

Get ready for some 'cool' greens

Green Notes The months of November to February are the right time to plant winter vegetables



PickHome-grown cabbage

Cool nights and bright mornings, the time to grow 'cool' season vegetables in your backyard is right now. Among these 'cool' greens, cabbage and cauliflower are the popular vegetables.

These winter vegetables are in demand and nutritious. With a crop season extending to two to two-and-a-half months, these vegetables can be grown and harvested with ease. The perfect season for planting these greens is between the months of November and February.

Seedlings that are 20 to 25 days old are usually used for planting. The seedlings of both cabbage and cauliflower look the same at the early stages. Ready-to-plant seedlings are available at various agencies.

One can plant the seedling directly in soil or in pots, sacks or grow bags. Grow bags of varied sizes are available at agriculture showrooms.

Terrace cultivation also yields good results.

For those who want to grow their vegetables in containers, prepare potting mixture with soil, sand and compost in a 1:1:1 ratio. When planting the seedlings on the ground make sure they get ample space to spread their roots and leaves.

A spacing of 45 cm is adequate between plants. After you plant them, firm the soil around each plant and provide shade till they start to sprout.

Also pour Pseudomonas solution, a bacterial biocontrol agent, once in two weeks to control soil borne diseases.

Remove weeds without disturbing the roots. Monitor daily for pest and diseases and destroy pests and affected parts by using organic solutions. Cauliflower is ready for harvest in 45 to 60 days, while cabbage takes 60 to 75 days.

'Curd' is the edible part of the cauliflower and 'head' that of the cabbage.

Both of them should be harvested within 10-12 days, after they attain full size. When the curd of the cauliflower attains harvesting stage, tie the leaves and cover the curd, otherwise the curd may loosen and turn yellow from over exposure to sunlight.

Eradication of noxious weed begins

Productivity loss due to 'parthenium' can be up to 40 per cent



Weeding it out: Parthenium weed control campaign organised at Shangarankoil block in Tirunelveli District recently.

With parthenium (*Parthenium hysterophorus*), a noxious weed, growing abundantly in some areas of Sankarankovil block, the Department of Agriculture has launched an intensive awareness campaign on the need to eradicate the weed.

Parthenium, derived from the word 'parthenin', means furious toxin and it causes severe respiratory malfunction in humans as well as skin problem in livestock. As it can become a rosette-type of plant in peak summer, it adapts to extreme temperature, growing well in all types of soil and grows up to a height of 90 c.m. One of the most proliferating plant, it is able to produce 5,000 to 10000 seeds per plant and can easily be propagated by wind. The productivity loss due to high incidence of parthenium can be up to 40 per cent among the cultivated crops.

“Considering the nature of the plant, control of parthenium has to be done in an integrated and systematic manner by following cultural, biological and chemical methods,” prescribes Joint Director of Agriculture K. Soundarajan.

The Department of Agriculture is popularising among the farmers all these methods during the parthenium eradication campaign.

Under cultural methods, it can be eradicated by manual removal with safety precautions. Crop rotation with marigold and certain medicinal plants have a positive impact in controlling the weed. Plants like Cassia service, Cassia tora, *Abutilon indicum* etc. smother parthenium density.

Parthenium can be controlled by means of composting too, in which sliced parthenium should be layered for about 20 cm thickness. Pleuritus with trichoderma vridi and 5 per cent urea should be applied on it. Subsequently the layers should be laid up to a metre height and then plastered with clay. Water should be sprinkled on the heap for two weeks and thoroughly mixed so that compost would be ready for crop on the 45th day. Since the toxic parthenin acts as a growth regulator, the composting helps not only control the weed but also help crop husbandry.

“In Biological control, *Zygotogrammus bioclorata*, a beetle, can be introduced in the area parthenium has grown abundantly so that it will feed on the foliage of the weed,” says Assistant Director of Agriculture, Sankarankovil Jayaselvin Inbaraj.

Chemical method of control is considered to have a better success rate, in which cooking salt solution with 15 to 50 per cent concentration should be sprinkled on the weed at vegetative stage in uncultivated area. For better results, 2-4D Sodium Salt (Ester) (1 Kg per acre) with wilting agent can be sprinkled. Pre-emergency herbicides like atrazin for millets, alachlor and butachlor for pulses and cotton can be added at recommended dosages in the cultivated areas.

During the campaign, all these methods were demonstrated to the farmers of Thalavaipuram, K.V. Alangulam, Ramanathapuram, Thiruvettanllur, Punnaivanam and Reddiapatti under ATMA – Kisan Goshti programme. Deputy Director of Agriculture Perumal gave technical advice to the farmers.

A former white collar employee harvests success from turmeric



Mr. Muhammed Busthani, from Koduvally in Kozhikode district of Kerala, does not claim to be an experienced farmer, but a casual chat with him can make one realise that the man's knowledge in the subject is quite deep rooted.

His interest, particularly in turmeric, is surprising when he asserts: "Among all crops turmeric is the least affected by pests and infestations."

No clue

On return to his home town after leaving a private sector job in New Delhi, Mr. Busthani was planning to venture into business.

But he was totally clueless on where to start. His friends floated many ideas, but he was all the more confused.

It was a meeting with an expert at the Indian Institute of Spices Research, Kozhikode, and an old acquaintance, which helped him to realize that agriculture was his next calling.

In February 2011, he, along with his five friends, attended a three-day seminar and technology showcasing conducted at the Institute under the aegis of National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) of ICAR.

That was a turning point in the life of Mr. Busthani and his friends.

“After attending various sessions in the seminar and hearing the success stories of farmer participants, we decided to grow turmeric,” he recalls.

Initially, they booked one tonne of seeds of Prathibha turmeric variety from a farmer delegate in the seminar. The friends formed a trust and took one acre land on lease at Sultan Bathery, Wayanad, and thus Bucca Farms was born.

From that one acre plot the team harvested around 17 tonnes of fresh turmeric in January 2012.

“We dried about 100 kg of Prathibha turmeric and powdered it for domestic use. After that, the home made dishes were all in a different taste. When my wife pointed out the superiority of turmeric powder, I thought of cultivating it on commercial scale,” he recalls.

Exploring options

He took the appreciation seriously and explored the opinions of the neighbouring housewives — a sort of survey study.

All the neighbours who used Prathibha turmeric for cooking endorsed the ‘magic’ of Prathibha turmeric powder.

This year, the friends leased out around 18 acres of land at Pazhayangadi near Vellamunda in Wayanad district of Kerala and the entire area was planted with the remaining Parthiba seeds.

Today, Bucca Farms may be the largest farm growing a single variety of turmeric in Kerala. The farmers adopt the production packages recommended by IISR.

The operations including the fertilizer applications are targeted to get a yield of 320 tonnes. IISR scientists' team has developed specific fertilizer recommendations to obtain a fixed yield from a unit area of land, known as 'targeted yield'.

As the crop is showing good health and uniform growth, the farmers are expecting a yield somewhere near the targeted levels.

Tonnes per hectare

"Maturing in 225 days under rainfed conditions, Prathibha gives an average yield of 39.12 tonnes per hectare. Relatively higher levels of curcumin (6.25per cent), oleoresin (16.2per cent) and essential oil (6.2 per cent) make this variety a hot choice for industrial, medicinal, and culinary purposes.

"The variety is proven to give 6 to 7 per cent of curcumin under Kerala conditions," says Dr. B Sasikumar, Principal Scientist of the institute who developed it more than 10 years back.

"The Prathibha variety, which was released in the year 1996, has proved to be more adaptable to different states of India like Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab etc, owing to its better phenotypic plasticity and other favourable conditions," says Dr. M Anandaraj, Director, Indian Institute of Spices Research.

With his two years of experience of turmeric cultivation, Mr. Busthani is now aware of the problems of farming in the state — labour shortage and high labour costs.

Remedy

And he has a remedy too for this malady — farm mechanization. In fact, one of the major labour requirements for turmeric in the state is for bed-making for planting. With the help of local skilled workers, he converted a tractor mounted disc plough into a bed maker.

"Though the topography of the area was undulating; we could make uniform beds for planting turmeric in the entire 18 acres land using the bed-maker. It helped us to save about 300 labourers' work," he adds.

The farmer is also contemplating going in for available modern techniques in other farm operations so as to bring down the cost of production.

“We are working on a tractor mountable device to harvest the crop in the coming season,” he adds.

He was also one of the farmers identified for scientific cultivation of ginger (varada) under the institutes’ NAIP project on multi-enterprise farming models to address the agrarian crisis of Wayanad, Kerala in 2011.

For more details contact Mr. Muhamed Busthani, Thotathil House, Elettill PO, Koduvally, Kozhikode, Mob: 09946041946.

Crop loss in Nilam-hit districts put at Rs. 1,710 cr.

The government has estimated the loss to agriculture and horticulture by the Nilam cyclone over an extent of 8.2 lakh hectares at Rs.1,710 crore.

At least 15 types of crops were affected by ‘Nilam’ and subsequent heavy rains in the coastal districts. Detailed enumeration of crop loss, damage to infrastructure such as roads, bridges was still going on in five to six districts which were worst hit, said Finance Minister Anam Ramanarayan Reddy here on Wednesday.

The estimated loss so far on crop damage was put at Rs.1,608 crore for cotton and paddy in 7.7 lakh hectares and Rs.102 crore for horticulture crops in 52,000 acres. A comprehensive report covering the loss to all sectors from the districts was expected in four to five days, he said.

After receiving the State’s report, the Central committee would visit the affected districts for its assessment. While the State had sought an assistance of Rs. 2,400 crore under National Disaster Relief Fund since 2009, it released Rs. 845 crore (35 per cent of the amount sought). The State had released an additional amount of Rs. 2,523 crore including input subsidy till 2011.

Mr. Ramanarayan Reddy, who held a review meeting with officials as Revenue Minister N. Raghuvveera Reddy was away on Padayatra to Hundri-Neeva project, told reporters that the Chief Minister had already sought an immediate relief of Rs.1,550 crore from the Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram. He also sought rescheduling of farmers’ loans at nominal interest in

districts that were severely affected such as Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari, Kurnool, Chittoor and Khammam.

Agricultural seminar

Odisha Chasi Vikash Trust will organise a seminar on problems and prospects of agriculture in Odisha at Test Quality Control Laboratory, Maharshi College Road, Bhubaneswar on November 22.

Rajasthan sops for agro-processing, agri-business sectors

Small and medium enterprises will be getting special incentives for making investments in the agro-processing and agri-business sectors in Rajasthan with the State Cabinet here on Wednesday deciding to provide full exemption from electricity duty, stamp duty on land purchase, mandi cess and land conversion charges.

In its meeting presided over by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, the Cabinet decided that the exemption would be applicable to all industries already established in the two sectors as well as those yet to start without an investment cap. The exemption was earlier available to the units making an investment of Rs.25 crore or more.

The move is set to benefit all enterprises setting up their projects under the policy adopted in 2010 for promotion of agro-processing and agri-business.

Enterprises establishing the projects early will get an additional employment-based incentive of Rs.7,000 for each employee every year. The investment cap in this category has been reduced from Rs.25 crore to Rs.10 crore for urban areas and Rs.5 crore for rural areas.

According to official sources here, the projects getting approval before March 31, 2014 under the 2010 policy would get all the incentives, while the employment-based incentive will be paid for three years from the commencement of commercial production.

Among other decisions, the State Cabinet gave approval for allotment of unoccupied Government land to eligible cooperative societies free of cost by amending the Rajasthan Land Revenue (Allotment & Conversion of Lands for Construction of Seed Godowns) Rules, 1965. Mr. Gehlot said the move would help strengthen cooperative movement in the State.

Through the insertion of a new section in the Rajasthan Krishi Upad Mandi Act, 1961, the Cabinet gave powers to the State Government to grant exemption and concession in mandiness to encourage agri-business enterprises.

The Cabinet also approved a proposal for giving a customised package to a private company for setting up a new cement plant in Chittorgarh, on which an investment of Rs.1,000 crore has been made. The Revenue Department's proposal for allotment of land on concession to various departments and institutions of Union Government was also approved.

Other decisions pertained to the promotion of fourth grade employees as lower division clerks on passing the secondary school examination, registration of a Transport Hub Development & Management Society for a new transport hub at Railmagra in Rajsamand district and rewriting of the State Treasury Rules to facilitate their simplification.

ATMA to train fishermen

Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) is to train fishermen on steps to prevent losses due to cyclones.

They would be trained in two spells between November and March. ATMA would impart skills on how to increase fish production and its storage.

An action plan in this regard was already kept ready, said Raja Babu, Project Director of ATMA.

Speaking at the 16th World Fishermen's Day celebrations at Krushi Bhavan here on Wednesday, Mr. Raja Babu said study tours for fishermen would be organised in coastal areas to enable them to learn techniques being adopted there.

Assistant Director (Fisheries) Phani Prasad said efforts were being made to sanction bank loans for buying nets, engines, boats etc.

On account of Nilam cyclone 2,600 fishermen were affected and their list was submitted to the Commissioner (Fisheries) for compensation.

President of District Fishermen Cooperative Society K. Venkata Rao said 8,000 fishermen were affected due to Lila, Jel and Nilam cyclones and appealed to officials to sanction financial aid.

He also mentioned non-payment of the pending Rs.20,000 that was sanctioned for construction of houses under Indiramma programme in the past.

Red Cross Society president Hema Sunder said the society would adopt Mukkam, Barripeta, and Tippalavalasa, all fishermen villages, and conduct free medical and eye camps.

DWMA plans to use solar power to run agri pumpsets



The District Water Management Agency (DWMA) is contemplating linking Indira Jala Prabha with solar power shortly. The Agency has chalked out plans to provide solar power to two blocks in Nuzvid under Indira Jala Prabha in view of high energisation costs. The Agency has sent proposals to the Government to launch the project.

The DWMA authorities have been toying with the idea since cost of providing conventional energy was exceeding Rs.3lakh in some of the agricultural lands developed under the Indira Jala Prabha. This cost includes bore well, erection of poles, transmission lines etc.

Project Director of DWMA V. Hanuma Naik says a 5 HP pumpset will require 5kv solar power set.

The solar power was best available option. The fallow, uncultivable and barren lands were being provided irrigation facilities under the Indira Jala Prabha scheme. Many SC, ST families would benefit out of it if the proposals materialised, he says.

The State Government has sanctioned permission to the DWMA to develop 11,000 acres in the district. As many as 93 blocks will be developed under the Jala Prabha scheme.

Each block consists of 5 to 10 acres. On an average, each block contains 8 acres. And the government is spending about Rs.2 lakh to develop each block. Of this, many blocks were provided conventional energy.

The DWMA officials observed that the conventional energy costs high in few blocks including those situated in Nuzvid.

Turned down

The DWMA, earlier, sent similar proposals for three blocks that were surrounded by mango orchards.

The proposals were turned down saying tapping of solar power in that area was not possible in view of green cover and hills.

To tap the solar power, open areas are preferred, officials explain.

Farmers unhappy with job scheme: Dharmana

Minister addressed Rythu Sadassu in Srikakulam



tech at work: Roads and Buildings Minister Dharamana Prasada Rao operating paddy transplanter at Naira Agriculture College in Srikakulam district on Wednesday.

Roads and Buildings Minister Dharamana Prasada Rao on Wednesday said more support was needed to the farmers with the growing expenditure in the agriculture sector. He said many farmers were complaining that the labour cost had gone up drastically after the introduction of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) which was providing assured income by creation of works locally. He hoped that the Union and State governments would look into the issue and come out with a solution to make agriculture as a lucrative profession.

Mr. Prasada Rao visited Naira Agriculture College and inspected the advanced technology being used in the agriculture sector. College Associate Dean M. Venkunaidu and other professors explained to him about the Mechanized Systematic Rice Intensification (MSRI) project which would reduce the labour cost and ensure more production.

Later, the Minister addressed Rythu Sadassu at the conference hall. He urged scientists to come out with new ideas to get more yielding. Mr. Prasada Rao listed out the initiatives of the government, including interest waiver scheme. "Only Congress government has taken series of steps to instil confidence among farmers. Still, a lot has to be done as farmers are not able to get remunerative price for their produce. The government is planning to ensure Rs.1,500 per quintal as minimum support price for fine variety paddy," he added.

MLAs Dharamana Krishnadas and Boddepalli Satyavati and several public representatives participated in the programme.

Good response to farm loan camps

Punjab National Bank is conducting special agricultural loan camps in the country. As part of the scheme, the bank has disbursed loans worth Rs.22 crore in Kerala in the retail and agricultural segments at functions held at Aluva, Thodupuzha and Cherthala on Tuesday.

The bank has introduced a special 'debt swap scheme' to help farmers. Under the scheme, the bank will help farmers who have taken loans from money lenders to pay off the debt. The scheme is getting good response from farmers and landless labourers, according to the bank.

PNB is offering housing loans at a special rate as part of a festival bonanza. During the bonanza period, the bank is offering full waiver of processing charges to the retail customers.

Where seeds of greenery are sown

Nursery section upgraded



Fresh greens: The new greenhouse at the botanical garden on the museum and zoo premises in Thiruvananthapuram.— Photo: Meedhu Miriyam Joseph

: The sprawling botanical garden on the Museum and Zoo premises, the city's green lung, has hundreds of varieties of trees and plants which have been there for years.

But the admirers of this greenery are often oblivious of the real action taking place at backstage, at the nurseries and greenhouse, where exotic plants and trees are nurtured and grown to replenish the garden every passing year.

Spread over two acres, the nursery section that houses thousands of saplings and potted plants, has been recently upgraded with a new greenhouse. The new greenhouse is spread over 200 sq m.

The Kerala Agro-Industries Corporation carried out the work at a cost of Rs.8 lakh.

Currently, the plants are being shifted to the new greenhouse from the old one that had about 1,500 Anthurium species, 25 varieties of bonsai and various other saplings.

“When these plants are kept in the ground, especially in the old greenhouse, we noticed that roots of other trees grow with them, affecting the growth of the potted plants. It is also difficult to

maintain a control over the climate changes in the old structure,” said G.R. Rajagopal, Garden Curator.

Over the years, the team of gardeners has been engaged in nurturing the plants, re-potting them every three or six months and taking care of the many exotic as well as indigenous species of plants that this age-old botanical garden boasts of.

The curator said the team had to constantly monitor the exotic varieties that were potted because of a number of factors that could affect their growth.

Environment pollution and the negligent attitude of the visitors towards the care of the trees are causes for concern for the team, whose work starts from four in the morning and continues till late in the evening.

Kerala relaxes curbs on poultry

Kerala has relaxed curbs that it had imposed earlier on the movement of poultry and poultry products from Karnataka following the avian influenza outbreak recently at the Central Poultry Development Organisation at Hesarghatta, near here.

The Kerala Government has now agreed to allow poultry from Karnataka if it was certified as “disease free” from the department, Arvind Jannu, Principal Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, told *The Hindu* here on Wednesday. “We can send poultry to Kerala from tomorrow if it is certified as free from disease by the Deputy Director, Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries,” he added.

Earlier, the poultry industry had claimed that it had been losing up to Rs. 10 crore a day after the Kerala Government banned poultry from Karnataka.

According to industry estimates, the total losses exceeded Rs. 150 crore, as Kerala banned poultry from Karnataka on the one hand and consumers here stayed away from chicken on the other, resulting in a steep fall in the price of chicken.

Acknowledging that the movement of poultry to Kerala had commenced, Business Manager, National Egg Coordination Committee, K. Giridhar said that the local demand as well as prices for chicken had improved.

Demand for eggs

“The ban had affected poultry movement from Mangalore and Mysore region and our estimation is that the losses could be between Rs. 150 crore and Rs. 200 crore. We are hoping things would become normal in the coming weeks,” he said and added that eggs were in good demand.

Meanwhile, Bangalore Rural Deputy Commissioner M.K. Aiyappa said that the bird flu virus had been contained in time with 35,000 chicken culled and scientifically buried.

“After a week, we are likely to declare the whole area safe,” he said.

Farmers say government’s announcement on cane price has belied expectations

The Tamil Nadu government’s announcement on Monday fixing the State Advised Price (SAP) of sugarcane at Rs.2,350 per metric tonne inclusive of the transportation cost of Rs.100 has left the sugarcane farmers in Vellore district utterly disappointed since the announcement fell far short of their expectation of Rs.3,000 per tonne. K. Kannaiah Naidu, Vellore district president of the Tamil Nadu Farmers Association, said that in announcing a price of Rs.2,350 per tonne, the State government has completely ignored the persistent demand of the farmers that the sugar mills should bear the transportation charges and the cost of cutting the sugarcane. Given the doubling of the prices of fertilizers in recent months and the increase in the labour cost for cutting the cane, the new price will not even meet the cost of cultivation, forcing many farmers to give up cane cultivation next year, he said.

The cost of DAP fertilizer has increased from Rs.500 per bag of 50 kg to Rs.1,050, that of complex from Rs.450 to Rs.950 per bag and that of potash from Rs.230 to Rs.670 per bag.

C.K. Dhanapal, Vellore district secretary of the Tamil Nadu Farmers Association said that from the government’s announcement, it is very clear that the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam government has gone back on the party’s election eve promise of paying Rs.2,500 per tonne for sugarcane. The sugarcane farmers have conducted several agitations in the last eight years demanding the bearing of the transportation cost and the cutting cost by the sugar

mills, but these demands have not been conceded by the successive governments in the State, he said.

Mr. Dhanapal said that whenever the government announced a price which is inclusive of the transportation cost, the farm labourers hiked the cost of cutting sugarcane. When the then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi announced a price of Rs.2,000 inclusive of the transportation cost two years ago, the labourers who were charging Rs.200 for cutting one tonne of sugarcane started demanding Rs.500 to Rs.700 per tonne. They hiked the labour charges to Rs.1,000 per tonne when the successive AIADMK government announced a price of Rs.2,100 inclusive of the transport cost last year. The farmers' woes were further compounded by the demand of a 'mamool' of Rs.1,000 per load by the lorry drivers for transporting the sugarcane, he said. Besides the steep hike in the increase in the price of fertilizers, the farmers were also hit by the increase in the cost of ploughing using tractors.

The farmers' association secretary said that the Central government's announcement extending the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to SC/ST and small and marginal farmers (SMF) has meant nothing since the government permitted the use of labourers under the scheme only for agriculture-related activities such as strengthening the bunds of the field and formation of percolation ponds. The extent of land owned by SC/ST/SMF was too small to form percolation ponds. The Centre has extended the scheme to activities not undertaken by the intended farmer beneficiaries, he said.

Mr. Naidu said that the farmers' association's demand for the cooperative and public sector sugar mills buying modern mechanical sugarcane harvesters and hiring them to farmers on a nominal rent has fallen on deaf ears. He wanted the government to direct the mills to purchase these equipments and hire them to farmers on a nominal rent, as done by private sugar mills which charge Rs.250 per tonne. He said that on account of the government's announcement of a meagre procurement price which is not commensurate with the cost of cultivation, the cane area would decline by 50% during the forthcoming season.

During the current year, as against a normal cane area of 20,000 hectares in Vellore district, 11,000 hectares have been covered, said an official of the Agriculture Department. He however claimed that the cane area would go up next year owing to difficulties faced by farmers in cultivating paddy and other crops.

Recirculating aquaculture systems, a boon to pisciculture



HIGH yield: Fishes being cultured under the recirculating aquaculture system.

To prevent disease, fishes could be cultured with Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS), a modern and sustainable form of aquaculture. “As water gets circulated repeatedly, fish excreta, bacteria and other effluents get eliminated and this ensures suitable growing conditions through filter and treatment system. It is cost effective when it is taken up in an intensive manner.

Facilities are land based and can be set up even close to market in an eco-friendly manner to supply fresh quality fish in required quantity”, M. Sakthivel, President, Aquaculture Foundation of India and Former Chairman and Director, MPEDA said.

Not just prevention of disease, healthy growth of cultured fish could also be ensured. This form of aquaculture could be adopted in freshwater, brackish water and sea water at any place. “As of now, it is being done on an experimental scale and it is essential to promote it on a commercial scale,” Dr. Sakthivel told *The Hindu* on Wednesday. It should be brought to the reach of coastal villages across Tamil Nadu by giving subsidy in the form of capital and energy cost. Such practice is common in countries like Japan, United States, Europe and also in some South East Asian countries, he added.

V. K. Venkataramani, Dean, Fisheries College and Research Centre, Tuticorin, said apart from a sanctioned project under Recirculating Aquaculture System one more project is on the cards. Highlighting the advantage of closed containment aquaculture system, N. Felix, Professor, Department of Aquaculture, FCRI, said the system was conducive to rearing fishes in nursery, culturing young ones in hatchery and also to brood stock management. With less water, stocking density could be increased.

As many as 800 juvenile fishes were cultured at Maritech Research and Extension Centre, Tharuvaikulam, a coastal hamlet in the district. The fishes weighing five grams each were stocked and it attained a weight of 300 grams in a span of three months under the National Agricultural Innovation Project, Dr. Felix added.

Mettur level

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 55.46 feet on Wednesday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 579 cusecs and the discharge, 12,002 cusecs.

Crop insurance scheme

Cooperative banks in the district would implement crop insurance scheme to benefit samba cultivators as usual. In a release on Wednesday, K.V.S. Kumar, Regional Joint Director of Cooperative Societies, said that the last date for insuring the crop is December 31 for farmers who have taken credit and December 15 for those not availing themselves of the credit. Farmers in need of assistance could contact cooperative officials by dialling 99949-32744, 98943-04311 or 90477-53397.

Poor storage in Vaigai dam upsets farmers

The storage in the Vaigai dam can last only for nine more days for irrigation. This is the shocking message the Public Works Department officials have conveyed to the representatives of farmers of 1.50 lakh acres of ayacut in the three southern districts.

Adequate quantity

“If we need to store adequate quantity of water in the Vaigai dam to take care of drinking water needs of Madurai city till June 2013, then irrigation is possible only for the next nine days,” the officials told the farmers at a meeting here on Tuesday.

Dry spell

If the dry spell, both in the catchment areas and the plains, continued and release of water for irrigation is stopped as suggested by the PWD officials, this irrigation season would get the dubious distinction of having released water for the shortest period in the recent times.

For, release of water to raise paddy seedlings in the double crop area in Madurai and Dindigul districts and the single crop area of Madurai and Sivaganga districts began only on November 9 and can continue only till November 28.

A PWD engineer said that out of the 2,898 mcft of storage in the Vaigai dam, at least 1,300 mcft has to be stored for the drinking water purpose of Madurai city and other towns till the next monsoon sets in Kerala by June 1, 2013.

Anticipation

“We did release the water for irrigation only with the anticipation and hope of good rain during November.

Last year, same time the Vaigai river was in spate and flood water reached the sea after all tanks had storage up to their brim.

But, this year the monsoon failed and the situation has worsened,” an official said.

Final call

He, however, said the final call on continuing or stopping the water release would be taken only by the end of the month.

“We have history of North East monsoon lashing till December end,” he added.

Farmers out of fear over water shortage had raised nursery in around 5,000 acres, R. Arul Prakasam, Periyar Basin Planning Committee member, who participated in the meeting, said. He wondered how the farmers, who have invested huge money on land preparation and on seeds, would be compensated for their loss.

Cane farmers upset

Sugarcane farmers in the district expressed their disappointment over the state advised price of Rs.2,350 a tonne fixed by the State government, stating that it would not help them meet the growing cost of cultivation. Many farmers said the cost of sugarcane cultivation had increased by 30 per cent due to labour shortage, spiralling fertilizer prices and other input costs. We had

been urging the government to increase the procurement price to Rs. 3,000 per tonne. But the price had been only increased from Rs. 2,100 to Rs. 2,350 a tonne.

“We are paying more than Rs. 700 per tonne as cutting charges alone. The charges are high because there is a serious shortage of labour,” District Secretary of Tamil Nadu Farmers Association T. Subbu said.

Management of citrus leaf miner

The citrus leaf miner is a major pest of citrus nursery and remains active from March to November. It causes injury to the citrus group of fruits such as lime, lemon, oranges and pomelo.

Caterpillars of this insect feed on leaves by making shiny silvery serpentine mines. The damage distorts the leaves, and the growth of the seedling is arrested as the photosynthesis is adversely affected. The mined leaves turn pale, dry and finally fall down or dry on the branches. The mining injuries serve as foci of infection for the cause of citrus canker, a bacterial disease.

The adult moth is a tiny (3mm) silvery white moth with heavily fringed wings. The female attaches 40-120 transparent eggs singly on the leaves and tender shoots. Within five days they hatch to produce pale yellow and legless larvae which mine into the leaf tissues making a long serpentine convoluted mine. Larval duration is 5 to 10 days.

Mature larvae spin cocoons for pupation in such a way that the margin of the leaf lamina is turned over to protect the pupa underneath. Pupal stage lasts for 5-25 days. Entire life cycle is completed in 12-55 days. There are 9 to 13 overlapping generations in a year.

Some management strategies are :

Collect and destroy the infested leaves. Prune heavily the affected parts during monsoon. Avoid frequent irrigations and split doses of nitrogenous fertilizers.

As the larvae are inside the mines, these cannot be easily killed by insecticidal application. However, application of some systemic insecticides will combat the infestation to certain extent. Spray any one of the following insecticides: Dimethoate 30EC, profenofos 50EC,

monocrotophos 36WSC, quinalphos 25EC at 2ml/litre of water, acephate 75SP at 2g/litre of water or imidacloprid 200SL at 375ml/ha.

The spray should be aimed at young leaves only. A second spray should be given after 10 days or apply 5 per cent neem seed kernel extract , 3 per cent neem oil suspension or 2.5 per cent neem cake extract. The larvae and pupae are attacked by natural parasitoids that should be encouraged by avoiding frequent application of toxic insecticides.

(J.Jayaraj, Associate Professor and R.K. Murali Baskaran, Head, Department of Entomology, Agricultural College and Research Institute, TNAU, Madurai - 625 104. phone: 0452- 2422956 Extn: 214)

Hindustan Times

TODAY FARM NEWS

22.11.2012 A.M

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Nov 22

Max Min

32.8° | 22.6°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 89

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:11

Sunset: 05:39

Barometer: 1011

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Friday, Nov 23

Max Min

29° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Nov 24	Sunday Nov 25	Monday Nov 26	Tuesday Nov 27	Wednesday Nov 28
29° 24° Cloudy	33° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast	32° 25° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:49

Humidity: 55

Sunset: 05:25

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1015



THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

21.11.2012 P.M

22.11.2012 A.M

Nabard sanctions Rs 311 cr to Maharashtra

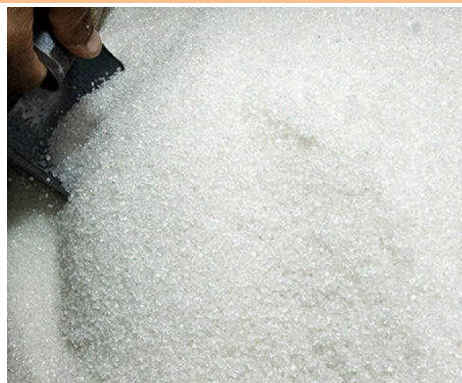
The National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned financial assistance of Rs 311.05 crore to the Maharashtra Government. The funds, out of its Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), are for the development of roads and bridges in the State.

This is the first sanction during 2012-13 under RIDF-XVIII Maharashtra.

The sanction for 345 road and 111 bridge projects in 20 districts would create connectivity to the extent of 816.60 km of roads and 3,394 meters of bridges connecting 1,710 villages, 968 marketing centres and 305 tourist places and 298 pilgrimage centres. It would create non-recurring employment to the tune of 171.51 lakh man-days. The projects would be implemented by the Public Works Department (PWD).

The RIDF was established by the Centre in 1995-96, wherein deposits from Scheduled Commercial Banks operating in India, to the extent of shortfall in their agricultural lending/ priority sector/ weaker sections are given at concessional rates to State Governments for development of infrastructure.

Sugar turns sour on ample supply



Sugar prices on the Vashi wholesale market declined by Rs 10-15 a quintal on Wednesday as local demand eased.

Producers continued to offer tenders in the absence of neighbouring States' demand. This kept the local market under pressure due to ample supply.

Mill tender rates dropped by Rs 10-20 pulled down naka rates by a similar margin. Local retail demand eased as festivals are over and month end time. Sentiment was slightly weak as mills have to offload allotted free sale quota before month end said sources.

Market witnessed cautious mood in the absence of effective cues. Domestic futures prices were highly volatile while in spot market, reduced retailer demand and ample supply cooled down prices.

Arrivals continued at higher levels. **On the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange** December futures were down by Rs 2 to Rs 3,290 (Rs 3,292); January dropped by Rs 5 to Rs 3,320 (Rs 3,325) and February at Rs 3,343 (Rs 3,349).

In the Vashi market, arrivals were 68-70 truck loads (each of 100 bags) and local dispatches were lower by about 65-66 truck loads.

On Tuesday evening, 17-18 mills offered tenders and sold about 50,000-52,000 bags (each of 100 kg) to the local traders in the lower range of Rs 3,330-3,380 (Rs 3,340-3,400) for S-grade and Rs 3,380-3,500 (Rs 3,390-3,520) for M-grade.

The Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates: S-grade Rs 3,466- 3,542 (Rs 3,472- 3,542) and M-grade Rs 3,502-3,721 (Rs 3,502-3,721). **Naka delivery rates:** S-grade Rs 3,410- 3,450 (Rs 3,430-3,470) and M-grade Rs 3,460-3,645 (Rs 3,465-3,650).

Pepper crashes on circular trading

Pepper market crashed on circular trading on Wednesday, probably in retaliation by the bear operators, flooring all the active contracts.

The turnover soared by 487 per cent to 14,416 tonnes today while the total open interest increased by only 162 tonnes.

The turnover in December alone was at 14,796 tonnes. Consequently, long position holders will have to pay mark to market margin to the tune of Rs 9,55,84,000 in December, market sources told *Business Line*.

They said the market opened on a firm note and at the highest price of the day at Rs 39,110 a quintal and traded with high volatility throughout all the sessions and the turnover was very high in the afternoon and closing session.

Prices touched the lowest level of Rs37,505 just before closing and slightly recovered and hence the last traded price was at Rs37,730. However, the closing price i.e., last 30 minutes average, was at Rs 37,615 a quintal.

Arrivals of farm grade pepper from the primary markets were at four tonnes and of this three tonnes were traded. As there were no sellers the primary market dealers were ready to buy pepper from the terminal market.

Meanwhile, hedgers who have sales on December contract and are holding farm grade pepper with them as stocks were offering at Rs 7 to 8 below the December prices instead of going for processing and converting them into garbled material, they said.

Domestic market is said to have become active and demand was trickling in from Monday onwards. Upcountry dealers were said to be buying from the hedgers, they said.

December contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 1,450 a quintal to close at Rs 37,615 a quintal while February and March fell by Rs 1,370 and Rs 1,420 respectively to close at Rs 34,910 and 34,390 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover soared by 14,416 tonnes to close at 17,373 tonnes. Total open interest went up by 162 tonnes to 8,125 tonnes.

December open interest moved up by 54 tonnes to close at 6,592 tonnes when the turnover of December stood at 14,796 tonnes. February open interest declined by 11 tonnes to close at 1,161 tonnes while that of March increased by 98 tonnes to 316 tonnes.

Market sources said that it was not a healthy sign and urged the Regulator to look into the happenings in the market.

Spot prices fell in tandem with the futures market by Rs 1,000 a quintal to close at Rs 37,200 (ungarbled) and Rs 38,700 (garbled) a quintal.

Indian parity in the international market also decreased to \$7,100 a tonne (c&f) Europe and \$7,400 a tonne (c&f) to the US. If the exchange rates remained favourable, at the current parity some overseas demand might come for Malabar, the trade claimed.

Pepper cools on FMC probe into price movement



Pepper futures turned bearish on Wednesday as correction set in in the counter. Over the last couple of days, prices have corrected sharply on reports that the FMC has launched a probe into complaints against pepper market movement. Also, expectations of better output in the domestic and international markets pressurised prices, with farmers trying to liquidate their stocks ahead of fresh crop arrivals in January.

On the NCDEX, the spice for December delivery lost 3.3 per cent to Rs 37,775 a quintal, while the January and February series lost 3.3 and 3.1 per cent to Rs 35,080 and Rs 34,520 respectively.

In the spot market at Kochi (Kerala), pepper was quoting at Rs 39,147.6.

Domestic production of pepper in 2011-12 is expected to be the lowest in a decade, declining further by 5 per cent to 43,000 tonnes compared with 48,000 tonnes in the last year.

Overseas: Huge price parity has dented exports. According to the Spices Board, exports of pepper in April 2012 fell by 47 per cent to 1,200 tonnes (2,266 tonnes). India imported 1,848 tonnes of pepper till March 2012.

Power regulator puts cost of solar voltaic plants at Rs 8 cr/MW

The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission has fixed the normative cost of solar photo voltaic plants as Rs 8 crore per MW of installed capacity, for the year 2013-14.

The CERC's normative cost is generally taken as the benchmark by developers and often forms the basis for tariff negotiations. For instance, in the forthcoming meeting of the would-be investors in Tamil Nadu and the state's electricity generation and distribution utility, TANGEDCO, which is scheduled for November 23, the CERC norm can be expected to be taken as the reference cost of solar plants.

The Commission has also taken the cost per MW of solar thermal plants at Rs 12 crore.

In calculating the normative cost of solar PV as Rs 8 crore per MW and solar thermal at Rs 12 crore per MW, CERC has decreased the cost by Rs 2 crore per MW for solar PV and Rs 1 crore for solar thermal over its normative cost for the year 2012-13.

For 2013-14, the Commission has taken Rs 7.87 per kWhr for solar PV and Rs 10.69 for solar thermal.

Thai rice buy plan sends Indian exporters laughing to bank



For 30 years, Thailand has been the top rice exporter in the global market. But a decision last year by the Thai Government to buy paddy from farmers at a higher price of \$450 has turned things topsy-turvy in the rice market.

In turn, it has proved to be a blessing for India that re-entered the rice export market in September last year after the Centre lifted a four-year ban. This year, India will be the top rice exporter.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) that see India topping exports have pegged the shipment figures at nine million tonnes and 10 million tonnes, respectively.

Thailand's move to buy paddy at a price, that is a third higher than before, has effectively raised the price of rice to over \$750 a tonne. This is set to see the Far-Eastern nation ending up behind Vietnam which, too, is trying to cash in on the current market situation.

"While India releases stocks, the Thai government is accumulating them by purchasing domestic supplies at above market prices, making exports uncompetitive," says the USDA.

New markets

But India's success story in rice export is just not confined to Thailand doing an India. This time around, exporters and firms that depend on overseas market were determined to make the most of the opportunity.

"For the first time, Indonesia's government agency Bulog has bought rice from India," says S. Venkatesh, Head of International Trading Division of LT Foods Ltd.

According to agency reports, LT Foods Ltd and the Amira Group have won the tender to supply 1.2 lakh tonnes of 15 per cent broken white or raw rice (in which out of 1 kg rice, 150 gm can be broken) to Indonesia. "India has made rapid strides in exporting to West Asia and North Africa after the ban was lifted," says Tejinder Narang, a trade analyst.

Competitive price

Indian rice has been competitive in the global market offering its 5 per cent broken at \$430 a tonne and 25 per cent broken at \$380 a tonne. In comparison, Thailand offers the same varieties at \$560 and \$535, while Vietnam's prices are \$450 and \$415.

Pakistan's prices are at a par with India but it is losing out on freight and quality.

Thailand prices are \$100-150 a tonne higher for white (raw) rice and \$100 for par-boiled (boiled) rice.

Quality factor

"Recently, we have won a tender in Iraq to supply 30,000 tonnes Basmati," says Venkatesh, pointing out to the quality factor that is working to India's advantage.

"With Thailand out of the par-boiled market, India has made inroads in the African market," says Narang. "There is a huge improvement in the quality of rice that India is offering abroad," says Huge investments have been made in raising the milling capacity as well as improving the quality, says Venkatesh.

Advantage andhra

Though details on the investments that have been made in modernising rice mills are not available, Narang says that millers in Andhra Pradesh, especially at the Kakinada port, have set up units that can mill fine rice.

"Indonesian officials recently visited our facilities and have said that our quality is much better than other countries," said Venkatesh. Buyers abroad have found the quality of rice from Andhra Pradesh way above others.

"Most of the exports are happening from Kakinada, Visakhapatnam and Chennai ports since freight charges from there are 10-15 per cent cheaper.

Close race

According to the USDA, the huge rice stocks that got built up during the four-year ban are coming in handy now. As on November 1, the Centre had 28.95 million tonnes (mt) of rice in the Central pool against the mandated 2.12 mt.

However, next year the USDA says that India may have to vacate its position of being the top exporter since Thailand is seen storming back to export around eight million tonnes, while Indian shipments are seen slipping to 6.5 mt. But the FAO sees a close race between India and Thailand next year.

“Things will change next year since Thailand will try to set things right. Also, the Indian crop is likely to be lower this year,” said Narang.

India’s rice production is likely to be lower than 100 mt this season to June against a record 104.32 mt last season. This is mainly since kharif paddy sowing took a hit with its output seen lower at 85.59 mt (91.53 mt).

Coonoor tea auction volume hits 17-week high

A volume of 14.80 lakh kg has been catalogued for Sale No: 47 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions to be held on Thursday and Friday, reveals an analysis of brokers’ listing.

It is the highest volume of the last 17 weeks. Of the 14.80 lakh kg on offer, 10.17 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 4.63 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades.

Fresh tea accounts for 14.56 lakh kg while about 24,000 kg comprises teas which had remained unsold in previous auctions.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped at Rs 152 a kg.

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Highfield Estate got Rs 215.

In the leaf tea auction, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) and Tata Global Beverages Ltd bought good medium varieties. Duncans Tea Ltd showed interest on good medium broken.

In the dust tea auction, HUL and Tata Global bought good medium varieties. Indcoserve showed interest on medium smaller grades.

Spot rubber rules flat

Physical rubber prices finished unchanged on Wednesday. There were no fresh enquiries from any major consuming sector, but the market managed to sustain at the prevailing levels probably as the domestic futures finished higher on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

Though the market is supposed to be moving in to the peak production season, there has been no improvement in arrivals yet. It is also expected that the growers might prefer to hold the stocks rather than to sell at lower levels even during the season.

Meanwhile, the key TOCOM rubber futures inched up, marking a third day of gains as the Yen hit a seven-month low against the Dollar. But the gains were limited on concerns over the slowdown in global demand.

Sheet rubber closed unchanged at Rs 171 a kg, according to traders. The grade finished steady at Rs 170 a kg at Kottayam and Kochi as reported by the Rubber Board.

The December series increased to Rs 175.30 (173.50), January to Rs 177.49 (175.58), February to Rs 179.94 (177.77) and March to Rs 182 (181.28) a kg on NMCE.

RSS 3 (spot) closed at Rs 166.17 (166.12) a kg at Bangkok. The November futures improved to ₹243.5 (Rs 163.23) from ₹240.9 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: 171 (171); RSS-5: 167 (167); ungraded: 162 (162); ISNR 20: 159.50 (159.50) and latex 60 per cent: 113 (113).

Early harvest of coffee begins

Fly picking (plucking berries that ripen early) has commenced in lower reaches or dry belts in the coffee growing regions in South India.

Picking in higher elevation areas are to commence later in the next 15-20 days.

“Fly picking of coffee has begun in Suntikoppa, Madapur and Chettali in Kodagu, after a bout of heavy rains last week,” said Bose Mandanna, senior coffee planter from Suntikoppa, Kodagu.

“Currently, we are experiencing bright sun which is favourable for coffee picking. But we are scared over the weather conditions for the next 15 to 20 days,” he added.

This year, extended cloud seeding activity carried out by the Karnataka Government to increase inflow into Cauvery basin, has partially affected coffee picking activities in the catchment areas in Kodagu.

“Parts of Mudigere, Sakleshpur in Chikmagalur have become conducive for fly picking,” said Nishant R Gurjer, Chairman, Karnataka Planters’ Association (KPA).

According to Vijayan P. Rajes, Chairman of UPASI Coffee Committee, “Growers waited for the cyclone Nilam to cross over. Now with dry days, fly picking has commenced in all lower elevation in Tamil Nadu.”

Normally about 10 per cent of the coffee is picked during fly picking. Later in the main round of picking carried out during December / January, 50-60 per cent of the harvest is done and finally in the stripping phase the balance is harvested this is done around February.

“Regular harvest of arabica will start during the first week of December and robusta some time mid-December,” he added.

Coffee estimate

A senior Coffee Board official said, “Post-monsoon crop estimate for crop year 2012-13 is delayed a bit and it is expected sometime mid-December.”

As for the 2012-13 coffee production estimates, the Karnataka Planters’ Association (KPA) has maintained it at 80,000-85,000 tonnes of arabica and around 210,000 tonnes of robusta.

“We will stick to it. At the end of December we will get a clear picture,” said Gurjer.

Vijayawada to host second edition of aqua show in Feb

The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) will conduct the second edition of Aqua Aquaria India 2013 in Vijayawada from February 8-10, 2013.

Aqua Aquaria India is the only show in its kind in Asia, which focuses on both aqua culture and ornamental fish sector. Andhra Pradesh has been selected particularly considering its contributions to the country's aquaculture production. The international event showcases the latest technologies available in aquaculture and ornamental fisheries sector, besides business interactions, a press statement issued here said.

AAI 2013 will have an exhibition of 150 stalls that showcase various production and harvest technologies, machinery and accessories in export oriented aquaculture as well as ornamental fisheries sectors. There will be 100 stalls earmarked for the aquaculture sector and 50 stalls for the ornamental fish exhibitors. The details of the event and registration are available in the website www.aquaaquaria.com.

Chana traders seek FMC probe into futures price movement



After guar and pepper, trading in chana futures is in the eye of a storm. A section of the trade is reported to have formed a cartel to perk up prices, leading to demand for a thorough investigation by the Forward Markets Commission (FMC).

According to Pradeep Jindal of Delhi, a member of the , “A group of cartel cornered all delivery of chana and now again it is buying large quantity and taking advantage. January contract are Rs 6,000 a tonne lower than November contract and exchange has 29,000 tonnes stocks in demat form. Instead of selling by the holder of the demat stock, they are cornering all the quantity.”

The difference, he said, is Rs 17.40 crore between November and January contract. The new Indian crop will come only from March 2013.

“This is the same as in the trading of guar and pepper,” he told *Business Line*. He said that “a cartel that is taking a huge position and manipulating market from certain participants and they are killing to hedger/arbitrator/small investor by cornering all deliveries”.

The trade, he said, has urged the Regulator to look into these issues and initiate steps to “investigate in detail and check who are holder of goods in demat form and why again they are on buying sides despite the fact that for the next two months prices are lower by 12.70 per cent and a real trader should sell the demated stock rather than buying again.”

They also wanted the authorities to check the source of their margins “as we are sure it is funded directly or indirectly by the cartels who already having position of demated stock and again buying in November expiry contract.

This is not healthy trade and this is totally out of thinking why instead of selling, they are buying.”

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

22.11.2012 A.M

Delay in UP cane price stokes distress sales

Crushers, kolhus by at less then last year's SAP

Virendra Singh Rawat / Lucknow November 22, 2012, 0:55 IST

The state government's delay in announcing its binding floor price for sugarcane purchases by mills from farmers, the State Advised Price (SAP), has stoked distress selling, as many small growers have to empty their fields at this time to sow wheat.



The SAP is traditionally set high, distinctly more than the Centre's own Fair and Remunerative Price. Last year, the Uttar Pradesh government (the then Mayawati administration) announced the SAP on November 8, raising it over the previous year by Rs 40 to 250/quintal for the early variety and by Rs 35 to 240/ql for the common variety which accounts for 60-70 per cent of total output.

However, the Akhilesh Yadav government is yet to announce this year's SAP, leaving many farmers with little option than to sell to non-mill crushers, including the hand-operated 'kolhus', at much lower rates.

"The delay in SAP and onset of the crushing season is adversely affecting farmers, especially small and marginal ones. The festival and field preparation for wheat has compelled them to sell cane at Rs 185-220/ql," Kisan Jagriti Manch president Sudhir Panwar told Business Standard.

It was expected the government would announce the SAP after yesterday's cabinet meeting but it came out that the chief minister had been authorised to decide the price. It is to be announced 'soon'. The state assembly session begins on Friday.

“Ideally, the SAP should be announced in October and mills should start functioning from October 15. Sadly, the farmers are now hard-pressed to sell cane to crushers and kolhu units,” Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan Convenor V M Singh said, putting the prices paid by crushers/kolhus at Rs 150-170/qtl. Adding: “The crushers were paying better prices about a month back but now seeing the panic among farmers, they have reduced the prices.”

Earlier, the sugar industry and farmers’ representatives had met government officials to put forth their views on the cane price. While farmers demanded Rs 300-350/qtl, the industry had urged retaining the SAP at last year’s level, saying sugar prices were low.

Meanwhile, 10-12 mills in western UP have started crushing and more would join as the days advance. “The starting of crushing without an SAP may be a strategy of the government to pressurise mills to accept it when announced, as mills would not afford closure of their units once started,” said Panwar.

LOSING SWEETNESS					
Crushing season	Acreage In mn ha	Sugarcane production In mn tonnes	Cane crushed by sugar mills In mn tonnes	Sugar production In mn tonnes	SAP Rs/qtl
2010-11	2.10	120.00	64.30	5.88	210
2011-12	2.25	133.57	76.86	6.96	250
2012-13 (estimated)	2.42	143.00	83.00	7.58	Awaited

Chana imports may rise as sowing declines

Traders see weakness gripping prices in next two-three months

Rutam Vora / Ahmedabad November 22, 2012, 0:57 IST

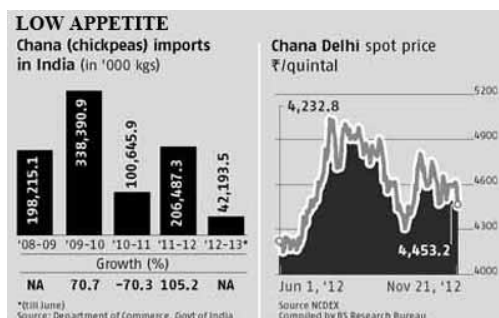
With the area under sowing for chana (chick pea) taking a hit due to erratic weather conditions, traders expect imports to rise sharply over the next two months. Increased availability due to

imports is likely to pull down chana prices by 10-15 per cent by February 2013 from its current levels.

“Chana prices already hit a high of Rs 4,800-5,000 per quintal in the August-to-October period. We expect about 500,000 tonnes of chana imports this fiscal. This will improve the availability and will soften the prices,” said Suresh Agarwal, vice-chairman, India Pulses and Grains Association.

According to Agarwal, chana sowing has dropped this year owing to erratic monsoon conditions.

Also, sowing for overall pulses has dropped this year. According to government data, rabi sowing under pulses is reported lower at 6.3 million hectares this year, compared to 7.61 million hectares last year.



Commodity analysts believe chana prices, which have breached the Rs 4,000 level, could ease over the next two-three months. “There is increased import of chana on the back of tight supply conditions in the domestic market. By February-March next year, we can expect chana to witness a bearish trend,” said Biren Vakil, founder and chief executive officer of Paradigm Commodity Advisors Pvt Ltd.

“Currently, prices have come under pressure, and we do not see any physical demand at present levels. This indicates prices may fall further,” he said.

Even as weakness in prices is expected due to increased imports, traders say prices won't fall below a certain level.

“The government has set a minimum support price (MSP) of chana at Rs 3,200 a quintal. Hence, we do not see prices falling below Rs 3,500 per quintal, even in the increased import situation,” said Agarwal, who is also an importer.

The government has upped the MSP of all rabi crops, especially pulses, considering the waning interest of farmers due to low returns from these commodities. The MSP of chana has been increased to Rs 3,200 per quintal for the 2013-14 marketing year from Rs 2,800 per quintal in 2012-13, a rise of about 14 per cent.

“This effectively means the acreage under chana could slide eventually and output could be hurt. The NCDEX chana futures had recovered steadily during the first three weeks of October, as the impact of early influx of arrivals in pulses from kharif season wore off. The futures have dropped from highs of Rs 4,369 per quintal to Rs 4,000 levels in a span of around three weeks and are lingering around Rs 4,100-4,200 per quintal now,” said analyst firm Capitaline. On Tuesday, Chana futures for immediate delivery contract on the NCDEX stood negative at Rs 4,324 per quintal, lower by Rs 57 from the previous close.

Rice exports likely to decline in 2013: FAO

Thailand is pegged to ship 6.5 mt of the grain this year

Press Trust Of India / New Delhi November 22, 2012, 0:58 IST

The fall in rice production in the current crop year in India against rising domestic demand is expected to affect exports of the key staple in 2013, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has said.

“By contrast, the 2012 production shortfall and rising domestic needs may depress India's exports next year,” FAO said in its latest Rice Market Monitor report.

The global body on the farm sector has pegged India's rice production lower at 100 million tonnes (mt) in the 2012-13 crop year (July-June) from a record high of 104.32 mt in the 2011-12 crop year. FAO said the spurt in exports from India has helped it displace Thailand as the world's largest rice exporter, with shipments expected to touch nine mt in 2012.

RICE BOWLS

Production in mn tonnes

Country	2011-12E	2012-13F
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China (Jan-Dec)	140.5	142.5
India (Oct-Sept)	104.3	99.8
Indonesia (Jan-Dec)	36.4	37.0
Bengladesh (Jul-Jun)	34.0	34.1
Vietnam (Jan-Dec)	26.4	26.7
Thailand (Jan-Dec)	20.5	21.2
World (Total)	463.4	464.8

E=Estimates, F=Forecast

Source: International Grains Council/PTI

Thailand is pegged to ship 6.5 mt of the grain this year. Earlier, the United States Department of Agriculture had also put India as the world's largest rice exporter for 2012, beating Thailand. Global rice trade is anticipated to grow by 2.5 per cent in calendar year 2012, to a new high of 37.3 mt, FAO said.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

22.11.2012 A.M

GIS in green polyhouses to aid Kodai farmers

MADURAI: A horticulture farm in Gundupatti in Kodaikanal block of Dindigul district has gone high-tech with the installation of the [GIS](#) (geographic information system), as part of a pilot project. The GIS provides global access to promote site-specific farming for the first time in Tamil Nadu.

According to S Raja Mohamed, deputy director horticulture (Central schemes) Kodaikanal, the programme has been launched with the objective of locating polygreen houses using GIS. It is being built with the help of subsidy assistances from the [National Horticulture Mission](#) (NHM) for the year 2012-13, in the spatial imagery and to add the attribute data (obtained during the field work) to those polyhouse features.

The GIS-initiative project was taken up by the department of horticulture, Kodaikanal division in co-ordination with the agriculture engineering department, Dindigul division and Remote Sensing and GIS Lab, ECE department, Thiagarajar College of Engineering (TCE). The processes involved includes the raw imagery (the satellite imagery of the location containing the poly houses is obtained), geo-referencing (the spatial data is geo-referenced using the particular toolbar), digitisation and photo-annealing (the images of the polyhouses are also attached with the point features by defining a field of type 'raster').

Mohamed said that development and implementation of precision farming or site-specific farming has been made possible by combining the GPS and GIS. These technologies enable the coupling of real-time data collection with accurate position information, leading to the efficient manipulation and analysis of large amounts of geospatial data.

GPS-based applications in precision farming are being used for farm planning, field mapping, soil sampling, tractor guidance, crop scouting, variable rate applications and yield mapping in the developed countries. The carnations grown in polyhouses in Kodaikanal are of international quality coming next only to their famous Columbian counterparts. If accessible over the GPS, cut flower cultivators in the region can become global entrepreneurs without the interference of middlemen as their buyers can get details about them from anywhere in the world.

Precision farming is now changing the way farmers and agribusinesses view the land from which they reap their profits. Position information system provides position data with acceptable degree of accuracy, available on demand at any time and at any location and is able to interface with other equipment. Farmers using the GPS system have the advantage of utilizing their land to the maximum.

According to Mohamed and G Kandasamy, deputy director of horticulture (state schemes), four poly green houses of 8,754 sq metres, belonging to four beneficiaries of Gundupatti in Kodaikanal block, were built with the subsidy being provided under NHM during the year 2012-2013.

With the help of the agriculture engineering department, Dindigul, ground control points (GCP) with GPS measurement for the poly houses were taken and were processed with the help of R A Alaguraja, associate professor, ECE department, TCE for representing these poly houses using GIS.

Mohamed said that the GIS would provide a big advantage to farmers especially those into the floral industry, which is the cut flower industry.

20% growth in sugar output likely in 6 months

MUZAFFARPUR: The [sugarcane](#) crushing season has started in Bihar on a positive note with an expected growth of at least 20% more production during the next six months. A hike in the prices of sugar and remunerative price of cane to growers are said to have encouraged both the farmers and the sugar mill owners to boost production.

A senior officer in sugarcane department said, sugar mills are now crushing 54,000 tonnes of cane everyday against 34,000 tonnes in the last season. Vice president of private sugar mills association B K Sureka also admitted that overall cane crushing is expected to be over 20% this season in comparison to the last season due to an incentive price being given to the growers since last year. A prospective cane grower of Muzaffarpur, Bholanath Jha also agreed that 25% farmers of this region have replaced cereal production by sugarcane cultivation due to better prices. He also demanded that the rate of cane should be Rs 300 per quintal against Rs 225 fixed last year.

At present, only 11 sugar factories, nine in private sector and two owned by [Hindustan Petroleum Corporation](#) (HPC), are functional in the state. But, unfortunately, none of the 15 sugar factories owned by the state government could resume production owing to various reasons. The only sugar mill of Muzaffarpur district at Motipur, is involved in a legal battle between the old proprietors and the state government over the issue of compensation. After lot of deliberations, the mill was taken over by the government three years back and was given on a 60-year lease to Indian Potash Ltd for running it. But the old owner challenged the state government in [Patna high court](#), where the matter is still pending for a final decision.

According to an official, a fresh tender is to be floated in next two months in order to give seven mills on lease for producing sugar.

The state government has been trying to open new sugar factories in private sector for the last several years but not a single factory has been set up so far. The main reason is that the entrepreneurs do not find much profit on investing in new mills on terms fixed by the

government.

Some local entrepreneurs said the government stresses on production of liquor from molasses, whereas entrepreneurs want to produce ethanol as the bi-product of sugar. The government should give the option to the entrepreneurs in this respect while using molasses, they added.

Over 2.94 lakh temporary power connections to farmers in MP

BHOPAL: Temporary electricity connections have been provided by the Eastern, Central and Western power distribution companies of Madhya Pradesh to around 2.94 lakh farmers for running irrigation pumps and thrashers till the month of October during the current fiscal. Through these temporary connections, the power distribution companies have received revenue to the tune of Rs 154.22 crore.

The Madhya Pradesh Eastern Region Power Distribution Company provided around 1.16 lakh temporary connections to farmers during the year till October. Out of these, around 97 thousand temporary connections were given for irrigation pumps close to 19000 for running thrashers. The company earned revenue to the tune of Rs 34.70 crore by providing these temporary connections.

During the same period, the Madhya Pradesh Central Region Power Distribution Company provided 20,443 temporary connections to farmers during the period. Out of these, around 20,000 temporary connections were given for irrigation pumps and 660 for thrashers. The company earned revenue to the tune of around Rs 12 crore by providing these temporary connections.

Similarly, the Madhya Pradesh Western Region Power Distribution Company provided 1.57 lakh temporary connections to farmers during the period. Out of these, 1.55 lakh temporary

connections were given for irrigation pumps and 2,061 for thrashers. The company earned revenue to the tune of Rs 107.63 lakh by providing these temporary connections.

Proud moments at Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology & Sciences convocation

ALLAHABAD: Sam Higginbottom Institute of Agriculture, Technology & Sciences, Formerly Allahabad Agricultural Institute, Deemed-to-be-University on Wednesday organised its 8th Convocation. Prof [Brady J Deaton](#), Chancellor & CEO, University of Missouri, Columbia, USA was the chief guest while SHIATS Chancellor Dr J A Oliver presided over the function.

Programme commenced with reading from scriptures and prayer following which Dr Oliver declared the opening of 8th convocation proceedings. Registrar Prof (Dr) AKA Lawrence welcomed the chief guest.

Prof (Dr) Sarita Sheikh dean Ethelind School of Home Science presented the vice-chancellor's report followed by the memento presentation to the chief guest and his wife by SHIATS vice-chancellor Prof (Dr) Rajendra B Lal. Presidential address was delivered by Dr Oliver, who said SHIATS was an expression of God's love to people to increase food production and cattle rearing to element hunger and poverty, adding, "We must explore talent and skills in our profession to generate sustainable agricultural prosperity of our country." Addressing the convocational address, the chief guest expressed his gratitude for historical relationship between SHIATS and [University of Missouri](#) to promote green technology around the world and he also emphasised to attend educational excellency for contributing towards our countries prosperity with global reorganisation.

Prof Lal gave away the degrees to students while chief guest distributed medals to merit holders. Addressing the gathering, Prof Lal said during its centenary [journey](#) SHIATS had adopted strategies for green revolution and to make our country self-sustainable in the field of agriculture and allied disciplines through dissemination of our students, knowledge and professional dedication. During the ceremony, 2,653 degrees including for doctorate (37), postgraduate (1,117) undergraduate (1465) courses and 54 diplomas were distributed to students. A total of 121 medals were given to meritorious students including 98 [gold](#) and 23 silver.

During the function, Prof Lal distributed degree of Doctorate of Philosophy (Honoris Causa) in social science to Prof Brady J Deaton, Most Rev Joseph Marthoma, Most Rev Isadore Fernandes, Major Jaswant Kumar Michael, Ghulam Ahmad Bhatt and Marri Shasidhar Reddy. Prof Lal also gave degree of doctorate in science to Prof Katesh V Katti and degree of Doctorate of Philosophy (Honoris Causa) in Theology to Bro P C Varghese.