

State's food security, farmers' livelihood in peril



Farmers thrashing samba paddy after harvest.—File Photo.

The truant monsoon and the intransigence of the Karnataka government in not releasing adequate water in the Cauvery have created a grim situation in which the very food security of Tamil Nadu and the livelihood of lakh of farmers are in peril, according to K.V. Kannan, vice-president of the Cauvery Delta Farmers' Welfare Association.

Mr. Kannan told *TheHindu* that usually samba paddy crop was being raised on 10 lakh acres in the State. When the losses on this count were calculated, it would be a mind boggling amount. With the average yield of 1.5 tonne per acre, the State was about to lose of 15 lakh tonnes of paddy. The State government had fixed the paddy procurement price at Rs. 1,350 per quintal or Rs. 13,500 per tonne. In case of crop failure, for want of adequate rain or water for irrigation, the total loss would work out to over Rs. 2,000 crore.

Therefore, the farming community that was already under tremendous financial burden owing to its inability to raise kuruvai crop was facing the imminent livelihood crisis for the samba season too. The northeast monsoon was usually spread over the period from October 10 to December 10, but so far no substantial rainfall was received.

Mr. Kannan, who is also the Kisan Morcha Prabhari of the Bharatiya Janata Party, said that the water was released from the Mettur Dam for irrigation on September 17, instead of the regular date of June 12. For the 120-135-day duration samba crop to fully mature water supply should be maintained till the second week of February. But considering the water level in the Mettur Dam that stood at 57 ft and the daily discharge at 12,000 cusecs, the storage would last only for a maximum of 20 days.

Mr. Kannan pointed out that as against the commitment of 170 tmc ft of water for the season, the Karnataka government had released only 25 tmc ft of water. Therefore, the chances of the tail-end delta region, comprising the districts of Thiruvarur, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam getting the required quantum of water was remote.

Therefore, the Association had called upon the Karnataka government to approach the Cauvery issue with humanitarian concern and release adequate water to enable the Tamil Nadu farmers to overcome the distress situation, Mr. Kannan added.

Cushioning farmers against price crash



PLAYing it safe: Farmers taking part in the farmers' grievance day meeting held at the collectorate in Dindigul on Friday.— Photo: G. Karthikeyan

Arrangements have been made to enable farmers to stock agriculture produce in godowns maintained by regulated markets with an aim of protecting them from financial loss owing to price crash during harvesting period.

Farmers can stock produces like paddy and maize in these godowns free of costs for 120 days and sell them after the price stabilises, said Collector N. Venkatachalam.

He was presiding over the farmers' grievances day meeting held here on Friday.

Price crash was common during harvesting period and if farmers sold their produces at the time of harvesting, they could not get better price owing to glut in the market.

To avoid such glut, they could stock their goods with regulated market and sell them during lean period. Meanwhile, they could hypothecate their goods and avail loan on their value. Such measure would help them wait for price stability while maintaining fund flow, he pointed out.

Seventy per cent of the total value of the produce or up to the ceiling of Rs.2 lakh would be given as loan to them.

Five per cent interest would be charged for the loan. Free insurance cover would also be provided to their produce.

Farmers should produce chitta, adangal and photostat copy of ration card to avail this facility, he pointed out.

Adopting the system of rice intensification method would not only improve yield but also scale down production costs, use of fertilizers, quantum of water used for irrigation and other inputs.

A subsidy of Rs.3,000 per hectare would be given to paddy cultivators, he added.

The Collector also advised farmers to avoid inordinate delay in transferring land pattas.

Agriculture officials appealed to farmers to raise groundnut, a less water consuming product in Margazhi, Tamil month.

Effective use of micronutrients would improve yield, they added.

Later, agriculture officials distributed booklet containing information about subsidy for various crops, contact numbers of agriculture officers, special schemes for paddy, small grains, pulses, oilseeds and cotton and seed development programmes to the participants.

Minimal increase in cane price irks farmers

Shared disappointment over the minimal increase in the support price for sugarcane, and compensation demands over loss of kuruvai and samba marked the monthly farmers' grievance meeting here at the Collectorate on Friday.

Farmers representing the Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam affiliated to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) made a staunch call for declaring the district disaster-hit and provision for compensation for farmers and farm labourers. V.Subramanyam, district secretary, Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, called for compensation for the complete 'decimation' of samba and kuruvai and demanded Rs.20,000 per acre for farmers, and Rs.15,000 per family for farm labourers.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the announcement of Rs.250 towards the support price for sugarcane, Alexander of Mayiladuthurai said that the hike was the central component, and the State has not made any hike from its side. The Minimum Support Price(MSP) of Rs.2,350 was also lower than the Chief Minister's promise of Rs.2,500 as MSP for cane as part of the election manifesto. He called for Rs.3,500 as cane support price for sugarcane for 2012-13.

Further, the complete absence of rainfall in November has affected crops, and the 18-hour power failure has added to the woes of the farmers, Mr.Alexander said. A subsidy of Rs.10,000 towards diesel engines would help the farmers. Sharing the disappointment over MSP for cane, Gobi Ganesan, general secretary, Cauvery Delta Paasanadharar Munnetra Sangam, said that the State government had "failed to increase a single rupee from its share" towards the support price.

Further, alleging that the farmers were faced with a severe prospect of indebtedness, Mr.Gobi Ganesan said that farmers had taken up samba on the government's assurance of a three-phased power supply for 12 hours and single-phased supply for 18 hours. However, in reality, there has been three-hour power supply. Calling for a minimum of nine-hour three phase power supply, Mr.Ganesan said that alternatively, farmers should be permitted to use two-phase supply enabled by capacitors.

Seeking flood compensation for fields, S.Samandam, district secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, called for compensation for sown fields and transplanted fields. Cyclone Nilam had caused unprecedented rains with Thalainayar and adjoining areas recorded over 175 mm rains

in a day. According to him, over 81,404 ha were partly and fully submerged in varying stages, and these ought to be compensation in a war-footing.

Training for SHGs

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Gandhigram in Dindigul district, has been imparting a week long training to members of self help groups on coconut tree climbing, coconut oil making, manufacturing coir products like coir beds, coir mats and other coir based products in order to enhance their income and ensure sustainable income generation activities, said Collector K. S. Palanisamy.

In a release here on Friday, he said that training will be conducted free of cost with the help of Kerala Coconut Development Board. Candidates aged between 18 and 40 years with strong physique were eligible for the training. Those interested may apply along with physically fit certificate from qualified doctors to the Project Officer, Women Development, Room No.71, Fourth Floor, Collectorate, on or before December 5, he added.

'Announce Rs.3,000 as 'fair and remunerative price' for sugarcane'

Various farmers' associations here have urged the Central government to announce Rs.3,000 as the "fair and remunerative price" (FRP) for a tonne of sugarcane. They also urged the State government to convene a tripartite meeting between the State government, sugar mills, and farmers to declare its "State-advised price" (SAP) which is over and above the FRP.

In a memorandum to Collector Jayashree Muralidharan, representatives of various farmers' bodies, including the Tamilaga Vivasayigal Sangham, Bharathiya Kisan Sangh, Agriculturists Wing of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and All India Kisan Sangh, pleaded that the recommendations of the Rangarajan Committee should not be accepted by both Central and State Governments.

"Its recommendations are mainly meant for promoting the profit of private mills," they alleged.

They pointed out that the committee had said that the FRP should be fixed by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices. Then, 70 per cent of the share of the prices of sugar, molasses, etc., should be added to that and declared as the procurement price. "This recommendation is disappointing," they said.

They were of the firm opinion that there was quite a lot of scope for the mills to deceive the farmers.

They submitted that the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) recommended Rs.1,550 as the price of sugarcane per tonne during the 2008-9 crushing season. But the same commission had recommended only Rs.1,077 per tonne for the 2009-10 crushing season.

They alleged that the commission was declaring absolutely unremunerative prices because of “other compulsions.”

They wanted this commission to function as a body “with powers” and at the same time with “no external interference.” While the Central government had declared only Rs.1,700 per tonne, it should announce Rs.3,000 per tonne as the FRP considering the skyrocketing prices of fertilizers and cultivation costs. “This should be taken up by the State government with the Centre,” they pleaded.

They contended that there was absolutely no possibility of the sugar mills sharing the price of the sugar and other by-products with the farmers because the Central government, which had been implementing such a sharing since 2005, had withdrawn it after a few years. All that should be done at present is that the State government should club the State Advised Price with the FRP announced by the Central government.

They also slammed the recommendation of the Rangarajan Committee that there need not be any restriction on supply of cane to the mills within a particular region and it could be supplied to any mill. This recommendation would hurt the farmers registered with both the cooperative and public sector mills. While the private mills might tend to cheat the growers, the farmers would not be able to get loans easily from banks.

The farmers’ representatives said all that the Tamil Nadu had done now is clubbing the FRP announced by the Central government, which is Rs.1,700 per tonne for the 2012-13 crushing season, with its previous year’s SAP of Rs.550. Besides, the transport charges of Rs.100 had made it in total Rs.2,350 per tonne.

“This gives a bitter taste,” they lamented and pleaded that the FRP announced by the Central government should be enhanced to Rs.3,000 per tonne.

Ryots expect bumper red gram crop



Thick growth of red gram crops under the transplanted method of cultivation has raised hopes of good yield among farmers this season.

After introducing the transplanted red gram this year, the Agriculture Department is all set to encourage these farmers to adopt this new technology by providing cash of Rs. 10,000 out of the total subsidy of Rs. 15,000 per hectare. The department has a target of covering 596 hectares of land under transplanted red gram across 20 blocks in the district, including Tirupattur, Alangayam, Madhanur and Jolarpet blocks, with roughly 30 hectares per block, according to officials.

Transplanted red gram was being cultivated in areas such as Ramanur, Chinnamottur, Chinnakallupalli and Ponneri in Jolarpet block and Vellakuttai, Vallipattu and Nimmiyampattu in Alangayam block.

A number of farmers, who had taken up the transplanted red gram, are happy with growth of the crop at the current stage. D. Sivakumar, a farmer in Ramareddiyur in Jolarpet block, who has cultivated red gram under the transplantation method on one hectare of land, said, "I regularly cultivate red gram crops. For the first time, I took up the transplantation method. It is four months since the crop was cultivated. We required less seeds for the transplantation method. In fact, the growth in the current stage is four times more than the crops cultivated under the normal method."

Each plant has 64 branches and was in the flowering stage now, he said, adding, "I gave the seedlings raised to 10 farmers in the surrounding area and asked them to take up the transplanted method under trial basis on a small area. If the weather supports us, we will get a really good yield as vegetative growth is wonderful."

For the Agriculture Department, the results of transplanted red gram are encouraging at this stage. Explaining the transplantation method, Joint Director of Agriculture, Vellore, K. Tamilselvan, said, "Seed treatment is done using bio-fertilizers and biocides. The seedlings are raised in polythene bags for a month and then planted on the fields."

Transplanted red gram crops are in the flowering stage now. "When compared to the normal method of cultivating red gram, there are more branches per plant under the transplanted method. In the normal method, there will be around 12 to 15 branches, while in the transplanted method, there are at least 50 to 60 per plant," he said. As a result, the number of flowers in each plant would also be more, with a minimum of 100 flowers in each branch, he pointed out.

The official observed that maximum potential of the crop was being tapped. "This is made possible through spacing technique. Farmers have been told to follow spacing of six feet in between rows and two feet in between plants. If there are excess plants, there will be competition for nutrients, and hence, spacing helps to a great extent," he explained.

The expected yield was 1,250 kg to 1,500 kg per hectare, he noted. Farmers, who had taken up the transplanted red gram cultivation, were given Rs. 15,000 as subsidy per hectare. Out of this, critical inputs such as chemical fertilizers, bio-fertilizers and micro nutrient mix is given under Integrated Nutrition Management and biocides, pesticides and weedicides are given under Integrated Pest Management for Rs. 5,000, he said.

"The remaining Rs. 10,000 is being credited to the bank accounts of these farmers to encourage them to adopt the technology. The process of depositing the money in their accounts is under way," Mr. Tamilselvan said.

Tripartite meeting sought to revise cane price

The Tirupattur Sugar Mill Sugarcane Growers' Sangam, Kethandapatti, has urged the State government to immediately convene a tripartite meeting to fix the price of sugarcane at Rs. 3,000 per tonne after getting the opinion of cane farmers.

R. Mullai, State Joint Secretary of Tamil Nadu Sugarcane Growers' Sangam affiliated to All India Kisan Sabha, in a press release said the government's announcement on fixing the price of sugarcane at Rs. 2,350 per tonne was disappointing.

Research project to look into enhancement of land productivity

A study on Multiple Water Use Systems for farmers of the Nilgiris has been initiated at the Central Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Institute (CSWCRTI) near here.

A team comprising O.P.S. Khola, head of the institute, S. Manivannan, Senior Scientist, and K. Rajan, Scientist, has been entrusted with the research project estimated to cost Rs. 40 lakhs.

Speaking to *The Hindu* Dr. Manivannan said that the objective of the system was to enhance the land and water productivity and livelihood security of small farmers of Nilgiris.

The system which has been put in place includes tea in upper reaches, vegetables in middle reaches and farm pond with cold water fish and grasses in lower reaches.

The system also includes livestock components like rabbit and geese units.

It will be evaluated for two years at the Research Farm of CSWCRTI and later tested in fields.

To a question, he said that the system was expected to increase the farm income of small farmers of Nilgiris and also reduce the usage of pesticides as the area under vegetables will come down.

Listing the reasons for undertaking the study, Dr. Manivannan said that over the years the yield in vegetable fields has been adversely affected due to water scarcity created by frequent dry spells.

Even during monsoon there was water shortage. In addition, there is scope to cultivate irrigated crops during summer (February to May) by using the harvested water.

Hitherto no attempts have been made to introduce multiple water use systems. Sectoral demand for water has been growing with industry and urban water use being the fastest growing sectors. 83 per cent of India's utilisable water is devoted to agriculture, mostly in the

form of irrigation. Demand from the domestic sector has remained low and accounts for only 5 per cent of the annual freshwater withdrawals in India.

The industrial sector in India is the second largest user of water, but it is not exactly known how much water these industries consume. Competition is growing rapidly as a result of declining water supplies and growing sectoral demands. Allocation of water from public systems is not based on social, economic, environmental and fundamental rights considerations, and thus it is inequitable.

An imminent reduction in share of water for agriculture from present level of 83 per cent to 72 per cent by 2025 is expected due to the increasing demand in other sectors.

Government subsidy for buying farm equipment

The State government has decided to provide subsidy ranging from 25 to 50 per cent to farmers for the purchase of farm equipment under the National Agricultural Development Programme (NADP).

According to a release from P. Sankar, Collector of Vellore, the government would be providing subsidy for the purchase of harvesting machines, weeding machines, power sprayers, threshing equipment, mini-tractors, power tillers and small farm equipment. A maximum of Rs. five-lakh-subsidy would be given to Adi Dravidar farmers and Rs. 4 lakh to other farmers.

The maximum subsidy payable to an individual farmer under the scheme would be Rs. 45,000. Subsidy ranging from 20 to 40 per cent would be given for the purchase of tractors of up to 40 HP capacity, power tillers and rotavators.

Interested farmers in Vellore revenue division should contact the office of the Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE), Department of Agricultural Engineering, opposite Thanthai Periyar E.V.R. Government Polytechnic College in Thorappadi, Vellore. Farmers in the Tirupattur division should approach the office of the AEE, Agricultural Engineering, Pudupettai Road, Tirupattur, while those in the Ranipet division should approach the office of the AEE, Agricultural Engineering, Anaicut Road, Walajapet.

Training in production of vegetable products

A training in commercial production of fruits and vegetable products will be held at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University on November 28 and 29.

According to a TNAU release, the training will cover making of dehydrated fruits and vegetables, mixed fruit jam, squash, pickles, candy, fruit bar, fruit toffee, and ketch-up.

Those interested can undertake the training by paying Rs. 1,000 in the form of a Demand Draft drawn in favour of Dean (Agricultural Engineering), payable at Coimbatore.

Borlaug Award for IARI scientists

This year's Borlaug Award has gone to K. V. Prabhu and Ashok Kumar Singh, scientists at the Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI), for their contribution to food security through Basmati rice research and development.

Announcing the award, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, Chairman of the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and head of the five-member jury for the award, said the two scientists were instrumental in producing high-yielding strains of Basmati rice that have significantly boosted farmer incomes and helped them compete in the international market.

While Dr. Prabhu has been associated with crop improvement programmes of wheat, barley, brassica and rice leading to the development of 14 varieties of rice, including Pusa Basmati 6 and Pusa Basmati 1121, Dr. Singh has pioneered changes in basic and applied research in rice genetics and breeding and was instrumental in improving the Pusa Basmati 1121 for resistance to blight and salinity tolerance.

The improved Basmati strain Pusa 1121, which now accounts for 70 per cent of Basmati cultivation in States like Punjab and Haryana, has more than doubled per hectare yield to about 45 tonnes and substantially increased farmers' income, Dr. Swaminathan said.

The award, instituted in honour of Nobel Laureate Normal Borlaug by Coromandel International, an entity of the Murugappa Group, will be presented to the scientists on November 28 at a function in Delhi. It carries a gold medal and citation and a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakh which will be shared them.

Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia will be present on the occasion.

Onion traders block road

Onion traders staged a road blockade on the old national highway between Hubli and Dharwad on Friday, alleging that officials of Shimoga district were unnecessarily harassing them.

Traders, who came out of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee yard, raised slogans and blocked the road outside the yard entrance at Amargol.

They alleged that despite having valid documents, they were being unnecessarily harassed.

The traders said they were regularly transporting onion to Shimoga district using “gate passes” issued by APMC authorities, which was accepted everywhere since the last two years.

However, of late Shimoga district officials had begun imposing hefty fines on traders, saying that the consignments didn't have valid permits.

While the “gate passes” were accepted as proof of having paid the taxes, they were only being rejected in Shimoga district, the traders alleged.

They demanded that State government take immediate steps to stop harassment of traders.

They said it was a token protest and they would be forced to intensify the agitation if remedial action was not taken.

Seminar on climatic vagaries

Minister for Youth Affairs P.K. Jayalakshmi will inaugurate a seminar on “Climatic vagaries and Wayanad” , organised jointly by the Wayanad Press Club and the Information and Public Relations Department, at 10 a.m..at Woodlands Hotel Auditorium here on Saturday.

The programme has been organised as part of the golden jubilee celebrations of the Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ). K.C. Rajagopal, president KUWJ, will preside over the function.

G. Mohankumar, senior scientist at the Centre for Earth Science Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, and P.K. Pradeepkumar, senior scientist, Centre for Water Resources Development and Management, Kozhikode, will present papers on various aspects of the issue. M.C. Narayanankutty, associate director, Regional Agriculture Research Station, will be the moderator.

Rally promotes use of bio-fertilizer

Biostat India Ltd organised a rally at Nandikotkur promoting bio-fertilizer for higher yields and chemical-free produce, according to a press note from area sales manager of the company T. Venkatramudu.

Tobacco exports show rising trend

Exports of tobacco and tobacco products have witnessed a rising trend during the first half of the current year with a growth of 26 per cent compared to the corresponding period last year.

The growth in exports of unmanufactured tobacco is more pronounced with a 30 per cent increase as against 10 per cent in export of tobacco products, Tobacco Board Chairman G. Kamalavardhana Rao said in a press release.

With the present trend, Indian exports of tobacco and tobacco products during 2012-13 are expected to match the record performance of \$ 924 million achieved during 2009-10.

Total exports of unmanufactured tobacco and tobacco products during April-September 2012 increased by 13 per cent, 26 per cent and 4 per cent in quantity, rupee and dollar terms respectively.

Exports of unmanufactured tobacco during April-September 2012 have increased by 18 per cent in terms of quantity, 30 per cent in value (rupee) terms and 8 per cent in value (dollar) terms compared to the exports made during the same period last year.

Decrease in tobacco products

Exports of tobacco products have decreased by 13 per cent and 9 per cent in quantity terms and in value (dollar) terms respectively but increased by 10 per cent in value (rupee) terms compared to the exports made during the corresponding period last year.

Major export markets for unmanufactured tobacco during the period were Belgium, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Korea, Netherlands, Russia, South Africa, UAE, USA and Yemen.

The production of cigarettes was 55,235.23 million pieces in April-September 2012 compared to 60,267.86 million pieces in April-September 2011.

Ex-factory sales stood at 54,060.08 and 56967.97 million pieces in the corresponding periods respectively.

Ryots demand speedy purchase of cotton

CPI and Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham (APRS) activists staged a demonstration in front of the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) office here on Friday demanding speedy purchase of cotton at Rs.5,000 per quintal instead of the stipulated Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs. 3,900 and opening of more procurement centres.

A delegation led by CPI district secretary Muppalla Nageswara Rao and APRS district general secretary N. Guravaiah and president B. Srinivasa Rao submitted a memorandum to CCI General Manager S.K. Panigrahi.

They also wanted the cotton that was soaked in rain during the Nilam cyclone to be purchased without preconditions. A compensation of Rs. 10,000 per acre of cotton fields damaged by the recent spell of torrential rains would help the farmers in mitigating their losses.

Mr. Panigrahi said nine procurement centres would be soon opened in the district on December 3 and 4. Steps for expediting cotton purchases would be taken, the GM assured the protestors.

'Mechanisation will prove beneficial to ryots'

Underscoring the need making the farmers aware of emerging technologies in agriculture, Collector Neetu Prasad on Friday said that farmers from the district could achieve record yield provided dissemination of technical knowledge.

Inaugurating a daylong training and orientation programme for the chairmen of the block-level farmers' advisory committees and the block technology managers on the revised guidelines of the Agricultural Technology Management Agency here, Ms. Neetu said that farmers from the

district were ahead of their counterparts in terms of achieving yield and introducing modern technologies only with the help of the ATMA staff.

Subsidy

She said that farm mechanisation was being implemented on a large scale in the district and a sum of Rs.18 crore towards subsidies was available with the agriculture department. Observing that not many small and marginal farmers were evincing interest in farm mechanisation, the Collector said that mechanisation would help farmers reduce the input costs.

Ms. Neetu advised the farmers to work with a vision and select crops basing on the future needs. She wanted them to make better use of various schemes launched by the government and avail facilities like crop loans and technical guidance.

Joint Director of Agriculture D. Prameela said efforts were on to assess the crop loss incurred due to the recent cyclone that hit the district badly and the objective was to ensure relief from the government only to the genuine victims.

She said the farmers must understand that crop insurance and input subsidy were different and separate procedures were there to apply for them.

Project Director of the ATMA K. Sitarama Raju said farmers committees were formed in all the 18 blocks and the revised guidelines were forwarded to all the blocks. Deputy Project Director of the ATMA Anjali was present.

Pesticide storage boxes set up in villages under IASP study



With easy access to pesticides is proving to be a major detrimental factor contributing to maximum number of farmers suicides, the International Association for Suicide Prevention

(IASP) has put up pesticide storage boxes in select villages as part of its study on “Secured storage of pesticides and its impact on suicides”.

About 1000 pesticide storage boxes have been set up at Polepalli, Ramannapet, Danvaigudem, V V Palem and a few other villages in Khammam rural and urban mandals as part of the IASP sponsored study. Vanda Scott, Development Consultant for IASP, visited Polepalli and a few other villages in Khammam rural mandal on Friday to oversee the conduct of the study. A team of psychiatrists, social workers, and other volunteers led by IASP National Representative for India R. Sateesh Babu accompanied Ms. Vanda Scott. The team highlighted the underlying theme of pesticide storage boxes and wanted the villagers to make proper use of the boxes to restrict access to pesticides. “We have set up about 1,000 pesticide storage boxes one each in the houses of farmers in the select villages as an integral part of the ongoing study, said Dr. Sateesh.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said the heads of the families were sensitised on the need to store the pesticides in the boxes, lock them up and keep the keys in their custody for avoiding the misuse of pesticides. The move is intended to curtail access to pesticides and check impulsive suicides involving the use of insecticides, the most common cause of farm suicides, he said. The use of non-toxic bio pesticides is considered to be a viable alternative in the given circumstances, he said underlying the need for community involvement in identifying the suicidal tendencies among the distressed persons and extending timely emotional support to the needy for prevention of suicides.

Ryots under KC, LLC told not to start rabi operations

Collector C. Sudharsan Reddy said that farmers under KC canal and Tungabhadra LLC would get water till the end of December for the current crop.

He told reporters that the KC canal would get a proportional allotment of 5.802 tmcft this year and so far only 0.4838 tmcft had been utilised and 3.318 tmcft would be available for irrigation needs.

Mr. Reddy said that two tmcft would be spared for drinking water for Kurnool and other areas from the KC canal quota.

By utilising the support from Tungabhadra dam, the water supply would be ensured for farmers till the end of December.

However, he asked farmers not to venture into rabi crop. Under KC canal, 58,000 acre had been cultivated up to 150 km and 1.90 lakh acre till 306 km.

He asked farmers under LLC too not to cultivate their second crop as there would be no water supply this year. The proportional allotment for LLC this year was 13.925 tmcft.

In view of drinking water needs, the second crop had been suspended, he said. Out of the LLC quota, 7.04 tmcft had been utilised so far and only 4.88 tmcft would be available for irrigation needs after sparing two tmcft for drinking needs.

Cane growers threaten to counter start of crushing season

A day ahead of the visit by Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy to his native Chittoor district, sugar cane growers here have threatened to counter the scheduled start of the crushing season in the State-run S.V. Co-Operative Sugar Factory near Tirupati on November 25.

They are furious over the government and the factory management preparing to start the 2012-13 crushing season, even as huge arrears payable to the farmers for the previous season remain unpaid. Leaders of the growers also are questioning the propriety of the factory preparing to start the crushing season without announcing the cane price.

Political angle

The stir also gets a political dimension with the farmers' wing of the YSR Congress party taking the lead and mobilising farmers against the government on the issue. Leaders of YSRC and the farmers associations - T. Adikesavulu Reddy, Chakrapani Reddy, Gunasekhar Naidu, Vasudeva Naidu, K. Chandrasekhar Reddy and others have in a statement demanded that the government peg sugar cane price at Rs.3,000 per tonne against the Rs.2,600 announced by the government, in view of the steep increase in the cost of farm inputs and other allied expenses.

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World Agriculture Forum-2013 to be held in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, NOV 24:

To discuss steps to make farming economically viable in the era of the WTO regime, a three-day World Agriculture Forum Congress will be organised here from November 4-7 next year.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will inaugurate the Congress, being held for the first time in Asia, which has the theme “Re-shaping agriculture for the sustainable future of small and marginal farmers”.

An agricultural trade fair will also be organised concurrently. As a prelude to the Congress, a meeting was held here today to discuss the agenda and related issues.

World Agriculture Forum Chairman Kenneth M. Baker; WAF Advisory Board chairman and former Prime Minister of New Zealand James B. Bolger; Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy; Agriculture ministers — Kanna Lakshminarayana (AP), Ramkrishan Kusmariya (Madhya Pradesh) and D Prasad Mishra (Odisha) — attended the meeting along with others.

The primary objective of the Congress was to discuss with all key stakeholders including farmers’ organisations, industry, Government and scientists the steps for “re-shaping and re-positioning” small farm-holder agriculture to make farming economically viable in the era of the WTO regime, WAF Chairman Baker said.

Speaking on the occasion, Bolger noted that the challenge was to feed nine billion people in the world in the next 40 years, up from seven billion now.

“About 800 million to one billion people are left hungry everyday now, out of the world’s population of seven billion. We have to feed not only these people but also an additional two

billion people in the next 40 years. We need to produce 70 per cent more food in the next 40 years,” Bolger pointed out.

The task, therefore, in front of agriculture sector was “immense”. “It’s not a question if it is possible but it’s a question of the will. The world can feed itself better if there is a political will,” the former Prime Minister observed.

“We need to use all the safe sides to reach the goal of feeding all,” he added.

Stating that the WAF was trying to reach out to the world, Bolger said the WAF Congress was for the first time being held outside the US.

Farmers’ body seeks removal of export trading controls



The Consortium of Indian Farmers’ Association (CIFA) has demanded the removal of all trading controls on exports of rice, wheat and cotton.

A national-level meet of farmers has asked the Government to come out with an exclusive budget for agriculture.

The CIFA has called for initiating a discussion on National Commission of Farmers in Parliament.

Demand perks up prices at Kochi tea sale

KOCHI, NOV 24:

A good demand perked up the prices of almost all varieties of tea at Kochi tea auction. At Cochin sale no. 47 dust category, the quantity on offer in CTC grades was 12,69,500 kg.

Market for good liquoring and popular marks of Kerala was fully firm to dearer by Rs 1 to Rs 3 and sometimes more. Others remained steady to firm and occasionally dearer following quality.

According to auctioneers Forbes, Ewart and Figgis, the orthodox grades also witnessed a steady market and the quantity on offer was 23,500 kg. Bulk of the offerings was absorbed by upcountry buyers and exporters.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted the best price of Rs 95/105, RD grades stood at Rs 100/110, SRD varieties fetched Rs 103/111 and SFD at Rs 103/124.

Cochin sale No.47 in leaf category also witnessed a good demand and the quantity on offer in orthodox grades was 244,500 kg.

Demand for Nilgiri bolder brokens and whole leaf was fully firm to dearer following quality.

Corresponding smaller brokens and fannings remained steady and tended to ease. Medium clean black, well made bolder brokens and whole leaf was fully firm to sometimes dearer.

Others were irregular and lower. Smaller brokens and fannings from the same origin was fully firm to sometimes dearer.

CTC leaf grades witnessed better demand and the quantity on offer was 1,01,500 kg. The market was fully firm to dearer by Rs 2 to Rs 3 and sometimes more.

In the dust category, Pasuparai SFD quoted the best prices of Rs 126 followed both by Injipara (Prm) RD and Kallayar SFD at Rs 125.

In the leaf grades, Chamraj Green Tea FOP (S) fetched the best prices of Rs 314 followed by P's Woodlands Hyson Green Tea at Rs 313.

Nation-wide campaign for promotion of millets



Millet Network of India (MINI), which has been promoting the usage of millets, will soon begin a nation-wide campaign to bring pressure on law makers.

MINI members would write letters to the Members of Parliament and other people's representatives in their respective geographies.

MINI is an umbrella association of non-governmental organisations, agri-economists, scientists and intellectuals who are strongly pitching for promotion of millets and bring them back to the kitchens of India.

"The Public Distribution System is one of the most important affirmative action programmes launched by the Government. In 2010-11, more than 56 million tonnes of foodgrains (read rice and wheat) were procured and the offtake was more than 52 mt. This accounts for more than 25 per cent of the total foodgrains production," a MINI draft, which will be despatched to the MPs, has said.

Referring to the origin and raise of PDS focus on the rice, the network said that the thrust on rice and wheat has undermined the local food systems. Besides reducing focus on other foodgrains, the PDS philosophy has also undermined community control over their food and farming.

"One of the offshoots of the rice and wheat-driven PDS is that people have slowly stopped cultivating traditional landraces of foodgrains. This makes people completely dependent on markets and the centralised PDS for their food needs," the network said.

This also has hit the nutritional status of rural communities as rural households meet 68 per cent of the total protein requirements from cereals.

The draft letter asked the MPs to highlight these issues when the National Food Security Bill comes up for discussion in Parliament and bring millets back on the menu of the poor.

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TODAY FARM NEWS

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Sugar industry to gain from govt's ethanol blending plan

The government's decision to implement mandatory blending of ethanol with petrol at market price has turned out to be a boon for the sugar industry as realisation may surge by up to 22 per cent to Rs 33 per litre from next month. The current supplies made are being at a provisional price of Rs 27.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) yesterday approved the proposal for oil marketing companies to directly fix the price of bio-ethanol with the producers. Mandatory blending of ethanol with petrol could now be implemented from as early as next month.

"A market-driven price is welcome for ethanol as it will bring stability to the blending programme and benefit the industry and farmers. In the absence of a domestic benchmark price for ethanol, the landed import price of Rs 33-34 per litre can be considered as the new price," said Vinay Kumar, managing director, National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories.

The blending programme is presently being implemented in 13 states with blending level of about two per cent against a mandatory target of five per cent. The government has also allowed import of ethanol to overcome shortfalls faced by both oil companies and the chemical industry. The chemical industry, led by companies like Jubilant and India Glycols, use ethanol as a raw material.

Kishor Shah, director (finance) at Balrampur Chini Mills said the decision is a win-win for the oil companies and the sugar industry. "While market forces of demand and supply will keep determining prices from time to time, the industry will be able to commit maximum quantities at a good price." He added that given the current market situation, a price of around ~31 per litre is reasonable for ethanol.

Between 2008-09 and 2010-11, oil companies had saved over Rs 300 crore through blending. Five per cent blending of ethanol with petrol began in 2007, but came to a halt in 2009 owing to low supply following fall in sugarcane output. It was reintroduced in November 2010 and the sugar industry has been selling it at Rs 27 per litre since then. Ethanol is considered a green fuel and its blending with petrol will help reduce India's heavy dependence on crude oil imports.

CCEA in August 2010 had approved the ad hoc price of ~27 per litre for ethanol for procurement by oil companies. This price was subject to adjustment on the basis of recommendations by an expert committee for pricing of ethanol. Later, an expert committee headed by Planning Commission member Saumitra Chaudhury considered the issue of pricing of ethanol. In its report, submitted in March 2011, the expert committee recommended a formula which was derived broadly from the price of motor spirit. Subsequently, a report by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, recommended the fixation of price of ethanol through the market mechanism.

Rice shellers told to provide information about crop purchase

The Punjab government has asked state rice shellers to provide [information](#) about [crop purchase](#) and sale to the excise and taxation department. The move follows after tax sleuths found some of dealers or rice [exporters](#) were not paying due purchase tax on [paddy](#) on the pretext of exporting rice.

Punjab levies 5 % of purchase tax on paddy.

"We have found that some of people (rice trade) do not export full quantity of rice. They export rice partially (and as a result of it), full purchase tax is not accounted for," Punjab Excise and Taxation Commissioner A Venuprasad said today.

He said, therefore, the department has decided that rice shellers would provide information about purchase of paddy or basmati rice and its sale from Punjab to other states.

This measure is expected to keep a check on "illegal diversion" of crop to evade tax, official sources said. With Punjab being an agrarian state, the government collects major chunk of tax revenue from agricultural commodities. The state this year is expecting to collect about Rs 900

crore from paddy crop, Rs 100 crore more than what it realised last season, on the back of heavy arrival.

Excise and taxation department has also asked the rice exporters to first pay the tax at the time of paddy purchase and they can claim refund after rice is exported out of the paddy.

"Those rice exporters who have export orders are not required to pay purchase tax (at the time of purchase). But those who do not have export orders should pay tax first on paddy purchase and thereafter if they get orders, they are eligible to claim refund," Venuprasad said.

Excise and Taxation department has said that any taxable person purchases paddy within the state will have to pay purchase tax on the same.

Sugar ends steady on adequate supply

Quiet conditions developed on the wholesale sugar market today as prices by and large moved both way on small alternate bouts of trading before settling at last levels.

Marketmen said sufficient stocks in the markets against demand, mainly held prices continuously unchanged for the third straight day.

The following were today quotations per quintal:

Sugar ready: M-30 3,600-3,750, S-30 3,575-3,725. Mill delivery: M-30 3,380-3,710; S-30 3,360-3,690.

Sugar mill gate (including duty): Mawana 3560, Kinnoni 3710, Asmoli 3620, Doralá 3530, Budhana N.T, Thanabhavan N.T, Ramala 3390, Bulandshar N.T, Morna 3400, Sakoti 3400, Chandpur NT, Dhanora 3490, Khatuli 3475, Baghpat 3410, Amroha NT, Simbholi 3610, Modi Nagar 3520, Anupshar 3390 and Nazibabad 3380.

Commodities weekly review: Edible oils rise

Edible oil prices rose on the wholesale oils and oilseeds market during the past week on the back of increased buying by vanaspati millers, driven by the ongoing wedding season.

A few oils in the non-edible section, also moved up on increased offtake by consuming industries.

Traders said fresh buying by vanaspati millers and retailers to meet the wedding season demand mainly led to rise in wholesale edible oil prices.

They said firm demand from consuming industries against restricted arrivals from producing belts influenced prices of select non-edible oils.

In the national capital, groundnut mill delivery (Gujarat) and mustard expeller (Dadri) oils rose by Rs 200 and Rs 100 to Rs 11,900 and Rs 8,300 per quintal, respectively.

Mustard pakki and kachi ghani oils traded higher by Rs 10 each to Rs 1,240-1,380 and Rs 1,395-1,495 per tin, respectively.

Sesame and cottonseed mill delivery (Haryana) oils which remained steady for the major part of week, met with fag-end buying and ended higher by Rs 50 each at Rs 8,750 and Rs 6,950 per quintal, respectively.

In line with a general firming trend, soyabean refined mill delivery (Indore) and soyabean degum (Kandla) oils moved up by Rs 50 each to Rs 7,150 and Rs 6,750, while crude palm oil (ex-kandla) shot up by Rs 200 to Rs 7,100 per quintal.

Palmolein (rbd) and Palmolein (Kandla) oils too seen in demand and gained Rs 50 each at Rs 7,250 and Rs 6,800 per quintal, respectively.