THE HINDU

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Utilising experts' advice leads to a substantial yield

M. J. Prabu

The Hindu TURNING POINT: Chandrasekaran at his cardamom plantation at Kodagu. Photo: Special Arrangement

The cardamom plants yielded 1,300 kg of dry capsules per hectare

Though several technologies are available to farmers today, the main problem is lack of proper communication and dissemination of information to them.

“Only easy accessibility to information can make a farm technology popular. Development and dissemination of technologies play an important role in achieving food production and security,” says Dr. V.A. Parthasarathy, former Director, Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR), Kozhikode, Kerala.

“Many farmers still practise traditional/conventional agriculture and are either not aware or not prepared to make use of proper and advanced technologies to increase their yields,” he adds.

Friendly approach

IISR takes a lot of efforts to ensure personal interaction between scientists and farmers to demonstrate and disseminate the various expertise it develops to farmers in their fields. Such demonstrations motivate the farming community and result in quick adoption of technologies, according to him.

The institute bagged the prestigious Sardar Patel Outstanding Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Institution award for the second time recently.

Mr. N. N. Chandrasekhar, a cardamom planter from Kodagu, talks about his personal experience as to how well he utilised experts' advice and harvested a substantial yield.

The planter initially inherited 25 acres and adopted coffee-based cropping system with black pepper as intercrop in 16 acres, and a local cardamom variety called Mazarabad in eight acres.

Harvesting tonnage

He harvested only 1,300 kg of dry cardamom from the entire plantation – a poor yield. He later migrated to Kodagu and purchased 35 acres of land and started planting coffee as the main crop, along with black pepper (3,000 vines) and orange (500 plants) as intercrops in 17 acres.

In the remaining 18 acres, he raised cardamom as main crop.

“Initially I harvested 4,000 kg (dry weight) of cardamom and the yield subsequently dropped to 300 kg. I incurred an expense of seven lakh rupees and got Rs. 10 lakh as income.”

Disheartened and disappointed, the farmer accidentally happened to attend a seminar on cardamom and black pepper cultivation, organized by the Cardamom Research Centre (CRC) at Appangala in Kodagu.

“When the yield of cardamom dropped, I visited CRC to find out ways to overcome the problem. This is my life and I cannot abandon it and try to find some other job. I knew well that my life and income depended on increasing the yield and after a thorough discussion, I decided to bring one acre of land under cardamom, strictly following their recommendations.”

Planting space

The farmer cleared the existing variety plants from an acre and planted a high yielding variety released by the institute. He planted the crops at 7x 7 feet spacing, accommodating about 1,000 plants in an acre.

A mixture of well- composted coffee husk and cow dung each (2 kg), neem cake (250-500g), and NPK mixture (300gms) was applied per plant, twice a year (pre and post monsoon applications). Two sprays of Bordeaux mixture (1 per cent) were done to protect the plants from major diseases.

Tackling insect problem

To tackle the insect problem, Phorate or Cypermethrin were sprayed as per the advice of the scientists, and sprinkler irrigation provided to protect the plants from drought.

“It was a turning point in my life,” says the farmer.

“The plants yielded 1,300 kg of dry capsules per hectare and were more resistant to pest infestations, posing a major problem in cardamom cultivation. I spent about Rs. 1 lakh on the crop and earned a net profit of Rs.3 lakh from such a small area.”

For details: Mr. N.N. Chandrasekhar can be reached at Pusphagiri Plantations, Madenad Post & Village, Madikeri Taluq, Kodagu district, Karnataka. Phone: 08272-203120, Mobile: 09449252585.

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Maize dehusker, sheller reduces farm drudgery

It can be operated by two persons

Dehusking and shelling are important post-harvest activities in maize crop, predominantly done by women. These activities involve a lot of drudgery as these are done manually.

Though hand operated maize sheller has somewhat eased the pressure on women shelling maize, the tool still makes women's lives difficult and yields very low level of output.

Moreover, dehusking as a separate activity precedes shelling that brings additional burden on women.

New machine

According to a press release from the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), new Delhi, in order to tide over the problem of drudgery and improve the work efficiency, a gender-friendly hand operated maize dehusker-sheller has been developed by Directorate of Research on Women in Agriculture, Bhubaneswar using ergonomic and mechanical considerations for dehusking and shelling.

The machine is operated by two persons and requires feeding of cobs one by one. The machine can yield an output of 89.6 kg grain/h when operated by men workers at hand cranking speed of 57 rpm, and 63.4 kg grain/h when operated by women workers at hand cranking speed of 52 rpm.

Lower workload

Reduction in drudgery with this equipment was 48.9 per cent as compared to dehusking and shelling with hand and it was 38.7 per cent while dehusking with hand and shelling with tubular maize sheller.

The equipment can also be operated with 370W single-phase electric motor. With all these features, DRWA dehusker-cum-sheller promises to bring the much needed relief to women involved in the activity.

Contact details

For more details contact the Director, Directorate of Research on Women in Agriculture (ICAR) Bharatpur Square, Nandan Kanan Khandagiri Road, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar - 751003, Orissa, India, website: http://www.drwa.org.in, email : director@drwa.org.in, nrcwa@nic.in, Phone: (0674)2386940, 2386241

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Farmers advised to implement ecologically sustainable practices

Staff Reporter

There is a shared belief among all sections of society that agriculture returns to the days when it used to be productive, sustainable, clean and healthy.

Natural farming means have shown that those halcyon days are not yet over and there is the real possibility that healthy agriculture produce can be secured, District Collector V.Shobana said here on Tuesday.

Addressing the Confederation of Indian Industry sponsored workshop on Zero Budget Natural Farming, Ms.Shobana observed that farming has come to be a burden on many of the agriculturalists and that the State and the Central government have to heavily subsidise agricultural inputs such as seed and fertilizers, besides insecticides to help farmers remain tethered to the practice. Still there was concern in a lot of quarters that farming has never been resourceful.

It was in these circumstances that the Chief Minister Jayalalithaa has initiated long-term steps and laid out schemes to double farmers' income and create better living standards to benefit famers and farm labourers.

The numerous schemes announced in the Vision 2023 document and in the Budget 2012-13 would spur agriculture practitioners, Ms.Shobana opined.

The best form of any agriculture practice would be to maintain its ecologically sustainable nature, Ms.Shobana pointed out hailing the initiative of the CII in organising the zero budget natural farming workshop which she hoped would benefit participants.

To increase productivity healthy means to preserve the soil's richness and variety must be practiced. Farmers could take recourse to integrated farming practices that would increase their revenue and improve their livelihood, Ms.Shobana said.

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Kadri Park ready for horticulture show

Special Correspondent

The three-day exhibition coincides with 'Year of Horticulture'

Flower arrangement made at Kadri Park in Mangalore for the horticulture and floriculture show from Friday.— Photo: R. Eswarraj

A three-day horticulture and floriculture show will begin at Kadri Park here from March 30.

The show to be organised by the Department of Horticulture coincides with "Year of Horticulture" as declared by the government, S. Nanda, Deputy Director of the department, Dakshina Kannada, told presspersons here on Wednesday.

Thirty-one vegetable species, 29 flower, and 17 ornamental and 90 medicinal plant species would be on display. An added attraction would be an arrangement of flowers on the theme Indian festivals, she said.

Ms. Nanda said that the show would be inaugurated at 4.30 p.m. on Friday. On the last day of the show, saplings of some flowers and ornamental plants would be up for sale.

She said the show would have pottery exhibition and exhibition of sand sculptures.

The Dakshina Kannada Hotel and Restaurant Owners' Association would organise a food festival at the venue for three days. Flowers such as salvia, petunia, gerbera, celosia, gladiolus, and flax would be on display. There would be an exhibition of some farm equipment, Ms. Nanda said.

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Alappuzha panchayat budget focuses on agriculture

Staff Reporter

Rs. 3 crore has been earmarked for agricultural sector

Proposing that all efforts would be made to declare Alappuzha an agricultural district, Rs. 57.67 lakh surplus district panchayat budget for 2012-13 with a revenue of Rs. 307.29 crore and an expenditure of Rs 307.34 crore has put its weight behind agriculture, the spirit and major occupation that drives the district forward.

The Budget presented by district panchayat vice president Thampy Mettuthara said that Rs. three crore has been earmarked for agricultural sector, which will be used for making fallow land cultivable, development of vegetable farming, project for seed production in gardens of the district panchayat and in increasing production of yam, ginger, pepper, betal leaves etc. Another Rs. one crore has been allotted to development of agriculture in production and service sectors under the special component plan. Poverty alleviation programmes to the tune of Rs. 260.71 crore will be carried out through the poverty alleviation unit of the district panchayat.

Agriculture-allied sectors like animal husbandry projects and fishing sector got Rs. 30 lakh each. A total of Rs. 50 lakh has been sanctioned for projects in the dairy sector. Other proposals include turning Mavelikkara District Hospital into a model hospital with 100 beds and increased facilities including scanning, implementing model school project by imparting training in non-curricular activities that were helpful for personality development like yoga, music, theatre and kathaprasangam, and allotting fund to start band troupes in schools under district panchayat.

Student-doctor project

A student-doctor project to kindle health awareness and skill in administering first-aid, training in specialised skills for 500 youth this financial year with the help from the IHRD, conducting cancer detection camps in 12 block panchayats, expanding e-toilet projects, starting of home nurse units on block panchayat-basis and expanding the scope of the existing ‘Karuna' and ‘Niyogam' social welfare projects. The district panchayat will distribute coconut saplings in all households with the help from the Coconut Board and the agricultural research institute, CPCRI.

‘Udayanalakshmi,' an unique project to turn the sides of national highway in the district beautiful with gardens; Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants in all colonies, project to process waste at its source, hi-tech facilities for model libraries, cashew sapling distribution project by joining hands with Cashew Development Corporation and new homeo dispensaries in 10 grama panchayats that do not have one are some of the other proposed projects. The district panchayat will set up eco-tourism villages in the district.

The Budget has also allotted Rs. 2 crore for educational, cultural and sports sectors and Rs. 20 lakh for sanitation projects. Health sector gets Rs. 50 lakh and drinking water projects get Rs. 75 lakh. A total of Rs. three crore has been set apart for infrastructure sector including bettering of transport facilities and development of basic infrastructural projects.

Opposition slams

The district panchayat opposition leader, John Thomas of UDF, termed the budget a repeat of the projects that would never be realized. He questioned the authority of the district panchayat to set up homeo dispensaries. He asked to allocate Rs. two crore each to drinking water projects and social welfare schemes. The opposition leader suggested that more amount be earmarked in the budget to purchase harvesting machines and planting machinery. The ruling LDF members welcomed the budget. One of the LDF members pointed out that care should be taken to make necessary changes the Centrally sponsored projects to suit the specifications of the district.

- *Agriculture-allied sectors like animal husbandry projects and fishing sector got Rs. 30 lakh each*
- *A total of Rs. 50 lakh has been sanctioned for projects in the dairy sector*

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, March 29, 2012

Cashew workers' wages revised

The wages of labourers falling in the staff category in cashew factories have been revised.

The decision was made at an industrial relations committee meeting held at the behest of Labour Minister Shibu Baby John here on Wednesday.

Employees in the factory rolls will get a hike of 31 per cent. Dearness allowance has been linked to the consumer price index and with the rise in every point, the employees will be getting an increase of 28 paise. One weightage increment has been granted to every four years of completed service, which will be given in the first pay date of the month.

Retirement will be on the last date of the month in which their date of birth falls.

The retaining allowance of workers has been increased by Rs.100, so that they will get at least Rs.1,200 during the period when the factories remain closed. The agreement period is between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2015.

On promoting employees the new pay scale will be fixed after granting an annual increase. Grade benefits will be given to employees who complete 10 years service in one post.

Actual medical reimbursement facility will be provided to employees who go out of the ESI cover on getting promoted.

THENI, March 29, 2012

Better paddy yield, but low prices worry farmers

Farmers hit by inadequate purchase centres, stringent norms

Harvesting in full swing in Chinnamanur in Theni district. —Photo: Special Arrangement

: Even as nature god blesses farmers to get better yield in the second harvesting season, those in the Cumbum Valley are not happy as traders buy paddy at very low price. The procurement price is less when compared to the price that prevailed during the previous year.

At present, harvesting of second paddy crop on 45,707 acres of double cropping area in the Cumbum Valley stretching between Goodalur and Veerapandi, has commenced. To begin with, harvesting is in full swing in Chinnamanur block and will begin in other parts of the valley in the coming weeks.

At present, traders from different parts of the state have started thronging the district to procure paddy from farmers directly. They procure paddy from the field itself irrespective of distance. But procurement price of paddy offered by traders is not palatable to farmers.

Traders offer Rs.500 or Rs.550 a bag containing 63 kg of paddy, which was Rs.650 a bag, minimum price for paddy last year. The present procurement price will not match even production cost. Mechanisation to meet labour shortage, escalation in prices of fertilizers and other input costs had scaled up production cost. Moreover, acute power crisis forced farmers to shell out a sizable amount for fuel to operate diesel generators to protect standing crops. Mechanisation from transplantation to harvesting increased diesel use, said S.K.M Raja, a farmer from Chinnamanur.

Traders not only scale down prices but also press farmers to pack 63 kg of paddy in one bag, instead of regular 61 kg.

Such measure escalates quantum of loss. Inadequate procurement centres in the district and stringent procedures and other cumbersome formalities for paddy procurement are the main reasons for such pathetic condition of farmers, said P. Ganesan.

While traders procure grains from harvesting spot, farmers have to transport paddy to procurement centres at distant places. We have to bear the transport costs. Above all, we have to wait for more than a day or two for weighing, completing other formalities and get payment.

Farmers appeal to the government to do spot procurement or set up procurement centres near the fields to enable them to get decent price for their produces.

COIMBATORE, March 29, 2012

Sell red chillies upon harvest, farmers told

The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has asked farmers to sell red chillies upon harvest after drying.

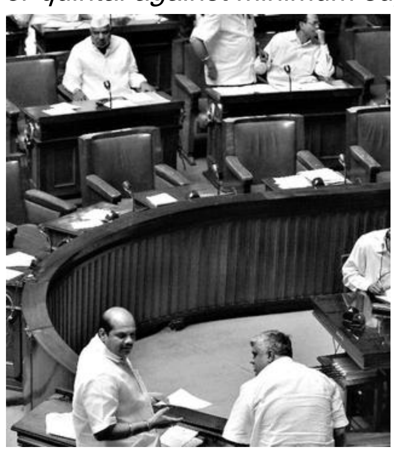
According to the price analysis carried out, it was found that last year farmers received Rs. 80 to Rs. 90 for a kg of red chillies. This year the price is expected to be between Rs. 53 and Rs. 55 a kg during April-May. There may be an increase in the price in June, but that may not cover drying and storage costs.

Chillies produced in Tamil Nadu will hit markets in Kovilpatti, Sathur, Sankarankoil. Rajapalayam, Kamuthi, Muthukulathur and Virudhunagar, from the second fortnight of March. However, at present produce is arriving only at the Virudhunagar market. Domestic demand is good for chilli and the spice processing industry is growing at a very fast pace.

BANGALORE, March 29, 2012

Government to the rescue of toor dal farmers

To buy commodity at Rs. 4,000 per quintal against minimum support price of Rs. 3,200



Financial brink:JD(S) Floor Leader H.D. Revanna holding a serious discussion with Agriculture Minister Umesh V. Katti on arecanut growers' travails in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday.— Photo: V. Sreenivasa Murthy

Following the crash in the prices of toor dal (red gram) in the open market, the State government has decided to open 16 centres to buy the commodity from growers in Gulbarga, Bidar and Bijapur districts.

Replying on the issue during zero hour in the Legislative Assembly, Agriculture Minister Umesh V. Katti said Rs. 10 crore would be set aside for procuring toor dal from growers, and centres would be opened in another 10 days. About 25,000 quintals of toor dal would be procured, he said.

Earlier, S.R. Patil (Congress) demanded a reply from the Minister to save the growers from financial crisis.

Liberal import

As liberal import of toor dal had led to the crash, he suggested a ban on import.

The government will pay Rs. 4,000 per quintal of toor dal against the minimum support price of Rs. 3,200, he said.

Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah and T.B. Jayachandra of the Congress urged Mr. Katti to stop the hoarding of the commodity by traders and to seize the produce. Middlemen and traders have been procuring toor dal at prices below the MSP, they said.

Delegation to Delhi

Intervening during the debate, Chief Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda said a delegation would go to Delhi to inform the Centre on the plight of areca nut, silk and toor dal growers, and to find an amicable solution to the Cauvery water dispute.

The delegation, including members of Opposition parties, would stay in the Delhi for two days next month to meet all the Ministers concerned to address the State's problems, he said.

Arecanut growers

Arecanut growers have been facing hardship owing to reduction in yield due to diseases, Mr. Gowda said, and blamed the Centre for not acting on the Gorak Singh report. He demanded a special package to areaca nut growers on the lines of a coffee package.

Rice park

The government has released Rs. 1.10 crore to establish a rice park at Karatagi in Kanakagiri Assembly Constituency in Koppal district.

Replying to Shivaraj Tangadagi, Independent, during question hour, Mr. Gowda said Rs. 5 crore had been set aside for the park in 2011-12 budget. The park would come up on 471.04 acres of land.

- *16 centres to open to buy toor dal from growers in Gulbarga, Bidar, Bijapur districts*
- *25,000 quintals of toor dal to be procured*

BANGALORE, March 29, 2012

'Of what use was your exclusive agriculture budget?'

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Siddaramaiah on Wednesday criticised the State government for a fall of 2.9 per cent in agricultural growth even after the Bharatiya Janata Party presented its 'Agriculture budget' last year.

Initiating the debate on the budget, Mr. Siddaramaiah said that the exclusive budget for agriculture and the agro-processing investors meet had not helped farmers in any way.

While the BJP government had been uttering the development mantra, the same was not reflected in its performance. He said the industrial growth also fell to 3.4 per cent from 6.1 per cent, despite its claim of signing MoUs attracting investment of Rs. 3.92 crore at the Global Investors' Meet.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said that the State Gross Domestic Product also fell to 6.4 per cent from 8.9 per cent, which was the lowest in the State. Human Development Index with respect to literacy rate, health coverage, gender equality and infrastructure development and other aspects was also low. He pointed out that no money was spent on Suvarna Bhoomi, organic farming, infrastructure for farming and market intervention to help farmers.

'Housing neglected'

He demanded that 25 per cent of the plan outlay be set aside for completing all on-going irrigation projects and allocate more funds for completing UKP projects in five years, rather than seven, as announced in the budget. Mr. Siddaramaiah criticised the government for not spending money from its sources on Asare houses for the flood-hit in north Karnataka.

He said not one house had been allotted to beneficiaries even after two and half years after the floods.

But, Minister for Minor Irrigation Govind Karjol said that the funds from the Union Government, public donations and others were used for compensation towards the death due to floods, crop loss and cattle, destruction of houses, bridges and roads.

Spending Rs. 5,100 crore on power subsidy and purchasing power was not sound financial management, Mr. Siddaramaiah said.

‘Not growth-oriented'

The Congress leader alleged that more than 1,000 unauthorised outlets across the State were selling liquor illegally. He urged enforcement to increase the revenue to Rs.11,500 crore from the targeted Rs.10,700 crore next year. He said the budget had been prepared without vision and it was not growth-oriented.

HASSAN, March 29, 2012

‘Youth turning away from agriculture'

The rate of food production in the country will go down if youngsters do not take up agriculture as a career, K. Narayana Gowda, Vice-Chancellor, University of Agriculture Sciences, has said.

The government and agriculture universities should encourage the youth to take up this profession, he said.

Dr. Gowda was speaking to presspersons before attending the annual day of the Agriculture College at Karekere in Hassan taluk.

He said that there was a similar trend in many developing countries. “The youth do not prefer agriculture as it may not help them to earn profits. We are encouraging students to spend time on the fields for four to five months during their degree course. A few students have shown interest to take up agriculture after their studies,” he said.

Further, the vice-chancellor said the university had recommended to the government to for agriculture equipment at gram panchayat level and distribute them among farmers.

“It will help to tackle labour shortage in rural areas,” he said.Dean M.A Shankar was present.*Government urged to purchase farm equipment*

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hindustantimes

Thu,29 Mar 2012

weather

Delhi - INDIA

Today's Weather

Sunny	Thursday, Mar 29
	Max Min
	33.6° | 19.2°
Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs	**Sunrise:** 7:14
Humidity: 53%	**Sunset:** 17:48
Wind: Normal	**Barometer:** 1014

Tomorrow's Forecast

Sunny	Friday, Mar 30
	Max Min
	34° | 18°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Mar 31	Apr 1	Apr 2	Apr 3	Apr 4
36° | 17°	38° | 20°	37° | 19°	40° | 22°	39° | 21°
Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy

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the pioneer

State pays Rs 46 cr bonus to farmers

THURSDAY, 29 MARCH 2012 00:20

The State Government has made a payment of Rs 46 crore by way of bonus alone to farmers during the process of wheat procurement on support price in the State during the last one fortnight.

A total of Rs 641.74 crore including support price and bonus has been paid to farmers so far. Wheat procurement has been made from 61,719 farmers.

Narmadapuram division had lagged behind in procurement in the initial stage due to late sowing. But crops are now ready over there and the division is set for bumper procurement now.

The total support price of wheat to be procured is Rs 1,385 per quintal. It includes Rs 100 per quintal bonus given by the State Government. For this, adequate funds have been made available to all the cooperative societies.

Maximum procurement of wheat was made by Bhopal division on March 28, which was 446 metric tonnes. The same day, 164 metric tonnes of wheat was purchased in Narmadapuram division and 129 metric tonnes in Ujjain division followed by Indore division (103 MT) and Jabalpur division (53 MT). In all, 4 lakh 66 thousand 422 metric tonnes of wheat has been procured in seven divisions of the state so far.

As a result of promptness in payments, so far Rs 641.74 crore out of total payable Rs 644.61 crore have been deposited in the farmers' bank accounts. The same is the situation of storage. A total of 3.15 lakh metric tonnes out of total 4.66 lakh metric tonnes of procured wheat has been stored safely in godowns.

Wheat crops were sown rather belatedly in Narmadapuram division this year due to seasonal conditions. It caused delay in ripening of crops as well. But now large number of farmers is expected to bring their wheat to major procurement centres in the division like Hoshangabad and Harda.

Raghurveer Singh Tanwar, farmer of Kotlakheri in Hoshangabad district said that it took some time to dry up the crops after harvesting it. He is now all set to take 1,000 quintals of wheat to the concerning procurement centre on the due date. Suraj Singh Patel, another resident of the same village is also going to sell 2,000 quintals of wheat.

Registered farmers Veer Singh Rajput, Hare Singh Rajput and Kishore Singh Patel of village Ratwara in Hoshangabad district are also going to sell five hundred, 1,500 and 1,000 quintals of wheat respectively on support price.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Commodities

28 MAR, 2012, 04.15PM IST, PTI

Sugar prices up on better offtake, restricted supply

NEW DELHI: Sugar millgate prices up by Rs 10 per quintal in the national capital today, following restricted arrivals amid increased offtake.

Marketmen said the government decision to allows another 10 lakh tonnes Sugar export mainly influenced the market sentiment.

In millgate excluding duty section, sugar thanabhavan and dorala rose by Rs 10 each to Rs 2,970 and Rs 2,925 per quintal, respectively.

Khatauli and mawana also moved up by Rs 10 each to Rs 2,920 and Rs 2,940 per quintal.

The following are today's quotations per quintal: Sugar ready: M-30 3,025-3,150, S-30 2,975-3,100. Mill delivery: M-30 2,825-3,000; S-30 2,800-2,975. Sugar mill gate prices (excluding duty): Kinnoni 3,010, Asmoli 2,950, Mawana 2,940, Titabi 2,920, Thanabhavan 2,870, Budhana 2,875, Dorala 2,925, Khatauli 2,920, Morna 2,860 and Ramala 2,840.

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28 MAR, 2012, 04.13PM IST, PTI

Gur prices ends quiet on scattered buying

NEW DELHI: Gur (jaggery) prices ended quiet in the national capital today following scattered buying support.

Muzaffarnagar and Muradnagar gur market also finished steady in thin trade.

Marketmen said small buying support and adequate position of stocks mainly held prices unmoved.

The following are today's quotations in Rs per quintal: Gur chakku 2,750-2,800, pedi 2,800-2,900, dhayya 2,850- 2,900 and shakkar 3,000-3,100.

Muzaffarnagar: Raskat 2,250-2,300, chakku 2,425-2,600 and khurpa 2,250-2,300.

Muradnagar: Pedi 2,550-2,600 and dhayya 2,550-2,600.

THE HINDU Business Line

Uptrend in cotton oil, palmolein continues

Mumbai, March 28:

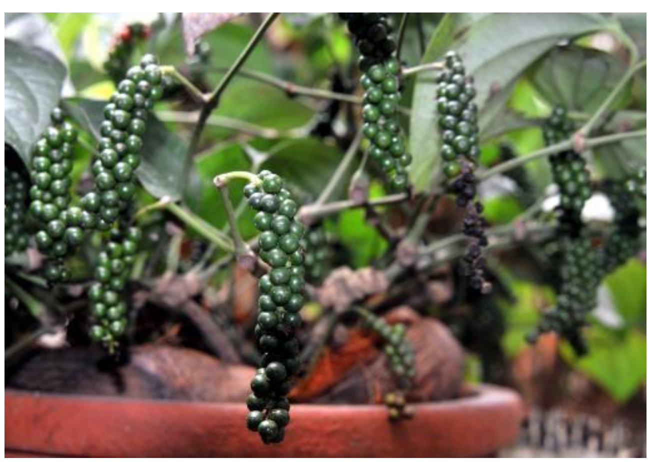
Edible oil price rule steady on Wednesday barring cotton oil and palmolein that continued to rise.

Weaker soya and palm oil futures market and increase arrivals in producing centres and absence of demand in month-end turned traders cautious.

Sources said that Malaysian crude palm oil futures may ease as investors lock in profits after Tuesday's rally. Worries over damage to soyabean crop in Brazil boosted demand for palm oil. Sources said that strong US dollar, firm trend in world palm and soya oil complex will keep undertone bullish in domestic market for coming months. Shortage of nuts, improved demand for meal exports, eased arrivals of rapeseed- mustard seeds, soyabean, cotton and groundnut due lean season, worry about the monsoon season and low water level of water reservoir at national level this year is supporting the bullish sentiments.In Mumbai, groundnut oil, soya oil, sunflower oil, rapeseed oil were unchanged in the absence of demand.Bullish prospects presented at recent China conference have fuelled prices further. For indigenous oils and oilseeds, strong fundamentals are emerging with tight availability of seeds.

About 100–150 tonnes of palmolein were traded for ready and near delivery. Towards the day's close, resellers quoted palmolein at Rs 615-616 for 10 kg. Liberty quoted palmolein at Rs 622-623, soya refined oil at Rs 709 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 715. Ruchi quoted palmolein at Rs 616-618, soya refined oil at Rs 700 and sunflower refined oil at Rs 705. Allana's rate for palmolein was Rs 620 and Mewah quoted palmolein at Rs 618-619.At producing level, soyabean arrivals were 20,000-25,000 bags and the price was Rs 2,780-2,860 at mandi level and Rs 2,900-2,950 at the plant level. Mustard seed arrivals were about 4 - 5 lakh bags and the price were Rs 3,450–3,850 a quintal.In Saurashtra – Rajkot groundnut oil uptrend continued on tight seeds supply. Rajkot groundnut oil was up Rs 5 to Rs 1,900 (Rs 1,895) for Telia tin and Rs 1,240 (Rs 1240) for loose - 10kgs.Malaysia's crude palm oil April contracts settled at MYR 3,500 (MYR 3,512), May at MYR 3,482 (MYR 3,485) and June at MYR 3,473 (MYR 3,481) a tonne. **The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates were(Rs/10 kg)**: groundnut oil 1,225 (1,225), soya refined oil 700 (700), sunflower exp. ref. 645 (645), sunflower ref. 710 (710), rapeseed ref. oil 843 (843), rapeseed expeller ref. 813 (813) cotton ref. oil 685 (684) and palmolein 616 (615).

Pepper loses steam on selling pressure



Kochi, March 28:

Pepper prices continued to drop on liquidation and reports of easier Vietnam market on Wednesday. Reports of selling pressure in Karnataka also subdued pepper.

The market continued to remain highly volatile. It opened on a firmer note and touched the highest price of the day in the beginning of the forenoon session. Thereafter, it started dropping with high volatility. It recovered during the beginning of the afternoon session and traded with volatility. About one hour before the closing prices, it touched the lowest levels of the day with April at Rs 40,605 or Rs 890 a quintal below the highest price of the day.

At the closing minutes, it recovered to end at the last trading price below the previous day's closing. A similar situation was there in the case of May contract also.

There were bearish reports saying Vietnam supplies have picked up and the prices for the 500 GL and 550 GL pepper would be easier to $6,000 a tonne and even lower.

At the same time, those in need of money were selling on a cash-and-carry basis in Karnataka and Kerala at a discount rate of Rs 5 a kg. However, for now delivery and payment on April 3 the sellers were demanding Rs 5 a kg premium, trade sources told *Business Line*.

There was also good liquidation. There was good activity on the exchange as is evident from the increase in turn over.

April contract on the NCDEX dropped by Rs 650 to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 40,850 a quintal. May and June were down by Rs 845 and Rs 1,055, respectively, to the LTP of Rs 41,500 and Rs 42,005 a quintal.

Total turnover increased by 1,395 tonnes to 5,602 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by 212 tonnes to 8,572 tonnes.

April open interest fell by 225 tonnes to 5,513 tonnes, while that of May declined by 15 tonnes to 2,648 tonnes. June open interest moved up by 14 tonnes to 279 tonnes.

Spot prices fell by Rs 500 on selling pressure to close at Rs 38,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 39,500 (MG 1) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market was at $8,300 a tonne (c&f) Europe and $8,600 a tonne (c&f) for the US.

Overseas trend

Vietnam production this year, according to a report today, is estimated by overseas trade at 1.2 lakh tonnes and nearly 30-40 per cent of the harvesting is claimed to be over.

Tur drops on weak buying

Our Correspondent

Indore, March 28:

Tur declined by Rs 75 a quintal on weak buying support on Wednesday.

In the spot, tur (Maharashtra) ruled at Rs 3,650-3,675 a quintal, while tur (Nimari) ruled at Rs 3,000-3,100. According to pulse trader Mr Sanjay Bansal, tur may remain bearish as arrivals of new gulabi tur will begin next month. Besides, with the mango season approaching, demand for tur among traders may drop, he said. Moreover, there is enough stock of imported tur.

Tur dal, on the other hand ruled stable, with full dal being quoted at Rs 5,400-5,450 a quintal, *sawa* no dal at Rs 4,400-4,500 and marka at Rs 6,100-6,150.

Urad

Bold urad ruled firm at Rs 3,650-3,675 a quintal on improved buying support at higher level. Medium urad ruled at Rs 2,800-2,900 a quintal. A weak rupee has also lifted urad prices. Urad dal also ruled steady despite subdued demand, with urad dal at Rs 3,675-3,700 a quintal, medium dal at Rs 4,450-4,500 and mongar at Rs 5,400-5,800.

Chana

Kanta chana declined to Rs 3,500 a quintal on weak buying support, while desi chana ruled at Rs 3,425. Weak chana also dragged its dal, with average chana dal being quoted at Rs 4,325-4,350 a quintal, medium dal at Rs 4,425-4,450 and bold dal at Rs 4,600-4,625.

Turmeric pales on heavy arrivals

Our Correspondent

Erode, March 28:

Following heavy arrival of turmeric bags, prices decreased by Rs 250 to Rs 300 a quintal on Wednesday.

“Around 23,000 bags of turmeric arrived for sales and the buyers were reluctant to buy as the turmeric price is decreasing every day, but have purchased 50 per cent of the arrived turmeric.

The buyers, mainly local traders, quoted lower prices and purchased yellow spices to fulfil orders from local masala firms and others.

Farmers, disappointed with the downtrend, had to go in for distress-sale,, said Mr R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said other turmeric markets at Nizamabad and Sangli did not function due to settlements for the financial year-ending and they would be assembled again in the first week of April. Futures remained stable, but did not make any reflection in the sale at Erode.

Prices at all markets showed a steep decrease of Rs 250-300 a quintal. One or two lots fetched top prices due to quality.

Similarly, despite arrival of quality goods of Hybrid Salem crop, the prices were decreased by Rs 100 a quintal for want of demand.

The arrival will go up in the coming weeks, said

traders. Farmers said that harvest of turmeric has completed in more than one lakh acres in Sathyamangalam, Sivagiri and Bhavanisagar areas. So huge stocks will arrive for sales by the end of April. The traders expected that in the second week the prices may go up, as they will get fresh orders from North India in the first week of April.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, finger variety was sold at Rs 2,509-3,799 a quintal. The root variety was sold at Rs 2,436-3,564 a quintal.

Salem Crop: The finger variety was sold at Rs 3,959-4,579 a quintal, root variety at Rs 3,391-3,714 a quintal. Out of a total arrival of 7,329 turmeric bags, 3,290 bags of turmeric were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety was sold at Rs 3,537-4,043 a quintal, root variety Rs 3,487-3,840 a quintal. Around 1,943 bags of turmeric were sold against the arrival of 1,976 bags.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 3,017-3,938 a quintal, root variety Rs 2,929-3,767 a quintal. All the 1,287 turmeric bags kept for sales were sold. At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 3,060-3,910 a quintal, root variety at Rs 2,569 to Rs 3,737 a quintal. All the 473 bags of turmeric kept for sales were sold.

Rice unchanged amid sluggish trade

Our Correspondent

Karnal, March 28:

Aromatic and non-basmati rice ruled almost unchanged on Wednesday even as buying remained tepid.

The market has been volatile over the last two weeks, said market sources. Bulk buyers and retailers are not placing orders and are waiting for the market to stabilise, said sources.

Current prices of most varieties are still way below those during the corresponding period last year.

In the physical market, after witnessing a fall earlier on Monday, aromatic varieties remained unchanged. Pusa-1121 (steam) quoted at Rs 4,200-4,300 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) sold at Rs 3,800-3,865.

Pure basmati (raw) sold at Rs 4,530-4,540 a quintal while pure basmati (sela) sold at Rs 4,100. Duplicate basmati sold at Rs 3,500-3,625 a quintal.Among the brokens of Pusa-1121, Tibar sold at Rs 2,900-3,350, Dubar quoted at Rs 2,650-2,780 and Mongra at Rs 1,900-2,140 a quintal.Similarly, non-basmati varieties remained almost unchanged. Sharbati (steam) was at Rs 2,900-3,010 while Sharbati (sela) sold at Rs 2,700-2,800 a quintal.

Permal (sela) sold at Rs 1,850-2,050 a quintal, Permal (raw) at Rs 1,900-2,045, PR-11 (sela) at Rs 2,200-2,410 and PR-11 (raw) at Rs 2,000-2,300.

Sugandha (steam) fetched Rs 3,200-3425 a quintal while PR-14 (steam) sold at Rs 2,320-2,350.

Sugar rules steady after word on exports quota

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, March 28:

Sugar price were steady on Wednesday in spite of a sharp decline in futures on Tuesday. The physical market saw month-end routine demand. At the Vashi market, spot prices for M-grade fine variety up by Rs 5-10 on improved demand while S-grade held steady. Naka and mill tender rates ruled unchanged as traders and farmers are waiting for the sugar quota announcement for the coming month. Volumes were at usual level, keeping sentiment steady, said traders.A wholesaler said prices firmed up on Tuesday in cash market on the announcement of additional 10 lakh tonnes of exports in current season year. But speculation about Government considering quarterly free sale quota from April in and shelving the monthly quota mechanism led to heavy selling pressure in futures market on Tuesday.Fall in futures market weighed on the physical market on Wednesday. Physical demand is expected to rise with onset of summer.

On Tuesday the sugar industry demanded again for further exports of 10 lakh tonnes in next 15 days to improve mills' cash liquidity for clearing cane dues, which are threatening to touch Rs 10,000 crore by April.On expectations of higher shipments from India, world prices has been under pressure for last three days. In world market, sugar prices fell further on Tuesday: May-12 futures dropped by $11.10 to $637.70 ($648.80) while August-12 futures closed lower by $8.50 to $625.00 ($633.50) taking total loss to $25 in three days.Arrivals to Vashi market was about 50-51 truckloads and local dispatches were about 48-50 loads. On Tuesday evening, 17-18 mills offered tenders and sold about 30,000-32,000 bags in steady range of Rs 2,715-2,780 (Rs 2,715-2,780) for S-grade and Rs 2,790-2,890 (Rs 2,790-2,880) for M-grade.Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 2,870-2,925 (Rs 2,872-2,925) and M-grade Rs 2,951-3,046 (Rs 2,941-3,041). Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 2,820 -2,870 (Rs 2,820-2,870) and M-grade Rs 2,920-3,000 (Rs 2,920-3,000).

FMC stops futures trade in guar complex, spot prices rise

Latha Venkatraman

March 28, 2012:

The Forward Markets Commission has finally stopped futures trade in guar complex on commodity exchanges after a series of regulatory measures failed to check the price rise.

Despite the move, spot guarseed prices increased five per cent and guar gum prices 10 per cent.

In Jodhpur, guar gum was quoted at Rs 88,740 a quintal and guarseed at Rs 26,999 a quintal. Prices gained after initially dropping following the news.

The guar complex has been on an upward surge since November. Prices of guar seed futures have been rising continuously since November and have gained in excess of 500 per cent during this period.

Commodity exchanges under directives of FMC, put out circulars stating that the outstanding positions will be closed out at the settlement price of Tuesday effectively ending futures trade in guar complex.

Last week, FMC barred fresh positions in the running contracts of guar seed and guar gum. It allowed only squaring off existing positions in contracts until July. The exchanges under the advice of FMC had not launched August and September contracts.

Although any ban in futures trade hits the turnover of commodity exchanges and brokerages, the impact of the halt in futures trade of guar complex would be muted mainly because volumes in this complex have been quite thin in the last two months.

“One cannot term this a ban. This is a temporary suspension of trade,” said an official of a commodity exchange.

Guar futures, both seed and gum, have been moving up sharply hitting the 4 per cent upper price limits several times during the past few months. Initially, the upward surge was attributed to strong fundamentals.

India’s guar seed production in 2011-12 has been estimated at 12.1 lakh tonnes compared with a record crop of 15 lakh tonnes in the previous year. The country is a leading producer of this commodity, which is mainly used in the making of guar gum, a product used in industrial applications.With futures trade relentlessly hitting the 4 per cent upper circuit, the regulator was prompted to sit up and take notice of the price surge. FMC used every regulatory tool that it could to control prices of guar. It cut open position limits, raised margins on buy side, stopped the launch of fresh contracts and also sent out a team to Rajasthan to investigate the reason for the price rise. Subsequently, it disallowed some traders from trading as one of the many measures to curb prices.“Although, the stopping of futures trade in guar would not impact turnover it would dampen sentiment,” said Mr Kishore Narne, Head – Currency and Commodity Research, AnandRathi Commodities.Also, this episode points to the fact that there is an urgent need for making the Forward Contract (Regulation) Amendment Bill into a law so that the regulator has much more tools to handle a situation like this, Mr Narne said.Autonomy to FMC is very crucial in dealing with situations such as the sharp and continuous rise in guar prices, brokerage officials said.The guar complex was one of the most active agricultural commodities traded on national multi-commodity exchanges.Once a commodity’s future trade is stopped or banned, reintroducing and bringing back volumes may not be easy.In the past, commodities such as wheat and sugar suffered similar fate. Both these commodities had moderately good volumes before they were banned. After they were reintroduced the volumes hav never come to original levels, brokerage officials said.Exchanges and brokerages are hopeful that FMC may allow either the October or the November guar contract to be launched.If October contract has to be launched it has to be done on April 10. According to a senior official at a brokerage, FMC should not launch October contract. It should make an assessment of the spot market and possibly launch the November contract.“The November contract can be launched as late as June so that the FMC is able to make some assessments based on sowing details,” said an exchange official.

Marginally drop in rice procurement by FCI in AP

K. V. Kurmanath

According to the latest figures, FCI procured 39.58 lakh tonnes against 40.13 lakh tonnes on the same date last year.

Hyderabad, Marcy 29:

There is a marginal drop in rice procured by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in Andhra Pradesh.

According to the latest figures available (as on March 27), FCI procured 39.58 lakh tonnes against 40.13 lakh tonnes on the same date last year.

Meanwhile, various Government agencies procured 9.77 lakh tonne paddy stocks (2.57 lakh tonnes). The agencies included FCI, AP State Civil Supplies and Indira Kranti Patham (IKP, a World Bank funded programme). Rice millers procured 83 lakh tonnes (74.45 lakh tonnes).

In all, the state procured 92.75 lakh tonnes of paddy (77 lakh tonnes), a Civil Supplies Department statement said.

Dry spell brews trouble for robusta coffee

M. R. Subramani

Chennai, March 28:

A near five-month dry spell in growing areas is likely to affect the production of coffee, especially robusta, the next season starting October.

“Robusta coffee is highly susceptible to water stress. The current dry spell will affect robusta production, though how much is difficult to say ,” said Mr Nishant Gurjer, Managing Partner, Sethuraman Estates and Kaapi Royale Coffee.

“Even this season due to the dry spell, farmers washed less of robustas since they retained water for irrigation. As a result, robusta parchment production was 50-60 per cent lower compared with last year," said Mr Ramesh Rajah, President of Coffee Exporters Association of India.

deficient rainfall

"The dry spell is likely to spell greater trouble for robustas in areas where there are not irrigation facilities," said Mr Anil K. Bhandar, former president of the United Planters Association of Southern India.

According to the India Meteorological Department, post-monsoon rainfall between October and December was 48 per cent below normal. Rainfall during January-March was 5 per cent lower than normal. However, since January, about 25 meteorological sub-divisions of the 36 in the country have had deficient rainfall.

Coffee production this season ending September has been estimated at a record 3.20 lakh tonnes against 3.02 lakh tonnes last season. Of this, arabica has been projected at 1.03 lakh tonnes (94,140 tonnes) and robusta 2.16 lakh tonnes (2.07 lakh tonnes).

"Small pockets in growing areas of Karnataka got rain in February and again a week ago," said Mr Gurjer.

"This quarter-inch rain has led to blossoming in some areas. But there has been no follow-up rain and the blossoming has been squashed," said Mr Bhandari.

"The prolonged dry spell will impact robusta severely next season," said Mr Rajah.

More than the dry spell, it is the high temperature in the growing areas that is worrying planters.

"Against a normal temperature of 33-34 degrees Celsius, the temperature is 36 degrees Celsius. Also, there is huge variation between maximum and minimum temperatures. We have to see if this could have any effect," said Mr Gurjer.

The pre-moosoon rain called "Revathy" in growing areas has been forecast for late March/early April. "If the rain fails to come as predicted, more trouble is in store," said Mr Gurjer.

Arabica coffee, on the other hand, is drought-resistant and can tolerate the dry spell at least till the month-end. Therefore, it may not face as much problem as the robusta.

“If it rains in the next two weeks, there is sufficient time for arabica to recover,” said Mr Rajah.

“If rain comes on time, there will be good blossoming of arabica since the buds are ready,” said Mr Bhandari.

Karnataka is the key coffee growing State in the country, making up 70 per cent of the total production. Kerala, which is also facing a dry spell that is affecting other plantation crops such as tea, rubber and spices, is the second largest producer of coffee.

Meanwhile, exports this year are marginally higher. As of Wednesday, 98,073 tonnes were exported against 93,113 tonnes during the same period a year ago.

Covering buys boost spot rubber

Our Correspondent

Kottayam, March 28:

Physical rubber prices improved on Wednesday. According to sources, the market firmed up mainly on covering purchases though major consuming industries were totally inactive, while passing through the last phase of the current fiscal.

Transactions continued to be narrow and the market seemed to be suffering from acute shortage of the raw material. The trend was partially mixed.

Sheet rubber increased to Rs 200 (199.50) a kg, according to traders. The grade was steady at Rs 199.50 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi, according to the Rubber Board.

RSS 4 improved marginally at its April series to Rs 200.29 (199.98), May to Rs 205.60 (205.24), June to Rs 210.25 (209.45) and July to Rs 210.50 (209.40) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to Rs 204.01 (205.14) a kg at Bangkok.

April futures for the grade declined to ¥316.6 (Rs 194.09) from ¥319 a kg during the day session but then remained inactive in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 200 (199.50); RSS-5: 198 (197.50); ungraded: 194 (193.50); ISNR 20: 197.50 (197) and latex 60 per cent: 130.50 (130.50).

20 fish markets to come up in costal Karnataka

Our Bureau

Mangalore, March 28:

The Karnataka Coastal Area Development Authority is planning to set up 20 fish markets in the next fiscal.

Speaking at a function to disburse loans to fisherwomen at three per cent interest rate, Mr B. Nagaraja Shetty, Chairman of the authority, said steps have been taken to construct 10 fish markets in coastal Karnataka during the current financial year.

The construction of these markets is being taken up with financial assistance from National Fisheries Development Board. Another 20 fish markets will be constructed during the next financial year, he said.

Stating that there are around 800 fish markets along coastal Karnataka, he said the authority is thinking of improving them all. The region has around 3.5 lakh families of fishermen.

Thanking Corporation Bank for extending loans to fisherwomen at three per cent interest rate, he urged the borrowers to adhere to prompt repayment culture. This will help them grow further. He said the bank has already been extending loans to fishermen for improving fisheries activity, including loans for mechanised fishing boats, fishing nets and various other needs.

Mr Shetty said the Karnataka Budget for 2012-13 has proposed to increase the supply of tax-free diesel to fishermen from 1.15 lakh kilo litres in 2011-12 to 1.25 lakh kilo litres during 2012-13.

Mr Ajai Kumar, Chairman and Managing Director of Corporation Bank, launched the scheme to extend loans to fisherwomen at three per cent interest rate on the occasion.

Mr Nitin Kumar, Chairman of the Karnataka Fisheries Development Corporation Ltd, said the Karnataka Budget has allocated Rs 215 crore for the development of fisheries sector during 2012-13.

World Bank credit for Rajasthan farm project

Our Bureau
Kozhikode, March 28:

The World Bank will extend $109-million credit for a project in Rajasthan to increase agricultural productivity in the State.

The Rajasthan Agricultural Competitiveness Project will cover a total of two lakh hectares of land across ten agro-ecological zones, benefitting around 1.55 lakh small farmers. It will focus on efficient water management, crop management, application of improved farm technology and bringing about market innovations to increase productivity and thereby the income of the farmers.

Rajasthan, which constitutes 10 per cent of the country's land area and five per cent of the population, is facing acute water shortage. The situation worsened in the wake of erratic rainfall and recurring droughts. Over the last 100 years, on an average, every district in the State has gone through drought in some form or the other for half of the time, says a World Bank report.

The project will tap into both surface and ground water resources to raise agricultural productivity per unit of water through efficient management. At the same time, this is expected to prompt farmers to move from low-value and often water-guzzling crops to high-value farming.

It is pointed out that Rajasthan holds the potential for diversifying into higher-value and less water-consuming sectors like horticulture, floriculture, spice and medicinal plant cultivation. However, achieving sustainable water resources management practices in agriculture is at the core of the present project.

Seafood exports to EU come to a halt

C. J. Punnathara

Kochi, March 28:

All seafood exports from India to the EU are coming to a halt. In a notification dated March 15, the Export Inspection Agency (EIA) has stated that it will not be giving health certificates and Q certificates to exporters unless the product is sourced from fishing boats and landing centres registered with the agency.

In a fleet of over 60,000 mechanised boats, the exporters complained that there is not a single boat which has been registered with the agency. There are 48 major fishing harbours and numerous fish landing centres which are not registered either.

Without the health certificate from the EIA no European Port will entertain Indian seafood export consignments. Q Certificate is mandatory for the Indian customs to release the consignments for exports.

The exporters pointed out that all fishing harbours and fish landing centres in the country are owned by the Government and there is nothing that they could do at this instance. The bulk of the mechanised fishing boats are often owned and operated by illiterate and poor fishermen and the agency would have to first educate them on the needs of registration.

UPGRADING FACILITIES

Most of the seafood processing units which have been exporting to the EU have already upgraded their facilities to meet EU standards and are registered with the EIA, sources in the Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI) said. What has caught them unawares is the fact that the date of the notification and effective implementation date are the same.

However, some of the exporters conceded that there was an earlier notification in March last year asking the fishing boats and fishing harbours and landing centres to register with the Agency. But referring to the Government-owned fishing harbours and fish landing centres, an exporter said, “We cannot be held guilty if one arm of the Government does not register with another arm.”

Since March 15, the EIA has stopped giving health certificates and Q certificates for seafood exports to the EU. All marine export consignments to the EU are currently operating with certificates issued prior to that cut-off date. These would soon dwindle and cease and effective exports to the EU would be arrested, SEAI said.

Some of the exporters said that the crisis has come at a most inappropriate time and several companies would not be able to fulfil their export target set for the current fiscal. Not to mention the loss of faith and confidence with the EU importers in case the export commitments are not executed.