. Other emerging economies were also buoyant. Supply from the world's mines, farms and oil rigs couldn't keep pace and prices soared.
Cut to June 2012, when a global economy, battered by the financial meltdown, is paralysed by anticipation of horrors that might lie ahead. There has been a spate of bad news. There appears no end to Europe's financial troubles, led by Spain and Greece, unless the world takes concerted action. Economic data from two largest economies, US and China, shows a slowdown.

Over the last few months, these tidings have cast a pall of gloom over large speculators, mainly hedge funds and big banks that normally bet on prices rising continuously. Revenues generated by the commodity desks of 10 largest US banks slumped 33% in the first quarter.

Since there is just too much that can potentially go wrong right now, these large speculators rapidly liquidated their bullish bets. As someone said, there is a time for departure even when there's no certain place to go.

As a result, May saw this year's largest outflow of 'hot money' from the commodities market, contracting its size. This cooled prices. The Standard & Poor's GSCI Spot Index of 24 raw materials tumbled 13%, the most since November 2008.

But the physical market remains largely impervious to this financial froth. Demand for crude oil remains strong, especially at the new lower prices. Demand for metals and energy from China may have slowed, but the numbers are large enough to keep the market chugging.

Demand is rising in the Middle East that depends on imported food and ores. Brazil, India and Russia are still in the reckoning.

Supply of several commodities, such as oilseeds and bullion, remains constrained, keeping prices buoyant. Copper prices are expected to remain high until the global inventory pipeline is replenished, most likely after 2014.

Even where demand and supply appear balanced for now, dangers lurk. Weather can play truant with crops, upsetting the arithmetic and again pulling up prices.

The big punters will be back shortly too. Their ears are pricked for the first sound of good news: a rescue package for Europe, interest rate cut in China to boost investment, or a new plan to pump more cash into the US economy.

Some large companies have shelved expansion plans. BHP last month scrapped a $80-billion spending plan that included China, where it supplies millions of tonnes of iron ore, copper and other industrial raw material.

But optimists abound. Despite the financial turmoil, Malaysian palm oil giant Felda is raising $3.3 billion this month, making it the world's second-biggest IPO this year after Facebook's.
So what does this mean for the consumer? No early respite from inflation. The companies that sell us food and everything else may heave a sigh of relief at the drop in raw material cost.
But not one will cut sticker price. Most purchasing managers sign quarterly supply contracts and so might miss out on this sudden dip. Any money they save will be used to offset the spiral in other costs. The May crash is neither the harbinger of a commodity downturn nor will it make our lives easier. Yet, it is important. Till 2009, everyone expected the market to move just one way: up. The hot money, the bets and the investments were all made with this single direction in mind. Today, we are wiser. What goes up can as easily come down. And this is the real takeaway. The biggest challenge before the commodities market today is how to balance the long-term demand outlook with short-term economic developments. Dips and spikes will become more frequent as the market teeters between the two. Those who can get up one more time than they fall will survive the ride. The punters are fine. They know life is all about timing.

Business Standard

Thursday, Jun 07, 2012

Enough stock for another 2 mt sugar export: Govt

Anindita Dey / Mumbai June 7, 2012, 0:32 IST

The Union ministry of food has worked out an internal limit of two million tonnes of sugar that could be exported under Open General Licence (OGL) till September, without affecting domestic prices.

According to official sources, the ministry expects final output in the current season to be 25.8 mt, against the earlier estimate of 25.2 mt. They said crushing of cane had ended in north India, but some mills in south India were still reporting production.

The current sugar marketing year started in October last year. India is the world's second-largest producer and biggest consumer. Output was 18.6 mt last year.

Before sugar export was brought under OGL, freeing it from quantitative restrictions, the government had allowed export of two mt.Officials said under the new regime, 170,000-180,000 tonnes of sugar had been registered with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for shipment abroad till date. They added the ministry was comfortable with availability of a three-month stock at its disposal for managing domestic demand at any given date. Beyond this limit, the surplus could be considered for exports, they said.

The commerce ministry told millers, once the OGL decision was announced, to register export contracts with it, to keep pace with the quantity of shipment. With the new regime, the DGFT raised the ceiling in each registered contract (RC) from 10,000 tonnes to 25000 tonnes, equivalent to one vessel load for white sugar. An applicant has the liberty to seek split RCs for export through more than one port, within the overall limit of 25,000 tonnes.Also, the time limit for completing export has been extended from 30 days to 60 days from the date of issuing the RC.

Among other reasons why the Union government keeps control on the marketing of sugar is its requisitioning of what is termed 'levy sugar', the quantity it requires mills to supply (at a price it sets) for subsidised supply through ration shops. It is mandatory for mills to sell a tenth of their production to the government at this lower rate. This levy sugar quota is then allocated to states and Union Territories for the Public Distribution System.

DGFT has approved export of 0.33 mt sugar since May

Press Trust Of India / June 07, 2012, 0:30 IST

The commerce ministry has issued registration certificates for export of 3,30,000 tonnes of sugar since early last month when the government decided to free sugar shipments, according to industry body Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA).

On May 2, the government decided to allow unrestricted sugar exports by bringing it under the open general licence. However, exporters were allowed to ship only after taking registration certificate (export permits) from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the commerce ministry.

"Till June 3, the DGFT has issued registration certificate for 332,000 tonnes of sugar. Of which, 1,77,000 tonnes has already been exported," a senior official of the ISMA said. He also said mills have also shipped the entire 200,000 tonnes of sugar that were allowed before May.

According to DGFT, an exporter can apply for registration certificate for a maximum quantity of 25,000 tonnes.

The application for second and subsequent RC can be made after exporting at least 50 per cent of the allotted quantity. Exports were permitted as the country's sugar output is expected to touch 26 million tonnes in 2011-12, higher than the annual demand of 21.5-22 million tonnes.

Stabilising guar market, field to mill

With the rush to sow guar on the back of a price surge last year, farmers fear a steep fall in rates this season

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai June 7, 2012, 0:30 IST

With the rush to sow guar seed owing to its huge price surge over the past year, there is also an apprehension of over-supply and prices slumping in the coming harvesting season.

Enter Vikas WSP, a Sriganganagar (Rajasthan) — based guar gum processor and exporter It has signed guar seed procurement contracts with around 225,000 farmers in the region, with a minimum price guarantee at Rs 50 a kg for the harvested crop.

Though this is less than a sixth of the current price in local mandis, yet enthusiastic farmers signed the contract. For, they get the assurance of a benchmark price which is 60-70 per cent higher than the cost of cultivation. Farmers will be free to sell seeds in the open market if prices at the time of harvesting are higher.

Guar seed and its derivative, guar gum, have seen prices shoot up 1,000 per cent during the past year. As happens with all agri commodities in such cases, sown area is expected to swell; there is anticipation of a 50 per cent increase in both area and output. This could also mean a glut, falling prices and distress sales.

“The guar seed price appreciation started with Rs 40 a kg during the last season. Hence, we fixed a minimum guaranteed price at Rs 50 a kg. Even in a distress sale, farmers would avoid sale at a price below this level,” said B D Agarwal, managing director.

Adding: “We are the largest guar seed crushing company in the region. Hence, even if farmers sell to others, including intermediaries, the commodity would come to us only. The MSP guarantees a minimum return.”

Guar seed (India, particularly Rajasthan, produces much of global supply) is considered cattle feed and hence, the government does not announce a minimum support price for it. In the absence of any benchmark, the price moves with abnormal volatility. During the peak harvesting season, traditionally, this cattle feed is sold at a throwaway price; during the lean season, it jumps through the roof. Its prices rose sharply last year because the final product, guar gum, was needed in the oil exploration business (and there were supply fears, as output was less than the year before).

Guar splits and gum powder are processed to make various derivatives for use in the petroleum, textile, paper, food and pharmaceutical industries, among others.

Agriculture ministry data showed guar seed output at 1.25 million tonnes in 2011, about a fifth lower than the 1.5 mt the previous year. This year, output is estimated at 1.8 mt. The sowing begins towards the end of July, for harvesting in November. It is usually a 90-day, rain-fed monsoon crop, requiring eight to 15 inches of rain in three to four spells. For effective guar cultivation, the crop needs two rain spells before sowing, one when the crop buds out and another when it comes up well and blossoming starts. Then it requires plenty of sunshine and dry weather to come up really well. During harvesting, it again needs good sunshine, to dry and become usable for industries.

Encouraged by last year's realisation, Vikas WSP has distributed 3,000 tonnes of seed worth Rs 92 crore to 225,000 farmers, to cover around 500,000 ha of sowing area this season. Last year, the company had distributed around 800 tonnes of seed worth around Rs 2 crore.

"This is a good beginning for a small commodity like guar seed," said Atul Shah, chief executive officer of Emkay Commodities.

Guar seed in the spot Sriganganar mandis is quoted at Rs 315-320 a kg. In March 2011, the spot price was Rs 27 a kg. Guar gum was quoted at the time in the Bikaner mandis at Rs 84 a kg; it is now Rs 1,100 a kg.

Vikas WSP has a guar seed crushing plant with 250,000 tonnes of installed capacity. It crushed 140,000 tonnes of seed last year. This year, looking at rising exports of guar gum, the company plans to use full capacity.

India may sell wheat to Glencore

Bloomberg / New Delhi June 7, 2012, 0:18 IST

India plans to sell 98,000 tonnes of wheat to Glencore International for export, as the country, the world's second-largest grower, seeks to cut record state inventories, said two government officials.

The cabinet is set to allow the State Trading Corp (STC) next week to sell 38,000 tonnes at $230 a tonne and 60,000 tonnes at $228 a tonne, said the officials, who declined to be identified because the plan is private. The price is less than the Rs 18,220 ($328) a tonne cost to the government of buying and storing the grain, they said.

India is seeking to cut reserves held by the state-owned Food Corporation of India (FCI) to create room for a sixth year of record harvests. Production will be 90.2 million tonnes in the year ending June 30, the Agriculture Ministry said. The country scrapped a four-year ban on exports by private traders in September.

"Global prices are expected to plunge with exports from India and commencement of Russia's new crop from July," said T P S Narang, an adviser at the New Delhi-based Emmsons International, a grain exporter.

Wheat for July delivery rose 0.8 per cent to $6.18 a bushel on the Chicago Board of Trade by 4:55 pm Mumbai time. Futures have fallen 16 per cent since September 8, when India ended the ban on shipments.

N C Joshi, a spokesman for the Food Ministry here, and Pravin Dongre, chief executive officer of Glencore Grain India Pvt, declined to comment.

THE HINDU Business Line

Castorseed futures rise on short-covering

Rajkot, June 6:

Short-covering lifted castorseed futures on Wednesday following profit booking on Tuesday. Spot prices declines on slow demand.

A Rajkot-based trader said that domestic demand in castorseed is low and ample supply in physical markets is putting pressure on prices. However, demand may emerge at lower levels in coming days.

A broker said that participants in the futures market covered their needs, expecting demand in the spot market in coming days. On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange, castorseed June contracts increased by Rs 26 to Rs 3,017 a quintal, while September contracts gained Rs 29 at Rs 3,180.RCX spot castorseed was declined Rs 82.50 to Rs 2,932.50 a quintal.About 80,000-85,000 bags arrived in Gujarat and the price was Rs 565-590 for a *maund* of 20 kg. About 5,500-6,000 bags arrived in Saurashtra and price was Rs 555-595 a *maund*.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, (NCDEX) June contracts gained Rs 35 to Rs 2,994 a quintal with an open interest of 7,380 lots. July contract was moved up Rs 23 to Rs 3,049 with an open interest of 36,720 lots and August contract traded higher by Rs 26 to Rs 3,122 with an open interest of 11,710 lots.

Lower prices lure stockists to buy edible oils

Mumbai, June 6:

Imported palmolein extended its losses further by Rs 4/10 kg on Wednesday with higher volumes as stockists came forward with new orders at lower rates. Rapeseed oil dropped by Rs 3. Other edible oils remain unchanged. The market witnessed good activities in palmolein and soya oil after a long time. Trade in indigenous oil was negligible.

Malaysian palm oil futures extended gain for the second day on expectations of steady production, higher exports and lower carryover stocks from May. Sources in the broker community said that a wide price gap between Mumbai and Gujarat forced drop in palm oil prices here.

At a lower price-level, stockists came forward with fresh orders and covered their needs. As monsoon has entered in Kerala and is expected to knock the doors in western parts soon, arrivals of seeds are expected to decline.

According to Mumbai-based traders, Liberty sold about 900–1,000 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 612-613 and soyabean refined oil 100–150 tonnes at Rs 690. Ruchi sold 700-800 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 606-608 and soya refined oil 400-500 tonnes at Rs 690.

Mewah sold 250–300 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 606. Resalers offloaded about 100-150 tonnes at Rs 608 -609. Groundnut and cotton refined oil ruled steady despite improvement in Gujarat due to tight supply of nuts for crushing.

In Rajkot-Saurashtra groundnut oil extended gain by Rs 40 to Rs 1,870 (Rs 1,830) for *Telia* tin and by Rs 10 to Rs 1,210 (Rs 1,200) for loose -10kgs.

Towards the day end, Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 612– 613, soya oil Rs 690 and sunflower refined oil Rs 720. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 606-608. Soya refined oil at Rs 690 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 720. Allana's rate for palmolein was Rs 608. Resellers were quoting palmolein at Rs 608 for JNPT and Rs 609-610 for Shapur.

Malaysia's crude palm oil July contracts closed at MYR 3,003 (MYR 2,960), August at MYR 3,003 (MYR 2,966) and September at MYR 3,000 (MYR 2,961) a tonne. **The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates were (Rs/10 kg)**: Groundnut oil 1,175 (1,175), soya refined oil 690 (690), sunflower exp. ref. 660 (660), sunflower ref. 715 (715), rapeseed ref. oil 797 (800), rapeseed expeller ref. 767 (770) cotton ref. oil 665 (665) and palmolein 608 (612).

Pepper continues upward trend

G. K. Nair

Kochi, June 6:

The pepper market continued to head north on Wednesday on bullish activities and liquidation amid limited availability. All the active contracts ended much above the previous day closing.

Market opened easier with June touching the lowest price of the day in the opening session itself. Then traded with high volatility and limited turnover. In the beginning of the closing session it moved up sharply to touch the first upper circuit breaker levels and hit the highest price of the day at Rs40,400 a quintal up by Rs1,270.

Thereafter it slipped and ended much above the previous day closing. Almost similar trend was seen in July with the increase not touching the upper circuit levels.

Many in the market now believe that the bull operators would take delivery of 1,000 tonnes of June contract and since the total stock position on the exchange as on June 5, 2012 is at 1,143 tonnes the balance available would be negligible. Add to this, as the weather is unfavourable following the onset of southwest monsoon the processors would not be able to process and deposit.

“Thus, the bull operators who are allegedly able to manage to get inside info etc, know that no fresh pepper would be deposited”, trade sources told *Business Line*. At the same, their opposite side is said to have short positions and hence they are being squeezed and cornered, they alleged.

There was no domestic demand forthcoming except for some stray requirement from the Papad industry, they said. As the prices are ruling high on the one hand and the heat wave conditions in north Indian states on the other upcountry dealers are staying away, they said.

Nearly 10 tonnes of fresh pepper arrived from the primary markets and of this 9 tonnes were traded at Rs378 a kg for material from the plains while that from Pulpally and Bathery in Wayanad fetched Rs380 a kg. High Range pepper was sold at Rs382 a kg.

June contract on the NCDEX increased by Rs920 a quintal to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs39,950. July and August went up by Rs750 and Rs895 respectively to the LTP of Rs39,625 and Rs39,920 a quintal.

Total turnover decreased by 554 tonnes to 2,756 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 14 tonnes to 5,747 tonnes.

June open interest dropped by 227 tonnes to 1,969 tonnes while that of July August went up by 194 tonnes and 19 tonnes respectively to close at 3,234 tonnes and 531 tonnes.

Spot prices in tandem with the futures market trend and limited supply went up by Rs500 a quintal to close at Rs37,800 (ungarbled) and Rs39,300 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was up at $7,450 a tonne (c&f) Europe and $7,750 a tonne (c&f) for the US. Other origins were reportedly easier/steady according to conflicting reports.

Poultry feed items rule flat on static inputs

Our Correspondent

Karnal, June 6:

Poultry feed products continued to rule flat on account of steady demand and prices of key ingredients of feed products being unchanged.

Mr Subhash Sharma, Financial Head of Sarvottam Poultry Feed Supply Centre Pvt Ltd., told *Business Line* that poultry products may continue to rule around current levels for the next

8-10 days. Traders expect prices of maize and bajra to drop in the coming days. Then, prices of poultry products may decrease by Rs 20-25 for a 30-kg and 50-kg bag, he added.

Soyameal prices have been ruling unchanged since last week and are currently quoting at Rs 3,100 a quintal. Similarly, other key ingredients of poultry feed products are maintaining their previous levels. Maize sold at Rs 1,170 a quintal, bajra at Rs 1,080, fish oil was quoted at Rs 68/litre, while DCP was at Rs 37-38 a kg.

Poultry feed products

Broiler concentrates feed was quoted at Rs 1,580, while broiler starter mash at Rs 1,260 for a 50-kg bag.Broiler pre-starter concentrate 30 per cent was sold at Rs 1,390 for a 30-kg bag, while layer concentrate at Rs 1,210 for a 50-kg bag.Pre-lay mash quoted at Rs 815, while broiler finisher was sold at Rs 1,240 for a 50-kg bag.Meanwhile, low production, coupled with good domestic demand, has pushed egg and broiler prices up, while chick remained unchanged. High mortality is the prime reason behind the low production, said Mr Subhash Sharma.On Wednesday, broiler was quoted at Rs 110 a kg against Rs 90 last week. The price of an egg was up by 11 paise to Rs 2.65, while that of chick ruled flat and sold at Rs 10-12.

Sugar mills seen under pressure to exhaust sale quota

Mumbai, June 6:

Sugar prices remained unchanged on Wednesday, thanks to a steady demand-supply situation. However, as the due date (June 10-15) for mills to exhaust their sale quota is approaching, resale selling pressure may increase, said traders.

Prices in the Vashi wholesale market were steady on ample supply and limited retail demand. The onset of the monsoon and fear of demand from stockist-traders easing also weighed on the sentiments. Stockists may, therefore, avoid building up inventories.

According to a wholesaler, ample arrivals from mills and fresh covering by retailers before the monsoon have kept the market active with small variation in prices.

In the spot market, the prices were Rs 2-5 a quintal higher depending on the quality. *Naka* and mill tender rates were steady. There could be some selling pressure in the coming days as some stockists who have booked the commodity have to lift the material from mills by June 10-15.

Other producers will also be under pressure to sell as they have to complete their quarterly free-sale quota before the month end.

At the current price level, it is difficult to export as expected. Moreover, neighbouring States buying in Maharashtra has been lacklustre since long due to higher production in most of the producing States.

According to the industry, total sugar production in 2011-12 will be 260 lakh tonnes, while domestic consumption will be around 220 lakh tonnes.

In the Vashi wholesale market, 52-53 truckloads arrived, while local dispatches were 50-51 loads. On Tuesday, 15-16 mills offered tenders and sold about 43,000-45,000 bags to local traders at Rs 2,770-2,830 (Rs 2,775-2,830) for S-grade, and Rs 2,840-2,910 (Rs 2,840-2,910) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade, Rs 2,920-2,971 (Rs 2,920-2,971); and M-grade, Rs 2,992-3,136 (Rs 2,992-3,136).

***Naka* delivery rates**: S-grade, Rs 2,860-2,900 (Rs 2,860-2,900); and M-grade, Rs 2,950-3,010 (Rs 2,950-3,010).

Bulk buyers shy away from turmeric market

Erode, June 6:

The price of the turmeric is steadily decreasing. “ In Tamil Nadu, the turmeric sale was conducted in Erode alone. Similarly in northern States, it was conducted in Sangli and Nizamabad.

The turmeric cultivation has increased in many places including Assam. More than three lakh bags are coming from Assam. It has reflected on the prices which are decreasing”, said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said due to uncertainty prevailing in turmeric market, many bulk buyers did not attend the auction. Very few exporters were purchasing only quality and big size turmeric.

Mr Ravishankar said with the onset of South-West Monsoon, the sales would be affected. Traders said they were purchasing little quantity to fulfil their committed orders for local turmeric powder units as they were not happy over the quality. At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, the finger variety was sold at Rs 2,306-3,399 a quintal, root variety Rs 2,282-3,135.

Salem crop: Finger variety at Rs 2,919-3,765; root variety Rs 2,839-3,285. Out of 1,923 bags that arrived 1,013 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, finger variety was sold at Rs 3,139-3,509; root variety Rs 3,069-3,331. Out of 1,669 bags, 1,613 were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety sold at Rs 2,840-3,669, root variety Rs 2,569-3,396. Out of 1,199 bags, 1,128 were sold.At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety fetched Rs 2,739-3,539, root variety Rs 2,569-3,400. All the 438 bags were sold.

3-day dairy show in Hyderabad next month

Hyderabad, June 7:

A three-day Dairy Show will be held in Hyderabad beginning July 13. The organisers said members from dairy farmers’ association and corporate firms in the sector, and other stakeholders will take part in deliberations on how to move up the value chain.

The show would be held at HITEX exposition facility at Madhapur here.

“The event will expose the stakeholders to best practices, technologies, policy issues and financial aspects concerning the industry,” Mr P.S.L.N. Rao, Director of Active Exhibitions and Conferences, has said.

Indian Dairy Association, Assocham, SERP (Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty) and Andhra Pradesh Government are supporting the event.

Dr M.V. Reddy, Director of AP Department of Animal Husbandry, has said that there was a need to improve the quality of animals in order to improve incomes. He said the Government had started an initiative in this regard.

“We are importing best of the bulls from the US and Europe to crossbreed them with local animals in order to get high-milk yielding animals,” he said.

He said importing technologies would help the dairy industry in the country. “Restricted entry (of foreign players) would help the country. They have got good technologies in breeding and semen production. We can invite that,” he said.

India to back Mexico on small farm holders at G-20 Summit

Providing access to technology and funding to such farmers is seen as a big challenge considering their small holdings.

Meet to focus on improving productivity to boost global farm output

New Delhi, June 6:

India, which has a large number of small farming families, has decided to back the Mexican Government's move to focus on small farm holders issue at the G-20 Summit, sources said.

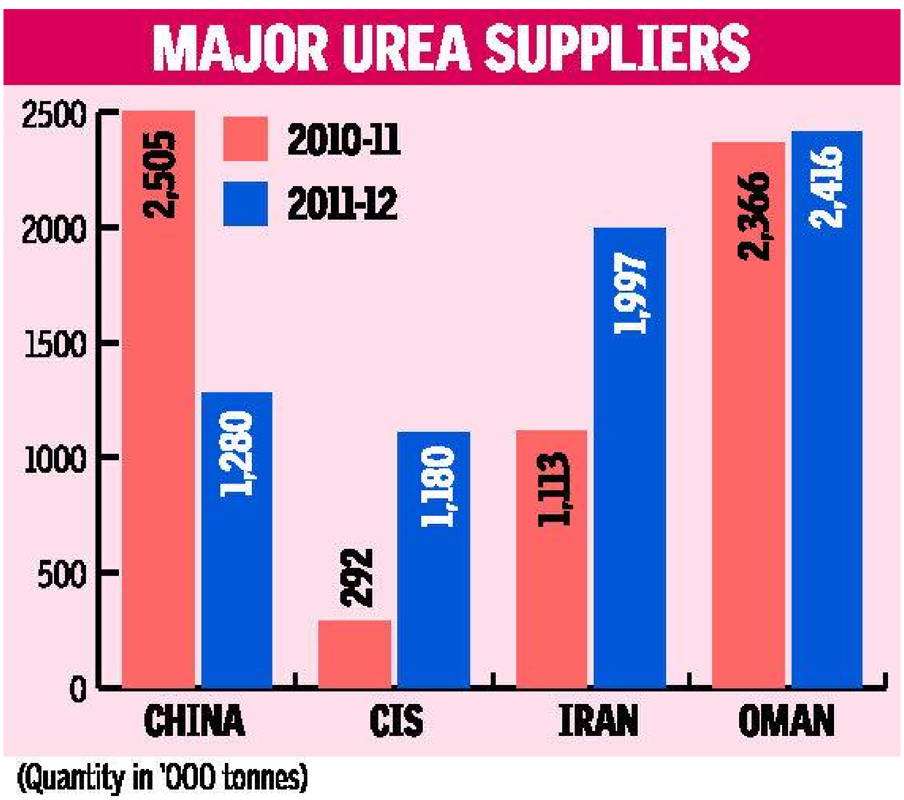
The issue of boosting productivity in small family farms is likely to figure at the G20 leaders summit in Mexico later this month.Mexico, which is heading the G-20 Presidency is trying for a consensus on the need for specific initiatives that can help boost productivity with emphasis on small farm holders. Sources indicated that India will oppose any move on diverting foodgrains to produce fuel. “Our first priority is food,” a senior Government official said.

The typical small farm holders suffer from yield gap owing to lack of access to technological inputs, investments and markets among others. As these small famers account for a large chunk of land holdings, especially in developing countries, it is important to focus on improving their productivity to boost global agriculture output.

Providing access to technology and funding to these farmers is seen as a big challenge considering their small holdings. In such a scenario, there is need to come up with innovative solutions like adopting a cluster approach among others to make such operations sustainable, sources said.In the run-up to the G-20 leaders meet, the Agriculture Deputy Ministers met recently and discussed the actions taken on containing food price volatility and the role that international trade can play in improving food security and output.The Ministers have called for an action plan to boost global food production through increased co-operation.Such action plan assumes significance as global population is set to exceed 9.3 billion by 2050 and the global agricultural output would have to increase by 50-70 per cent over the same period. In developing countries food production has to grow by about 100 per cent. They also felt the need to align the application and management of public policies to coordinate policy actions to ensure the population's right to food.This apart, food security, transfer of technology to improve output through increased international co-operation and promotion of investments in farm sector through public-private partnerships are other key issues that may find a mention at the summit's final declaration.

Oman emerges biggest supplier of urea in 2011-12

Arvind Jayaram



Provides one-third of India's total imports of 78.34 lt

June 6, 2012:

Oman was India's biggest supplier of urea in 2011-12. The country provided around one-third of India's total imports of 78.34 lakh tonnes of the fertiliser during the year.

The weighted average cost of India's urea imports in 2011-12 was $481.74 per tonne, which was up 47.1 per cent over the previous year. This translates into total urea imports of $3.77 billion.

The supply from Oman remained around 24 lakh tonnes over the last two years.

In 2010-11, China was the country's biggest urea supplier, accounting for nearly 38 per cent of total imports, according to a supplementary note tabled in the Lok Sabha.

The country's urea imports rose 18.5 per cent during FY12 vis-à-vis the previous fiscal. Most of the imports from Oman were through India's long-term off-take agreement with Oman India Fertiliser Company, a joint venture between Oman Oil Company SAOC, IFFCO and Kribhco.

Iran was our second-biggest supplier, followed by China. Iran accounted for 25.5 per cent of urea supply, while China provided another 16.3 per cent. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as a whole fulfilled 14.1 per cent of India's requirement of urea.

The other countries that supplied urea to the country in 2011-12 were Russia and the former Soviet Union, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Indonesia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Lithuania, Vietnam, Romania the UAE and Malaysia.

The CIS and Saudi Arabia have been the only consistent suppliers of urea to India since 2004-05. Oman commenced supplies in 2005-06 and China in the year after. While supply from Oman has gradually ramped up over the years and has been at the same level in the past three years, urea imports from China have been erratic, with an all-time high of 26.35 lakh tonnes in 2007-08.

In the past, India has also sourced the fertiliser from Egypt, Latvia, Libya and Turkey.

AP officials told to make ample seeds, fertilisers available

Hyderabad, June 6:

The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, has asked officials to keep adequate stocks of seeds and fertilisers available to meet the demand in ensuing kharif season. He also asked them to monitor disbursals of crop loans and input subsidies in different parts of the State.

Reviewing kharif preparations here on Wednesday, the Chief Minister asked officials to take action against those who were selling inputs in the black market. He wanted officials to visit different towns and villages to take stock and address grievances of farmers.

“Tell farmers that over 36 companies are producing 100 different types of seeds of the same quality,” he told the officials.

Officials told the Chief Minister that the companies had positioned 1.27 crore packets of cottonseeds in Warangal, Karimnagar, Khammam, Nalgonda and Adilabad districts. The demand was put at 1.20 crore packets. “Vigilance raids have been stepped up in areas where there is a scope for selling the seed in the black market.

Over 14.8 lakh quintals of different types of seeds have been kept under the disposal of State Seeds Development Corporation, Oilfed and Markfed and HACA.

The State set a target of distributing 41.55 lakh tonnes of fertilizers as against the consumption of 34.26 lakh tonnes in the last kharif.

Rajasthan withdraws permission for GM mustard trial

K. V. Kurmanath

Hyderabad, June 6:

The Rajasthan Government has withdrawn its ‘no objection certificate' (NOC) given for conducting transgenic mustard field trial at an advanced stage.

The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has found fault with it for doing such a thing.

The Department of Agriculture in Rajasthan have given the NOC for holding trials at three locations. But towards the end of the second season trial, the Government directed the research team to terminate them.

At a recent meeting, the GEAC took serious objection to the withdrawal.

"Once permission to carry out experiments has been granted, we should not withdraw it arbitrarily," the GEAC observed.

Concerns

The Rajasthan Government wrote to the research team saying that the matter for permitting trials of transgenic crops had indeed brought with concerns as no unanimity had been arrived at, either in favour or against.

"We have taken a view to wait until a national consensus is evolved (on the issue)," it said, while withdrawing the NOC.

Replying to queries in an e-mail, Dr Deepak Pental of Delhi University, termed that the Rajasthan Government decision was a knee-jerk reaction.

"What instigated this anti-science decision is not known to us.

While the GEAC has recorded its concerns, the body should be more proactive. If agriculture is a State subject, why do we have GEAC at the central level," he asked.

The team could complete the trials at Kumher and Navgaon and data have been received.

"We were given a few days, not through taking the order back but just as act of generosity as the trials were near maturity," he said.

Sri Ganganagar trial was burnt 4-5 days before the crop was to mature.

"It was waste of public resources as the Centre funded bio-safety trials and the research," he said.

UP to clear over Rs 3,200 cr dues of cane farmers

Lucknow, June 6:

The Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday, in a reply to the Assembly, said that it had to pay Rs 3,232.34 crore dues to cane farmers.The figure included over Rs 550 crore in government sugar mills and rest in private mills.“This amount will be paid to farmers as per the Supreme Court order of April 20 in three installments by June 7 next”, the reply said.

Coonoor tea auction volume rises to 20-week high

Coonoor, June 6:

A volume of 12.79 lakh kg will be offered for Sale No: 23 of the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association to be held on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of listing by brokers.

It is the highest volume of the last 20 weeks. It is about 2.11 lakh kg more than last week's offer but 3.68 lakh kg less than the offer this time last year.

Of the 12.79 lakh kg on offer, 9.09 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.70 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 11.92 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.87 lakh kg, orthodox variety. The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.47 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 8.62 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.40 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 3.30 lakh kg, CTC.

In the 12.79 lakh kg, fresh teas account for 12.68 lakh kg. About 11,000 kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. Last week, in the leaf auctions, Hindustan Unilever Ltd and Tata Global Beverages Ltd operated on good medium grades while Duncans Tea Ltd., better medium brokens. In the dust auctions, HUL and Tata Global were selective while, Duncans showed interest on better medium sorts. Godfrey Philips India Ltd did not operate.

Fisheries output seen touching 10 mt soon

The Union Minister for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries, Mr Sharad Pawar and the Union Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr Charandas Mahant chaired the 7th meting of governing body National Fisheries Development Board in Hyderabad on Wednesday. - Photo: Mohammed Yousuf

Hyderabad, June 6:

Fisheries output in the country could touch the 10-million-tonne-mark soon, the Minister for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries, Mr Sharad Pawar, has said. From 6.5 mt six years ago, the output increased to 8.4 mt last year.Addressing a gathering to mark the seventh meeting of the governing body of National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) here on Wednesday, he said that the segment was growing at about 5 per cent.

The Government plans to set up hygienic fish trading platforms in cities such as Nellore. Fish markets would come up at Rajahmundry, Kulgaon (Maharashtra) and at Salt Lake City (West Bengal).The Government also proposes to set up a National Freshwater Fish Brood Bank (NFFBB) at the fish farm of the Department of Fisheries at Kausalyaganga in Orissa. It would be managed by NFDB in association with CIFA (Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture) at Bhubaneswar.The executive committee of NFDB had given the in-principle nod to establish the bank.During 2011-12, the Government spent Rs 100 crore for development of fisheries through National Mission for Protein Supplements. Under this scheme, cage culture in reservoirs and intensive aquaculture in ponds and tanks were being promoted.This scheme would be continued in 2012-13 with an outlay of Rs 200 crore.

Global rice output surges to record 480 mt in 2011: FAO

World output of rice rose by 2.6 per cent to an all—time high of 480.1 million tonnes (MT) in 2011, according to Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

New Delhi, June 6:

Helped by record rice production in India, world output of the key staple rose by 2.6 per cent to all—time high of 480.1 million tonnes (MT) in 2011, United Nation's body Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has said.

Global rice production stood at 468.1 MT in 2010.

"With the rice season virtually completed, the latest estimate of 2011 world rice production has been lowered slightly to 480.1 MT, still pointing to a 2.6 per cent or 12 MT, increase from 2010 and to an all time high," FAO said in its latest Food Outlook report.

The downward revision in the 2011 world estimate resulted from adjustments in the output especially in Bangladesh, Mali, Pakistan, Senegal and Venezuela, it added.

"... the increase in world output in 2011 was principally fostered by outstanding results in India, which on the back of a favourable monsoon, experienced a 7.4 MT expansion to 103.4 MT, breaking the 100 MT landmark for the first time," it noted.

According to the India's Agriculture Ministry estimates, the country is pegged to have harvested a record 103.41 MT of rice in the 2011—12 crop year (July—June) as against 95.98 MT in the previous crop year.

"Considerably more rice was also harvested in Asia by China, Pakistan and Vietnam. Further sizable gains were achieved by Cambodia, Malaysia, Nepal and the Philippines," it said.

However, a series of setbacks including floods, excessive rains and diseases depressed output in Indonesia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand, FAO pointed out.

Outside Asia, the 2011 season concluded positively in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Egypt and Uruguay, while poor growing conditions were partly behind disappointing crop results in Madagascar and in countries of West Africa, especially Mali and Senegal, it said.

For the current year, FAO has pegged world rice output at 488 MT.

Spot rubber declines further

KOTTAYAM, JUNE 6:

Physical rubber prices fell further on Wednesday. According to observers, there were no quantity buyers in the market even at the prevailing levels. Anticipation of higher imports due to lower prices in the international markets amidst lacklustre demand and gloomy economic outlook is likely to build further pressure over the markets. The trend was partially mixed.

Sheet rubber weakened to Rs 191 (192) a kg according to traders. The grade dropped to Rs 191.50 (192) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi as reported by the Rubber Board.

The June series improved to Rs 191.30 (188.11), July to Rs 193.40 (190), August to Rs 192.01 (189.17) and November to Rs 192.03 (191.50) while the September series slipped to Rs 187.11 (187.95) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

The June futures slipped to ¥246.5 (Rs 172.44) from ¥247.9 a kg during the day session but then recovered to ¥247 (Rs 172.71) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) dropped to Rs 193.39 (195.63) a kg at Bangkok.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 191 (192); RSS-5: 189 (189); ungraded: 184 (186.50); ISNR 20: 188 (191) and latex 60 per cent: 131 (131).

Costlier imports, rising dollar perk up tur

INDORE, JUNE 6:

Tur prices have increased by Rs 100 a quintal in the last one week as imports have turned costlier. This is on account of the devaluation of the rupee against the dollar.

This has also led to the bullish trend continuing in tur with demand aiding the trend further. Lower domestic stocks have resulted in imports turning costlier.

In the spot, tur (Maharashtra) perked up to Rs 4,450 a quintal, while tur (Indore variety) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,300. Buying support also perked up tur dal with marka gaining Rs 100 at Rs 6,600 a quintal.

Similarly, tur dal (full) also rose to Rs 5,800-5,850 a quintal (Rs 5,750-5,800), while tur dal (sawa no.) ruled at Rs 5,100-5,150(Rs 5,050-5,100).

Dollar chana tumbled by Rs 150-200 a quintal on weak demand. Even as arrival remained steady at 3,000 bags, dollar chana in local mandis declined to Rs 6,500-7,000 a quintal. In container trade, dollar chana crashed by Rs 150 a quintal on sluggish export demand with dollar chana 42/44 count declining to Rs 7,950, dollar chana (44/46) to Rs 7,850 a quintal, while 60/62 count ruled at Rs 6,350 a quintal.

Moong and its dal ruled stable even as arrivals rose to 3,000 bags. In the spot, moong (best quality) ruled flat at Rs 3,800-3,900 a quintal, while moong (medium) ruled at Rs 3,400 a quintal. Moong dal ruled steady with moong dal (average) being quoted at Rs 4,900-5,000 a quintal, moong dal (bold) at Rs 5,500 a quintal, while moong mongar ruled at Rs 5,000-5,300 a quintal.

Chana (kanta) rose to Rs 4,300-4,325 (Rs 4,250-4,275) on renewed buying support, while chana (desi) ruled flat at Rs 4,200. Support to spot chana also perked up its dal with chana dal (average) rising to Rs 5,100-5,125 (Rs 5,075-5,100), chana dal (medium) ruled at Rs 5,200-5,225 (Rs 5200), while chana dal (bold) rose to Rs 5,400-5,425 (Rs 5,375-5,400).

Mexico looking to boost avacado exports to India

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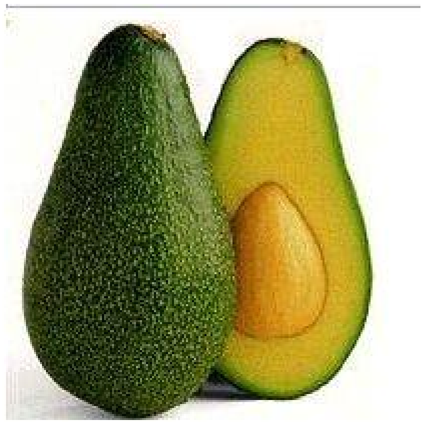
WikipediaAvocado fruit and foliage

- WikipediaA seedless avocado



- WikipediaAvocado fruit

BANGALORE, JUNE 6:

The Mexican ‘King Avacado' (fruit) could soon be available in India. Buoyed by huge demand, Mexico is now trying to push avacado exports to India.

“We are working on the logistics aspects with the Government of Karnataka, and hope to use the State's knowledge or solution to reduce the transit time of shipments,” Mr Aldo Ruiz, Investment and Trade Commissioner, Ministry of Economy, Mexico, told *Business Line* on the sidelines of the Global Investors' Meet in Bangalore on Wednesday.

Avacado is a fruit native to Mexico, and is largely exported from there. It is very difficult to send fresh product exports to India because the transit time is long, he pointed out. “We are looking for better connectivity to India through Karnataka,” he said.

Currently, shipments from Mexico's Veracruz port take 44-50 days to reach Nhava Sheva container terminal in Mumbai. “We are trying to route shipments from Singapore to Mangalore port in Karnataka,” he said.

The preferred transit time would be 30-32 days, added Mr Ruiz. Other challenges in India would include cold storage facilities, which are not yet very well developed, and also ground transportation time which need to be reduced too.

Though Mr Ruiz declined to quantify the demand for avacado in India, he said that top retailers from India have shown interest in getting the fruit to the country and have been in touch with Mexican exporters and distributors.