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Cultivation of sorghum on the rise

Staff Reporter



Director of Sorghum Research J.V Patil interacts with a farmer near Tenali on Tuesday.—

PHOTO: T. Vijaya Kumar

At a time when rising costs of cultivation of rice and other labour intensive crops is weighing down farmers, few enterprising farmers in delta have started experimenting with cultivation of sorghum (tella jonnalu in Telugu) with the support from Directorate of Sorghum Research.

The Directorate has produced a new variety of hybrid seed-CSH-16- and asked farmers to cultivate in 150 acres on an experimental basis.

Buoyed by the rich yield, over 7.8 tonnes per hectare-the directorate is motivating more number of farmers to cultivate sorghum.

Director J.V Patil, who visited parts of Tenali, on Tuesday, interacted with farmers. Mr. Patil told *The Hindu* on Tuesday that conditions in Delta were ideal for the cultivation of millets like sorghum. The cultivation of crop requires less moisture and low nutritional input but scores over other crops over high productivity.

“Modern life style changes with focus on consuming foods with less sugar and carbohydrate and more fibre means sorghum could be an effective alternate to rice,” Mr. Patil said. Presently, Sorghum was being cultivated in over 20,000 hectares in delta area.

Farmers in delta area have already experimented with cultivation of Maize as a second crop.

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Training on seed treatment

Special Correspondent

A one-day training programme on seed treatment techniques in paddy cultivation would be organised at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Vamban on March 15.

The training is organised for the benefit of farmers and with the objective of increasing productivity in paddy, by adopting integrated seed treatment techniques. The training would be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Further details can be had from the Kendra by dialling 0432-2290321, Collector B.Maheswari said in a press release.

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“Backyard poultry can provide extra income”

Special Correspondent

Ninety persons – 50 men and 40 women – attended the two-day vocational training on ‘Backyard Poultry Rearing’ organised at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Needamangalam recently. Dr.Anandalakshmi, Regional Joint Director, Animal Husbandry, Tiruvarur, inaugurated the training programme. She said backyard poultry played an important role in socio-economic uplift of rural mass and eradication of poverty.

Backyard poultry reduced the high infant and maternal mortality rate through restoration of nutritional status of the rural population.

T.Senguttuvan, Professor and Head of KVK, said that backyard poultry is a viable enterprise for getting additional income of Rs.2,000 to Rs.5,000 per month besides providing employment to women.

Moreover, backyard poultry rearing is more beneficial to small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, and tribal and backward class people in the rural areas since it generates daily income. G. Mahendiran, assistant surgeon, Needamangalam Veterinary Hospital, spoke about various poultry diseases caused by virus, bacteria, fungi and parasites and ways to prevent them through vaccination.

He also sensitised the trainees about the diseases infecting humans through the birds with special emphasis on avian influenza (flu), A(H5N1).

The disease has caused high mortality among humans in East Asian countries. He also briefed about the symptoms of avian influenza and the ways to prevent the infection, its spread and vaccine available.

Dr. M. Senthil Kumar, assistant professor, Entomology, shared his views on the alternate poultry farming as an alternate livelihood option for the farming community. He also spoke on the protection aspects of Turkey farming, Japanese quail farming and the usefulness of low cost poultry egg incubator in backyard poultry.

Trainees were taken to Devangudi village in Needamangalam taluk as an exposure visit.

Hands-on practice was also given to the trainees about administration of various vaccines. Selvam and Mohammed Ghani, assistant directors of Animal Husbandry participated in the training.

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Move to increase agriculture production

Staff Reporter

The Government had been implementing various schemes through the Department of Agriculture Engineering with an intention to increase the production in the field of agriculture, said Collector S. Nagarajan.

Presiding over a meeting organised in connection with the distribution of agriculture equipments by the Agriculture Engineering department on Monday, he said that the National Agriculture Development Scheme had been implemented to achieve a four percent growth in the field of agriculture.

The Collector also distributed agriculture equipments with a subsidy of Rs. 5.69 lakh during the year 2011-12 to the beneficiaries. He handed over the combined harvester worth Rs. 15,25,250 with a subsidy of Rs. 4 lakh to George of Patharai near Reetapuram and weeding machine attached to a mini tractor worth Rs. 2,83,725 with a subsidy of Rs. 1.25 lakh to Subbihan of Manavalakurichi. He also handed over a power tiller worth Rs. 1,15,450 with a subsidy of Rs. 44,080 to Krishnakumar of Azhaganparai.

The Executive Engineer of Agriculture Engineering Department, Sam Selvaraj, Assistant Executive Engineer Kolappa Pillai attended the meeting.

Share

THRISSUR, March 14, 2012

Council moots department for seed technology

The Academic Council of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU) which met here on Tuesday recommended the establishment of a new department of seed technology at the College of Horticulture, Vellanikkara, and a postgraduate course in the discipline.

It also recommended a hike in fellowships and stipends for students.

“The KAU also plans to widen the scope of courses such as Cooperation and Banking, and Agribusiness Management,” said KAU Vice Chancellor K.R. Viswambharan.

The research contingency fund, fellowships for postgraduate and PhD courses, and the stipend for undergraduate students for the RAWE (Rural Agricultural Work Experience) programme had been increased, thanks to a State government aid of Rs.1.9 crore under the plan mode, the meeting said.

The annual contingency fund for MSc student will be raised from Rs.15,000 to Rs. 40,000, and that for PhD scholar from Rs.35,000 to Rs.60,000.

The fellowships for postgraduate course will be increased from Rs.700 to Rs.1,500, and Ph.D. fellowships from Rs.800 to Rs.2,000 a month. Undergraduate students will receive Rs.8,000 a month for the RAWE programme. They are currently paid Rs.1,500 a month.

SANGAREDDY, March 14, 2012

64 paddy procurement centres to be set up

As many as 64 paddy procurement centres will be established in the district for the rabi season. In addition, the managements of the 59 rice mills have also been entrusted the job.

Paddy was sown in 55,000 acres in the district and the authorities are expecting a harvest of 1.85 lakh tonnes by the end of the season. While 58 centres will be run by village organisations, four will be run by the Food Corporation of India and two by the Civil Supplies Department. These centres will be established from April 2 to 7.

It was decided at a meeting here on Tuesday to impart training to VOs in paddy procurement.

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Wed, 14 Mar 2012

~~weather~~

Delhi - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Wednesday, Mar 14

Max Min

27.2° | 13.1°

Rain: 6.0 mm in 24hrs

Sunrise: 7:14

Humidity: 72%

Sunset: 17:48

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1018

Tomorrow's Forecast



Sunny

Thursday, Mar 15

Max Min

28° | 13°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday






Mar 16

Mar 17

Mar 18

Mar 19

Mar 20

				
30° 12°	31° 12°	33° 13°	33° 13°	34° 15°
Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny



Govt withdraws ban on cotton exports

MONDAY, 12 MARCH 2012 22:15

PNS | NEW DELHI

Under immense domestic and international pressure the Government on Monday lifted the ban on cotton exports barely a week after imposing it.

The Government, however, said it will not issue any new export registration certificates and only bales registered for shipment before the ban was effected March 5 would be cleared for exports.

“The central Government hereby withdraws the notification” the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification. The roll-back followed widespread protests from political allies and the opposition, farmers and traders within the country and buyers, especially China, the biggest importer of Indian cotton.

Industry Body ASSOCHAM also favours the decision taken by the Government and said, “the Government’s decision to lift the ban on cotton exports is a wise decision at the right time, exporters had to pay heavy penalties for not honouring their commitments to international buyers.”

Patna HC quashes levy sugar stock rule

Ajay Modi / New Delhi March 14, 2012, 0:21 IST

The rule requiring sugar companies to meet the unlifted portion of what is known as the levy sugar quota for up to two years unless the central government takes this off its hands is too unreasonable to pass legality, says a recent verdict of the Patna high court.

The verdict says the companies are entitled to sell at the end of each season any portion of the quota the government is unable to lift. As for the current unlifted stock of about 2.1 million tonnes in all, the order gives the central government three months to take it. If not, the companies may sell it at the market price. Since the court order was issued on January 12, the time limit in this regard is April 12.

It is practically impossible for the government to lift such a huge quantity in the remaining month. With a difference of Rs 11 per kg between the levy and open market price of sugar, mills can realise around Rs 2,300 crore. However, the Union food ministry has planned to challenge the order before a larger bench of the HC. It is learnt that industry bodies, including the Indian Sugar Mills Association (Isma), will seek to implead themselves in the case if that happens.

According to the rule, a portion of the sugar made by each mill has to be given to the central government for distribution through ration shops. The percentage of output to be set aside in this manner (10 per cent, at present) and the price at which it is to be given to the government are both set by the latter. And, as mentioned, if the government is unable to or does not, for any reason, take the sugar in question, termed the 'levy quota', the mills cannot dispose it, in effect. They can sell within three months but, on demand, the obligation has to be met at the price of the year for which the levy sugar was allotted.

All this, says the HC verdict, is "unfair, arbitrary and unreasonable". The judgment was given in a petition filed by a Vishnu Sugar Mills. After liquidating the existing stock as noted earlier, the

court says “from the next sugar production year, commencing from October each year, there would not be any carry-forward of past liability and the levy liability would start with a clean slate every year”.

Isma director-general Abinash Verma said the industry welcomed the decision. “Carrying forward of previous years’ levy obligation is a financial burden for mills, as they have to supply it at a previous year’s price. Mills also bear the inventory cost.”

Cotton export ban episode created uncertainty, says ICAC

Committee fears more textile mills, importing nations may switch to polyester

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai March 14, 2012, 0:18 IST

India’s recent flipflop over a ban on cotton exports has created uncertainty in the market, according to countries that produce, trade and consume the item. The twin development could, in the long term, encourage more textile mills around the world, especially in importing countries, to switch to polyester where supplies are more stable, says the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC), an association of nations involved in growing, transacting and buying the soft and fluffy staple fibre.

ICAC executive director Terry Townsend, noting that the world’s cotton trade is estimated at about eight million tonnes, said the recent ban on Indian exports of the commodity, followed by its lifting of the ban yesterday in a week’s time, will not change the quantity of total world trade. “Instead, the episode created uncertainty,” he told Business Standard in an email interview. “The long-term impact will be to encourage more textile mills around the world and especially in importing countries, to switch to polyester because supplies are more stable.”

Now that the ban is lifted, Townsend said the world cotton market would settle back to the prices suggested by fundamentals. In round numbers, the world’s production of the crop is estimated at 27 million tonnes, while the consumption is just 23 million tonnes, he revealed. “Therefore, stocks are rising and the average price level is lower this year than it was last year.”

According to Townsend, the partial lifting of the export ban eliminates the most disruptive aspect of the original ban: the retroactive application of the ban to shipments for which

registration certificates had already been issued. The easing of this aspect of the ban will allow contract fulfilment to occur, thus avoiding defaults.

“However, the interruption of trade through government regulation is still highly disruptive and serves to undermine the long-term competitiveness of the world cotton industry,” he noted. “Cotton prices are already returning to normal levels because contracts will be fulfilled, with perhaps just a lag of several weeks.”

Townsend said the world cotton market had sufficient stocks during the current season, and prices were lower now than they were at the time of the previous ban on exports.

“The Cotlook A Index of average world cotton prices is falling from an average of \$1.64 per pound of cotton last season to about \$1 per pound this season. (prices are for delivery to mills in east Asia). Nevertheless, the recent export ban created uncertainty in the market, and it was very expensive for traders and textile mills with contracts for Indian cotton,” he observed.

Also, competing cotton exporters would benefit from the ban, even though it was lifted after just one week, because buyers would be careful about buying Indian cotton in the future, he added. According to the ICAC, the world cotton production for 2011-12 was estimated at 27.2 million tonnes, trade at eight million tonnes and consumption at 23.4 million tonnes, ending stock of 13.1 million tonnes.

During 2012-13, the cotton production is estimated at 25.8 million tonnes, trade at 8.3 million tonnes and consumption at 24.3 million tonnes, ending stocks of 14.6 million tonnes.

As for India, the ICAC has projected cotton production at 5.9 million tonnes in 2011-12, consumption at 4.4 million tonnes and exports at 1.5 to 1.7 million tonnes.

During 2012-13, India is expected to produce 5.7 million tonnes, while cotton consumption is estimated at 4.7 million tonnes and exports at 1 million tonnes.

Selling keeps spot sugar on leash



Mumbai, March 13:

Sugar prices ruled steady in the Vashi wholesale market on Tuesday with demand-supply being routine. In the spot, prices fell by Rs 6-10 a quintal for fair quality.

Naka rates declined by Rs 15 for M-grade, while S-grade was unchanged. Mill tender rates ruled steady.

Mr Jagdish Rawal of B. Bhogilal and Co., said that with the demand-supply position being routine, the market was stable with minor changes.

The market trend will depend upon local demand support and producers selling. Local retailers demand for fine quality continued but selling of fair quality at lower rates kept price on leash.

He further said that upcountry markets also were stable on routine demand. Support from export market is also not encouraging. Traders in the physical market opted for need-based buying on limited retail demand.

Arrivals in the Vashi market were 50-52 truckloads and dispatches were 51-52 loads. On Monday, about 14-15 mills offered tenders and sold 58,000 – 60,000 bags in the range of Rs 2,730-2,800 (Rs 2,730-2,800) for S-grade and Rs 2,830-2,900 (Rs 2,830-2,900) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S-grade Rs 2,876-2,962 (Rs 2,882-2,962); and M-grade Rs 2,966 - 3,061 (Rs 2,981- 3,061). **Naka delivery rates were:** S-grade Rs 2,820 - 2,860 (Rs 2,820 - 2,860) and M - grade Rs 2,920-3,000 (Rs 2,940-3,000).

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Our Correspondent



Kottayam, March 12:

Physical rubber prices were mixed on Tuesday. The market opened weak but regained initial losses on late trades. Most of the counters finished unchanged amidst scattered transactions. The overall volumes were not impressive.

Sheet rubber closed weak at Rs 190.50 (191) after hitting an intra-day low of Rs 190 a kg, according to traders. The grade finished steady at Rs 191 a kg, as reported by the Rubber Board.

In the global market, futures on the Tokyo Commodity Market (TOCOM) edged higher on firm oil prices but gains were limited as investors preferred to wait for clear policy moves from the Bank of Japan. Trading volumes on Tokyo rubber futures stood at 6,467 lots, far below the over 10,000 lots normally traded on the exchange.

The March series increased to Rs 189.99 (188.79), April to Rs 196.15 (195.11), May to Rs 200.50 (199.26) and June to Rs 202.59 (201.35, while the July series slipped to Rs 203.05

(203.30) and August to Rs 201.07 (201.70) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) closed firm at Rs 202.60 (201.93) a kg at Bangkok. The March futures improved to ₹321 (Rs 193.77) from ₹319.3 a kg on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 190.50 (191); RSS-5: 188 (188); ungraded: 185 (185); ISNR 20: 188.50 (188.50) and latex 60 per cent: 128.50 (127.50).

Turmeric shines on reduced arrivals

Our Bureau



Erode, March 13:

Turmeric prices increased Rs 200 a quintal at the Erode market on lower arrivals.

“Around 17,000 bags arrived for sale and 70 per cent was sold, reflecting buying interest. The traders and exporters have received fresh orders from the North India, leading to increased lower and upper price levels,” said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

Arrivals were optimal at other markets. Turmeric futures ruled stable. As usual, the demand for the Dharmapuri crop has increased. The hybrid Salem crop saw brisk sales.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 2,401-3,719 a quintal; root variety was sold at Rs 2,324-3,311 a quintal.

Salem Crop: The Finger variety fetched Rs 3,711- 4,118 a quintal; root variety Rs 3,300-3,519 a quintal. Out of an arrival of 3,459 bags of turmeric, 1,401 bags were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, finger variety was sold at Rs 3,206-3,756 a quintal. Root variety was sold at Rs 3,073-3,419 a quintal. Out of arrival of 1,604 bags, 1,574 bags were sold.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 3,066-3,956 a quintal. Root variety Rs 2,919-3,486 a quintal. All the 1,074 bags of turmeric that arrived for sales were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 3,040-3,919 a quintal, root variety Rs 2,109-3,446 a quintal. Out of arrival of 403 bags, 380 turmeric bags were sold.

Chana firm on low arrivals

Our Correspondent



Indore, March 13:

Chana ruled firm despite subdued buying interest on Tuesday. With most *mandis* in Madhya Pradesh closed, arrival of chana declined to merely 2,000-2,500 bags.

Arrival of pulses declined as most *mandis* were closed in the wake of a State-wide bandh called by the Congress party in protest against the murder of an IPS officer in Morena a few days back.

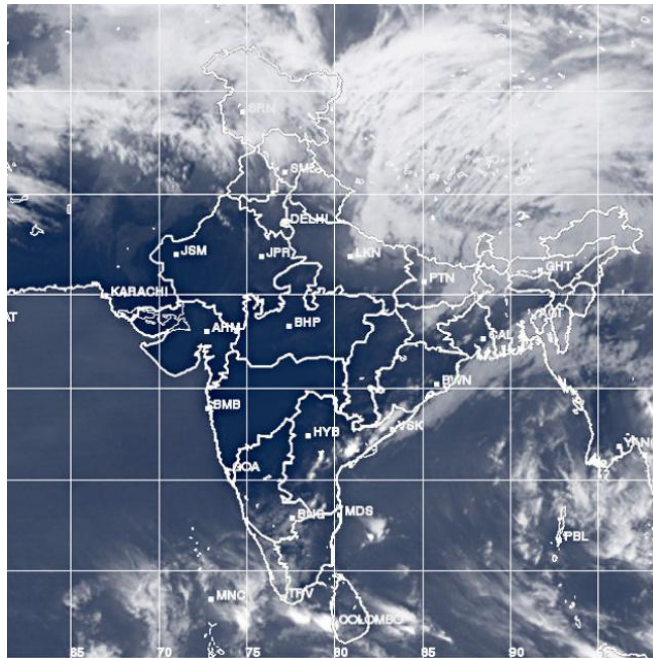
Kanta chana in local mandis ruled at Rs 3,500-3,525 a quintal, while desi chana was at Rs 3,425-3,450. Among other varieties, mausmi chana ruled at Rs 3,600-3,800, annagiri G-5 at Rs 3,300-3,400, kaktu at Rs 4,200, V2 at Rs 3,300, vishal at Rs 3,300-3,400, turki at Rs 4,200-4,300, Russian at Rs 3,400-4,100 and kabuli bitki at Rs 3,500-3,600 a quintal.

Chana dal ruled marginally higher, with average dal being quoted at Rs 4,275-4,300 a quintal, medium dal at Rs 4,375-4,400 and bold dal at Rs 4,500-4,525.

Dollar chana or chickpea ruled firm at Rs 6,200-6,400 a quintal as arrival declined to 3,000-3,500 bags.

Hailstorm may hit UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha

Vinson Kurian



Hailstorm whipped up by a prevailing western disturbance could work up speeds reaching 55 km in East India

Thiruvananthapuram, March 13:

Hailstorm whipped up by a prevailing western disturbance could work up speeds reaching 55 km in East India on Wednesday.

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Meghalaya, Odisha, West Bengal and Sikkim might get affected in the bargain.

NORTH-WEST POUNDED

This follows scorching of the earth in the northwest during the 24 hours ending Tuesday morning, says an India Meteorological Department (IMD) an update.

Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and east Madhya Pradesh bore the brunt of the resultant weather during this period.

Rain or snowfall was reported from Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

In the plains, east and west Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Haryana, east Madhya Pradesh and sub-Himalayan West Bengal saw varyingly wet weather. On Tuesday afternoon, the weather-maker western disturbance hung over Jammu and Kashmir and neighbourhood.

INDUCED CIRCULATION

The induced cyclonic circulation, a sign of the parent's strength and intensity and lying to its southern flanks, was spotted over west Uttar Pradesh.

The front-end with moist and ascending air is what is whipping up the hailstorm as is the norm during transition from winter to spring at this time of the year.

Another upper air cyclonic circulation persisted over east Madhya Pradesh after moving in from west overnight on Tuesday.

Meanwhile in the south, an itinerant easterly wave has started affecting south peninsular India.

EASTERLY WAVE

A number of places in Tamil Nadu, north coastal Andhra Pradesh and Kerala have benefited from occasional rains.

An outlook valid until Sunday said that rain or thundershowers may continue to break out over extreme south peninsular India.

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, south Karnataka and Rayalaseema are likely to share the spoils.

The outlook also maintained the outlook for an incoming fresh western disturbance to affect the western Himalayan region from Friday.

Govt report on farms calls for reforms to boost investment

Our Bureau



New Delhi, March 13:

A Government report has called for enhancing investment in agriculture and leveraging technology to boost the country's farm sector growth in the years ahead.

The report 'State of Indian Agriculture 2011-12,' released by the Agriculture Ministry on Tuesday, called for institutional reforms in research set up to make it more accountable and geared towards delivery, conservation of natural resources such as water and land among others.

“Achieving a 8-9 per cent growth in overall GDP may not deliver much in terms of poverty reduction, unless agricultural growth accelerates. The agriculture growth has to be kept at the centre of any reform agenda or planning process, in order to make a significant dent on poverty and malnutrition and to ensure long-term food security for the people,” it said.

The report, first of its kind, has emphasised on development of rain-fed agriculture, irrigation, creating infrastructure support for marketing and ensuring increased credit flow to farmers

among others. It calls for the need to bridge the yield gaps through technology input and other interventions, while placing thrust on raising productivity.

Public private tie-up

Strongly advocating public-private partnership in the farm sector, the report said that the Government needs to raise public investment, besides playing a catalytic role to attract more private sector investment. "We want the private sector's managerial and technical capabilities on the field," said the Union Agriculture Secretary, Mr P.K. Basu.

Increase investments

Stating that contribution of agriculture to overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has halved in the past two decades to around 14.5 per cent in 2010-11 from about 30 per cent in 1990-91, the report noted that such a trend is expected in any development process of the economy. The gross capital formation in agriculture has hovered between 6 and 8 per cent as compared to 18 per cent in the early 1980s, Mr Basu said.

Such a trend suggests that non-agriculture sectors have been receiving higher investments over the plan periods. Keeping in view the high population pressure on agriculture for their sustenance, there is need to increase in investments, he said.

The report also calls for reforms to streamline domestic markets and expanding infrastructure and institutions to connect local markets with national and global markets.

Besides, deliberating on the consequences of rising population on farming and its capacity to provide employment, the report calls for creation of additional employment opportunities to the rural populace in non-farm and manufacturing sector. Such opportunities could be agro-based rural industries that have area specific comparative advantage in terms of resource endowment and development possibilities. "This would require suitable skill development," Mr Basu said.

Water usage

Cautioning on the impact of water scarcity, the report calls for efficiency in water usage. It estimates that even a rise of 5 per cent irrigation efficiency can increase the irrigation potential by 10-15 million ha.

The report also focuses on problems of imbalanced use of fertilisers, deteriorating soil health and the threats posed by climate change among others.

Bumper tobacco yield in AP's West Godavari district

Ch. R. S. Sarma



Guntur, March 13:

The virginia tobacco yields this season have been unprecedented in Andhra Pradesh, especially in the light soils of West Godavari, according to Mr G. Kamala Vardhana Rao, Chairman, Tobacco Board.

In an interview here on Tuesday, he said that the yield in West Godavari district was unprecedented. "In the light soils of West Godavari, farmers have got bumper yields. Usually, our farmers get yields of 1,600-1,800 kg a hectare against 3,000 kg a hectare in the US. This season, in West Godavari, the yield is in the range of 2,600-3,000 kg a hectare in many areas.

Congenial climatic conditions in December and good agricultural practices adopted by the farmers are the reasons for it. As a result, there may be a surplus of roughly 10 million kg on the five floors in West Godavari," he said. The Tobacco Board had permitted raising of 48 million kg in West Godavari but there may be about 58 million kg. "However, it is quality tobacco grown in the area, semi-flavourful to flavourful, and the trade will absorb the surplus," he said. He said he inaugurated the auctions on the five floors in West Godavari on Monday and the highest price touched Rs 130 a kg. There may be a price correction due to the bumper crop, Mr Rao said, but

the farmers had no reason to complain as they would realise a higher amount due to higher production. Last season, the highest price on the five floors in West Godavari was Rs 140 a kg.

In response to a question if the surplus would be unmanageable due to bumper yield, he replied in the negative. He said the board did not anticipate such a situation. The authorised crop size in the State is 162 million kg.

Karnataka auctions

Mr Rao said that auctions in Karnataka were in the final stages. Almost 95 million kg of tobacco had been sold on the floors in Karnataka at an average price of Rs 90 a kg. By the end of the week, the auctions may be completed in that State, he said.

He said that auctions in the remaining floors in East Godavari and Krishna district would begin in the last week of March.

Hike in customs duty on raw silk opposed

Our Bureau



Chennai, March 13:

The Banarasi Cloth Producers Union (Banarasi Vastra Udyog Sangh) has urged the Union Finance Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, to refrain from increasing customs duty on raw silk imports.

In a memorandum to Mr Mukherjee, the Union Yarn Development Committee Convenor, Mr G.K. Kediya, opposed any hike in duty from the current 25 per cent on various grounds.

The memorandum follows demand from domestic reelers to hike the duty to 30 per cent.

“The whole scenario has changed since February 28 when the duty was cut,” Mr Kediya said.

Any hike in the duty will hurt weavers and will not lead to rise in raw silk prices, he said, adding that thus, sericulturists would in no way benefit from the increase.

Currently, domestic prices that usually rule Rs 200 lower than imported raw silk prices are lower by Rs 500-600. This is due to bumper crop and slackening demand resulting from switch-over to synthetic yarn by weavers.

If customs duty is raised, it will not have any effect on domestic raw silk prices. Efforts should be made to improve quality of domestic raw silk which would help bridge the demand gap of 10,000 tonnes, Mr Kediya added.

Renewed buying boosts *dara* wheat

Our Bureau



Karnal, March 13:

After witnessing a decline last week, *dara* wheat recovered while the *desi* variety continued to rule around its previous level on Tuesday.

Some new buying pushed *dara* prices upwards, said Mr Sewa Ram, a wheat trader. It is hard to anticipate how the market will behave in the next few days as bulk buyers have not been participating actively in market in the past few days, he added.

In the physical market, the *dara* variety rose by Rs 10 and settled at Rs 1,210-1,215 a quintal. Just around 230 quintals of *dara* wheat arrived from Uttar Pradesh and stocks were directly delivered at the mills. Mill delivery of *dara* was at Rs 1,210 a quintal, while delivery at *chakki* was at Rs 1,215 a quintal.

Tohfa, a *desi* wheat variety, remained unchanged at Rs 2,295-2,300 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for March delivery decreased by Rs 5 to Rs 1,213 a quintal.

Poor demand pulled down flour by Rs 10 at Rs 1,190 for a 90-kg bag and *chokar* fell by Rs 25 at Rs 595-605 for a 49-kg bag.

Bankers see scope for dairy farming in Dakshina Kannada

Our Bureau



Mangalore, March 13:

Bankers have been asked to explore the credit disbursement potential for dairying in Dakshina Kannada district.

Launching the credit plan for the district on Tuesday, Mr J. S. Shenoy, Deputy General Manager, Syndicate Bank, said that the credit potential for dairy alone in the district is more than Rs 100 crore.

With procurement prices reaching Rs 25 a litre, there is enthusiasm among farmers to take up this activity. He said that Syndicate Bank, along with Dakshina Kannada Cooperative Milk Producers Union Ltd, has launched a special scheme for dairy.

Mr Hemanth Bhide, Chief Manager of Lead Bank (Syndicate Bank is the lead bank in Dakshina Kannada), said that there is a production shortage of around 1.5 lakh litres of milk in the district. If farmers are encouraged to rear around 15,000 cattle to meet this shortage, bankers can look at a credit potential of more than Rs 100 crore, he said.

The banks in the districts can associate with 330 dairy societies for bringing about increase in milk production.

This will help bring down the milk deficit in the district. It will also have a positive impact on the rural economy, he said.

He also stressed the need for popularising stall-fed goat rearing in the district. This will help meet the meat requirement of the district, and consumers will get a chance to use goats' milk.

The bankers can expect a credit disbursement potential of Rs 10 crore for this sector, Mr Bhide said. Establishment of a few big goat-rearing units will help ensure continuation of goat rearing in the district, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr K. N. Vijay Prakash, Chief Executive Officer, Dakshina Kannada Zilla Panchayat, said that the district can think of taking up goat-rearing activities in some villages on a pilot basis.
