THE HINDU

TODAY FARM NEWS

21.11.2012 A.M

ICT in vet science

Vice-Chancellor of Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University C. Renuka Prasad said here on Monday that the use of information and communication technology has helped greatly veterinary researchers.

Speaking at a training workshop on the application of ICT in animal husbandry, Mr. Prasad said the ICT application has helped develop diagnostic kits for diseases such as infectious bovine rhinotracheitis and tuberculosis. He gave examples of teams that had succeeded in improving treatment for animals. Simulation studies have helped vaccine development, he said.

It's raining milk on APDDCF

Usually there are problems with shortages. But in the case of A.P. Dairy Development Cooperative Federation (APDDCF) the opposite is true. It is faced with the unique problem of glut of milk so much so that it doesn't know where to store all the milk that is coming its way.

Everyday the Federation is left with an extra 1.70 lakh litres to handle which it simply can't. Therefore, it is toying with the idea of declaring a 'milk holiday' once in a fortnight.

The idea is not to procure milk two days in a month so as to take care of storage problem and also the rising cost of procurement. The proposal will be placed before the APDDCF board to get its nod. The last time the Federation declared a milk holiday was in 1993.

The APDDCF has been flooded with surplus milk from September onwards. The per day procurement shot up from 3.90 lakh litres in August to 4.69 lakh litres in September. It touched 5.27 lakh litres in October and 5.93 lakh litres in November. In December, milk procurement is projected to be 6.29 lakh litres.

Faced with this unusual phenomenon, the Federation has started converting the excess milk into skimmed milk powder (SMP).

“We are doing all this only to not inconvenience farmers,” says Mohammed Ali Rafath, managing director and vice chairman, APDDCF.

Unlike private diaries, the APDDCF is procuring milk beyond its requirement to help the farmers. Its factory has a capacity to handle only 4 lakh litres a day, including 30,000 litres of by-products such as flavoured milk, butter, khova, lassi.

In the last few months it has been getting an extra 1.70 lakh litres milk per day. Of this, 1.02 lakh litres is buffalo milk and the rest cow. To procure this excess milk, it has to shell out Rs.41 lakh per day.

To tide over the problem, the APDDCF has started converting the milk into powder and now it has a stock of 1,000 metric tonnes of butter and 800 metric tonnes of skimmed milk powder. To clear this stockpile, the Federation has asked the Women Development and Child Welfare Department to use its powder milk in its programme of supplying cooked food to pregnant and lactating mothers.

“This way we hope to supply 100 tonnes of skimmed milk powder per month”, says Mr. Rafath.

The excess milk production is the result of milch animal induction programme wherein the government provides 25 per cent subsidy on purchase of cattle and also reimburses transport charges.

Another factor is the vigorous artificial insemination programme taken up by the Animal Husbandry Department.

Why can't the APDDCF push up its sales? It cannot because there are no takers for its Vijay brand of milk. While Hyderabad has a liquid milk market of 12 lakh litres a day, APDDCF accounts for just 3.60 lakh litres a day.

Now the APDDCF is planning to develop forward linkages by strengthening its district market where the sales are very dismal.

Bangalore has the highest number of organic outlets'

Bangalore is fast emerging as the country's organic capital as it accounts for the highest number of organic produce sales outlets in the country, according to experts.

International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture (ICCOA) Executive Director Manoj Kumar Menon, says Bangalore has 68 retail shops selling organic produce. He told *The Hindu* that these shops include dedicated organic outlets as well as those which have sizeable space earmarked for organic produce. He said that Mumbai has 45 such outlets selling organic produce while Delhi has only 36 of them. "What is important with respect to Bangalore is that it has the presence of all the prominent organic brands unlike other cities which have only a few of them," he says.

The volume of organic retail business in Bangalore is also higher than that of any other city in the country, according to Mr. Menon, who has been watching organic retail sectors of different States and cities.

He says the number of organic outlets have been increasing in Bangalore with each passing year.

He expressed confidence that the proposed international organic trade fair – BioFach India – to be held in Bangalore would further boost organic farming and trade in Karnataka.

He recalled that the previous edition of the international organic trade fair held in Bangalore had seen a total business transaction of Rs. 17.5 crore.

In terms of crops, it was the spices that had set the ball rolling for organic farmers of the State then. Black pepper, ginger, turmeric and coffee are the major crops that have attracted most of the business during the previous edition of the fair while organic cotton and jaggery too have fetched some business.

Referring to the present trend, he said all the above crops would have similar demand during the present edition of the fair also. Kodagu district will be showcased this time with organisers planning to take international traders on a field visit to this hilly district to familiarise them with organic coffee farming and the potential it holds in terms of trading opportunities.

‘Stress on decentralised purchase of rice, paddy’

A.P State Civil Supplies Corporation (APSCSC) Vice-Chairman & Managing Director D. Varaprasad said that more number of paddy and rice procurement centres would be opened in the State soon to buy the grains directly from farmers at the stipulated minimum support prices (Rs 1,280 per quintal of Grade-A variety of paddy and Rs 1,250 for common variety and Rs 1,500 per quintal of BPT rice).

The Government planned to sell rice in five kilo packs in future and the modalities of it were being worked out. While ensuring that the farmers earned minimum returns on investment, orders were issued to buy BPT variety rice after carefully ascertaining its quality.

Addressing a meeting with officials of the Civil Supplies Department and rice millers here on Tuesday, Mr. Varaprasad said the APSCSC had decided to purchase raw rice (mill levy quota) in Chittoor, Guntur, Karimnagar, Nalgonda, Nellore, Prakasam and Warangal districts under the decentralized scheme of rice procurement and Custom-Milled Rice raw rice in all the districts.

It was targeted to sell 40 lakh metric tons of rice through PDS to over 2.20 crore card-holders.

District Rice Millers’ Association President V. Bhaskara Rao said the millers were being harassed by Vigilance Department who were booking cases on various charges when only a few had violated the norms.

Collector S. Suresh Kumar, Joint Collector N. Yuvaraj and others participated.

High labour charges cause slump in cotton picking

Tough times:Large expanses of land can be found dotted with the white of the burst cotton bolls mainly in the mandals of Jainoor, Kerameri, Boath, Neredigonda, Mamda, Kadem and Sarangapur, in Adilabad.– Photo: S. HARPAL SINGH

Even a brief spell of rainfall at this stage can result in the destruction of cotton, crop which lies exposed to the elements of nature, in thousands of acres.

Picking of the produce has gone abegging as farmers in many mandals of Adilabad district find the increasing labour charges quite unaffordable.

“Though the average charge for picking cotton stays at Rs.5 per kg like in previous years, the increased cost of cultivation this year has made it burdensome. No farmer has dared to import labourers from neighbouring Maharashtra despite the risk of damage to their crop,” says farmer Punaji Rathod of Raghunathpur in Boath mandal.

Large expanses of land can be found dotted with the white of the burst cotton bolls mainly in the mandals of Jainoor, Kerameri, Boath, Neredigonda, Mamda, Kadem and Sarangapur.

Most of the cotton farmers in these mandals are small land holders and hence any ‘unjustified’ increase in cost of farming has a debilitating effect on them.

“The price of cotton at a minimum of Rs.3,900 per quintal has been rendered unremunerative this year due to the increased input costs and the damage to the crop due to excessive rainfall earlier this season. If a farmer has to pay labour charge at Rs.5 for every kg of cotton picked instead of a judicious Rs.2, he will lose about Rs.300 per quintal additionally," says Mr. Rathod depicting how unaffordable picking charges are.

The shortage of local labourers over the last few years has opened gates for the working class people from Maharashtra.

Thousands of them from the adjoining districts of Nanded and Yavatmal arrive finding the prospects of seasonal employment in agriculture fields here quite lucrative.

"As the current period is considered a lean season for agriculture labourers in Maharashtra, we are paid only Rs.100 per day as wages. Here, each member of my family earns between Rs.200 and Rs.250 every day in cotton fields," reveals Gajjawar Arjun, an agriculture worker from Hadgaon in Nanded district who is camping with 16 members of his family at Pusai village in Jainad mandal.

Farmers' rights authority office to be opened

The government is preparing to establish a regional office of the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFRA) in Thiruvananthapuram, Minister for Agriculture K.P. Mohanan has said.

Delivering the inaugural address at a State- level awareness programme on the PPVFR Act here on Tuesday, he said the regional office was expected to be inaugurated before the end of the year.

Registrar General of the authority R.C. Agrawal said the new office would cater to the southern States.

"It will make it easier for farmers and plant breeders to register new varieties and contact the authority when infringement of rights takes place," he said.

Highlighting the looming threat posed by climate change to the agriculture sector, the Minister said extended drought conditions had made water conservation methods imperative. "Realising the importance, the government has formulated the Sahasra Sarovar scheme to restore 1,000 ponds and tanks across the State." Mr. Mohanan said technology-assisted farming had emerged as one of the solutions to the challenges faced by farmers. Stressing the need for an integrated approach to agriculture, he said rearing of cows was a key factor in the State's drive to switch over to organic farming by 2015. The Minister presented mementos to the Pokkali Rice Farming Community, Ernakulam; Kerala Agricultural University; the Wayanad Tribal Development Action Council; and M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, winners of the Plant Genome Saviour Community award 2010-11.

Agriculture Minister inspects farms

Crop welfare:Minister for Agriculture S. Damodaran inspecting fields at Jegaveerapandiapuram in Tuticorin on Tuesday.— Photo: N. Rajesh

Minister for Agriculture C. Damodharan visited farms in various parts of the district on Tuesday and enquired with the farmers about the availability of fertilizers and agriculture inputs to enable them carry out their farming operations unhindered.

After visiting Jegaveerapandiapuram under Ottapidaaram block, where the farmers had raised maize, Mr. Damodharan distributed hand sprayers to four beneficiaries at Eththilappanaickenpatti.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said the State Government was according highest priority for ensuring increased revenue for farmers by introducing a range of welfare schemes and awareness programmes like 'Farmers' festival.'

He also inaugurated the sprinkling of DAP solution on the black gram crop cultivated on 100 acres in the village.

Minister for Labour Welfare S.T. Chellapandian, Tuticorin Collector Ashish Kumar and senior officials of Department of Agriculture accompanied Mr. Damodharan.

In the evening, the Minister participated in the voluntary certification programme for medicinal plant produce, organised by Department of Horticulture.

Skill development course on shrimp farming

The Tharuvaikulam-based Maritech Research and Extension Centre, functioning under the Directorate of Research and Extension (Fisheries), Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, has proposed to offer a one-month skill development course on ‘shrimp farm assistant’ from November 27.

According to M. Venkatasamy, Director of Research and Extension (Fisheries), Fisheries College and Research Institute, Tuticorin, the Directorate of Research and Extension (Fisheries) will impart basic techniques on shrimp farming as theory for 7 days and on-farm training for 21 days during the training programme.

Course fee

Interested persons will have to pay Rs. 1,000 as course fee. After successful completion of this skill development training program, certificate from Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University will be issued to the participants.

The interested candidates should register their names with the Associate Professor and Head, Maritech Research and Extension Centre, Tharuvaikulam – 628 105, Tuticorin District (Phone 0461 – 2340576 or 99944 50248 either in person or over the phone on or before November 26, Dr. Venkatasamy said.

Cane procurement price leaves farmers bitter

They say it is far below expectations, and threaten ‘non-cooperation movement’

Farm workers harvesting sugarcane at a farm near Dindigul. —File Photo

State president of the Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham S.A. Chinnasamy on Tuesday threatened to launch a “non-cooperation movement” to protest against the government’s decision to fix Rs. 2,350 per tonne as the procurement price of sugarcane.

General secretary of the Federation of Farmers’ Associations of Tamil Nadu, C. Nallasamy, warned of acute shortage of sugarcane next year. (During 2011-12, sugarcane was planted on seven lakh acres and the yield was 260 lakh tonnes. The average production was 40 tonnes per acre. But production during the current year is uncertain owing to poor monsoon and shortage of power).

The associations said they were “shattered” by the decision as it was not only far below their expectation but also less than what was promised in the election manifesto of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

They recalled that the AIADMK, while in the Opposition in 2010, organised a major demonstration in Villupuram demanding Rs. 2,500 per tonne when the procurement price was Rs. 2,000, including Rs. 100 as transport charges.

“Now, it has announced only Rs. 2,350, including Rs. 100 as transport charges. But the cost of cultivation has gone through the roof during the past two years.”

They estimated it to be around Rs. 80,000 per acre.

The price of DAP and potash had gone up by three times since April 1, 2010. Similarly the cost of labour had also gone up to Rs. 400-500 from Rs. 200 a day a couple of years ago.

The component of cutting charges was a major problem. “When the crushing starts in some mills on November 23, it will be Rs. 300-500 per tonne. It keeps changing and, at times, touches Rs 1,000 a tonne. That is why we have been demanding Rs. 4,000 per tonne,” Mr. Chinnasamy said and wanted the government to waive the purchase tax of Rs. 65 per tonne.

He would launch a campaign urging farmers not to plant sugarcane or register with any mill.

He alleged that both the Dravidian parties had failed to understand the problems of the sugarcane farmers and fix “fair and remunerative price.”

Mr. Nallasamy asserted that the State would face serious sugarcane shortage next year as the cane area would shrink owing to monsoon failure. Sugarcane required at least 800 mm to 900 mm rainfall. Even if fertilizer were to be applied, there would be no yield because of the drought. “When you apply fertilizer you require water. Due to poor power supply, even those areas with groundwater will not be able to irrigate the fields. The 46 mills in the State would have no sugarcane to crush because the average production per acre would shrink by 50 per cent.”

10,000 farmers sanctioned interest-free loans

well done:Collector Darez Ahamed and MLA R.Tamilselvan handing over prize to a participant in Peramablur on Monday.

Over 10,000 farmers have been sanctioned interest-free crop loans in the district, Darez Ahamed, Collector, said on Monday. At the 59{+t}{+h}All India Cooperative Week celebrations, he said several schemes were being implemented in the State for the welfare of farmers.

According to an official release, he said that in the past two months, crop loans to the tune of Rs. 43.12 crore had been sanctioned through special camps to 10,271 farmers. Besides, as many as 28,492 persons had been given jewel loans to the tune of Rs. 82.86 crore.

The Collector urged the farmers to utilise the interest-free loan scheme properly and avail of total interest exemption by repaying the principal promptly.

In order to help agriculturists, loans to the tune of Rs. 14 lakh have been sanctioned against their produce. This would help them wait for remunerative prices instead of disposing of the produce at the earliest possible opportunity to the broker.

Similarly, Rs. 1.5 crore had been advanced to farmers as a sort of group loan, Rs. 16 lakh as drip irrigation loan, and Rs. 1.38 crore as medium term loan.

About Rs. 2.36 crore had been extended to the self-help groups as group loan.

The 48 primary agricultural cooperative societies had been helping the farming community by renting out various machinery including tractor, mini-tractor, power tiller, power weeder and power sprayer at a nominal charge.

Certificates and shields were given to the best performing cooperative institutions in the district.

The Collector gave away certificates to the students who emerged victorious in the oratorical, essay and drawing competitions.

A. Elavarsan, MP, R. Tamilselvan, MLA, M. Umamaheswari, Joint Registrar of Cooperative Societies, T. Prabhakaran, general manager, Tiruchi District Central Cooperative Bank, and V. Meenakshisundaram, District Supply Officer, spoke.

Cane growers unhappy: Karunanidhi

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) president M. Karunanidhi on Tuesday said sugarcane growers in Tamil Nadu were not happy with the increase in the procurement price of sugarcane from Rs. 2,100 to Rs. 2,350 per tonne.

In a statement, he said though the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) had announced in its poll manifesto that the price would be enhanced to Rs. 2,500 per tonne, the promise was not fulfilled.

It was during the DMK regime that procurement price of sugarcane was steadily increased, he said, and added that the ruling party, in its election promises, had also assured the people that State-owned sugarcane mills would be modernised.

Crop starts withering

Farmers look up at the rain god as 15-day-old paddy crops on about 15,000 hectares started withering with northeast monsoon playing truant.

The well grown crops on 10,000 to 15,000 hectares in various parts of the district started withering for want of water, but they could be saved if there is rain in the next 10 days, Joint Director of Agriculture Ka Sakthimohan said.

Elsewhere in the district, rainfed paddy crops, cultivated on about 60,000 hectares were well grown and they could sustain the dry spell for another 20 days, he said while exuding confidence that “it will definitely rain in the next 10 days and the crops will be saved.” This year, everything was well planned with the district administration providing agriculture inputs, ensuring adequate stocks of fertilizers and arranging loans to farmers but the northeast monsoon has been playing truant, he lamented.

As it has not rained since November 5, farmers were keeping their fingers crossed on taking up the cultivation of pulses, millets, groundnuts and other oilseeds. While pulses were cultivated on 4500 hectares, millets were cultivated on 3000 hectares and groundnut on 3600 hectares, he said.

While farmers were looking up for rain, planting of paddy nurseries grown on 100 hectares was going on, on 1,200 hectares, he said adding “like last year, we can have a bumper harvest this year if there is rain in next 2 weeks.”

The northeast monsoon brought good rains in October, 181 per cent more than the normal rainfall, but it turned out to be a failure in November. During October, the district received 330.8 mm of rain against the normal rainfall of 182.6 mm, he said. However, during November so far, the district has received only 32.25 mm of rain, he said.

SAP for sugarcane may be enhanced

Minister for Agriculture Umesh V. Katti on Tuesday did not rule out the possibility of the government enhancing the State Advisory Price (SAP) for sugarcane. He, however, said the decision would depend on the market price of sugar.

Addressing journalists here, he said Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar had announced SAP of Rs. 2,200 and Rs. 2,400 per tonne of sugarcane cultivated in north and south Karnataka respectively.

The SAP announced by the government is Rs. 100 less than the price being offered for the produce by private sugar factories here.

Mr. Katti, who heads the high-level committee for fixing the SAP, said the government had fixed the price after taking into accounting harvesting and transportation charges. In north Karnataka region, the harvesting and transportation was taken care of by sugar mills. While in south Karnataka, farmers themselves have to harvest and transport sugarcane to factories.

Minister’s assurance to farmers

Minister for Major Irrigation P. Sudarshan Reddy assured farmers that the government would not let a single acre of crop go dry and is making all efforts to supply required amount of power to protect crops.

Going round villages in Bodhan mandal to ascertain electricity problem on Tuesday, he said in view of the power scarcity, farmers should try to produce more crops in less area.

Waive our loans," cry out Punjab's farmers

Any need, any time" commission agents claim the Government cannot do without them, Food Corporation of India or not

Paddy being cleaned up ahead of the auction at Rajpura mandi near Chandigarh.— Photo: Gargi Parsai

Even before anyone from the visiting Press team could open the floor for conversation, a battery of *arhtiyas* (commission agents) at the main *mandi* here started off: " *Hamara challenge hai* . *Sarkar* direct procurement *karke dekh lein* . *Ho hi nahi sakta* . [We challenge the Government to try and make direct procurement. It is not possible]."They were referring to the changes the Government expects once multinationals like WalMart, Carrefour and others enter the Indian retail market and go for direct sourcing from the farms.

The little room in the *mandi* office was suffused with *arhtiyas* and Food Corporation of India (FCI) officials who accompanied us from Chandigarh. The gathering contained no farmers to give their version of the "generations-old relationship" with the commission agents, which is at the same time beneficial and exploitative.

Almost at the end of the paddy procurement season in Punjab, the *mandi* is now receiving aromatic Basmati varieties. *Arhtiyas* were setting the price through auction, as is always done, based on the quality of the paddy.

The area under Basmati has declined by almost 40 per cent this year and there is an expectation of prices going up this year for the famous Pusa 1121 and the PB-1 varieties. The area has shrunk because a lower price (about Rs.1,600 per quintal) last year made some farmers turn away from Basmati. The paddy variety is fetching between Rs.2,600 and Rs.2,700 per quintal this year. Rice is expected to go up to between Rs.60 and Rs.70 per kg, the *artiyas* told journalists.

On the new mode of payment to farmers through cheques issued by the FCI, the *arhtiyas* said it was not possible for them to make payment of "lakhs of cheques", so they make payments by personal cheques and claim payments from the FCI later. "But we are authorised to make payments of up to Rs.10,000 in cash," they claimed.

For their efforts, they earn a commission of 2.5 per cent out of a total of 14.5 cent *mandi* taxes and levis. The *mandi* taxes that the FCI and other procurement agencies pay to the State are the highest in Punjab.

Arhtiya Association vice-president Hari Chand 'Fauji' said they were there for "any need any time".

"A harvest comes within a gap of six months. In the meantime, if a farmer needs any financial help, be it for an illness or a wedding, we are there to lend them money at a nominal interest rate. Banks do not lend without collateral and certainly not for small needs. Farmers do not have any savings to fall back upon," he added

Nirata Singh (75) from Ballupur village in Patiala district had brought his Basmati paddy for sale at the Rajpura *mandi* . Asked how much he might get for his produce, he simply said: "I don't know. *Arhtiya* knows."

The paddy brought to the *mandi* by each farmer has to conform to the standards, particularly the moisture content. The grain is first dried and then it is cleaned, for which the farmers are charged Rs.10 per quintal by the *arhtiya* . And then begins the process of auction. It is heart-rending to see the farmer, who has toiled for days, with no bargaining power or any say in what price he should get for his produce.

Nirata Singh was awaiting his turn. But there were others who watched as a team of *arhtiyas* bid for their produce. The rate was mostly settled at Rs.2,650 per quintal.

“Our process is transparent,” said trader Amarjit Singh. “In Uttar Pradesh, *arhtiyas* put a cloth over their hand and raise a finger or two to bid. The farmer never gets to know at what price his produce is sold. What he gets is after any loan he has taken and advance for seeds, etc., for the coming sowing season is deducted.”

Nirata Singh is a small farmer with a one-acre land holding. He has an unpaid loan of Rs.5 lakh from the State Bank of Patiala. In addition, he has taken a loan of Rs.50,000 from his *arhtiya* at a 24 per cent rate of interest, not 18 per cent as claimed by the agents. He has no one in Canada or America to supplement his income. In fact, he lost his only son a few years ago.

On expectations from the Government, he said: “No, the Government has strangulated us. It has raised the price of diesel, fertilisers and seeds. Our input costs are up by Rs.1,500 per acre.”

So what will bring relief? “ *Sadda* loan *maaf kar dein* [Waive our loans].”

HindustanTimes

TODAY FARM NEWS

21.11.2012 A.M

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Wednesday, **Nov 21**

Max	Min
32.5°	25.2°

Cloudy

Rain: 0
Humidity: 89
Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:10
Sunset: 05:39
Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast

Thursday, **Nov 22**

Max	Min
30°	22°

Partly Cloudy

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday Nov 23	Saturday Nov 24	Sunday Nov 25	Monday Nov 26	Tuesday Nov 27
30° | 22°	33° | 25°	33° | 25°	32° | 25°	32° | 25°
Cloudy	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi **Delhi**

Rain: 0
Humidity: 43
Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:48
Sunset: 05:25
Barometer: 1015

THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

20.11.2012 P.M

21.11.2012 A.M

Wheat rules flat as supply matches demand

The wheat market ruled flat with all varieties maintaining their previous levels on Tuesday.

Satish kumar, a wheat trader, told *Business Line* that since the demand matched supply, prices were unchanged.

Wheat and flour prices have been ruling unchanged since November 9 and may continue to rule around current levels this week, he said. Good domestic demand for flour is keeping dara wheat in demand, said Mr Kumar.

In the physical market, around 50 tonnes of dara variety arrived from Uttar Pradesh and the stocks were directly offloaded at the mills. Mill delivery was at Rs 1,540-1,545 a quintal, while delivery at the chakki was Rs 1,550 a quintal. Similarly, Desi wheat varieties continued to rule flat and quoted between Rs 2,500-2,550 a quintal.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, wheat for December delivery increased by Rs 5 and traded at Rs 1,592 a quintal; it had touched a high at Rs 1,599 a quintal earlier on Tuesday. January contracts went up by Re 1 at Rs 1,590 a quintal. Wheat spot prices on the exchange went up by Rs 5 and traded at Rs 1,570 a quintal.

Flour Prices

With a steady trend in wheat, flour prices too ruled unchanged and sold at Rs 1,750 a quintal. On the other hand, Chokar went further up by Rs 100 on strong demand and sold at Rs 1,500 for a quintal.

Exports

A global trading firm Toepfer is the highest bidder for the wheat export tender floated by PEC last month. PEC had floated the tender to sell 55,000 tonnes of milling wheat for export. The highest bid was $319.15 a tonne.

Stockists stay away from volatile sugar market

Sugar prices at Vashi market decline by Rs 10 – Rs 15 on Tuesday. Tracking volatile and weak domestic futures prices stockiest kept away from fresh inventory buying. Arrivals and local dispatches were higher as market was closed for previous two consecutive days. Other side in world market sugar prices shot up by $17 to a six week high but the effect was not seen on domestic market due to continuous and sufficient supply from mills. Market sentiment was steady but under current was weak sources said.

Mr. Jagdish Rawal of B. Bhogilal and co., said prices remain unchanged for routine variety while some quality sold Rs10- Rs 15 lower due to sufficient supply and arrivals in the market. Traders expect local demand could be ease coming days due to month end time. Other side mills have to complete free sale quota before month end hence there is ample supply from producers. Business activities back on track in the market after the cremation of Shiv Sena Chief Bal Thackray. Market was totally closed on Sunday and Monday. Volume was higher.

Analyst said Indian sugar mills association (ISMA) has paged sugar production 2012-2013 season till 15{+t}{+h} November higher by 27% to 9.85 lakh tonnes compare to 7.86 lakh tonnes. Higher sugar production figures weigh on futures markets which drop by more than Rs36 for Dec futures till noon. But the ongoing of farmers for cane price and payment in

Maharashtra will support the sentiments. As Diwali festival is over and due to month end time physical demands is expected to be lower coming days.

In World market sugar futures jumped to a six-week high on a short-covering on Monday, the first trading day of the fourth quarter following a sizeable delivery and support from the weak U.S. dollar. The weak greenback can attract buying by investors holding other currencies.

In world market white sugar March-13 futures closed higher at $526.30 ($509.30) and May-12 shot up to $532.50 ($515.50) a ton. On National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange sugar December-12 futures was down by Rs36 to Rs 3300 (Rs 3336), January contracts was Rs3327 (Rs 3358) and February was lower by Rs26 to Rs 3341 (Rs 3367).

In Vashi spot market loading – unloading activities were higher due to previous two days closed. Arrivals in the Vashi market were 72-74 truck loads (Each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were about 69 – 70 truck loads. On Monday evening 14-15 mills offered tenders and sold about 58,000 - 60,000 bags (Each of 100 kgs) to the local traders in the range of Rs 3,340-3,400 (Rs 3,330-3,390) for S-grade and Rs 3,390 - 3,520 (Rs 3,400 - 3,520) for M-grade.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,472– Rs 3,542 (Rs 3,480 – Rs 3,550) and M-grade Rs 3,502 - 3,721 (Rs 3,510- 3,725). Naka delivery rates: S-grade Rs 3,430 -3,470 (Rs 3,430 -3,480) and M-grade Rs 3,465-3,650 (Rs 3,480-3,650).

Edible oils heat up on lower seeds inflow

Edible oils extended gain on Tuesday tracking firm domestic futures market and tracking less than expected arrivals of seeds in producing areas. Soyabean refined oil and Sunflower expeller refined oil up by Rs5 each while sunflower refined oil rose by Rs18. Cotton refined oil higher by Rs5. Palmolein drop by Rs 2 on back of weak Malaysian palm oil futures. Groundnut and rapeseed oil rule unchanged. Most activities remained for December kept spot volume need based. Under current of the market was positive sources said.

Malaysian BMD palm oil futures closed lower by 17,4 and 2 ringgits a tone on Tuesday as investors booked profits after the contract hit a two-week high earlier in the day and as export demand continued to show signs of slowing. Malaysia exported 10.20 lakh tonnes of palm products for Nov. 1-20, down 3.3 percent from 10.60 lakh tonnes a month ago, cargo surveyor

Intertek Testing Services said on Tuesday. Another cargo surveyor Societe Generale de Surveillance will release its export data later in the day.

Analyst said traders were pretty hopeful for positive export data, although decline is not really that significant. Market participants are also anxious as they wait for the outcome of the European financial meeting. Market is hoping for higher exports for November to ease record stocks, which hit 25.1 lakh tonnes in October.

Mr. Shailesh Kataria of Riddhi Broker said less than expected arrivals of oilseeds in producing areas and fear of lower output will support the market sentiment. Other side expectations that a seasonal decline in palm oil yields during the December-March period will help to reduce Malaysia's palm oil inventories, which hit a record 25.1 lakh tons at the end of October. Further onset of Malaysia's annual monsoon seasons to curb supply further. Export demand is expected to remain positive. For India weak domestic currency makes import parity costlier.

He said most of the volume on Tuesday in Palmolein was for December. Ruchi sold nearly 1900 – 2000 tones of Palmolein at Rs 511- 512 ex JNPT for December and 80 -100 tones of soyabean refined oil at Rs 680 as stock transfer to Gujarat line. In ready about 80 -100 tones of Palmolein was resale traded at Rs 516. There were no fresh commitments for indigenous oils.

End of the day Liberty was quoting Palmolein at Rs 518 –Rs 521 and Super palmolein Rs.575 for delivery up to 15 Dec., Soya refined oil Rs.680 and sunflower refined oil Rs765 for delivery up to 15 Dec. Ruchi quoted palmolein Rs518 for up to 10 Dec. and Rs 521 for 11 – 31 Dec., Super Palmolein Rs 579 for 1-10 Dec and Rs582 for 11-31 Dec. Soyabean refined oil Rs.680 and Sunflower refined oil Rs 765 for 10-31 Dec. Allana’s rate for palmolein was Rs 518 and Super Palmolein was Rs.575. In Saurashtra – Rajkot market Groundnut oil weaken by Rs10 – Rs20. Telia Tin was Rs1820 (Rs1830) and loose 10 kgs was Rs1180 (Rs.1200).

On National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange, soyabean refined oil December futures was up Rs 698.60(Rs696.25), January was Rs690.45 (Rs 689.05) and February was Rs686.30 (Rs685.50). Malaysia's crude palm oil December -12 futures settled at lower at MYR 2,369 (2,386), January -13 at MYR 2,426 (2,430) and February at MYR 2457 (MYR 2459) a ton.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates were (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,185 (1,185), soya refined oil 680 (675), sunflower exp. ref. 685 (680), sunflower ref. 768 (750), rapeseed ref. oil 850 (850), rapeseed expeller ref. 820 (820) cotton ref. oil 680 (675) and palmolein 516 (518).

Weak buying support drags chana, its dal

Weak futures and expiry of November contracts on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) pulled down chana prices in local mandis to Rs 4,500 a quintal (down Rs 60), while chana (desi) declined to Rs 4,350.

On Monday also, chana traded lower on weak buying support and rise in selling pressure at Rs 4,550-75. According to Sanjay Agrawal, a local whole-sale chana trader, local mandis on Tuesday were dormant with traders neither showing interest in buying nor selling.

In the past two weeks, chana has declined by Rs 200 in local mandis.

Decline in spot chana also pulled down chana dal (average) at Rs 5,400-5,425 (Rs 5,500-5,525); chana dal (medium) at Rs 5,525-50 (Rs 5,600-5,625); chana dal (bold) Rs 5,825-50 (Rs 5,925-50).

Dollar chana ruled steady at Rs 6,000-7,000 on subdued buying support, even as arrival was reported at 4,000 bags.

In the container, however, dollar chana declined by Rs 100 on weak export demand; 42/44 count quoted at Rs 8,400; 44/46 count Rs 8,200; 46/48 count Rs 7,925; 58/60 count ruled at Rs 5,150.

Raw coconut may rally on Sabarimala season

The coconut oil market turned weak on lower consumption by local consumers and low demand from corporates. Prices ruled weak despite other edible oils firming up.

Prakash B.Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association, cited lower demand from corporates as the reason for decline in prices.

Prices on Monday closed at Rs 60 in Kerala, the same as quoted last week, while in Tamil Nadu, it ruled at Rs 58 a kg against the last week's Rs 58.50. However, copra prices ruled steady at Rs 4,200 a quintal in Kerala and Rs 3,900 in Tamil Nadu on lower arrivals, he said.

Traders were of the view that prices are likely to spurt following major enquiry from upcountry buyers next week. They are still optimistic of a price rally with major enquiries from corporates, he said.

Palm oil and palm kernel oil prices ruled at last week's level of Rs 58 and Rs 52 a kg, respectively.

Rao said that the market for raw coconut would pick up as there is a demand during Sabarimala pilgrim season that commenced from November 16 and will last up to January 17. During this period, raw coconuts will be in demand from pilgrims as each one takes 2-3 raw coconuts to perform rituals.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, said that the market has not yet picked up after Diwali holidays in Tamil Nadu. It will take another week to get a guidance from the market. Prices are now ruling steady with chances for a further decline almost nil, he said.

Bharat N.Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that upcountry buyers have entered the market on a low key after Diwali. "We will have to wait and watch how the demand picks up next week", he said.

Mustard seed down on slack demand

Rapeseed/mustard seed futures continued their bearish run on both spot and futures following reports of higher coverage of the crop and slack upcountry demand.

On the NCDEX, rapeseed futures for November delivery was up by 0.05 per cent on short covering to Rs 4,250 a quintal. December and January contracts were down by 0.3 and 0.4 per cent at Rs 4,252 and Rs 4,298 respectively.

Rabi oilseeds sowing as on November 10 was reported at 43.21 lakh hectares compared with 35.18 lakh hectares in the same period last year. The MSP for rapeseed has been increased by 20 per cent from Rs 2,500/quintal to Rs 3,000 for 2012-13 season.

Total arrivals of rapeseed in Rajasthan, the top grower of the oilseed, today were 20,000-28,000 bags (of 85 kg each).

Plant delivery prices also were on the decline with Jaipur line ruling at Rs 4,450-4,460 from yesterday's 4,470-4,480 a quintal.

Spot prices were down on profit booking and in Jaipur (Rajasthan) the oilseed was quoted at Rs 4,451.55.

Turmeric futures continue to fall

Turmeric futures on NCDEX continued its downtrend. It opened lower at Rs 5,240 a quintal on Tuesday against the previous close of Rs 5,254. The November contract touched a high of Rs 5,248 and low of Rs 5,190. It was down 1.22 per cent at Rs 5,190 at 1.35 p.m.

Despite low arrivals, turmeric prices in the spot markets were traded lower at Rs 5,048 due to weak demand. This was largely due to huge inventory held by the traders.

Traders may offload their holdings before the fresh crop arrives in the market in February. This may lead to prices falling below the Rs 5,000-mark in the spot markets.

Grain quota for Kerala

Kerala will get 98,935 tonnes of rice and 23,589 tonnes of wheat from the Centre during the current fiscal for controlling price rise, according to K.V. Thomas, Union Minister for Food and Consumer Affairs.

A special meeting of the Union Cabinet had decided to allot 65 lakh tonne of wheat to the States and bulk consumers at the minimum support price (MSP). The MSP of rice will be Rs 16 a kg and wheat Rs 12.50, he told reporters here.

The Minister said that rice would be procured either from Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu. Officials of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Consumerfed will select the rice variety for the State.

The FCI will release the food grains through Consumerfed in Kerala. Discussions were held with the Chief Minister and the Cooperation Minister in this regard, he said.

Consumerfed Chairman Joy Thomas and Managing Director Riji G. Nair and FCI official B.K. Philip also took part in the discussions, the Minister said.

The State will be allowed extra time to lift the food grains that was allotted to it earlier. The quality of food grains to be distributed will be ensured and the Centre was willing to train the officials of the State in quality checking and assurance schemes, he said.

A request for support from Consumerfed for opening 100 Triveni stores and a few cold storages was being considered by the Union Ministry, he added.

Pepper falls on liquidation

Pepper market fell on liquidation by bull operators on Tuesday. November contract was floored in terms of last traded price while other active contracts declined marginally from that of the previous day’s closing.

The last traded price for November, which matured today was at Rs 38,975 a quintal, down by 3 per cent. The market fell on liquidation by operators holding huge stocks.

Staggered delivery

Market sources said 302 tonnes were marked for staggered delivery today and with this the total quantity marked for delivery under the staggered delivery system increased to 1,642 tonnes.

Thus, in the November contract to liquidate 97 tonnes, the market was brought down by Rs 1,135 a quintal. Similarly, 81 per cent of the turnover was in December and still the net open position was down by only one tonne.

On the spot, seven tonnes of farm grade pepper arrived and of this, five tonnes were traded.

November contract on NCDEX decreased by Rs 1,135 a quintal to close at Rs 39,045 a quintal. December and February declined by Rs 90 each per quintal to close at Rs 39,065 and Rs 36,280 a quintalrespectively.

Turnover

Total turnover increased by 181 tonnes to close at 3,188 tonnes. Total open interest fell by 365 tonnes to 8,164 tonnes.

Nov open interest decreased by 399 tonnes to close at 201 tonnes while December declined by one tonne to 6,538 tonnes. Feb rose by 28 tonnes to close at 1,172 tonnes.

Prices on the spot remained unchanged at Rs 38,200 (ungarbled) and Rs 39,700 (garbled) a quintal on limited activities.

In the international market, Malabar continued to remain nearly $1,000 a tonne above other origins at $7,500 a tonne and stayed outpriced. “In fact, the gambling on the exchange has made Malabar Garbled a laughing stock in the world market,” the market sources alleged.

UP farmers turn jittery on delay in fixing cane support price

Sugarcane growers in Uttar Pradesh are getting jittery over the delay in announcement of the State Advised Price (SAP) for the 2012-13 (October-September) season by the State Government.

As a result, only about eight to ten factories have started crushing operations unlike 43-odd mills around this time last year.

"There is an immense delay in SAP announcement this year," said V.M. Singh, Convenor of the Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Sanghatan. He said the State Government is acting under pressure from millers to delay the SAP announcement. Such a move, while benefiting the millers in terms of better recovery as they get more of matured cane, makes it difficult for farmers to vacate the fields for planting of wheat.

In the 2011-12 sugar season, the Mayawati Government had hiked SAP for normal cane varieties to Rs 240 a quintal as opposed to Rs 205 for the previous season. Not only was the price announced on November 8 last year, but in the context of impending assembly elections, her Government even forced the millers to start early crushing.

However, this year, the UP Government has not even ensured that mills start their crushing operations around November 1, Singh said. As a result of delayed crushing, the farmers are forced to sell their ratoon cane to kolhus and crushers at a lesser price of around Rs 150-160 a quintal over the past few days, Singh said.

Record acreage

The cane that is currently being harvested is the ratoon from the plant-cane harvested last February-April. Growers in UP this year have planted a record acreage of 23.60 lakh hectares about 4 per cent more than last year. The State is set to emerge as the largest producer of the sweetener in the current season as the erratic monsoon has hurt cane crop in Maharashtra.

In Maharashtra, the cane crushing has started off to a bad start as farmers seeking a higher price have resorted to protests in the sugar belt of Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur seeking an upfront payment of Rs 300 a quintal at the farmgate.

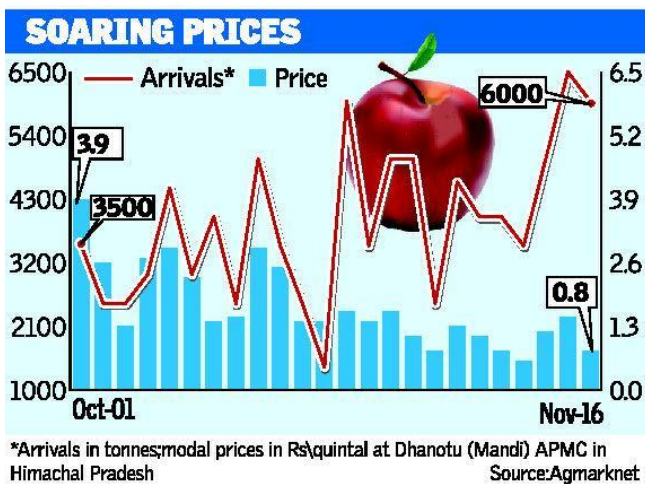
Growers in UP this year are expecting a price of Rs 300 a quintal or 25 per cent more than last year's price of Rs 240. Millers have indicated their inability any hike in SAP and want the Government to freeze it at last year's levels. However, sources said the UP Government may announce a hike of Rs 20-30 a quintal over the next few days.

“We are not late in starting crushing operations,” said Abinash Verma, Director-General of Indian Sugar Mills Association. The usual trend is that mills in UP start crushing after Diwali and we expect most of the mills to start their operations soon, he said.

Simbhaoli Sugars Ltd is one of the few companies that typically start early crushing. “We have started operations at our factories in Brijnathpur and Simbhaoli on November 16 that are running at a 65 per cent capacity. We are waiting for cane arrivals at Chilwaria in Eastern UP” said G.S.C. Rao, Executive Director at Simbhaoli Sugars Ltd.

Sugar production in UP in 2012-13 is expected to be 13.7 per cent higher at 7.9 million tonnes (mt) against 6.97 mt last year.

Price turns apple the forbidden fruit for Concor arm



Fresh and Healthy Enterprises Ltd (FHEL) – the subsidiary of Container Corporation of India (Concor) in the cold chain storage and logistics space – has reduced its apple procurement by half to 6,400 tonnes from the original target of 14,000 tonnes this year due to high prices of the fruit.

FHEL has a cold storage facility of 12,000 mt capacity at Rai, Sonepat. The company, one of the largest apple procurers in the country, usually supplies apples to all retail chains including Wal-mart, More, Big Bazaar, Mother Dairy and Big Apple.

"Prices are already high this year. They will soar after adding storage costs. After six months, we may find imported apples available in the country at lower prices," Anil Gupta, Managing Director, Concor, said explaining the move for lower procurement.

Indian markets sell apples imported from countries such as the US and China.

KASHMIR IMPACT

This is the second consecutive year when high apple prices have prevented FHEL from procuring in line with its target.

Last fiscal, apple prices were high because of a bad crop year in Himachal Pradesh, whereas this fiscal, a bad crop in Kashmir has firmed up prices in Himachal.

"This year, apple prices shot up after the market realised there was a shortage of quality apples from Kashmir, which arrived from September-end onwards," N.K. Jawa, CEO, Fresh and Healthy Enterprises, told *Business Line.*

"Initially in September, the prices were relatively lower at Rs 55-57 a kg at orchard gates. They subsequently rose to Rs 75-80 and even touched Rs 90/kg," said Jawa. FHEL's average procurement price in 2011-12 was Rs 65.59 , compared with Rs 34.77 in 2010-11.

In 2011-12, FHEL procured 6,898.4 tonnes apples from Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh and sold 4,805 tonnes at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad and other fruit markets in India.

It sold its best quality apples at same prices as imported (Washington) apples. It also procured and sold 206 tonnes of Kinnows to retail chains. During off season, it provided its chambers on hire for rice, garlic and oranges.

AP, TN raise support price for sugarcane

Sugar mills in Tamil Nadu have welcomed the 'balanced' approach by the State Government in pricing sugarcane for the 2012-13 season.

Reacting to the announcement on Monday in which the State Advised Price (SAP) for a tonne of sugarcane was fixed at Rs 2,350 linked to a sugar recovery of 9.5 per cent, representatives of the South Indian Sugar Mills Association said it is a 'fair' price that takes into account the viability for farmers and sugar mills.

FARMERS UPSET

Farmers, however, have expressed dissatisfaction over the cane price.

The State Government announced the price taking into account the Fair and Remunerative Price of Rs 1,700 set by the Unionl Government and last season price of Rs 2,100 a tonne The price includes Rs 100 a tonne towards transport cost.

M. Manickam, President of the South Indian Sugar Mills Association, and Vice-Chairman of Sakthi Sugars, said the hike in sugarcane price is a 'fair decision' and fully passes on the Centre's hike. Palani G. Periaswamy, Executive Chairman, Dharani Sugars, described the decision as a `correct and appropriate step'. N. Ramanathan, immediate past president of the Association and Managing Director, Ponni Sugars, said it will be a `high cost' year for farmers and sugar mills.

R.V. Giri, State General Secretary, Consortium of Indian Farmers Association, said farmers are disappointed with the price as the cost of production has increased.

AP fixes Rs 3,000/tonne:

The Andhra Pradesh Government has asked the private and joint venture sugar factories in the State to consider the demand of sugar cane growers to pay Rs 3,000 a tonne of cane keeping in view of abnormal increase in cost of cultivation.

"There is a huge increase in cost of cultivation, fertilisers, harvesting, diesel and labour charges. Also, they have to wait for more than 15 months to get returns on their produce," Ben-Hur Ekka, Commissioner of Sugar and Cane Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh, has said in a statement here.

H1 cashew exports decline on slack demand

Exports of cashew kernels during the first half of the current fiscal declined sharply. Shipments during the period were 45,572 tonnes valued at Rs 1,891.62 crore against 54,108 tonnes valued at Rs 2,148.82 crore in the corresponding period last year. The average unit value was at Rs 415.09 a kg (Rs 397.13).

Imports of raw cashew nuts also fell during the first six months of the current fiscal to 5,08,020 valued at Rs 3,081.69 crore from 5,82,470 tonnes valued at Rs 3,681.49 crore in Apr - Sep 2011. The unit value this fiscal was at Rs 60.66 a kg (Rs 63.20), according to Cashew Export Promotion Council of India (CEPCI) sources.

They attributed the fall in exports to the fragile economic conditions prevailing in major consuming countries and the tough competition from other tree nuts.

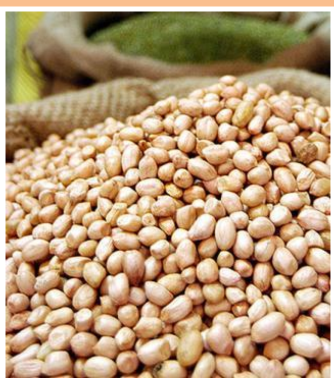
Prices firm/steady

Meanwhile, prices of white whole cashew kernels continued to inch up last week in the international markets. However, not much change was seen in price for other grades. “Activity was limited as there was reluctance amongst buyers to pay higher prices and amongst shellers to sell at the last traded levels”, Pankaj N. Sampat, a Mumbai-based dealer, told *Business Line.*

The domestic market was quiet following the peak activity in end Oct/early Nov before the festivals. Prices for wholes in the intra-sheller market moved up smartly in the last few days.

Price range last week was W240 from $3.85-3.95; W320 from $3.35-3.45; W450 from $3.10-3.15; SW320 from $2.90-3.05; SW360 from $2.75-2.85; splits from $2.15-2.25; butts from $2.25-2.30; pieces from $1.65-1.75 an lb (f.o.b).

Groundnut oil rises on expected demand



Groundnut oil rose by Rs 15 a tin on shortage of groundnut for crushing and expected demand. However, cotton oil declined marginally on lower buying support. At Rajkot, groundnut oil loose traded higher by Rs 15 to Rs 1,200-1,205 for 10 kg. *Telia* tingained Rs 22 to Rs 1,842-1,843 for 15 kg and groundnut oil new tin increased by Rs 15 to Rs 2,030-2,035. About 80-100 tonnes of groundnut oil were traded from Saurashtra. Groundnut arrivals stood at 16,000 bags in Rajkot and 1,200 bags in Jamnagar. Total arrivals in Saurashtra were at 22,000-25,000 bags. HPS TJ37 80-90 count was offered at Rs 83,500 a tonne, G2 80-90 count at Rs 85,000; TJ37 50-60 count at Rs 85,000; G2 50-60 count at Rs 88,000 and bold 50-60 count at Rs 76,000. Cotton oil wash was traded down on lower retail demand. About 150-200 tonnes cotton oil were traded here. Cotton oil wash declined by Rs 3 to Rs 662-665 10 kg and cotton oil new tin for 15 kg stood at Rs 1,170-1,180.

Rubber gains on covering buys

Spot rubber extended the previous day's gains on Tuesday. Though the domestic futures showed signs of weakness probably on profit-booking at higher levels, the local market continued to remain firm on covering purchases at lower levels amidst dull supplies.

The sentiments were further supported as TOCOM rubber futures hit another two-week high tracking the gains in Asian share prices on hopes of a compromise in the US fiscal crisis.

Sheet rubber increased to Rs 171 (170) a kg, according to traders. The grade closed higher at Rs 170 (169) a kg at Kottayam and Kochi, according to Rubber Board.

The December series dropped to Rs 173.49 (174.69), January to Rs 175.68 (176.86), February to Rs 177.98 (178.96) and March to Rs 180.10 (182.28), while the April series recovered to Rs 182.30 (181.70) and May to Rs 184.50 (180.81) a kg on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) firmed up to Rs 166.12 (165.67) a kg at Bangkok. The November futures improved to ¥240.9 (Rs 163.19) from ¥238.7 a kg during the day session, but then remained unchanged in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 171 (170); RSS-5: 167 (166); ungraded: 162 (161); ISNR 20: 159.50 (159) and latex 60 per cent: 113 (113).

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

21.11.2012 A.M

Wheat output may dip marginally to 90 mn tonnes this year

Wheat production stood at a record 93.9 million tonnes in 2011-12

Press Trust of India / New Delhi November 20, 2012, 21:37 IST

India's wheat production is likely to fall by 4 per cent to 90 million tonnes this year assuming normal weather conditions, think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) said today.

Wheat production stood at a record 93.9 million tonnes in 2011-12. Wheat is the main rabi (winter) crop. Its sowing is underway in most growing states across the country.

"Assuming normal weather conditions, 2013 wheat production is expected to remain at around 90 million tonnes (as against 93.9 million tonnes last year)," NCAER said in the second quarterly report on agricultural outlook.

Late monsoon season rains across most parts of the country should provide favourable planting conditions for the mostly irrigated rabi (winter) crops, which include wheat, small quantities of rice and coarse grains, pulses and oilseeds, it said.

The report said the drop in wheat output could be due to shift in acreage from wheat to other competing crops amid the possibility of a no or marginal rise in minimum support price (MSP) of wheat this year.

"Given the prevailing higher prices for oilseeds and pulses vis-a-vis wheat, the possibility of a no or marginal increase in the wheat support price for this year crop may prompt farmers in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat to shift some area from wheat to less irrigation intensive crops," the report said.

However, in the major wheat producing states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana, there may not be significant shift in acreage from wheat to other crops, it added.

Last year, wheat MSP was fixed at Rs 1,285 per quintal.

Besides wheat, the NCAER has estimated rice production in the rabi season to be around 13.5 million tonnes, pulses at 11.5 million tonnes and mustard seed at 7.5 million tonnes.

The report said the government is making special efforts to increase rabi production and offset losses of foodgrains production in kharif (summer).

According to NCAER, the country's total kharif foodgrains output is estimated to be 120 million tonnes this year, lower than 127.50 million tonnes in the year-ago period.

The projections, however, are slighly higher the government's estimate of 117.18 million tonnes.

FDI in the interests of farmers: Pawar

Fears that FDI in multi brand retail would affect interests of small shopkeepers and traders are unfounded, he says

Press Trust of India / Ludhiana November 20, 2012, 15:57 IST

Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar today asserted FDI in retail was in the interest of the farmers and the consumers across the country.

The fears that the FDI in multi brand retail would badly affect interests of the small shopkeepers and traders were unfounded, Pawar told reporters after inaugurating the seventh national conference on "Krishi Vigyan Kendras - 2012" in the Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) premises here.

On the trend of paddy-wheat cycle in Punjab, he said it was not only was affecting fertility of the agricultural land, but was also causing depletion of underground water in the state.

Pawar said discussion had been held with Punjab government on the need to change this cycle and he would also discuss the issue with Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal.

He said the Punjab government should look at bringing more area under the cultivation of oil seeds and pulses.

The Minister said the Centre's main focus was to bring a second revolution by encouraging maximum paddy cultivation in Eastern parts of the country, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh.

Replying to a question, he said the MSP on wheat was likely to be announced within a week.

On the issue of storage of food grains, Pawar said the Centre was working towards increasing storage capacity of food grains by setting up more godowns.

He said higher land prices in Punjab and Maharashtra were becoming obstacles in this regard.

Earlier, during his inaugural speech at the three-day conference, Pawar lauded the role played by PAU and the Punjab farmers for enhancing agriculture production in the country.

He praised the role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in the country while stating there was need to do more towards upgradation of technology in the agriculture sector.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

21.11.2012 A.M

Indian Council of Agricultural Research honours Anand Agricultural University scientists for liquid biofertilizer tech

VADODARA/ANAND: Two scientists of Anand Agricultural University (AAU) have been honoured by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, for their outstanding work on developing liquid biofertilizers and its commercialization.

Dr Raja Babu Vyas and H N Shelat from AAU's department of microbiology have been honoured for their contribution in developing the liquid biofertilizers technology.

AAU has given licences for commercial use of this technology to three firms - Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited, Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation Limited and Kemrock Agritech Private Limited.

The scientists were honoured during the regional committee meeting for Gujarat and Rajasthan of ICAR at the Central Arid Zone Research Institute at Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

Dr Vyas and Shelat are also co-principal investigator and partner scientist respectively at the AAU's Business Planning and Development (BPD) unit, which is a sub-project under National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) of ICAR with majority funding from World Bank.

AAU's microbiology team had developed the liquid biofertilizers technology as a safe alternative to carrier based biofertilizers. Being of non-chemical nature, liquid biofertilizers, which are known to increase crop yields by 8 to 10 per cent, can be used as a component of organic farming.

The scientists were honoured by director general of ICAR Dr S Ayappan in the presence of national director of NAIP Dr Bangali Baboo, AAU vice-chancellor Dr A M Shekh and vice-chancellor of Navsari Agricultural University Dr A R Pathak.

Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority offices locked up by protesting farmers

GREATER NOIDA: Around 250 farmers under the banner of Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) locked up Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) offices in Greater Noida on Tuesday morning, barring all officials from entering their offices for nearly five hours. The agitating farmers are seeking parity of compensation rates for all farmlands acquired from Greater Noida to Agra by the state government.

BKU members reached YEIDA offices around 10am and courted arrest after protests. Armed with sticks and rods, hundreds of farmers locked up the offices. They then sat on the steps leading up to the two floors of offices so that officials could not attend to their work.

Amidst heavy police presence, the farmers' organization shouted slogans and waited for senior officials of the Authority to start a dialogue. "We have been demanding that YEIDA hand out enhanced compensation for acquired land at 64.7%. Also, the Authority should give us 10% developed plots in lieu of the total land acquired instead of 5%. This was directed by the Allahabad high court last year for land acquired in Greater Noida villages. We want the same compensation rates for all farmlands acquired in the entire district," said Ajay Pal Sharma, district BKU president, who led the protest.

Senior district administration and YEIDA officials then held talks with the protesters around 3pm. "That is when the farmers allowed officials to enter the offices," said an official.

Two senior additional CEOs of YEIDA assured BKU members that their demands would be forwarded to the UP government as their issues had to be decided by the state. "We can only sort out local issues. The matter regarding enhanced compensation and quantum of developed plots has to be decided by the state government," said a senior official.

The BKU has given the Authority an ultimatum till November 30 to get an answer from the government failing which they have threatened to again stage a dharna. "After November 30, we will intensify our stir and completely stop all work of the Authority," warned Sharma.

Last month, BKU members had gheroaed YEIDA offices and locked out officials. At that time too several members had courted arrest. "YEIDA officials had assured us that by November 20 they would sort out our issues, but they have failed to do so," Sharma said.

Meanwhile, after the talks with BKU members YEIDA has agreed to distribute enhanced compensation to three villages — Kherli Bhav, Chappagarh and Raunija.

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE
TODAY FARM NEWS
21.11.2012 A.M

Develop technology, machinery for small farmers: Minister to CIPHET

Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Processing Industries Charan Das Mahant visited the Central Institute of Post Harvest Engineering and Technology (CIPHET) to get first-hand information regarding research and extension initiatives taken by the institute in the area of post-harvest.

Mahant said the Centre was laying special focus on food processing industry, and CIPHET could play a very important role in this regard. Appreciating a survey conducted by the institute in figuring out post-harvest losses, he said similar studies should also be carried out in future at a large scale. He encouraged scientists to develop technologies and machinery which could help small farmers and enterprise in rural areas.

Dr P R Bhatnagar, officiating director of CIPHET, told the minister about the recent innovations and technologies developed at the institute. “Institute is conducting a number of training programmes for development of entrepreneurship in the area of food processing,” he added.

On the occasion, films on the research activities initiated by the CIPHET were screened.