

Tapioca crop proves too weak to weather storm



The tapioca farmers at Nanamedu in Cuddalore district are the worst hit due to the rain, as the tubers have started decaying due to water stagnation— Photo: C. Venkatachalapathy

The strong winds and substantial rain that lasted throughout Wednesday, as fallout of Cyclone Nilam, caused extensive damage to standing horticulture crops.

The tapioca farmers are the worst hit as the tubers have started decaying by water stagnation.

M. Raghuraman, a farmer at Nanamedu, told this correspondent that when the tubers were ripe for harvesting, the inclement weather arising out of Cyclone Nilam destroyed the crops.

For raising tapioca in an acre, he had spent Rs. 50,000 —Rs 60,000, but his expectations of getting good returns were belied. The rotting tubers could not be sold in the market, nor left in the ground.

If not removed, the tubers would emanate foul smell. Therefore, he decided to mow down the standing crops, along with the stems and tubers, in the farm itself, so these would serve as manure for the next crop.

Mr. Raghuraman said that he had to do this with a heavy heart. He further said that tapioca was a year-long crop. He lost the previous year crop in Cyclone Thane, but mustered courage to raise another crop this year. But his hopes of harvesting a bumper yield were dashed, he added.

Another farmer, Geetha Veeramani, said that the entire tapioca crop, on about 35 acres in Nanamedu area, got spoilt by the rain. The tubers could not even be used as fodder and, therefore, it caused utter loss to the tapioca farmers, she said.

The gusts of winds that blew through the district also felled the fruit-bearing banana trees at places such as Othiyadikuppam, Nellikuppam, Vazhisothanaipalayam and Ramapuram.

Training in banana fibre

A training programme on banana fibre and rural employment would be offered to banana growers and entrepreneurs at Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Vamban on November 5 (Monday) from 10 a.m. In a release on Thursday, C. Manoharan, Collector, said that the district accounted for 2,639 hectares of banana with 2,500 plantains raised a hectare. Much of the plantains were destroyed or buried during post-harvest season. On the other hand, inadequate supply of fibre posed a challenge to industries producing fibre yarn and fibre paper. The training aimed at generating rural employment through value addition to banana fibre. Details could be obtained by dialling 04322-290321.

Nutmeg farmer cries foul

Award-winning farmer Abraham Mathew from Koorachundu in the district has accused his brother of unduly taking credit for developing a nutmeg variety, 'Kadukanmakkal Kochujathi,' which Mr. Mathew developed several years ago.

At a press conference here on Wednesday, Mr. Mathew alleged that his brother had fleeced the authorities by renaming a variety of nutmeg, the saplings of which were given to his brother by him years ago. Mr. Mathew alleged that certain officials from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Peruvannamuzhi, which itself had earlier certified his invention in the cloning of nutmeg variety, was taking side with his brother in his dishonest deed.

Mr. Mathew said that it was from a recent article published in the magazine 'Spice India' that he came to know about his brother taking "false credit" for developing the nutmeg variety after giving it a new name. "Anyone can easily understand that the new variety of nutmeg which my brother now claiming to be his invention is nothing but the one I developed years ago," he said.

According to Mr. Mathew, his nutmeg variety, 'Kadukanmakkal Kochujathi,' was developed at the end of nearly 30 years' efforts. It was selected as a superior tree from among the 100 seedlings planted at his place in 1971 to produce high yielding saplings through budding thereafter, he said.

"I had also given a few of its saplings to my brother years ago, which he now claims to be his invention," said Mr. Mathew, whose efforts in developing the high yielding nutmeg variety had earlier won him recognitions.

Steps to enforce ban on import of poultry products

: A meeting convened by Minister for Animal Husbandry K.P.Mmohanan to review the ban on import of poultry and poultry products into the State decided to strengthen surveillance at check-posts in border areas and to intensify patrolling along routes likely to be used to smuggle in poultry products.

The meeting, here, on Thursday, decided to ensure police presence at the check-posts run by the Animal Husbandry Department. Mobile squads will be deployed to check smuggling. District Collectors have been asked to convene meetings of officials from the Animal Husbandry, Health and Food Safety departments on Friday.

Erratic monsoon plays havoc with paddy sector

Paddy cultivation has slipped out of gear in upper Kuttanad area as a result of the delayed south west monsoon and unpredictable showers during the ongoing north east monsoon.

Intermittent rain had soaked the harvested paddy kept in open fields and the mature lot ready for harvest.

The increased moisture content in paddy was the immediate problem faced by farmers said E.N. Dasappan, leader of the All India Kisan Sabha.

Mr. Dasappan said mill owners were demanding additional quantity of paddy to make up for the stock with moisture content beyond the stipulated level.

“The millers are expected to return 68 kgs of rice to Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation for every quintal they procure. The rate has been fixed by the Central government after providing for 17 per cent moisture in the paddy we procure,” said one of the millers.

He also points to lack of proper winnowing by the farmers who are satisfied with the winnowing done by the combined harvester. Hence the demand for more paddy, he said.

According to Mr. Dasappan, the millers were demanding an additional one kg of paddy for every one per cent rise in moisture level and this has put the farmers in a fix.

The believe that this is highly exploitative and in Vaikom, the discontent among the farmers had led the local MLA, K Ajith, holding a meeting of all stakeholders to resume the stalled procurement process.

Meanwhile, the farmers in Vechoor area have called for a more liberal attitude by the public sector Vechoor Rice Mill, run by the Oil Palm India Ltd.

According to Mr Dasappan, last year, the Mill had taken more than 2,000 tonnes. The Kisan Sabha has alleged that they were colluding with private millers.

The current predicament faced by the paddy cultivators is due to the delayed sowing of the viruppu season because of the delayed monsoon, it is pointed out.

The changed State government policy on power subsidy disbursal too had contributed to the delay in sowing of the viruppu crop, it is pointed out

In fact, this problem is expected to continue into the mundakan season which too will be delayed.

Mill owners demand extra paddy to make up for the stock with moisture content beyond the stipulated level.

Cocoa farmers facing crisis

Cocoa farmers in the district are facing a crisis due to a new disease affecting the beans resulting in high-level of decay, in addition to the sudden fall in the prices of both dried and wet beans.

Principal Agriculture Officer V.M.Sasikumar who visited the areas told *The Hindu* on Thursday that a new disease has been identified and it is being studied. Farmers would be told of the measures to counter it, he said.

Cocoa is mainly cultivated along with coconut palms. However, in Idukki farmers cultivate it as inter crop with pepper and coffee in addition as a single crop. As per the estimate of the Agriculture Department, there are 3,500 hectares of cocoa cultivation in the district.

Large scale cultivation is in Adimaly, Kattappana, Kamakshy Vathikudy, Mariyapuram, Kanjikuzhy Murickassery and in low range areas of Thodupuzha. Mr. Sasikumar said that most of the farmers prefer to sell cocoa as dried beans and it is considered as a crop that compensates their income when the prices and level of production of other cash crops fall.

Call for action to improve crop productivity

The Zonal Research Extension Advisory Council meeting of Kerala Agriculture University for the High Ranges zone on Thursday stressed the need for focussed action and research to improve the productivity of crops.

P. Vikraman, Principal Agricultural officer, in his inaugural speech, said researchers should find effective measures to control diseases in pepper and ginger.

He invited the attention of policy-makers, farmers and researchers to the shift in cropping pattern in the region and changes in climatic conditions.

He stressed the need for promoting scented paddy varieties and the traditional paddy cultivation of the district.

Homey Cherian, Director, Directorate of Areca Nut and Spices Development, Kozhikode, said the production of pepper had declined drastically and a combined effort was needed to rejuvenate pepper groves.

Farmers' representatives demanded quality assurance for organic inputs. They demanded that Wayanad be declared a special agricultural zone for promoting agriculture.

The meeting suggested long-term measures for the conservation of water and soil moisture in the High Ranges to address drought. It decided to explore the possibility of growing fruits such as lychee, mangosteen and strawberry in Idukki and Wayanad districts. Various problems in cropping in the High Ranges zone were discussed.

Two new selections of cardamom, PS 27 and P 14 (Malabar and Vazhukka type), would go for field trials. A proposal for the release of a high-yielding black-pepper variety, "Culture 5308," will be considered by an expert committee.

Papers on emerging weed problems; major, secondary and micro nutrients, disease management in spices and banana; impact of climate change on paddy cultivation; and the need for irrigating pepper in the dry months were discussed. T.R. Gopalakrishnan, Director of Research, KAU, presided over the meeting.

We're committed to protecting farmers' interests'

Chief Minister hosts 'High Tea' for Rajyotsava Award winners

Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar on Thursday said that the government is committed to protecting the interests of farmers and the people of the State with reference to the Cauvery issue.

Interacting with presspersons here on the sidelines of "High Tea" hosted for Rajyotsava Award winners, Mr. Shettar did not answer how the government will implement Wednesday's Cauvery Monitoring Committee directive to Karnataka to release 6.2 tmcft waters to Tamil Nadu by November 15.

Earlier in the day, the former Lok Sabha Member G. Made Gowda, who has been spearheading a protest in Mandya against release of Cauvery waters to Tamil Nadu, met Mr. Shettar. Mr. Made Gowda is learnt to have urged the Chief Minister to make earnest efforts to find a permanent solution to the Cauvery issue. The "At Home" was attended by dignitaries from various walks of life selected for this year's Rajyotsava Award. Mr. Shettar greeted each one of the award winners before leaving for the award distribution ceremony.

Chief Secretary S.V. Ranganath, Chief Minister's Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola, Additional Director-General of Police Praveen Sood and Secretary, Information, Kannada and Culture Basavaraju were present.

Steps being taken to maintain minimum price of turmeric

About 10,000 farmers to participate in dharna in front of Parliament

"The Turmeric Farmers' Association of India is taking various steps to maintain minimum price of turmeric," association president P.K. Deivasigamani told *The Hindu* on Tuesday. He said that close to 10,000 turmeric farmers are expected to participate in a dharna in front of the Parliament in New Delhi on December 10 and 11.

"The demonstration is aimed at getting the Union Government's attention to fulfil the various demands of turmeric farmers across the country, which includes forming a separate board for turmeric on par with the boards for other commodities such as tea, coffee and coconut, to establish a turmeric production and marketing research centre and to fund mechanisation of turmeric farms. Other important demands of the association to the Government are to put an end to online trading of turmeric and stop import of the commodity from Vietnam, China and Cambodia to maintain minimum price of turmeric in India," the association president noted.

About inability to maintain turmeric price after the association announced minimum price for a quintal at Rs. 9,000 in Tamil Nadu, Mr. Deivasigamani said that they were in the process of organising farmers to achieve the goal.

"With 15 lakh turmeric farmers in the country, organising them is not an easy task. Some farmers sold turmeric at a lesser price as they had to meet immediate and unavoidable expenses. We are forming

village-level turmeric farmers' committees. Work is also underway to make the association strong like the National Egg Coordination Committee – the poultry farmers' body that fixes the wholesale price of egg. About three decades ago, the NECC announced the price of egg for the first time but it took three years for them to establish their price," he observed.

He said that the association is making arrangements for establishing turmeric storage facilities across Tamil Nadu, where farmers can preserve turmeric and sell it when the market price is good.

"Nationalised banks are ready to give Produce Pledge Loan – 60 to 70 per cent of the value of the produce – to the farmers and this will be instrumental in helping farmers realise better prices for their produce," he said. After a discussion with farmer's representatives from Andhra Pradesh in Erode on Monday, to announce base price of turmeric in that State, he said that the association announced the price of a quintal at Rs. 10,000 in Pune on October 15.

"The same price will be announced at Nizamabad (Andhra Pradesh) on November 12. It is Rs. 1,000 more than the price announced in Tamil Nadu as buyers have to travel 900 more km to reach the markets to buy turmeric. The difference in price is like the difference in egg rate announced by NECC in various places across the country due to various reasons," Mr. Deivasigamani added.

Sowing a farm revival in Afghanistan

"We used to cultivate citrus fruits, olives, peaches, apricots and apples on more than 11,000 acres of land in each province of Afghanistan. But now we start from zero, with just 10 acres of land each for almond cultivation," Mohammed Musa Sharifi gives a picture of how much the war has cost the people of his nation.

But over the past 10 years, the nation has taken up measures to revive agriculture and animal husbandry, the latest of which included a study tour by a team of civil servants like Mr. Sharifi of the farms under the Kerala Livestock Development Board.

On Thursday, the team met Agriculture Minister K.P. Mohanan at his residence in the city and shared their experience of the eight-day training given by the Board.

"The training session was dynamic, interesting and informative. This will help us revive our agriculture sector because we have to start all over again after the war destroyed everything. Our country has always received support from India, and we hope that it continues to be mutual and beneficial," Hojat Ullah, Capacity Development Officer, United Nations Development Programme, said.

He said that before the war, 85 per cent of the country's population was self-sufficient in food. However, the years of war had destroyed the land. The support in this sector was crucial because the nation had to feed its people.

The eight-member team, which included officials from the Agriculture and Animal Husbandry departments of various provinces in Afghanistan, was taken to various agriculture and livestock farms in Mattupetty and Munnar.

The team had a brief interaction with farmers in Mavelikara.

Mr. Sharifi said the people had to pay a heavy price for neglecting their land for so long and hence progress could be made only on a slow pace.

“The soil has lost its fertility and we are no more able to cultivate as we used to. But now we are slowly encouraging participation of the private sector in farming and livestock cultivation,” he said.

Protest by farmers



Centre's policies opposed: Farmers and farm workers, under the banner of Akhil Bharatiya Kisan Sabha and Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union, stage a protest against the Central government's 'anti-farmer' policies, in New Delhi on Thursday.

Crops inundated; six dead

North-East monsoon turns vigorous, heavy rain likely today

While cyclonic storm 'Nilam' spared the State, torrential rains tailing its landfall brought vast stretches of crops in Chittoor, Nellore, Prakasam, Guntur and East Godavari districts under water and claimed the lives of six persons.

Three casualties took place due to electrocution, one each in Nellore, East Godavari and Anantapur, and another in Prakasam in a wall-collapse. Two other rain-related deaths were also reported from Nellore.

North-East monsoon became vigorous over the State aided by the storm, causing downpour at many places. The lashing was such that Vinjamur in Nellore district recorded a rainfall of 16 cm, the State's highest, Ongole, Tirumala 15 cm each, Darsi 14 cm, Addanki, Cumbum and Kavali 13 cm each,

Rajampet, Bheemunipatnam and Podili 12 cm each , Venkatagiri and Avanigadda 10 cm each. G. Sudhakar Rao, director, State Meteorological Office (SMO), said most places in Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema received rains ranging up to 6 to 7 cm each on an average.

Cloudy weather

A cloudy weather prevailed in Telangana with Hyderabad and its surroundings receiving intermittent drizzle throughout the day. Places in this region too were likely to be lashed by heavy rains on Friday along with Coastal Andhra, according to an SMO warning. Paddy crop over an extent of 1,87,500 acres in Nellore, East Godavari, Guntur, Prakasam and Chittoor which bore the brunt of the fury, came under a sheet of water. Agriculture officials, who submitted a preliminary report to the government, however, ruled out damage to paddy as the plants would straighten once the winds subsided. Several streams and tanks in these districts overflowed, with some developing slight breaches, threatening to inundate low-lying habitations around.

Cotton farmers demand Collector's transfer

Cotton farmers in Adilabad Revenue Division staged protests at different places on Thursday demanding the transfer of Collector A. Ashok, accusing him of pursuing anti-farmer policies.

They burnt effigies of the top officials as a measure of resentment.

It may be recalled that farmers had walked out of a meeting chaired by Mr. Ashok in Adilabad on Wednesday to address the issue of moisture content in cotton.

They alleged that he had colluded with traders in denying them remunerative prices for their produce on grounds of excessive moisture content.

At Tamsi mandal, angry farmers under the aegis of Rythu Sangham even demanded the Collector's suspension.

“We will hold Mr. Ashok responsible for any suicide by cotton farmers in the future,” warned K. Goverdhan Reddy, a farmer from Tamsi.

‘Rasta roko’

The transfer of the Collector was also demanded at Bela mandal headquarter where a ‘rasta roko’ was organised jointly by the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) activists and farmers.

The farmers here as well as in Talamadugu mandal headquarter village accused Mr. Ashok of following anti-farmer policies.

State to fix MSP for milk procurement from farmers



Final decision will be taken in consultation with Chief Minister, says Viswaroop. State has no control over procurement/sale price of milk by private dairies: Minister

The government is planning to fix MSP (minimum support price) for procurement of milk from farmers and it will make a policy announcement on this in a week.

Animal Husbandry Minister P. Viswaroop said a final decision on the proposal would be taken in consultation with Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy.

At this week's Prajahitham media conference here on Thursday to highlight various activities of his department, he said as of now, the government had no control over procurement/sale price of milk by private dairies. Steps would be taken to implement MSP once the government announced it.

The Minister said an inquiry had been ordered into supply of adulterated milk by some private dairies and persons found guilty would be punished severely.

Milk supplied by private dairies would be tested for quality under Food Safety and Standards Act.

Mr. Viswaroop denied that the Congress government diluted government dairies and said it was the TDP with N. Chandrababu Naidu as Chief Minister which, 'did this mischief' by weakening the Mutually-Aided Cooperative Societies Act.

The Minister disclosed that although burdensome, the government was procuring nearly 2 lakh litres of cow milk daily to help farmers. Plans were afoot to supply this milk to inmates of the government-run hostels.

He said diesel subsidy on fishermen's trawlers would be continued although it was discontinued by the Centre. Another notification would be issued to fill the remaining 300 vacant posts veterinary staff. In two months, 800 posts of veterinary assistants/ attendants would be filled.

The Minister claimed livestock diseases, which prevailed at 421 villages in 2009, were now confined to 10 habitations, indicating they were on wane due to vaccination. This became possible following establishment of a Rs. 14-crore vaccine unit through which vaccine was supplied to Orissa and a revenue of Rs. 23 crore was earned.

Farmers to move apex court against ban on GM crop trials

The Consortium of Indian Farmers' Associations (CIFA) and Federation of Independent Farmers' Associations (FIFA) including Lok Satta Party (LSP) will file a petition in the Supreme Court opposing the recommendation of an expert panel for a 10-year moratorium on genetically-modified (GM) crop trials.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, president of Lok Satta Party Jayaprakash Narayan, who also heads FIFA, and secretary general of CIFA P. Chengal Reddy said the Prime Minister had favourably responded to the suggestion that the Centre should make out a strong case against the moratorium.

The Supreme Court could not take decisions that affect the livelihood and health of crores of farmers and consumers, they felt.

Crop loans given to 5.68 lakh farmers: Collector

Efforts are on to promote farm mechanisation, she says



Paying tributes:Collector Neetu Kumari Prasad garlanding the statue of Potti Sriramula in Kakinada on Thursday. —PHOTO: S. RAMBABU

Stating that top priority was being accorded to agriculture sector in the district, Collector Neetu Prasad on Thursday said t crop loans to the tune of Rs.1,704 crore had been provided to 5.68 lakh farmers in the district during the current kharif season.

Ms. Neetu along with Superintendent of Police C.M. Trivikram Varma and other officials participated in the Andhra Pradesh Formation Day celebrations here. After garlanding the statue of Potti Sri Ramulu at P.R. Government College junction, she hoisted the tricolour and addressed a public meeting at Ambedkar Bhavan.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said efforts were on to promote farm mechanisation in the district by distributing implants worth Rs. 6.8 crore with 50 per cent subsidy. Equal importance was given to promote horticulture and dairy as well, she said.

Ms. Neetu said women self-help groups were functioning well in the district and Rs. 245 crore had been distributed to 9,181 groups in the rural areas towards the linkage loans. Employment had been provided to 5,098 unemployed under Rajiv Yuva Kiranalu scheme and Rs. 268 crore had been spent on development of infrastructure and facilities in the government schools under Rajiv Vidya Mission.

Referring to the tourism sector, the Collector said a two-day beach festival would be celebrated at Vakalapudi from November 30 and tourism circuit would be developed between Sarpavaram, Samalkot, Pithapuram, and Draksharama. Efforts were on to develop eco tourism at Maredumilli, she said.

Later, the Collector distributed assets worth Rs. 40 crore to the beneficiaries of various welfare schemes. Cultural performances by the students of various educational institutions enthralled the audience.

Rain provides relief to farmers across districts

Widespread rain across the district, on account of a cyclone in the Bay of Bengal, has given immense relief to farmers in the district. Agriculture scientists described the rain as life-saving for the standing crops such as Bengalgram and jowar.

The district recorded an average rainfall of 13.3 mm. Srisailam recorded the highest rainfall of 60 mm, followed by Dornipadu with 34 mm, Peapuly with 24.6 mm, Rudravaram with 22.2 mm and Chagalamarri with 20 mm. Except Aluru, all mandals recorded rainfall.

One day later, submerged fields dampen farmers' hopes

Water runoff from central districts is an overload on the channels that are threatening to breach



besieged:Collector T.Munusamy inspecting a paddy field in Nagapattinam district.

A dead goat swamped by flies was laid out along a rugged road near Vadagudi, as if to testify to the loss and subsequent claim for livestock compensation. A shrivelled old woman, weathered by years stood crouched along the roadside, after being forced out of her hut by inundation. She, like her other village folks, dotted the nondescript roads and its rugged terrains in a bid to air their grievances, as the Collector's entourage toured Keezhvelur, and Thirukuvalai, to ascertain the damage inflicted by the rains here.

These images formed visual snippets of loss, destitution and grief, as the district woke up to a dry, yet moist day on Thursday, hours after the passage of cyclonic storm 'Nilam'.

But the recurring and telling images were those of missing paddy fields – in whose place were watery expanses that blurred landscapes and erased contours between river channels and paddy fields. At Pasukidaiveli village, the Madhiullan channel was on a coterminous flow with the adjoining paddy fields, blurring the embankment.

Until a month ago, the farmers who had looked up skywards were now looking to start all over again, with fresh sowing, and fresh raising of nurseries. However, this would be possible only after the fields drain out in the days to come.

In the midst of completely submerged fields of directly sown and transplanted nurseries, there were plots of community nurseries that were still to be transplanted. These plots of nurseries were decayed, after days of submergence.

As part of the comprehensive Scheme for Samba, the State Government had promised a subsidy component of Rs.19,000 per acre, that included compensation for land use where community nurseries were raised. As of date, these nurseries have so far received only the seed subsidy of Rs.4,000 and the remaining subsidy component was yet to be disbursed. For the farmers - who had raised community nurseries, and those others transplanted - the complete decimation of fields, is a pinching loss, in the light of costs incurred so far.

According to preliminary information, over 81,100 ha were fully and partially submerged.

This includes 7,659 ha in Keezhayur and 10,040 ha in Keezhvelur blocks.

According to the agricultural department's rainfall figures, the normal average rainfall for October was 212.30mm. However, the rainfall received in a fortnight, were as follows: Thirupoondi received the highest rainfall of 792mm, followed by Thalainayar 722mm; Nagapattinam 710mm; Vedaranyam 693mm; Kollidam 618mm; Tharangambadi 613mm; Sirkazhi 549mm; Manalmedu 487mm; and Mayiladuthurai 450mm. The district has received an average rainfall of 626.1mm, registering an excess of 413.8mm in the last fortnight. The average rainfall received in October was 861.1mm placing the rainfall received four times higher.

In addition, the runoff of rainfall from the central districts is an overload on the channels here, threatening to breach. According to Kaveri Danapalan, Cauvery Delta Farmers Protection Association, rainfall figures for the tail-end district of Nagapattinam ought to include the excess rainwater runoff from the other delta districts. Also, farmers here believe that release of water in the first week of September would have spared the farmers of this predicament.

Inspecting the submerged areas of 268 ha irrigated under Odampokki channel, Collector T.Munusamy issued directions to clear the blockages along river Devanadhi, from Mudikondam upto Elanjiyam channels.

According to the administration, 14 houses were fully damaged, and 13 houses were partially damaged. The livestock casualties were placed at 105 in the district. Also, five transformers and 100 electrical posts were damaged.

Submerged fields in Thevur, Valivalam, Keezhvenmani, Anaikudi, Pasukidaiveli, Anaimangalam, were inspected. However, the PWD officials were not part of the entourage that sought to ascertain the drainage in the channels.

Water runoff from central districts is an overload on the channels that are threatening to breach

Aftermath of 'Nilam'

Over 81,100 hectares of fields submerged

14 houses fully and 13 partially damaged

Livestock casualties reach 105 in district

Five transformers and 100 electrical posts damaged

Cotton farmers in a catch-22 situation



Farmer Dursa Swamy tries to show moisture content in freshly picked cotton at his field at Sawargaon near Adilabad on Wednesday.— PHOTO: BY ARRANGEMENT

After passing through an extremely difficult phase brought about this season by a steep hike in price of all agricultural inputs, cotton farmers in Adilabad are now faced with the unforeseen and more challenging problem of high moisture content in the produce. No purchaser, be it private or the Cotton Corporation of

India (CCI), is ready to give them a remunerative price for their cotton which invariably has a moisture content much beyond the permissible limits.

The question of moisture content has become a serious problem for farmers only this year as private purchasers have decided to follow relevant governmental norms. While they are offering over Rs. 200 above the minimum support price of Rs. 3,900 per quintal for dry A grade cotton with a moisture content not beyond 8 per cent, deductions are being applied for the produce with greater content of wetness.

“Freshly picked cotton at this time of the year exhibits a moisture content of even 20 per cent in some cases. It is due to the black cotton soils,” points out farmer Dursa Swamy of Batti Sawargaon village in Adilabad mandal.

“Yes, cotton in the early stages has a natural high moisture content,” agrees Adilabad Assistant Director of Agriculture C. Narsingu. “The moisture content starts decreasing only after a couple of weeks into the harvest season,” he adds.

On the other hand, traders and purchasers say a price beyond Rs. 3,700 for a quintal of cotton will only result in irrecoverable losses to them. “The price of a candy of cotton bale has fallen from Rs. 34,000 to Rs. 33,300 in just a matter of few days. Similarly, the price of cottonseed oil cake has fallen from Rs. 1,700 to Rs. 1,600 per quintal during this period,” points out a trader. The solution perhaps lies in the government relaxing the rules a bit. “Or else, it can announce bonus for farmers,” suggested farmer leader B. Goverdhan Reddy.

Farmers seek national level policy in trading animal-based products

“It is three days since the Government of Kerala imposed a ban on bringing eggs and chicken from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, but no effort has been taken by the Animal Husbandry Department (AHD), Government of India, to set right the issue by reassuring the Government of Kerala that there is no bird flu panic among broilers and egg laying chicken,” poultry farmers here said.

The egg industry in Namakkal is mainly dependent on consumption in Tamil Nadu and Southern districts in Kerala. Kerala consumes more than one crore eggs (about 28 per cent) of the total egg production of 3.58 crore a day in this region.

“An overnight ban without prior intimation will directly affect the farmers even when their produce is safe for consumption. It is high time the AHD, Government of India, forms a high level committee to frame guidelines for a ‘National Animal Originated Trade Policy’ to regulate trade of animal-based products such as chicken, egg, meat and fish. “This will ensure that the entire industry does not suffer a setback during outbreaks in one part of the country, as the concern is to stop spread of those diseases from animals to humans,” general secretary of the Livestock and Agri Farmers Trade Association P.V. Senthil told *The Hindu* .

He pointed out that the World Organisation for Animal Health regulates such guidelines in the international level to ensure that animal related contagious diseases such as bird flu did not spread from an affected country to the other.

The Government of Kerala took the decision as there were no such guidelines in India. “How can we expect countries that import egg and chicken to understand that Tamil Nadu – a State in South India – is free from bird flu and that it is safe to import from our State and continue importing?” he questioned.

Bird flu outbreak

Bird flu outbreak has been witnessed twice or thrice a year in India – in wild birds, turkey, ducks and chicken – in the last five years. “India being a large country this could still happen despite efforts to control it. Meanwhile, the Centre should monitor steps taken by the Government of affected States on quarantine and sanitation aspects to check spread of the virus.

“This will not only serve as a double filter to check spread of the disease but also give the consumers an assurance that not all the farms are affected during an outbreak and help farmers continue doing business without speculations,” Mr. Senthil added.

Rain raises hopes for samba

The above-normal monthly rainfall the district registered in October this year has raised the prospects for samba cultivation and agriculture department officials are confident of achieving the normal area of 95,000 hectares this season.

Against the October’s normal 192.3 mm of rain, the district registered 262.2 mm this year.

Although the prospects for samba crop were bleak till early this month, the paddy cultivators have started taking up cultivation, especially in rain-fed blocks.

An estimated 60,000 hectares has been covered under the crop so far.

Of it, about 30,000 hectares fall in the coastal blocks of Avudaiyarkovil, Aranthangi and Manamelkudi.

Agriculture department sources said that according to weather forecast for the next fortnight, the north east monsoon would further stabilise by the first week of November.

So far, there is a shortfall of about 35,000 hectares which will be covered by the end of this month, say the sources.



Crop damage drives 3 farmers to suicide

Fearing that they would not be able to repay their debts after Wednesday's rain damaged their crop, three cotton farmers committed suicide.

According to sources, Bhimuni Kanakaiah, 45, a resident of Sooraiahpally village of Manthini mandal,

consumed poison in his fields. Kanakaiah had taken two acres on lease. But since the cotton crop in his 1.5 acre land and the additional two acres got damaged, his worry about repayment of his debts grew. He left his residence in the evening and did not return. His family and neighbours who searched for him found him dead in the fields.

In another incident at Manikyapur village of Bheemadevarapally mandal, 48-year-old Ramarapu Yadagiri committed suicide after his cotton crop was damaged. He had borrowed more than Rs 2 lakh from money lenders. Since the cotton crop in his three acres and the jowar crop in another 1.5 acre got damaged, he hanged himself to a tree in his fields on the outskirts of the village.

Worried as to how he would repay his debts a young farmer also committed suicide at Kamanpur mandal on Wednesday night. According to sources, cotton farmer Burra Ramesh, 25, consumed pesticide at his fields.

At Suddala village of Konaraopet mandal, another cotton farmer died due to electrocution. According to sources, N Rajaiah, 55, went to his fields to water the crop but came in contact with a live wire at his agricultural well and died on the spot.

Poultry products lie on Kerala border

State agriculture minister and chief secretary spoke to their Kerala counterparts to allow poultry farmers in [Tamil Nadu](#) transport chicken and eggs to markets in the neighbouring state.

Poultry farmers and exporters, largely centered in and around Namakkal, are facing a major crisis ever since Kerala, a major market, imposed a ban on poultry products from TN after reports of outbreak of avian influenza or bird flu in Bangalore earlier this week. [Stocks](#) have piled up in Namakkal resulting in severe loss for the farmers. Kerala's decision to close the border for chicken and eggs has deprived the farmers of not only a large market but also severely affected exports to Gulf countries though Kochi port. Reports of the bird flu outbreak have also led to fall in domestic consumption across Tamil Nadu.

On Thursday, state agriculture minister S Damodaran contacted his Kerala counterpart K P Mohanan and sought his help to lift the ban. However, Mohanan said the ban was enforced by the health department and not by his ministry (agriculture), but promised to bring the issue to the notice of Kerala chief minister [Oommen Chandy](#) and health minister Adoor Prakash. Tamil Nadu chief secretary has written a letter to the Kerala chief secretary citing scientific data to assure that the high temperature in Namakkal would not allow any outbreak of bird flu.

Talking to TOI, Namakkal district collector D Jagannathan said the state is in constant [touch](#) with Kerala over the issue and the crisis would be resolved soon. According to him, at least 500 trucks carrying 200 crore eggs and over 300 trucks carrying about 10 lakh live cull birds are stranded on the Kerala border, awaiting clearance from the check post. Though Tamil Nadu Live Stock Department has started to issue

certificates that each bird and egg is free of bird flu, free movement of poultry has yet to happen.

According to Tamil Nadu Poultry Farmers Association president P Nallathampy, the crisis is likely to be resolved in another two days. "We are trying our very best to convince Kerala government and the traders there. Our poultry farms are being operated in scientific way with high cleanliness. The crisis would soon be over," he said. "Though poultry farms here have not been affected by flu, the fear is that overseas buyers will not be location-specific while banning the products. They will stay away from our shipments until the OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) declares the zone avian flu-free," said P Selvaraj, chairman, National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal zone.

Eggs from Namakkal are sold in markets in Afghanistan apart from Gulf countries. "Trade picks up during November-January after all the austerities get over. Kerala, being a major market, the ban could result in 1.05 crore eggs piling up here," he said. This also likely to result in a cut in prices, he said.

Kerala to launch 30-day prog for agri-reforms

The state agriculture department has set a one-month deadline to complete a series of [agri-reforms](#) programmes initiated by the government this year.

Chief minister [Oommen Chandy](#) inaugurated a month-long initiative in the state capital on Thursday. The projects include generating farm related employment at panchayat level, implementation of mechanization process, high-tech farming and setting agri-kiosks across all districts in the state.

On the issue of conversion of farm-lands, state agriculture minister K P Mohanan said that the agriculture department is studying the proposed land use bill, 2002, which is being circulated to different departments for suggestions and recommendations. "We will not allow anything that will harm the progress of the agriculture sector in the state," he said.

The minister added that the state is planning to initiate conclaves that will include agriculture experts, students and veteran farming families who will initiate cultivation in barren farm lands across the state.

"We have been able to increase cultivation in 400 hectares of farm lands that were lying barren this year. We have also given Rs 25,000 a hectare to farmers for farming expenses and Rs 5,000 a hectare for farm owners who have given their farm lands on lease," he said. "Kasaragod will be the first district in the state to become fully organic and we will introduce safe-to-eat food products in select horticulture outlets in the city," he added.

Govt ups MSP of 5 rabi crops like pulses and mustard seed, left wheat untouched

The [Central government](#) on Thursday approved a hike of up to 20% in the support price of five [rabi crops](#), including pulses and [mustard seed](#), but left [wheat](#) untouched, making it clear that [grainBSE 4.83 %](#) farmers do not need additional incentive after three consecutive bumper harvests.

But the higher [MSP](#) for oilseed and pulses may not be enough to attract more acreage since market prices of these commodities are already above the revised MSP.

The [Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs](#) (CCEA) has approved the MSP of barley at 980 per quintal, gram at 3,000 per quintal, masur (Lentil) 2,900 per quintal, rapeseed/mustard at 3,000 per quintal from 2,500 and safflower 2,800 per quintal from 2,500.

However, dal and oilseeds processors said that the hike in MSP will not help increase the production of these crops as farmers are aware that market prices are ruling higher.

The current market price of masur is 3,200/qtl to 3,400/quintal. Chana dal prices are expected to touch 3,400/quintal in the coming months. Due to a fall in kharif acreage of pulses, farmers in Rajasthan, Maharashtra and [Madhya Pradesh](#) are expected to increase the area under chana.

Vijay [Data](#), president, solvent extractors association of India, said: "The MSP of mustard has been raised to 2,800/quintal. This will not be of much use as the market price is already at 4,000/quintal."

HindustanTimes

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Friday, Nov 2

Max Min
27.6° | 22.0°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 06:03

Humidity: 70

Sunset: 05:41

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1008

Tomorrow's Forecast



Rainy

Saturday, Nov 3

Max Min
27° | 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Sunday
Nov 4



28° | 23°

Rainy

Monday
Nov 5



33° | 25°

Overcast

Tuesday
Nov 6



33° | 25°

Overcast

Wednesday
Nov 7



33° | 25°

Overcast

Thursday
Nov 8



33° | 25°

Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0 Sunrise: 06:34
Humidity: 94 Sunset: 05:35
Wind: normal Barometer: 1014



FDI will benefit farmers, says Dr Johal

Padma Bhushan Dr S S Jahl, Chancellor, Central University of Punjab, Bathinda, who is an economist, academician and administrator, has said that entry of FDI in retail will be very beneficial for the country, especially producers/farmers and consumers.

He emphasised that policy announcement and policy implementation were two different things. “Our government is good in policy announcement but not in implementation,” he said while interacting with members of Ludhiana Management Association (LMA) on Wednesday.

He said since mismanagement and malpractices were prevalent in the whole system starting from production to public distribution, it was very important to implement policies because if they were not implemented then the country won’t be benefited by this.

Three farmers commit suicide in Andhra

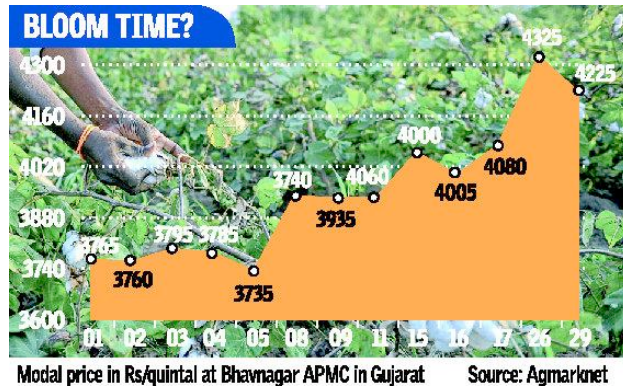
Three cotton farmers from Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh allegedly committed suicide owing to indebtedness and crop failure, police said today.

Bhimuni Kanakaiah (44), a cotton-grower from Suraihpalli village killed himself by consuming pesticide in his field yesterday, they said, adding the deceased had borrowed a loan of Rs 2 lakh but failed to repay it as the crop failed due to deficient rains.

A case has been registered under Manthani police station limits.

In another incident, Burra Ramesh Goud (27) took the extreme step by consuming pesticide on similar grounds at his house in Kamanpur block yesterday, police said.

Another cotton farmer S. Yadagiri (47) from Manikyapur village hang himself to a tree at his field yesterday, police said, adding he had incurred huge debts.



A three per cent drop in global cotton production and a three per cent rise in consumption this season ending July will likely result in a 29 per cent drop in carryover stocks for the next season.

According to Cotton Outlook, global production this year is expected to be lower at 25.93 million tonnes (mt) against 26.73 mt last year. The projection is nearly 0.65 mt higher than the estimates made last month.

The higher projection comes mainly on better crop prospects in India and China.

The outlook estimates cotton production in India at 340 lakh bales (of 170 kg each) or 5.78 mt against 325 lakh bales or 5.53 mt projected last month.

Last season, the country produced 5.86 mt or 345 lakh bales.

China's crop, too, is seen higher at 6.94 mt against 7.2 mt last year. Last month, it was estimated at 6.74 mt.

Cotton production in Pakistan has been estimated higher at 2.17 mt against last year's 2.21 mt. The production was seen at 2.09 mt last month.

Cotton output this year is likely to be lower in almost all major producing nations barring Uzbekistan and the African Franc zone. The outlook has projected global consumption at 22.10 mt against and 21.40 mt last year. It was seen at 21.98 mt last month.

While Chinese consumption is seen lower at 7.6 mt (7.8 mt last year), the offtake in the subcontinent, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, is likely to be higher at 7.73 mt, up from 7.70 mt projected last month.

It is also more than last year's consumption of 7.09 mt. Consumption is projected higher in Brazil, the US and Turkey too.

As a result, the carryover stock for the next season is seen at 3.83 mt against last year's 5.33 mt. Last month, the carryover stock projection was 3.29 mt.

Cotton prices in the global market have dropped by a fourth this year making the natural fibre one of the under performers. On Thursday, cotton for delivery in December was quoted at 70.07 cents a pound.

Cotton had run to a record \$2.17 a pound in March last year.

In the domestic market, Shankar-6 cotton that is in demand for exports is currently ruling around Rs 34,000 for a candy of 356 kg.

In March last year, it had soared to nearly Rs 63,000 a candy.

Lower returns for farmers is one of the reasons for the drop in production as they have shifted to other remunerative crops.

Coffee exports lose aroma on lower crop, carryover stocks in January-October



Coffee exports dropped by 7.23 per cent in the first 10 months of the calendar year (January to October) to 2.82 lakh tonnes compared with 3.04 lakh tonnes during the same period a year ago.

Coffee exports in rupee terms was flat (0.18 per cent) at Rs 4,255.85 crore against Rs 4,248.06 crore.

In dollar terms, it was down 9.47 per cent at \$839.69 million against \$927.60 million.

However, in terms of unit value realisation, coffee fetched Rs 1,50,734 a tonne as against Rs 1,39,455 a year ago. Exports in the first month (October) of the crop year 2012-13 was up 1.08 per cent at 18,286 tonnes compared with last year's 18,090 tonnes.

Reasons

The unit value realisation of coffee stood at Rs 1,60,598 a tonne against last year's realisation of Rs 1,40,386.

“Coffee exports are marginally down due to lower crop and negligible carry forward stocks. Last year, the industry saw unusually high exports, almost 20 per cent more than the previous year's average,” said Vijayan P. Rajes, Chairman of UPASI Coffee Committee.

According to M.P. Devaiah, General Manager, Allanasons, lower production in 2011-12, coupled with buyers' price not matching with that of growers dragged shipments.

According to Coffee Board statistics, arabica parchment constituted 41,682 tonnes (last year's exports stood at 39,505 tonnes); arabica cherry 12,366 tonnes (10,523 tonnes), robusta 22,402 tonnes (27,316 tonnes) and robusta cherry 1,26,467 tonnes (1,47,055 tonnes).

Instant coffee total exports were at 79,236 (79,977 tonnes); instant coffee (Indian) 38,870 tonnes (39,893 tonnes) and instant coffee re-exports 40,366 tonnes (40,084 tonnes).

Top 5 export houses

Allanasons Ltd 27,865.10 tonnes (arabica 9,737.80 tonnes, robusta 18,127.30 tonnes), NKG Jayanti Coffee 26,490.80 tonnes (arabica 8,144.70 tonnes, robusta 18,346.10 tonnes), CCL Products-India 26,141.40 tonnes (robusta 26,141.40 tonnes), Amalgamated Bean Coffee Trading 20,011.40 tonnes (arabica 8,167.70 tonnes, robusta 11,843.70 tonnes) and Tata Coffee 18,801.10 tonnes (arabica 984.90 tonnes, robusta 17,816.20 tonnes).

Heavy rain forecast for Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh

Wednesday's cyclone 'Nilam' has weakened into a depression and was traced to over south interior Karnataka on Thursday afternoon.

The system remained practically stationary and lay centred close to Chitradurga, an India Meteorological Department (IMD) update said.

RAIN BANDS

It is expected to move north westward and weaken as a low-pressure area by Friday morning, the update said.

Satellite imagery showed rain-bearing clouds rising over south interior Karnataka, south Andhra Pradesh, north Tamil Nadu, south Bay of Bengal and Comorin area.

Rain bands from the depression extended east across the peninsula into coastal Andhra Pradesh as it came under the influence of dominant westerly flows.

It will rain heavy over Telangana, Rayalaseema and south interior Karnataka on Friday, an IMD weather warning said.

Heavy rainfall has been forecast over north coastal Andhra Pradesh and coastal and north interior Karnataka during next two days.

WIDESPREAD FALL

Extended outlook valid for the next seven days said that scattered to fairly widespread rainfall would occur over east and adjoining Central India.

Meanwhile, last 24 hours during when the landfall of 'Nilam' took place, saw widespread rainfall being reported from the southern peninsula.

Most places in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, coastal and south interior Karnataka, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema received rainfall.

It was scattered to being isolated over north interior Karnataka, Telangana, Odisha, Goa and Lakshadweep.

This period also saw much heavier rain being precipitated than when the crossing occurred or its immediate aftermath.

MERCURY DIPS

Chief amounts of rainfall (in cm) recorded until Thursday morning are: Yercaud-24; Ongole-15; Kavali-13; Bangalore, Kanyakumari, Cuddalore, Nellore and Arogyavaram-8 each; Chitradurga, Kakinada, Puducherry and Kochi-7 each; Nagapattinam and Tiruchi-6 each; Machilipatnam, Bapatla, Vellore, Vedaranniyam and Tirupathi-5 each.

Meanwhile, minimum (night) temperatures fell normal by 2-5 deg Celsius over many parts of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, east Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, parts of Maharashtra, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, interior Odisha, Saurashtra and Kutch.

The lowest minimum of 10.5 deg Celsius was recorded at Malegaon in Maharashtra.

Warmth associated with moisture supplied by 'Nilam' kept temperatures above normal over parts of Telangana, north interior Karnataka and Lakshadweep.

CCEA okays higher MSP for rabi crops; no decision on wheat

The Government today approved hike in the support price of five rabi crops such as gram and masur by up to 20 per cent for the next year starting April 2013, but no decision was taken on wheat prices.

"Except for wheat, the CCEA has approved the MSP of all other rabi (winter) crops. There will be a fresh Cabinet note on wheat," sources close to the development said.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved raising the minimum support price (MSP) of gram and masur by Rs 400 per quintal to Rs 3,200, each, for the 2013-14 marketing year (April—March).

The support price of these two pulses was fixed at Rs 2,800 per quintal, respectively, for this year.

The CCEA has agreed to raise the MSP of the two key pulses grown in the rabi (winter) season to reduce the country's dependence on import.

Among oilseeds, the Cabinet approved increasing the MSP of mustard seed to Rs 3,000 per quintal for the 2013-14 marketing year from Rs 2,500 per quintal in 2012-13.

Similarly, safflower MSP has been raised to Rs 2,800 per quintal from Rs 2,500 per quintal in the review period.

Among cereals, the CCEA has okayed increasing the support price of barley to Rs 1,100 per quintal for 2013-14 from Rs 980 per quintal this year.

As against the recommendation of the Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP), the Agriculture Ministry had proposed higher support price for rabi crops. The Ministry has accepted CACP's suggestion on mustard seed and safflower.

On wheat, CACP had recommended freezing of MSP at last year's level of Rs 1,285 per quintal considering huge stock in the central pool. Even the Food Ministry had opposed the hike saying it would increase the procurement cost of the grain and food subsidy bill by an additional Rs 4,000-5,000 crore.

Despite opposition, the Agriculture Ministry took forward the proposal before CCEA seeking hike in the wheat MSP by Rs 115 per quintal to Rs 1400 for 2013-14, arguing that the CACP has not factored in the hike in diesel price by Rs 5 per litre, sources said.

Spot rubber stays weak



Spot rubber weakened further on Thursday. Though widespread rains were reported from major plantation areas, the prices lost strength, lacking quantity buyers from the tyre sector.

According to analysts, most of them were comfortable with imports and expectations on an improvement in their volumes may not materialise in the immediate future.

Sheet rubber dropped to Rs 176 kg at Kottayam and Kochi from Rs 177 and Rs 176.50 respectively, according to traders and the Rubber Board. The trend was partially mixed.

The November contracts concluded at Rs 177.84 (Rs 177.31), December at Rs 179 (Rs 178.75), January at Rs 180.81 (Rs 181.11) and February at Rs 183.19 (Rs 183.00), while the March and April futures remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) increased to Rs 165.23 (164.23) a kg at Bangkok. The November futures improved to ¥247 (Rs 165.86) from ¥243.1 during the day session, but then remained inactive in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 176 (177); RSS-5: 172 (173); ungraded: 166 (166); ISNR 20: 160.50 (161) and latex 60 per cent: 117.50 (118).

Tea Board to update data on Web site

The Tea Board will soon take steps to update the statistical data it provides in its Web site.

While the tea boards of most countries have provided data relating to September, the India Tea Board continues to flash only July data although it is November. Likewise, some data such as exports are given only up to March and some other data pertain only to previous years.

When this was brought to the notice of the Tea Board Chairman M.G.V.K. Bhanu, he told *Business Line*, “ We will sort out this in a couple of days and update the Web site data regularly”.

Decision on hike in support price for wheat deferred

(in Rs/quintal)

RAISING SUPPORT					
Commodity	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Wheat	1080	1100	*1120	1285	#
Barley	680	750	780	980	980
Gram	1730	1760	2100	2800	3000
Masur (Lentil)	1870	1870	2250	2800	2900
Rapeseed/Mustard	1830	1830	1850	2500	3000
Safflower	1650	1680	1800	2500	2800

#No decision taken. *Includes an additional bonus of Rs 50/quintal. Source: Agriculture Ministry

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs deferred a decision on a hike in the minimum support prices (MSP) for wheat following inter-ministerial differences.

However, it approved an increase of up to 20 per cent in support prices for rabi oilseeds and pulses.

Sources said that the Agriculture Ministry is in favour of a hike in wheat MSP but the Finance Ministry was opposed to it as increase in support price could fuel further price rise and inflate the food subsidy bill.

As a result, the support price for wheat for 2013-14 marketing season stays at last year's level of Rs 1,285 a quintal, as of now.

However, it may be revised after further consultations, for which Agriculture Ministry is likely to move a Cabinet note.

For rapeseed/mustard, the key winter oilseed crop, the MSP has been hiked by Rs 500 to Rs 3,000 per quintal.

The MSP for safflower is fixed at Rs 2800 a quintal for 2013-14, an increase of Rs 300 over last year's Rs 2500 a quintal. The CCEA also left the support price for barley unchanged at Rs 980 a quintal.

MSP for gram and masur, the main pulses grown in winter, has been hiked to Rs 3,000 and Rs 2,900 a quintal each for the marketing year 2013-14 starting April. In 2012-13, the MSP for these two pulses stood at Rs 2,800 a quintal each.

The hike in MSP is broadly in line with the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), which suggested raising support prices for pulses and oilseeds.

Such a move was to encourage farmers to grow more of these crops so that the country's import dependence on pulses and oilseeds is reduced.

The annual edible oil import bill now exceeds Rs 55,000 crore while that of pulses is over Rs 10,000 crore. India imported about 10 million tonnes of edible oil for the oil year-ended October 2012, up 18 per cent over the previous year.

Considering the huge wheat stocks, estimated at 43 million tonnes as of October 1, the CACP had recommended a freeze on support price for wheat in the 2013-14 marketing season at last year's level.

However, the Agriculture Ministry was in favour of a marginal increase MSP for wheat at Rs 115 per quintal to Rs 1,400 a quintal.

Domestic demand lends flavour to aromatic rice



The rice market was mixed on Thursday. A few aromatic and non-basmati varieties recovered on some buying, while other varieties managed to maintain their previous levels.

Amit Chandna, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told *Business Line* that some fresh contracts and an increase in domestic demand ahead of Diwali festival mainly pushed rice prices up.

Though, earlier, traders were not expecting any uptrend in the prices at this time of the year, some good domestic buying pushed prices upwards, he added.

It is hard to anticipate the future at present as market situation is highly uncertain because arrivals of the new rice is also pressurising the market, said Chandna.

In the physical market, Pusa-1121 (steam) improved by Rs 100 and sold at Rs 5,600 a quintal while Pusa-1121 (sela) went up by Rs 50 and sold at Rs 4,400-4,450 .

Pure basmati (raw) quoted at Rs 5,475-5,500 while pure basmati (sela) sold at Rs 4,600 . Duplicate basmati traded at Rs 4,600-4,650 .

PR-11 (sela) sold for Rs 2,450-2,500 while PR-11 (Raw) quoted at Rs 2,400 a quintal. Permal (raw) improved marginally by Rs 25 and sold at Rs 2,100 while Permal (sela) increased by Rs 150 and went for Rs 2,200-2,250 a quintal.

Sharbati (steam) improved by Rs 200 and quoted at Rs 3,700 while Sharbati (sela) quoted at Rs 3,300 a quintal.

Paddy Arrivals

About 75,000 bags of PR variety arrived and went for Rs 1,240-80 a quintal, Sharbati arrived with a stock of around 5,000 bags and quoted at Rs 1,670-1,740 while just around 5,000 bags of Sugandha 999 variety arrived and sold at Rs 1,720-1,800.

Around 10,000 bags of PR14 arrived and sold for Rs 1,280-1,310. About 10,000 bags of Pusa-1121 arrived and quoted at around 2,200-2,370 a quintal.

Lack of quality crop pounds turmeric



Spot turmeric lost Rs 200 a quintal in the Regulated Marketing Committee due to arrival of medium variety turmeric.

“Almost all the exporters have received upcountry orders and they purchased only after verifying the quality. They procured hybrid variety by quoting increased price. The price of the hybrid variety was up by Rs 400 a quintal due to quality. But in the Regulated Marketing Committee, buyers confirmed only

200 bags against an arrival of 406 bags of turmeric due to quality,” said R. K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

He said that for the second day, exporters received some fresh orders from North India and so they are buying. In addition, stockists also purchased as usual quoting marginally higher price.

Of the 1,200 bags of turmeric that arrived, 60 per cent stocks was sold. Stockists purchased 200 bags of this.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,096-5,569 a quintal, the root variety Rs 3,696-5,031.

Salem Hybrid Variety: The finger variety was sold at Rs 5,667-6,211; the root variety Rs 4,389-5,100.

Of the arrival of 525 bags that arrived, 150 were sold.

At the Regulated Marketing Committee, the finger variety quoted Rs 4,616-5,489 and the root variety Rs 4,384-4,969.

Of the 406 bags put up for sale, there were takers for 200.

At the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 4,548-5,890 and the root variety Rs 3,809-4,973.

All the 167 bags were sold.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,869-5,659; the root variety Rs 4,017-4,696.

All the 73 bags were sold.

Pepper falls on profit booking

Pepper market continued its southward move on selling interest on Thursday. All the active contracts ended below the previous day's closing.

The market fell sharply in the opening session but in the closing session it recovered and closed marginally down on covering and profit booking by short position holders.

On the spot, both the buyers and sellers stayed away from the declining market. The primary market dealers/farmers said to have sold good quantities when the prices were ruling high and hence they can afford to wait, market sources told *Business Line*.

November contract on the NCDEX decreased by Rs 170 a quintal to the last traded price (LTP) of Rs 42,800 a quintal. December and February contracts fell by Rs 250 and Rs 325 respectively a quintal to the LTP of Rs 42,100 and Rs 37,500 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover increased by 1,562 tonnes to 3,932 tonnes. Much of the turnover was in December with an increase of 1,175 tonnes, they said.

Total open interest declined by 11 tonnes to 8,996 tonnes. November open interest decreased by 571 tonnes while that of December and February rose by 504 tonnes and 49 tonnes respectively to close at 3,328 tonnes and 675 tonnes.

Arrivals on the spot remained thin at 15 tonnes and that were traded at between Rs 400 and 405 a kg depending upon quality, grade and area of production. The rainy conditions also reduced the activities, they said.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$8,125 a tonne (fob) for the Europe and \$8,425 a tonne (fob) for the US and remained totally outpriced, they said.