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Livelihood security assured by enterprise, resource use

M. J. Prabu



The Hindu COMPLETE: Narayana Hebber in his self-sustaining farm at Kasaragod. Photo: Special Arrangement

From two hectares the farmer gets a net income of Rs. 3.5 lakh a year

An Integrated farming system assures livelihood security to a small farmer by integrating enterprise and resource utilization.

Mr. C.N. Narayana Hebbar an enterprising and dynamic farmer from Bela village, Badiadka Panchayath, Kasaragod, Kerala has around 2 hectares of land. He developed the farm on a sloppy undulating terrain by successfully adopting suitable soil and water conservation methods such as stone pitched bench terracing, and digging rain water storage pits.

Different crops

The farmer grew crops like coconut, arecanut, banana and pepper along with a well established dairy unit. He integrated high yielding, fodder grass varieties, vegetables, cocoa, bee keeping, vermicomposting, biogas plant etc.

Mr. Hebbar succeeded in incorporating all these components to enhance the productivity as well as profitability of the system as compared to the farming system model practised earlier.

“I grew fodder grass varieties such as Co-3, Co-4 and Co-GG3 in an area of one hectare of coconut garden, with micro sprinkler irrigation system. The amount spent for the purchase of paddy straw drastically reduced to Rs.50 per day, as compared to Rs.400 per day prior to fodder harvest,” he says.

The change towards organic farming became possible through effective recycling of crop wastes to highly valued vermicompost by adopting vermicomposting technology developed by the Central Plantation Crop Research Institute (CPCRI) for which, he got trained at KVK.

The dairy unit comprises 11 cows out of which five are in milking. The farmer sells around 75 litres of milk per day. The cattle shed is clean with rubber mats spread on the floor and milking is done by a milking machine.

Animal husbandry

Animal husbandry plays a crucial role in the overall sustainability of the system not only as the major source of income but also by improving the nutrient recycling and providing energy for household cooking purpose through two biogas plants.

The bio-gas plants of capacity of three cubic metre each, are built underground with the inlet pipe inside the cattle shed and the slurry is collected in a big tank outside.

“Bio-gas slurry is directly pumped to coconut, arecanut, and fodder grass after ensuring proper dilution. In this recycling model, even crop residues such as arecanut leaf sheaths serve as valuable, low cost source of nutrients for livestock,” explains Mr. Hebbar.

A chaff cutter installed near the cattle shed simplifies the workload in terms of cutting bio-wastes for composting and cutting fodder for cattle. Through the establishment of 10 honey bee colonies he aims at better pollination and higher yields other than honey production.

Production

The average production from this system is 90 coconuts per tree in a year, 1.7 kg of dried arecanut per year, 1 kg dried pepper per vine, 10 kg banana per plant, 1.5 tonnes of vermicompost, 75 kg of honey, 110 tonnes of cowdung, 170 tonnes of fodder grass besides household consumption of bio-gas.

According to him, the net returns from his farm of around two hectare area comes to about Rs. 3.5 lakh per year.

Self sustaining

“This is a self sustained integrated farming system model wherein 90 per cent of nutrient requirement is met through farm level processing of waste bio-mass produced in the farm itself, which is one of the basic principles of organic farming practices.

“Adequate irrigation facilities are provided through two farm ponds and one bore well whereas round the year household requirement is met through a suranga – the unique water harvesting structure of Kasaragod district,” says Dr.George V.Thomas, Director of the Institute.

This farm serves as a training resource for KVK trainees and farmers in and out of the district.

To talk to him readers can contact Mr. C.N.Narayana Hebbar, Chowkar house, P O Bela , Via Kumbala, Kasaragod, Kerala, Phone: 09446222192 , 04998247234.

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Farmers to benefit from Tropical Legumes II project

A second phase of an agricultural research for development project aimed at improving the livelihoods of poor farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia has been recently agreed on.

This is one of seven grants which Bill Gates announced today in Rome at the 35th Session of the Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

This announcement, nearly \$200 million in grants, brings the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's total commitment to agriculture to more than \$2 billion since the program began in 2006.

Three year project

The three-year, US\$21 million project known as Tropical Legumes II (TL II), is part of a ten-year plan which seeks to improve the livelihoods of 60 million small farmers and their families in 15 countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

It is also expected to bring about US\$ 1.3 billion in added value to the productivity of the target crops, namely: chickpea, common bean, cowpea, groundnut, pigeonpea and soybean.

The project is expected to help small farmers overcome productivity constraints such as drought, pest and disease problems, and unavailability and lack of access to quality seed of improved legume varieties.

With this additional support from the foundation, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and sister Centers together with several national programs, private sector, and NGO partners work closely with smallholder farmers to ensure that seeds of improved varieties from the project reach farmers' fields.

“If you care about the poorest, you care about agriculture,” said Bill Gates, co-chair of the foundation.

“Investments in agriculture are the best weapons against hunger and poverty, and they have made life better for billions of people. If we can do that, we can dramatically reduce suffering, and build self-sufficiency,” he said.

The first phase of the project has already made valuable impact.

More varieties

More than 60 new varieties of tropical legumes have been released in several countries. About 93,000 metric tons of seeds of improved legume varieties produced have reached 240,000 smallholder farmers, who together with extension workers, have been trained on improved farming practices. In particular, the role of women in producing food and making decisions about family nutrition needs has been recognized.

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'Step up copra procurement'

Govt. has announced start of process

The coconut farming community in the district has urged the State government to step up copra procurement and ensure greater transparency in the process. Though the government announced the minimum support price for the copra and started the procurement, only about 20 per cent of the coconut growers were given the identity cards to participate in the procurement process.

Make efforts

Efforts should be made immediately to provide identity cards to all the coconut growers in the district and step up the procurement of copra, Lower Bhavani Farmers Association president S. Nallasamy said. The government should procure the copra brought by all the coconut growers in the district, he said.

Copra procurement

The Tamil Nadu Co-operative Marketing Federation Limited is currently procuring the copra from the farmers on behalf of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited. TANFED should carry out copra procurement in full swing and there should not be any irregularities in the process, Mr. Nallasamy stressed.

Price

The price of copra, which stood at Rs. 74-a-kg a few months ago, had come down to Rs. 40. As a result, the government had announced that it would provide Rs. 51 per kg as the minimum support price for copra. The benefit of this effort would reach the farming community, only when the government carried out the procurement process properly, farmers association here said.

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- *Only about 20 per cent of coconut growers were given I-cards*
 - *Govt. announced it would provide Rs. 51 per kg as msp for copra*
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Published: March 1, 2012 00:00 IST | Updated: March 1, 2012 04:28 IST

Farmers of S. Pudur encouraged to cultivate horticulture crops



In depth:Collector V. Rajaraman inspecting a demonstration at Dharmapatty in Sivagangadistrict on Tuesday.

The district administration has embarked upon a scheme to adopt S. Pudur block, a fringe area bordering Tiruchi, Dindigul and Pudukottai districts, for cultivating horticulture crops in a massive way considering its enthusiastic farmers, favourable climate, soil and available water table.

Some of the villages of the block such as Dharmapatty, Kondampalayam, Konampatty, K. Pudupatty, Chettikuruchi are situated very close to the hills. The average temperature hovers around 25 to 26 degrees.

The soil and average rainfall also suits cultivation of crops such as potato, cauliflower, brinjal and others.

Collector V. Rajaraman, who came to know the immense potential of the block, arranged a seminar by inviting experts from the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, horticulture officials, bankers, lead bank officials and other stakeholders.

They went around a few villages and were surprised about the enthusiasm and spontaneous application of latest techniques of the farmers, who have already been growing some of the hill crops utilising the climatic conditions.

The officials demonstrated the models and methods of drip irrigation and precision farming to the farmers, which were well received by them.

“I am surprised to see the enthusiasm of farmers of the block, who have demonstrated their skills in growing hill and horticultural crops. If they were given proper training and financial assistance they will do wonders. All out efforts will be taken to bring the benefits of National Horticultural Mission and the National Agricultural Development Programme to the farmers of the block,” says Mr. Rajaraman.

He added that out of a total target of 150 acres of precision farming in the district 50 acres would be identified in S. Pudur block under the National Horticultural Mission.

Similarly, as many as 100 acres, out of 800 acres, in the same block would be brought under the drip irrigation as part of National Agricultural Development Programme.

Mr. Rajaraman said it would enable the small farmers, who owned landholding below 5 acres, to avail 100 percent subsidy for bringing their fields under drip irrigation and precision farming.

Other farmers could claim 75 percent subsidy as per the latest Government Order. The officials and bankers had been asked to work closely with the farmers to help them avail the benefits and ensure proper implementation of new farming technologies.

S. Irulappan, Deputy Director, Horticulture, said S. Pudur was one of the blocks famous for growing inter-crop such as onion, bell pepper in between the main crops.

A series of training and follow up steps for the farmers could transform their life. Shade nets could also be supplied for raising cluster based nurseries.

K. Venkateswaran, Assistant Director, Horticulture, said the proposed fields to be brought under precision farming would be implemented with fertigation techniques.

It would enable the farmers to apply fertilizer only at the roots of the crops. Certified seeds could also be sowed by using latest techniques.

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Training on value-addition of freshwater fishes

Staff Reporter

The Tuticorin-based Fisheries College and Research Institute has been sanctioned a new project worth Rs. 8.46 lakh to train 120 persons on value addition of freshwater fishes.

According to V.K. Venkataramani, Director of Research and Extension (Fisheries), six training sessions – each with three-days duration – will be conducted for 20 participants each. The beneficiaries will be from Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts.

The main objective of this project is to bring successful entrepreneurs in value addition of freshwater fishes. Nutritional benefits of inland fishes, hygienic handling of fish, personal hygienic aspects will be taught during the training sessions.

In addition, the participants will be trained on value-added products such as making fish pickle, fish noodles, fish balls, fish cutlets, fish burger, fish samosa and fish pakoda, all using freshwater fishes.

These types of value-added products will be prepared by inland fish farmers, self-help groups and marketing of these products done through the supermarkets across Tamil Nadu.

Project reports will also be prepared for the trainees for availing bank loans after the completion of training.

P. Velayutham, Professor and Head, Department of Fish Processing Technology, FCRI will serve as Principal Investigator of the said project, he said.

Six training sessions – each with three-days duration – will be conducted for 20 participants

TIRUNELVELI, March 1, 2012

Need for breeding marine ornamental fish stressed



Prospective option: V.K. Venkataramani, Director of Research and Extension (Fisheries) speaking at the training programme on 'Marine Ornamental fish Maintenance and Breeding Techniques at Tharuvaikulam near Tuticorin on Wednesday.— Photo: N. Rajesh

: A three-day training programme on 'Marine ornamental fish maintenance and breeding techniques' sponsored by the Department of Science and Technology commenced at the coastal hamlet of Tharuvaikulam near Tuticorin on Wednesday.

The training programme is funded by Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology (CMLRE), Government of India, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Kochi at Maritech Research and Extension Centre of Fisheries College and Research Institute, Tuticorin.

Inaugurating the training programme, V. K. Venkataramani, Director of Research and Extension (Fisheries) said that about 120 marine ornamental fish species were living exclusively in the reef region of Gulf of Mannar, as per the survey conducted by the FR and RI, and many of them were still being sold to various parts of the country owing to its demand by the aquarists. He

emphasised the need for breeding of marine ornamental fishes since many of these varieties were being over harvested from the reef regions of Gulf of Mannar.

He also requested the participants to take up this new venture of breeding of marine ornamental fishes in their farms so that the pressure caused by wild collection of marine ornamental fishes from the Gulf of Mannar region would reduce.

A total of 20 participants from all over Tamil Nadu are participating in the programme. The participants will be taught about the resources of marine ornamental fishes, selection of important varieties of marine ornamental fishes for breeding and practical exposure will be given on the breeding techniques of clown fishes, live feeds for young ones of ornamental fishes and brooders, live feed culture and marketing of marine ornamental fishes along with demonstrations and hands-on training.

BIDAR, March 1, 2012

Benefits of cashew cultivation stressed

There is huge potential for cashew cultivation in India, as the country imports half the raw cashew needed for processing units, Venkatesh Hubballi, head of the Kochi-based Directorate of Cashewnut and Cocoa Development (DCCD) has said.

He was speaking at the workshop on cashew organised by the College of Horticulture here on Wednesday.

Demand

“Over 13 lakh tonnes of raw cashew is needed to keep the 4,000 cashew processing units across the country busy for half the year. However, we grow only around 6.5 lakh tonnes over 9.5 lakh hectares in 15 States.

For years, the average import of cashew has been 6.5 lakh tonnes. This has led to an interesting situation where we earn Rs. 3,000 crore a year exporting cashew nuts, but spend Rs. 3,100 crore on imports,” Dr. Hubballi said.

As cashew was a commercial crop, farmers could profit from its cultivation.

Besides, cashew cultivation, processing and marketing had created 17 lakh jobs in the country. Further growth would create more jobs, he said.

Promoting cultivation

The Union Government was taking steps to promote domestic cultivation of cashew, Dr. Hubballi said. Agencies such as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research were promoting research in high-yielding and disease resistant varieties. Agricultural and horticultural universities provided consultancy and extension services to farmers. The DCCD provided cash incentives of Rs. 85 a plant over three years to farmers.



Hardy

The laterite soil, rainfall and extended winter in Bidar district was suitable for cashew cultivation, Dr. Hubballi added. Besides, it was more pest and disease resistant than many other fruit crops and did not demand intensive irrigation, making it easy to be grown on waste land.






Plantation crop expert S.I. Hanumashetty claimed cultivating cashew was easier and more profitable than growing mango.

Dr. Hanumashetty, who was Dean of the College of Horticulture, Bidar, said the college was involved in the cultivation of 1,000 acres of cashew in association with DCCD and the NGO Pravardha. Around 100 farmers from the region participated.

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 Partly Cloudy Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs Humidity: 84% Wind: Normal	Thursday, Mar 1 Max Min 36.1° 23.9° Sunrise: 6:35 Sunset: 18:03 Barometer: 1009	 Cloudy Max Min 30° 21°	Friday, Mar 2 Max Min 30° 21°
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Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Mar 3	Sunday Mar 4	Monday Mar 5	Tuesday Mar 6	Wednesday Mar 7
				
31° 22° Cloudy	31° 22° Cloudy	31° 21° Cloudy	30° 21° Cloudy	31° 20° Partly Cloudy



Parliamentary committee reviews agriculture in MP

THURSDAY, 01 MARCH 2012 00:07

Members of Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture apprised themselves of the activities of Agriculture, Cooperatives, Fisheries and other departments at Bhopal on Wednesday. Committee chairman Vasudev Acharya and other members lauded the works going on in Madhya Pradesh. Acharya said that demand for fertilisers should be sent from the State to the Union Government in time.

He said that all the facilities will be made available to farmers with coordination between the Union and State Governments. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the fertilisers sent by the Centre reach the rake point on time.

Acharya said that production will increase only with timely availability of seeds and fertilisers.

The responsibility of transporting fertilisers being supplied by the Union Government to cooperative societies and get the same distributed lies with the State Government. The committee members suggested for storing fertilisers for future and using organic fertilisers also along with chemical fertilisers. The members lauded the works being carried out in Madhya Pradesh in connection with organic farming.

Agriculture production commissioner R Parshuram informed that Agriculture Cabinet has been constituted in the State to ensure total development of agriculture. This decision has been taken with a view of making agriculture profitable and spreading progress in this sector.

Organic Policy is also being chalked out for increasing farm production. Country's 35 per cent organic farming area is in Madhya Pradesh. In view of changing scenario of agriculture, attention is also being paid to animal husbandry and milk business. The work of preparing soil health cards for increasing agriculture production is also progressing rapidly. Loans are being extended to farmers at an interest rate of 1 per cent. The committee members praised Kisan Credit Cards prepared for farmers in Madhya Pradesh.

Members of Parliament Hukum Dev Narayan, Narayan Singh Amlave, Sheikh Nurul Hasan, Narayan Bhai Kachhariya, Devji M. Patel, Nripendra Nath Rai, Jagdish Thakur, Shashi Bhushan Behra, Satyavrat Chaturvedi, Mohammad Adil Khan, Upendra Kushwaha and Bharat Singh Parmar and officers of various departments were present

The members of the Parliamentary Committee held talks on Wednesday with concerning officers at Aquaculture department of Barkatullah University on fisheries development works. Committee's chairman Vasudev Acharya and members apprised them of training and research programmes being conducted in the fisheries sector.

Head of Aquaculture Department Prof Pradeep Shrivastava informed the team of the fisheries research, development and other research works being undertaken by the department. Assistance is being received from various departments of the State Government and World Bank for these programmes. The department give free of cost consultation to entrepreneurs and fishermen of the State.

Besides, information is also given about fish seed production, advanced techniques, etc.

Farmers go for distress sale of paddy in Jajpur district

WEDNESDAY, 29 FEBRUARY 2012 23:28

AKSHAY ROUT | JAJPUR

The poor and hapless farmers are in a dilemma with slow progress in procurement of paddy by the Government agencies.

As the farmers are forced to wait, the middlemen and traders are out to test the patience of the farmers offering less than the Minimum Support Price (MSP). The farmers are allegedly being forced to resort to distress sale of paddy at a much lower price, ranging from Rs 700 to Rs 800 a quintal at a number of places even as the MSP of the paddy has been fixed at Rs 1,050 per quintal by the Government.

More than the hapless farmers, attention is focused on the moves of the rice milling fraternity which is allegedly forcing the farmers to make distress sales and sell stocks directly to them, alleged a farmer of Balichandrapur Gayadhar Dhal.

At Chatia, a rice businessman Rabindra Pradhan said he has been purchasing paddy at around Rs 750 per quintal since last 10 days which is Rs 300 below the maximum retail price fixed by the Government.

However, a farmer Pramod Behera (54) of Charinangal village revealed that he has been forced to sell his paddy for as little as Rs 700 a quintal. Another, farmer Jadumani Samal(45) of village Bari said that soon he may sell off his unsold stock for as little as Rs 750 to Rs 800 a quintal.

The millers' game is to delay the procurement. The more is the delay; the lower will be the procurement price. As a part of their strategy, the millers will be exhausting farmers' patience, forcing them to make distress sales, said farmer leader Babaji Parida of Bari.

After harvesting the paddy, a large number of farmers are being compelled to sell away their stocked paddy to meet the daily expenses for which the mill owners in a clear nexus with the Government officials and agents have been purchasing paddy from the hapless farmers at lower prices.

But the authority is not taking any steps to check the distress sale, alleged Ratnakar Rout, a farmer of Nalipur. Jajpur district collector Anil Samal said, "All the Tehsildars have been directed

to issue identity cards to the genuine farmers well in advance. So they can sell their surplus paddy at the nearest paddy purchase centres at minimum support price without any difficulty. To safeguard the interest of the farmers and to avoid distress sale of paddy, all the Block Development Officers (BDOs), police and other enforcing agencies have also been instructed to monitor the procurement operation in the district".

Business Standard

Thursday, Mar 01, 2012

MP invites pvt players for wheat storage

State charts out ways to tackle another season of crop bounty

Shashikant Trivedi / New Delhi/ Bhopal March 1, 2012, 0:55 IST

Anticipating another season of bounty in the state's wheat fields, the Madhya Pradesh government is inviting private partners this year in its bid to create more warehousing facilities. The state has targeted procuring 65 lakh tonnes of wheat this year -- an all-time high, which is 15 lakh tonnes more than its previous year's figure. As for production, the state has this year estimated 120 lakh tonnes, which will be another record.

The procurement process has come under sharper scrutiny this time after the main opposition Congress party alleged last year that a few state officials had imported cheap wheat from neighbouring states to fetch more prices and, thus, pocket profit. As of now, the government has put on allocation a food credit limit of Rs 1,100 crore for procurement purpose.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has already announced a bonus of Rs 100 per quintal to the minimum support price, thereby capping floor price at Rs 1,385 per quintal. As of now, 4.5 lakh tonnes of wheat that was procured last year is still lying either in warehouses or in open covered caps. Thus, to attract private investors in the sector, the government plans to offer at least three months' business to each warehouse owner, provided they enter into a deal with the government before March 13 on a first-come-first-served basis.

Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Paras Jain said on Wednesday that the government has a shortage of warehouse space. "But," he added, "we will manage it through placing 12 lakh

tonnes (of wheat) in government warehouses and 30 lakh metric tonnes in joint-venture warehouses. Besides, 23 lakh tonnes of wheat will be kept in open under cap covers.”

Jain noted that a lack of support from the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the central government agency, was leading to the rot of hundreds of tonnes of wheat. “We need approximately 25 lakh tonnes of wheat each year. Yes, FCI does not lift its allocated quota before monsoon.” Those warehouse owners who are already registered with the Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority and have obtained licenses will not be offered assured business. The government will join hands with them in an 80:20 space share ratio. A scheme that FCI floated earlier did not click much in the state, though ten years of business is assured under the scheme. The Madhya Pradesh Warehousing and Logistics Corporation are creating 85,000-mt capacity godowns and the private players are creating godowns of 243,600-mt capacity. “To check fraud and import from other states at cheap rates,” the minister said, “the government has registered as many as 13 lakh farmers so that they apply through our e-application system. Each farmer will be registered through an electronic system.” He, however, did not speak about the way the system would function in places/cases where Internet facilities were absent.

Jain said the authorities have asked officials to start wheat procurement despite a data transfer problem. “We we will have an alternate system to monitor the e-procurement system,” he added. Farmers will be paid against their yield within seven days of delivery.

Milk to cost 10% more from today in Mumbai

Dilip Kumar Jha / Mumbai March 1, 2012, 0:06 IST

After nearly a five-month pause, milk prices have started rising once again. Private dairies in Mumbai are set to raise milk prices by 10 per cent effective tomorrow on rising fodder prices.

The last revision was in September, with private dairies raising milk prices by Rs 2 a litre, followed by organised sector players, including Amul and Mahananda dairies, increasing prices by Rs 1 a litre each, respectively. This time, again, private dairies have taken the lead in raising milk prices by a massive Rs 4 a litre, thereby opening a door for organised sector players to follow suit.

With this price rise, milk from private dairies will be sold at Rs 48 a litre from tomorrow, as against Rs 44 a litre now. "We had no option but to pass on the price rise in fodder to consumers," said Ashok Sharma, owner of Ashok Dairies in the western Mumbai-suburb.

Sharma said fodder prices have jumped 12-15 per cent in the past few months. The average price of maize, the main ingredient of cattle feed, has gone up by nearly 18 per cent to Rs 11,518 a tonne in the past year. Meanwhile, organised sector players like Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), the owner of Amul brand, has not taken any decision to raise prices till now.

"We are not raising milk prices as of now. But, we are not going to cut prices either as dairy products are the cheapest in India," said GCMMF Managing Director R S Sodhi. While comparing milk prices in India with the US, Sodhi said, "As against a dollar a litre in the US, Indian consumers are paying much less for a litre of milk."

GCMMF is buying 14 million litres of milk daily in Gujarat currently, 19 per cent more than the procurement a year ago. It pays around Rs 30 crore a day to dairy farmers in the state.

According to GCMMF, Indian farmers get the maximum price for milk as they get 70 to 80 per cent of the 'consumer rupee', while in the West, farmers get only a third of the 'consumer dollar'.

A study by the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates India's milk production to rise four per cent to 121.7 million tonnes (mt) in 2011 on the back of rising domestic consumption, The country produced about 116 mt of milk in 2010.

Rising domestic demand for milk and dairy products is stimulating growth in the country as India is largely absent from the international markets for dairy products, the FAO report said.

The international body on the farm sector in its latest 'Food Outlook' report also estimates global milk production in 2011 to grow two percent to 728 mt.

Much of the anticipated expansion is likely to accrue in Asia, where India is expected to witness an output rise of five mt to 121.7 mt.

According to a recent study by the industry body, Associated Chambers of Commerce and

Industry of India, India, the world's largest milk producer, accounts for around 20 per cent of global milk production, with most of it consumed domestically.

The domestic dairy industry is expected to touch Rs 5 lakh crore by 2015, with milk output pegged at 190 mt at the end of the period, the study further said.

Dry weather to hit cardamom output

George Joseph / Kochi March 01, 2012, 0:04 IST

The absence of winter showers in Kerala, especially in the Idukki district, has severely affected cardamom plantations here. Hot climate in the region has damaged cardamom plants. The region accounts for 60 per cent of the country's total production.

Normally, rainfall in January and February helps in growth of new offshoots. But, this season the offshoots are heavily damaged due to dry weather conditions, said growers of Vandanmedu and Udumbanchola area. Around 20 per cent of the plants are damaged in the district as there was no rainfall in the past six-eight weeks.

Cardamom needs cool and watery weather conditions. Less rainfall has made the weather extremely dry in most of the growing areas, thereby affecting the output. Reji Njallani, a grower from Kattappana told Business Standard, the climatic conditions might hit the initial rounds of harvesting during June-July in the next season.

He said farmers had not been keen on growing cardamom this season due to sharp fall in prices and high labour costs. The average price of cardamom fell to Rs 500-520 a kg in the November-January period, from Rs 1,200 a kg during the same period last year. The current price is not attractive as the daily wage for plantation workers had increased. But, even at these wages, there is shortage of labourers for agriculture and allied jobs.

Due to the row over the Mullaperiyar dam between Kerala and Tamil Nadu, a major chunk of the Tamilian labourers had returned to their home state. Idukki district is the most affected area in the case of labour shortage.

Prices are likely to rise now as 95 per cent of harvesting has been completed. The market is now entering off season, so supply will be lower. The price is expected to rise in the next four months. The next harvesting season begins in June. The average price on Wednesday rose to Rs 800 a kg as the arrivals to the auction centres dropped. The average price recorded in March-April period last year was Rs 1,000 a kg.

Guarseed shows mix trend

Press Trust of India / New Delhi February 29, 2012, 13:43 IST



Guarseed prices declined in the future market today on profit booking at prevailing higher levels amid new arrivals in the spot markets.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, guarseed for delivery in May lost Rs 553, or 2.97%, to Rs 18,055 per quintal, with an open interest of 520 lots.

The March contract shed Rs 37, or 0.20%, to Rs 18,745 per quintal, with an open interest of 19,450 lots.

However, the July contract gained Rs 524, or 2.90%, to Rs 18,600 per quintal, with an open interest of 400 lots.

National agriculture insurance scheme to be modified for farmers' protection

New scheme to include crop and price protection will encourage farmers to buy insurance products

Anindita Dey / Mumbai March 01, 2012, 0:01 IST

The government proposes to roll out an integrated farmer security plan by reworking insurance schemes and consolidating all other risk management schemes to benefit farmers at large.

According to the new plan, crop insurance, price protection for farmers and market intervention scheme (MIS) would now fall under the umbrella of the national farmer security cover programme. The farmer crop insurance cover is proposed to be named Modified National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (MNAIS) and will replace the existing National Agriculture

Insurance Scheme (NAIS). A pilot version of MNAIS was launched in the 2010-11 rabi season in 34 districts across 12 states.

Based on that version, the new policy would provide insurance cover to be sold by insurance companies, where 90 per cent would be upfront subsidy premium paid by the government and 10 per cent premium by farmers, said official sources.

The government subsidy will be shared in the ratio of 75:25 by the Centre and the state, respectively. In case of failed sowing, claim up to 25 per cent is payable while rest gets terminated. The scheme provides minimum indemnity level of 70 per cent instead of 60 per cent in the original NAIS. Sources said the new insurance cover may extend the premium subsidy to lower and medium risk farmers. "We are also looking at requests of states for extending the scheme to localised calamities, which presently covers only hailstorms and landslides," said an official source.

Another area of concern is the subsidy payment mechanism where the criteria to be reworked are mode of transfer, nature of recipients, calculation methodology of subsidy, nature of beneficiary regions, type of crops to be insured and nature of risk. The government is also looking at variants of insurance covers to be included under the agriculture insurance schemes.

One is the weather index-based crop insurance, which is currently undergoing pilot studies. The second product is a combination of weather-based index and crop yield-based index. Existing products are either yield-based assessment of risk or weather-based risk. The combination product is based on the total sum insured for a crop insured by the farmer to be divided in two categories — influence of yield and weather on crop.

Thereafter, the product could decide the weight age of risk factors depending on its influence. Sources said for a crop like wheat, heat plays a vital role; so the weather weightage will be more. Similarly, livestock insurance scheme is also getting fine-tuned to make it more farmer-friendly and to increase the existing adverse claim ratio.

Other components that may be designed into the modified insurance scheme is to add savings-linked crop insurance since cultivators are less enthusiastic to buy insurance products if there are no payouts in the previous season. Therefore, some amount of the premium paid will be

invested on behalf of the farmer to earn reasonable investment return and the farmer can take the money after full year of remaining invested in the scheme or certain percentage in between.

MIS and price protection schemes, on the other hand are similar to minimum support price for fruits, vegetables and other types of cash crops.

THE HINDU Business Line

\$85 m from ADB for Maharashtra agri-infra project

Rahul Wadke

Mumbai, Feb. 29:

The Maharashtra government has decided to launch a project with \$85 million funding from the Asian Development Bank, which will augment the agriculture infrastructure in the State.

The project is named Agribusiness Infrastructure Development Investment Program (AIDIP) and aims to achieve accelerated investment in agriculture sector and to support related infrastructure in rural areas. Funds would be used for expanding the whole agriculture product value chain in the State.

A public-private-partnership (PPP) model would be used for developing the project, in which private partner would be investing about 60 per cent of project cost and remaining 40 per cent would be borne by ADB and the State Government in the ratio of 80:20.

Mr Kishor Toshniwal, Project Director with Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board, said that the ADB has already sanctioned the funds for the project, which will expand the existing agriculture facilities, and add new ones for aggregating, sorting, grading and packaging of farm produce, he said.

In the first phase of AIDIP, crops such as pomegranate, grape, tomato, onion and banana will be given support in Nashik, Jalgaon and Amednagar districts. While Lemon, Kesar mango, Orange and Banana would be covered in the districts of Aurangabad, Amravati, Buldhana, Jalna and Akola.

An industry source said that since last year's union budget has given some income tax concessions for post harvest processing, it will definitely attract private sector players.

If the project is implemented properly then there would be better price realisation for the farmers, reduce wastage and improved handling, packaging and storages of the farm produce.

AIDIP will also fast track infrastructure support like last mile roads, power and water supply to the agriculture markets.

Volume hits 4-week low at Coonoor tea sale



Coonoor, Feb. 29:

A volume of 10.70 lakh kg will be offered for Sale No: 9 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 lowest volume of the last four weeks. It is about 13,000 kg less than last week's offer but 98,000 kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 10.70 lakh kg on offer, 7.66 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.04 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 9.96 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.74 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 0.40 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 7.26 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.34 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 2.70 lakh kg, CTC.

In the 10.70 lakh kg, fresh teas account for 9.25 lakh kg. As much as 1.45 lakh kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions. Last week, Tata Global Beverages did not buy at all while Duncans Tea Ltd did not operate in leaf market. Exporters bought selectively at Rs 51-81 a kg for Pakistan and Rs 51-61 for the CIS.

A.P. aqua feed plant to get Chinese equipment

M. Somasekhar

VIJAY FEEDS

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FACTS

- 13 types of Aquaculture
- 7 Business Divisions: Hatchery, Farms, Seabed Farms, Trading, Processing, Export and Aquatic Feed Plant
- Over 100 Skilled and 200 unskilled farm staff
- Hatchery capacity – 100 million production per annum
- Over 400 FDI units conducted annually
- Over 3 million seed raised annually for sea farming
- Two state-of-the-art bio-secure laboratory
- Over 300 acres of semi-intensive farms - sea based and earthen pond
- Farm capacity – over 500 metric tons per annum

Shree Vijay Aqua Feeds occupies the complete "farm to fork" value chain - from hatching, feed and culture to processing and exports. The company's processing units adhere to stringent quality control norms and are approved by USFDA, BSA and EU. We are currently setting up a fully automated Extruded Floating Fish Feed & Pelleted Shrimp Feed plant with state-of-the-art machinery from Muyang Group of China. The company is planning an international tie up with a global consulting firm for supplying high quality feeds at competitive prices that will benefit the farmers. This will be a new benchmark and a pioneering drive to revive the industry.

Shree Vijay Aqua Feeds Pvt. Ltd.

Hyderabad, Feb. 29:

The Muyang Group of China is all set to supply the latest machinery to help an Andhra-based firm to set up a fully-automated aqua feed plant.

The Yangzhou headquartered, Muyang Group, a leader in feeding machinery and agriculture engineering, has signed a deal with Shree Vijay Aqua Feeds to supply the machinery worth Rs 30 crore. The latter is setting up a Rs 80 crore plant in Saripalle village near Bhimavaram in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh.

The machinery for the fully-automated extruded floating fish feed and pelleted shrimp feed plant is scheduled to arrive in May.

“We expect to commission the plant around December 2012. It will have a capacity of 40 tonnes/hour and 180, 000 tonnes a year,” Mr B.K. Murthy, Managing Director of Shree Vijay Aqua Feeds, told *Business Line*. Muyang Group, with operations in 85 countries is a solution provider in feed manufacturing, grain milling, food processing, bulk solid handling and storage etc. The latest machinery is expected to help improve yield and quality of aqua feeds to meet global export standards for Shree Vijay.

The Vijayawada-headquartered, 12-year-old group with a turnover of Rs 400 crore, exports 57,000 tonnes of fish and shrimps presently, with the US being the major market.

It has developed the complete “farm to fork” value chain - from hatching, feed and culture to processing and exports.

The agreement with the Chinese firm was done recently, when the Muyang Group President Mr Fan Tianming visited India.

Shree Vijay trades over 60,000 tonnes of aquatic feed a year. It has set up over 300 acres of semi-intensive farms with a capacity of over 1,900 tonnes a year and block freezing capacity of over 40 tonnes a day, Mr Murthy said.

Mixed trend in spot rubber

Kottayam, Feb. 29:

Physical rubber prices saw a mixed mood on Wednesday. Though major counters remained firm after a better opening, sheet rubber lost charm during closing hours on buyer resistance. According to observers, weakness in the domestic and international futures kept the sentiments under pressure on late trades.

Sheet rubber closed unchanged at Rs 188 a kg after hitting an intraday high of Rs 188.50 a kg, according to traders.

The grade improved to Rs 188.50 (188) a kg, as quoted by the Rubber Board. RSS 4 weakened with March contracts dropping to Rs 189.91 (190.74), April to Rs 194.40 (195.20), May to Rs 199 (199.89), June to Rs 200.75 (201.38) and July to Rs 200.04 (203.00) while the August contracts increased to Rs 201.92 (201) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 196.82 (197.41) a kg at Bangkok.

The March futures for the grade firmed up to ₹319.4 (Rs 194.10) from ₹318.4 a kg during the day session and then to ₹319.5 (Rs 194.38) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 188 (188); RSS-5: 185.50 (185); ungraded: 182.50 (182); ISNR 20: 187 (186) and latex 60 per cent: 123 (123).

First alphonso mangoes of season arrive in Gujarat



Vadodara, Feb 29:

Alphonso mango (hapus) - the king of fruits - has arrived in the city, with a box of dozen selling for Rs 1,200 to 1,300. The fruit has arrived in markets in other cities of the state too. Bhupendra Kachhiya Patel, a fruit and vegetables dealer, said that supply was still low, and last year the first box of alphonso mangoes had sold for Rs 800.

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