

## Training on RICEscape modelling

Scientists of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University attended a five-day international training on RICEscape modelling at the university as part of the international project titled “Remote Sensing based Information and Insurance for Crops in Emerging Economies”, here from October 15 to 19.

Explaining the project, Francesco Holecz, Chief Executive Officer of Synthetic Aperture Radar Systems, Switzerland, said the goal of the project was to introduce the use of remote sensing and crop modelling to obtain reliable figures on agriculture. In future this information would be used for introducing micro financing system for farmers in seven Asian countries, viz., India (Tamil Nadu), Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Indonesia.

P. Subbian, Registrar, TNAU, said there rice growth models had been developed to study the influence of soil, water, and climatic variables on rice productivity.

## Contest to develop hi-tech solution for farmers

With a view to encourage engineering students to look at developing socially relevant technological solutions, Gravity 2.0 – Regional Planning and Development Forum – is throwing a challenge at the engineering students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, to design and develop a temporary grain storage system that can be set up and dismantled by a farmer.

The science and technology contest being organised by Gravity 2.0 – a Regional Planning and Development Forum – requires a team of students to design and develop a solution for the farmers to store 1 MT harvested grain on their field for at least three months. The storage system would have to be a temporary warehouse with all the features like temperature and humidity control so that the farmers can store their harvested grain, wheat or rice, in it. This would ensure that the farmer is not desperate to sell his harvest and can wait for a good price, Gopi Bulusu of Gravity 2.0 explained.

The solution GSS-1K (1 tonne grain storage system) must have an optional microcontroller controlled temperature and humidity sensor, low cost wireless interface to collect statistics, along with a mobile application, protect grains from rodents and pests and must be all-weather proof. It should use a combination of high-tech structural components and locally available components. Most importantly the total cost of all components must not exceed Rs 25,000 and one person should be able to install it in the field in four hours.

The registration for the contest began on October 18 and closes by December 31, 2012. All the solutions have to be demonstrated to a team of Gravity members in Visakhapatnam between July 1 and 31. Teams must comprise of at least seven members, and must include members belonging to computer science, electronics, electrical, mechanical and civil engineering backgrounds, Mr Bulusu said.

The selected entries will have the opportunity to showcase their entries at Gravity 2.0 Tech Santa to be organised near Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh in August next year. The winners will get prize money of Rs 50,000 and incubation support to commercialise their designs. Details can be had from [info@gravity20.org](mailto:info@gravity20.org).

G S Subrahmanyam, in Visakhapatnam

### Seeding a yellow bowl



Success takes root: Muhammed Busthani of Thotathil with the turmeric plants on his farm at Pazhayangadi, near Vellamunda, in Wayanad district.

A rich, fertile land and a fecund imagination are combining to make Pazhayangadi, near Vellamunda, in Wayanad a prominent turmeric-growing village of the State.

It all started on the initiative of Muhammed Busthani of Thotathil, who never had a hand at turmeric cultivation before. Now his Bucca Farms is ready to shower yellow dust and the fragrance of the spice in all its abundance.

“This may be the largest farm growing a single variety of turmeric in Kerala,” B. Sasikumar, Principal Scientist, Indian Institute of Spices Research (IISR), Kozhikode, says.

### **On 18.5 acres**

A recent visit organised by the institute to the farm, 18.5 acres of leased land, proved the enthusiasm of the 42-year-old farmer.

Three years ago, Mr. Busthani was at a crossroads after leaving his job in New Delhi. A year later, a three-day farmers’ seminar organised by the IISR helped him find his calling.

“After hearing the experts and the success stories of farmers at the seminar, my friends and I decided to go for turmeric farming; the crop is practically left alone by pests and gives good profits,” Mr. Busthani says.

He bought one tonne of the seed rhizomes of “Prathibha,” a new variety of turmeric developed by the IISR, from a farmer delegate at the seminar. The friends formed a trust called Bucca Farms and started turmeric cultivation on an acre of leased land at Sulthan Bathery.

“We harvested more than 17 tonnes of turmeric in January 2012. Of this, Mr. Busthani dried nearly 100 kg and powdered it. The colour, aroma and taste of the ‘Prathibha’ variety are unique, and he gave half of the harvest to his neighbours,” he says.

The friends planned to multiply the crop, taking on lease the land at Pazhayangadi and planting the rhizomes five months ago.

The farm adopted the packages developed for turmeric at the IISR, all, even fertilizer application, targeted to get a yield of 20 tonnes an acre, he says.

The team developed an innovative agriculture implement with the help of local skilled workers for making the beds to plant turmeric.

“We are planning to make value-added products from turmeric after harvest and market them under a brand name,” Mr. Busthani says.

The team is planning to visit Erode in Tamil Nadu to learn more about farm mechanisation for turmeric cultivation and processing. “Our dream is to set up a fully mechanised farm in seven years,” he says.

Mr. Busthani was one of the farmers identified for scientific cultivation of the Varada variety of ginger under the National Agricultural Innovation Project of the IISR on multi-enterprise farming models to address the agrarian crisis of Wayanad.

### **Flying squads to keep eye on paddy procurement**

In efforts to facilitate paddy procurement in the State, Punjab Mandi Board has initiated several steps including constituting flying squads to check irregularities in various agriculture markets.

The Board’s chairman Ajmer Singh Lakhwal, who is also Punjab Bharatiya Kisan Union President, said this today while on a visit here at the local market to interact with farmers and commission agents.

On the issue of delay in lifting of paddy due to shortage of gunny bags and payment to farmers, Mr Lakhwal said he has raised the matter with the state Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal and other concerned authorities.

“The board has also constituted flying squads for checking irregularities in various markets,” he said.

He said that about 4928 lakh tonnes of paddy had already arrived in the markets as against 6155 lakh tonnes during the corresponding period last year. – PTI

## AP unhappy over lack of action on 4 species

After playing host, Andhra Pradesh remains unhappy that the issue of protection of at least four animal and plant species endemic to the State and adding an edge to its biological diversity could not be taken up at the just concluded COP-11 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) here.

Officials of AP State Biodiversity Board (APSBB) are battling to prevent attempts by some countries to take away four such species and claim them as their own to do business—Ongole bull, Punganur cow, Pulasa fish and red-sanders.

But the Board is peeved that though the conference debated the issue of access and benefit sharing for long hours, it could not come up with any concrete step on the way forward.

These species have been taken away by other countries without any mention of action planned to be taken or sharing of benefit.

### Clandestine purchases

According to information available with APSBB, Brazil developed a full-scale economy on Ongole bulls after clandestinely purchasing them in large number from the State since 1965, luring innocent farmers by offering high prices. Meat of Ongole bull, which grows up to a height of 5 feet and distinct by its huge hump, is being exported to 26 countries from Brazil now. The Board recently stumbled upon attempts to smuggle out Ongole bull semen, upon which it had alerted airport and ports.

Pulasa, sea fish found at the confluence of the Godavari with the Bay of Bengal in East Godavari district, comes away from the salty waters and strangely against the river currents.

It is now a target of Japanese. As the meat of this fish is “having properties for curing some ailments”, including cancer, it has heavy demand there. Seeing the demand, Japan is offering huge sums to fishermen to buy them, leading to suspicion that Pulasa is being bred there.

### Worldwide attention

Punganur cow, which is found only in Punganur area of Chittoor district, is drawing worldwide attention these days as its milk contains as much as 8 per cent fat. Efforts are on by some western countries to take this also from AP. Similarly, red-sanders is a massive tree with a huge trunk and is available nowhere in the world except in Kadapa area.

### **Patent rights**

The APSBB is now left with no other alternative except to get patent rights from World Intellectual Property Organisation, Switzerland, at the earliest to prevent this trend, says Dr. R. Hampaiah, its chairman.

### **Red gram to be raised on Karnataka model**

A special technique in cultivating red gram through seedlings will be introduced in Tiruvarangulam block in the district on Monday. This is the first time that red gram cultivators are being motivated to take up this method, considered an innovative practice in this region, as, so far, they were adopting direct sowing for raising the crop, though the technique resulted in lesser yield.

Raising the red gram through seedlings has been in vogue in States and is popularly known as the 'Karnataka model'.

It is being introduced under Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and National Food Security Mission (NFSM) for Pulses. About 7.50 lakh seedlings have been readied, which will be raised on 100 hectares in the block.

"We raised the seedlings of Corg 7 variety about three weeks ago and the duration of this high yielding variety is 120 days," says S. Sivasankaran, Joint Director of Agriculture, Pudukottai. He says the anticipated yield is one tonne a hectare.

With a view to encouraging farmers to take up this technique, the Agriculture Department implements this scheme through subsidy-based components. A farmer raising the crop will be eligible for a subsidy of Rs.9,000 towards seedlings and inputs.

## Drastic drop in egg price

Retail price still stands at Rs. 4, say consumers

*(Values in rupees)*



In just five weeks, wholesale price of egg that reached a record high price of Rs. 3.65, drastically dropped by 95 paise in seven stages to Rs. 2.70 on Sunday.

This drop in its price in the wholesale market by 26 per cent has taken its price less than the minimum wholesale price for the calendar year 2012 that was fixed by the National Egg Coordination Committee (NECC), Namakkal Zone.

On July 21, 2012, Chairman of the Namakkal Zone, NECC, Dr. P. Selvaraj announced that the wholesale price of egg will not come below Rs. 2.72 this year, considering the escalating feed costs for the egg laying birds. Egg price that was fixed at Rs. 3.15 on October 11 and was maintained till October 18 before it was dropped by 15 paise to Rs. 3 on Friday, Rs. 2.85 on Saturday and Rs. 2.70 on Sunday.

The tough stand maintained by the farmers and traders is cited as the reason for this heavy drop below the minimum guarantee price. The NECC fixed deduction by traders towards packing and transportation - from the price announced by them - at 25 paise. But on Friday, traders deducted 65 paise per egg as they fixed the harvesting rates at Rs. 2.50 when wholesale egg rate was fixed as Rs. 3.15 by the NECC.

Following their decision, the NECC's Rate Fixation Committee, headed by the zonal chairman, decided to reduce the price to match the price fixed by the traders. "In doing so, the NECC's earlier announcement of selling eggs to traders at the board rate fixed by the committee will come into effect - that means no more deduction towards packing and transportation," an NECC source said.

"The competitive price drop was due to the heavy drop in egg consumption during the pooja season, which takes place annually. Egg price will drop further in a day or two and stabilise after pooja comes to an end - in the next five days. With this drop, we expect consumers to get egg at just Rs. 3 and increase consumption.

Once it improves, price of egg will start increasing steadily and maintain till Pongal," Joint Secretary of the Namakkal Poultry Farmers Federation M. Murali said.

On the other hand, consumers in Chennai and Nagercoil said that the retail price of egg still stands at Rs. 4 even while they hear news that the wholesale price of egg has come much below the Rs. 3 mark.

### **Sugarcane farmers worried over price for produce**

Slowly, but surely, the farmers are coming on roads to get remunerative price for sugarcane in Medak district. The political parties are trying to stand by the side of farming community so that it would benefit both of them.



The crushing of sugarcane had already commenced in parts of the district with Trident Sugar factory located at Zaheerabad starting the process. Even in a recent meeting Collector A. Dinakarbabu has expressed his displeasure over commencing the crushing without finalising the price of sugarcane that would be offered to farmers.

Alleging that the Trident has started crushing without announcing the price, allegedly with the tacit support of Major Industries Minister J. Geeta Reddy, the TDP leaders recently held dharna before the factory along with some farmers. According to some farming activists, this would be a psychological pressure on the farming community to sell their sugarcane produce without further delay so that it would get right yield.

“Farmers fell into a psychological stress that the quality of sugar cane may go down getting them lower price if the cutting was delayed. It is highly impossible to stop them from sending the produce for grinding as the process was already commenced,” G. Jayaraj, general secretary Andhra Pradesh Rytu Sangam, told *The Hindu*. Rytu Sangam has also held a meeting with farmers on Friday in this regard.

The two other sugar factories – Ganapathi Sugars at Sangareddy and Nizam Deccan Sugars Limited at Medak, have not yet commenced crushing. While the farmers and farmers’ organisations are demanding a price of Rs.3,250 per tonne, Mr. Dinanakarbabu in a meeting held recently said that farmers need to be paid at least Rs.3,000 per tonne. However, the management of Ganapathi Sugars has reportedly offered Rs.2,400 per tonne, while to others remained silent. Coming to the rescue of farmers, the CPI(M) district unit held a dharna on Thursday demanding to pay a price of Rs.3,250 to farmers in addition offering facilities such as sheds, toilets and drinking water at factories till the produce was unloaded.

### **Minister disburses gold loans to farmers**

Minister for Stamps and Registration Thota Narasimham on Sunday distributed gold loans to farmers of Kamarajupeta village under Gokavaram primary credit society. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said farmers have to pay 25 paise interest for loans below Rs. 3 lakh and no interest will be levied on loans below Rs. 1 lakh. He said small and medium farmers can get loans from any nationalised bank and tenant farmers are given cards to get loans from scheduled banks also.

The Minister said Kamarajupeta and Kothapalli villages witnessed natural calamities last two years and the district administration was ready to support the farmers in way of loans and subsidies. He said he would discuss with the officials regarding releasing irrigation facilities in these villages. Mr. Narasimham said the UPA government had waived Rs.76,000 crore farm loans and of which the State got relief of Rs.17,000 crore. In East Godavari farmers Rs.300 crore worth loans of farmers were waived, he said. He asked the farmers to repay the loans in time to get fresh loans from the credit societies or banks.

### **SEED bags NABARD Award**

Society for Energy, Environment and Development (SEED) has bagged NABARD's award for Rural Innovation -2012 for its solar food processing and dryers technology. Demonstration-cum-training programmes were conducted by SEED for farmers, providing the prospect for generating high income from their farm produce, according to a press release here on Saturday.

— Special Correspondent

### **Plant wonders, evolution and genetics for children**

'Plant Wonders and Evolution', a programme held last year by the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI) for school students, will be held again this year during November 14-21.

Last year's programme saw the participation of 338 students and 44 teachers from schools in Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta districts. This year's programme includes lessons on Gregor Johann Mendel, the father of Genetics and his experiments that led to the creation of an altogether new branch in biological science. A class on Charles Darwin, his life and letters written during his journey aboard the HMS Beagle while exploring the Galapagos Islands is also included.

For details, contact the Director at 9447039588 or [plathagopalakrishnan@gmail.com](mailto:plathagopalakrishnan@gmail.com)

gmail.com, or log on to the official website of TBGRI.

## Farmers resent decision to open regulator shutters

Say water has gone waste even as they face its shortage for second paddy crop



Farmers in the Chitturpuzha irrigation project area have taken exception to the decision of the Irrigation Department to open all 13 shutters of the Moolathara regulator to drain out floodwater from Palar, Anamalayar, etc., due to heavy rain in Tamil Nadu for the last couple of days.

The shutters were let open at a time when the farmers were preparing to abandon the second crop of paddy as there was not adequate water available from the inter-State Parambikulam Aliyar Project (PAP) for paddy cultivation in Chittur taluk.

The Moolathara regulator was constructed to regulate water from the Parmbikulam group of reservoirs and floodwater from the Neerar, Palar and Anamalayar rivers in Tamil Nadu to the reservoirs in Chittur, including Chulliyar and Meenkara, and areas such as Kampalathara, Venkalakayam and Kunnampidayiri, which could be used for the second crop of paddy cultivation.

The alleged apathy on the part of officials of the Irrigation Department had resulted in huge quantities of water being washed into the sea at a time when farmers of Chittur were clamouring for water for the second crop of paddy, said Muthalathode Mani, general secretary of the Desheeya Karshaka Samajam.

He said the floodwater could have been diverted to Chulliyar, Meenkara, Kampalathara and Venkalakayam reservoirs through the Left Bank Canal of the Moolathara regulator, and to the Kunnampidayiri reservoir through the Right Bank.

This would have helped the farmers to address the water shortage to take up the second crop of paddy.

“The officials of the Irrigation Department did not take necessary steps to take the water to our reservoirs for storage at a time when Palakkad district was facing drought. The flood water from Tamil Nadu was wasted when the State sought more water from the PAP for Chitturpuzha irrigation project,” Mr. Mani said.

He has urged the government to take action against the Irrigation Department officials for wastage of huge quantity of water. A meeting of the Joint Water Regulatory Board (JWRB) of the PAP held in Coimbatore on Tuesday decided to release water only up to December 15 as against March 31 that was required for long duration crop.

### **Farmer ends life in Wayanad**

A farmer who had been admitted to the Kozhikode medical college hospital, after allegedly consuming poison owing to financial difficulties, died on Sunday morning.

The deceased was identified as Sivan, 65, of Nalamnadiyil at Pazhupathur near Sulthan Bathery. The family found him unconscious in a coffee plantation near his house on October 11. Though he was hospitalised, his life could not be saved.

His relatives said that Sivan had taken a loan of Rs.4.5 lakh from financial institutions and friends for cultivating plantain and ginger on a leased land of 2.5 acres. The attempt at farming was a failure. Sivan is survived by wife Vijayamma and three children.

### **Rain spoils harvest for paddy farmers**

The rain that lashed several parts of the district on Saturday and Sunday has created problems for farmers here. Most paddy farmers had either harvested the crop or were readying for harvest in the second round of cultivation known as ‘virippu’ in Kuttanad areas.

Thankachan Varghese of Champakulam, who was employing a combine harvester machine in his paddy field on Sunday, had to stop the harvest by around 3.30 p.m. as the rains started. “If the rain subsides by Sunday evening, the harvest can be resumed by 10 a.m. tomorrow,” he said.

The rain has dashed the hopes of farmers who had harvested their crop and heaped it by the side of their paddy fields.

The Kerala Civil Supplies Corporation (Supplyco) has put in a strict set of conditions for procuring paddy this year.

They are not accepting paddy that has more than 17 per cent moisture content.

The Rice Research Station, Mankompu, under the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), had on Friday issued an advisory to farmers about likely rain based on the weather forecast received from the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune, and the Meteorological Department, Thiruvananthapuram. Moderate rain is predicted in the district on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday also.

The advisory asked farmers to put the paddy atop a layer of dry paddy straw and a sipolin sheet.

### Tea growers urge govt. to implement HC order

A meeting of small tea growers and manufacturers organised under the aegis of the Nelikolu Charitable Trust here on Saturday resolved to urge the Central Government to implement in letter and spirit and without any reservations a recent order of the Madras High Court which stated that the Centre should endeavour to provide a realistic price for the green leaf produced by the small tea growers of the Nilgiris.

Pointing out that the meeting had been convened to enhance awareness about the order, trustee of the Nelikolu Trust and former Additional Chief Secretary N. Sundaradevan told *The Hindu* that in 2008 R. Dharuman, another Trustee of Nelikolu had sought judicial intervention to get the government to fix a minimum price for the green leaf.

Around the same time, a Kotagiri-based advocate K.B. Bojan had also filed a writ petition seeking a similar direction.

This was resorted to because in 2002 the Nilgiris Tea Growers Protection Centre, Kotagiri had filed a writ petition for the same relief and the Madras High Court had held in June 2007 that the grievances of the small tea growers were genuine.

It had rejected the contention of the Government of India that it was not mandatory on its part to invoke Section 30 of the Tea Act and fix a minimum price for the green leaf.

Consequently, the Government of India had engaged the services of the Institute of Costs and Works Accounts of India (ICWAI) to carry out a study and ascertain the real cost of production of green leaf and also processed tea.

Even as the studies were in progress, the Central Government had fixed a Price Sharing Formula for growers and manufacturers in the Nilgiris in the ratio 65:35.

Since it was not in tune with the order of the High Court passed on the writ petition filed in 2002, the two writ petitions of 2008 had been filed.

Expressing the hope that the Centre will implement the order of the court, Mr. Sundaradevan said that the meeting had also resolved to request the State Government to espouse the cause of the small growers vis a vis the order with the Centre.

### **Committee**

By another resolution, it was decided to form a committee to pursue the matter.

Adverting to various suggestions put forth in the meeting, he said that the government will be requested to revive an educational assistance scheme which had been implemented earlier for the small tea growers by the Tea Board.

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costs for the egg laying birds. Egg price that was fixed at Rs. 3.15 on October 11 and was maintained till October 18 before it was dropped by 15 paise to Rs. 3 on Friday, Rs. 2.85 on Saturday and Rs. 2.70 on Sunday.

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"The competitive price drop was due to the heavy drop in egg consumption during the pooja season, which takes place annually. Egg price will drop further in a day or two and stabilise after pooja comes to an end - in the next five days. With this drop, we expect consumers to get egg at just Rs. 3 and increase consumption.

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### **Repeal Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966'**

People Movement of India has urged the Central Government to repeal the Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966.

In a release, C. Nallasami, field organiser, has said that the Government must accept the Rangarajan Committee's recommendation in this regard – it should avoid buying sugar at a

discounted price from mills but should buy in the open market then subsidise it for public distribution.

For, the Order was against free trade and accepted trade practices. It was unfortunate that farmers sold sugarcane at the Government-fixed discounted price to mills and the latter sold 10 per cent sugar again at Government-fixed price for public distribution.

The Order also allowed farmers to cultivate sugarcane on land allotted for sugar mills but not harvest the cane, which, again, was unacceptable.

Mr. Nallasami demanded that mills should crush sugarcane and give the products the farmers desired – it could be sugar, alcohol or liquor. The mills should also share the money they make by generating electricity through co-generation plants and also paper.

The next of his demands was for payment of dues to farmers by sugar mills under the State Government control. Of the 560 mills in the country, 47 were in Tamil Nadu under the co-operative sector. Most of these mills were on the verge of bankruptcy and for none of these the Government had held elections. The Myladuthurai mill owed Rs. 22 crore to farmers, the Tiruthani mill Rs. 12 crore and the Maduranthakam mill Rs. 8 crore. These were just a few, he said and wanted the Government to clear the dues at the earliest.

Mr. Nallasami has sought increase in the minimum support price for paddy, a white paper on the state of agriculture in the country among other things.

### **Centre directed to fix minimum price for green tea leaf**

The Madras High Court has directed the Union government to fix the minimum price for green tea leaf payable to small tea growers within six weeks.

It also directed the government to do such exercise by calling for a realistic report on the problem faced by the small tea growers in The Nilgiris district and thereafter, arrive at a scientific sharing formula between the growers and the manufacturers.

Disposing of petitions from two small tea growers in The Nilgiris district, Justice K. Chandru said: "Since the monopoly power is vested on the Government of India, in this regard, it requires a scientific human approach and should not be dictated by the artificial market forces. The



endeavour of Government of India must be to provide a realistic price in respect of the green leaf produced by the small tea growers and must be based upon the ground reality regarding the cost of production of such green leaf.” The judge also directed the Union government to take note of the Institute of Cost and Works Accountants of India (ICWAI) Committee report dated on May 5, 2008 and even call for any other study in this regard and arrive at a just and reasonable conclusion and price to be paid for the green leaf produced by small growers.

Following a direction from the Division Bench of Madras High Court in 2007, the Tea Board engaged the services of ICWAI to conduct a study to ascertain the cost of producing tea leaf. Based on the findings, the Union government announced a price-sharing formula between tea growers and the manufacturers in 2008. Not satisfied with the government’s decision, the two petitions were filed by R. Dharuman and K.B. Bojan, small tea growers in The Nilgiris district.

They contended that the Union government’s order was nothing but eyewash and the order would not bring any solution to the problem faced by the small tea growers. Small tea growers were entitled to a reasonable return, and the Centre should fix minimum support price as it did for sugarcane and rubber.

Mr. Justice Chandru said it was the brokers and buyers who controlled the market and a large number of small tea growers were left high and dry. “The Union of India and the Tea Board have not really taken note of the direction issued by the Division Bench earlier and have hurriedly announced a formula which is far from any ground reality.”

### **SKCRF brings out book on Kangayam cattle breed**

In an attempt to prevent Kangayam cattle breed from extinction, the Senaapathy Kangayam Cattle Research Foundation (SKCRF) here has come out with a promotional book titled ‘Wealth of the Yoke- interplay of nature and culture’ with the funding support from National Biodiversity Authority of India.

#### **Threats**

The publication, written in English by K.S.M.Karthikeya, managing trustee of SKCRF, along with V. Aruvudai Nambi, principal scientist with M.S.Swaminathan Research Foundation, and Sundar Ganesan, a researcher and archivist, has a narration of the evolution of the breed, its

management and threats presently encountered in its preservation with the help of neatly arranged glazed photographs.

The book was recently released by renowned agriculture expert and Rajya Sabha member M.S.Swaminathan.

“We brought out the book as the dwindling population of Kangayam cattle breed mainly owing to changes in biodiversity, has become a cause of concern.

### **Domesticated animal**

In fact, our country is a repository for domesticated animal biodiversity having 30 well-defined cattle breeds which is 7.5 per cent of the total animal breeds globally,” Mr. Karthikeya told *The Hindu* .

The content of the book takes the readers through a text-visual journey describing the salient features and benefits of Kangayam cattle, the importance of Korangadu, a typical grazing area of the species containing 29 types of shrubs and trees the area of which is now diminishing, and threats faced by the breed.

The concluding session in the tome reiterates the importance of government assistance to successfully arrest the fall in the population of the breed.

“We will be distributing the book among different segments of the society to create awareness on the Kangayam cattle species and garner support in its conservation,” Mr. Karthikeya said.

### **Study on bollworm attack on Bt cotton vital'**

Minister for Agriculture Kanna Lakshminarayana has asked the scientists of the agriculture university to conduct a comprehensive study on the increased intensity of bollworm attack on the Bt cotton crop.

In a meeting conducted with the officials of the Agriculture Department here on Sunday, the Minister said a large number of complaints were coming on the bollworm attack on Bt cotton in the recent weeks. The scientists should be in a position to suggest the farmers about the precautions to be taken from the next season, he said.

Though it was customary to cultivate refuge crop around Bt cotton fields most of the farmers were not following it. It was for the agriculture officials to create better awareness among the farmers to take up such measures to prevent bollworm attacks, the Minister stated.

Commissioner of Agriculture K. Madhusudhana Rao informed the Minister that they had already taken up comprehensive study on the Bt crop in 10 villages in every district. The Minister told the Commissioner to submit a report on the study taken up by the department along with that of the scientists. A delegation of all-party farmers' organisations called on the Minister and requested him not to allow the trials of genetically modified crops in the State to which he promised that a decision would be taken in this regard after talking to all stakeholders.

### **Wrong values being taught'**

Bislaiah, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, says that though being class monitors may seem like a small thing, the survey does point out the values being taught to the children.

It is saying that only 'upper caste' children can have the privilege, while the 'lower caste' children are better off as cleaners.

Kancha Illaiah, writer and academic, says that the study shows the persistent nature of caste.

The teachers practise discrimination. Considering that their Hindu gods also propagate casteism and inequality, even the teachers follow the same system.

# Hindustan Times

TODAY FARM NEWS

22.10.2012 A.M

## Weather

Chennai

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Rainy

Monday, Oct 22

Max Min

29.2° | 22.8°

Rain: 53.1

Humidity: 94

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:00

Sunset: 05:46

Barometer: 1013

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Overcast

Tuesday, Oct 23

Max Min

32° | 25°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Oct 24	Thursday Oct 25	Friday Oct 26	Saturday Oct 27	Sunday Oct 28
33°   25° Overcast	33°   25° Overcast	32°   25° Overcast	29°   23° Cloudy	33°   25° Overcast

#### Airport Weather

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 65

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:26

Sunset: 05:44

Barometer: 1018



# THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

21.10.2012 P.M

22.10.2012 A.M

21<sup>th</sup> oct 2012 P.M

## Sugar mills owe Rs 1,233 cr to cane growers till August



Sugar mills owe Rs 1,233 crore to sugarcane growers as on August 31 of 2011-12 marketing year that ended last month.

According to the Food Ministry data, sugar mills have already paid Rs 49,899 crore till August 31 of 2011-12 marketing year (October-September), while the cane arrears stood at Rs 1,233 crore.

The total cane price payment is estimated at Rs 51,132 crore for the entire 2011-12 marketing year, against Rs 44,530 crore in the previous year, the data showed.

Of the total cane arrear, Uttar Pradesh mills accounted for a maximum of Rs 440.84 crore, followed by Tamil Nadu at Rs 304 crore and Uttarkhand at Rs 151.89 crore.

However, cane arrears in Maharashtra, the country's largest sugar producing state, were mere Rs 16 crore.

The Centre had fixed the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane at Rs 145 per quintal for the 2011-12 marketing year.

However, the states like Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttarkhand had announced State Advisory Price (SAP), which was much higher than the FRP. In Uttar Pradesh, cane price was around Rs 250 per quintal.

Sugar mills had produced 26.2 million tonnes of sugar in the 2011-12 marketing year, as against 24.42 million tonnes in the previous year. The country's annual domestic demand is 22 million tonnes.

On the back of surplus production, the country is exporting sugar. In 2011-12, about 3.5 million tonnes of the sweetener has been shipped.

### **Pepper prices decline**

The usual "squeezing and cornering" continued in the pepper market last week also. If the first half of the week was in the hands of bear operators, the second half was controlled by their counterparts.

The former had an upper hand altogether as was evident from the closing prices which had shown a decline during the week.

October contract matured at the weekend and the bulls cartel is said to have cornered 2,564 tonnes of pepper raising the total volume held by it to over 5,500 tonnes involving an estimated investment of over Rs 200 crore, market sources alleged.

All the other origins were ruling much below the Indian parity by over \$1,600 a tonne for their Asta grade pepper. At the weekend, Vietnam was easier by around \$100 a tonne from its black pepper price the previous week. Domestic demand was being met by supplies from stockists in Rajasthan for some time and of late, from Karnataka. The domestic requirement is expected to pick up in the coming weeks for Diwali and winter months. But, by that time, the new pepper will start arriving at the primary markets. There is a possibility of more imports this year because of the high prices prevailing in the market here. Already, an estimated 15,000 tonnes of pepper might have landed in the country and another 6,000 tonnes of the commodity are expected to

come till Dec-end, market sources said. In the international market, demand was slow last week. Vietnam is reported to have exported large quantity of pepper up to September. In Brazil, the new crop has started trickling in. The trade estimated the Brazilian production at around 25,000 tonnes and claimed that it would be sold in Oct/Nov/Dec.

Indonesia is reported to have sold out around 30,000 tonnes of its new crop leaving a balance of over 10,000 tonnes. The Indian crop is expected to hit the market from mid-Dec onwards and it is projected between 60,000-63,000 tonnes by various agencies.

During the weekend, Oct contract matured. All the active contracts showed a decline. November, December and February contracts were down by Rs 85, Rs 330 and Rs 260 respectively to the last traded price of Rs 43,500, Rs 42,940 and Rs 38,900 a quintal.

Total turnover increased by 1,779 tonnes to close at 10,474 tonnes. Total open interest showed a marginal increase of 58 tonnes during the week to close at 7,602 tonnes.

Spot prices declined by Rs 200 a quintal at the weekend in tandem with the futures market trend to close at Rs 40,400 (ungarbled) and Rs 41,900 (MG 1) a quintal.

January has not been listed on the exchange claiming that it is a lean month. But, pepper season in Kerala normally begins from December onwards and lasts till March/April.

Last year, however, due to the vagaries of the weather, harvesting was delayed and thus December/January turned out to be a lean period. But, this year going by the current trend, such a situation is unlikely to happen, some of the growers claimed.

### **TN foodgrains merchants favour power holidays**

Tamil Nadu Foodgrains Merchants Association (TFMA) has offered suggestions for the proper distribution of electricity till the power crisis in the State is rectified. In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister J. Jayalithaa, the association thanked the Government for the constitution of a 10-member monitoring committee to monitor equitable distribution of available electricity in the State.

It suggested power holidays for 2 days, including Sundays, may be implemented in all industries; during night time, alternate street lights must be made to burn; commercial

establishments who consume more than 500 units of electricity may be ordered to reduce their consumption by 25 per cent; factories producing electricity needed for them by using generator may be given exemption of VAT and given subsidy; offer subsidies and long-term loans to encourage the setting up of solar lights; all commercial establishments to be asked to switch off power to all lightings after 10 p.m. with the exception of a few; buy electricity from other States; and, desisit from enforcing power cut during night time in residential areas.



# Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

22.10.2012 A.M

## Lack of R&D on soybean seeds is contributing to relatively low yield: Dinesh Shahra



With record soybean output estimated this kharif harvesting season, the Rs 13,000-crore Ruchi Soya Industries is intensifying procurement, Managing Director **Dinesh Shahra** tells *Dilip Kumar Jha*. Edited excerpts:

### **What is Ruchi's plan for this season?**

We are planning to increase capacity utilisation of both crushing units and refineries. Our average crushing capacity utilisation remained 52 per cent last season of the total capacity of 4.1 million tonnes (mt). We plan to increase it by 15-20 per cent this year. Similarly, refining capacity of 2.2 mt is set to achieve an average 70 per cent utilisation from 55-60 per cent last year.

### **What is your estimate for crush margins?**

We are bullish on the crush margins for two reasons. One, a larger crop will mean better capacity utilisation, up 15-20 per cent from last year. Two, the highest ever prices fetched by soy meal, at \$550-600 a tonne.

### **How will you achieve this higher capacity?**

More output of soybean would mean more availability for crushing. We have intensified our procurement programme in Madhya Pradesh to have higher bean stock. During the lean crushing season, normally, the unavailability of soybean proves a major hurdle for running the plant. This crop year, we are stocking beans for crushing even during the lean season.

### **What is your estimate of the soybean crop for 2012?**

It should be over 11 mt, a rise of around 10 per cent from the previous year. A better price at the time of sowing and erratic behaviour of the monsoon in the early stages forced farmers to move towards comparatively resistant crops like soybeans and a major shift towards early varieties,

which reduce the time exposure to the vagaries of nature. With the monsoon revival, farmers extended sowing, resulting in a 15-20 per cent rise in acreage.

**Soybean prices fell 35 per cent between sowing and harvesting. What is the forecast for rest of the season?**

Multiple factors affect soybean and oil prices. Hence, it would be too early to forecast bean and oil prices. Besides, there are several international and domestic factors influencing the trends — the ensuing crop in South America, the coming US crop and also other output of oilseeds such as rapeseed, sunflower, etc, change in the import duty in India and export duty in Indonesia and Malaysia, the exchange rate...all these affect the price. Soybean has jumped to Rs 32 a kg now from Rs 24 a kg during the same time last year.

**India lags developed countries in average soybean yield. What is the way forward?**

Our country undergoes seasonal changes at a much faster pace compared to the developed world. The physiological maturity levels are short in India (60-90 days), which completes the crop cycle very fast. Second, in a good number of areas, soybean is grown as a filler crop due to its short duration and for taking advantage of the monsoon; this also leads to poor inputs and less inter-cultural practices, ending in poor yields.

Lack of research and development in seeds is another problem. The other factors are very low sizes of holdings and the level of mechanisation as compared to other countries. Additionally, we have post harvest losses to blame for less produce.

**You had recently announced a Rs 5 a litre price cut for refined soya oil. Do you see room for more such cuts?**

We consider reduction in price a healthy trend, as it would reduce inflationary pressure in agro products. The price of soya oil has gone down substantially in the past few months. If availability remains higher than consumption, one can expect a further cut in retail prices.

**What else?**

Owing to higher prices, the area under soybean has increased in almost all growing states. There is potential for further growth in sowing in Karnataka, UP, Gujarat and Andhra. Soya meal export will increase due to good demand and fair availability.

**Any plan to change business strategy, like branded oil to unbranded oil?**

We are focusing more on branded products, as they fetch better margins.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

22.10.2012 A.M

## Noida farmers call off protest

NOIDA: Farmers of Noida, who had stalled construction work on residential projects in the city for over a month, decided to call off their protests on Sunday after the [Noida Authority](#) agreed to meet their demands. The Authority has assured them that proposals of their demands would be taken up for approval in the next board meeting.

About 300 disgruntled farmers riding motorbikes, cars, tractor-trolley and cycles had last protested outside the Authority office in Sector 6 on Wednesday. On Saturday, Authority officials had met a farmers' delegation and agreed to solve their problems. Officials assured them that they will solve the developed plots issue within five months. "We have started working on the roadmap to clear the issues. Farmers have also assured that they will cooperate with us and we hope to settle things by April next year," said a senior Authority official. The Authority will have to distribute Rs 2,000 crore as compensation.

For about a month, farmers of Sadarpur village have been demanding 64% hiked compensation, 10% developed plots, village development and regularization of abadi land, among others. "It is a welcome decision. If the Authority does not settle our problems, we will again resume our agitation and halt the construction work in the region," said Ashok Bhati, a farmer.

Meanwhile, an issue of allotting a farmer's land to a developer has arisen in Sarfabad area. Authority officials have decided to initiate a probe by SDM (Dadri) to establish the exact ownership of the land.

## SC-appointed panel wants to restrict even field trials of genetically modified crops

The 10-year moratorium recommended by an expert committee appointed by the Supreme Court - on field trials of genetically modified (GM) crops - will, if implemented, undermine efforts to boost agricultural productivity and strengthen the nation's food security. Though India has increased food production over the decades the pace of growth has decelerated in recent years, causing growing imbalance between demand and supply for food even when natural resources like land and water have been stretched to the limit. Consequently food prices have shot up which, according to a just released UN report, prevented eight million Indians from rising out of the poverty bracket in 2010-11 alone. GM crops, a technological breakthrough widely accepted across the world, offer a way out of this trap. They are now grown across 134 million hectares worldwide in more than two dozen countries. In India, Bt cotton alone is grown in over 11 million hectares, doubling productivity over the last decade.

The main argument cited by the committee for such a draconian freeze on field trials is that Indian evaluation of the safety status of GM crops is not of the desired standards. While nobody would argue about the need for scientifically evaluating the full impact of GM crops, one fails to understand the need for stopping all field trials that are an important ingredient of research and development efforts in this strategic area. The government has, in fact, sought to legislate the Biotechnology Regulatory Authority of India Bill to set up a statutory and autonomous agency with adequate powers to regulate research, import, manufacture, transport and use of biotechnology products so that safety standards are maintained. A ban would only render these efforts futile.

## Agri group to focus on dual crop pattern for onion, garlic

NASHIK: The National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF) is planning to focus on intercrop farming for onion and garlic crops in the major onion growing states across the country.

While [Maharashtra](#) is a major onion producer, it is followed by Karnataka, [Gujarat](#) and Madhya Pradesh. NHRDF has been taking several measures to increase onion yield and production to meet demands. As part of this objective, the foundation has decided to focus on intercropping

which will help farmers get the benefits of growing two crops at a time.

Speaking to TOI, a senior NHRDF official said, "We are planning to promote the intercrop pattern to help farmers benefit out of growing two crops at the same time. Both, onion as well as garlic, can be cultivated with sugarcane and chilly crops. While the duration of sugarcane and chilly crop is more compared to the former two, both root varieties can therefore be cultivated with sugarcane and chilly."

He further said that NHRDF is focusing on Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and [Madhya Pradesh](#) for this dual crop pattern. This will help benefits not only the growth of two crops but will also increase onion yield.

"Maximum onion production can be undertaken with the use of technological intervention, micro irrigation and disease control measures. We are also promoting onion-growers to resort to micro irrigation, as most of the regions are facing water shortage. many farmers have started diverting to micro irrigation as an option."

The official said that while most farmers in Maharashtra cultivating onion crop traditionally it has resulted in a drop in yield. NHRDF is therefore making efforts to educate the farmers to resort to new technology and use good quality seeds to increase the yield.

"We have developed around seven varieties of onion for all three crops - kharif, late kharif and the summer crop. These good quality seeds are being distributed to the farmers across the country and we are also creating awareness among the farming community to use the seeds.

In Gujarat, reportedly, around 80% of the farmers are using these seeds, generating the highest yield of 25.48 tonnes per hectare. But onion yield remains around 14.03 tonnes per hectare in Maharashtra and 13.61 tonnes per hectare in Karnataka due to the use of traditional methods.

## Potato cultivation dwindles this season in Nilgiris

UDHAGAMANDALAM: A recent study showing that potato cultivation has been dwindling in Nilgiris has prompted officials from the [Horticulture Research Centre](#) and Directorate of [Marketing Intelligence Centre](#) to initiate steps to encourage farmers to cultivate potato in the hill district.

Potato is cultivated in the Nilgiris in about 1500 acres, every three months. However, farmers generally switch to other vegetables once the potato crop is harvested to maintain the soil standard. According to a survey conducted by the horticulture department, farmers preferred other crops like carrot which is an ideal cash crop. This is because of the risks involved in cultivating potato in the rainy season as it is vulnerable to changes in weather. The cost involved in cultivating carrot is less than that of potato. While it costs around Rs 65,000 to cultivate an acre with potato, it is only Rs 25,000 for cultivating carrot in an acre.

N Selvaraj, President, Horticulture Research Centre said, "This time the area of cultivation of potato has declined as farmers seem to prefer cash crops like carrot where the investment is low. Also, potato is vulnerable to climatic changes where excess rains and high humidity, expected this season, may affect yield". Carrot seed are cheaply available. This is not the case with potato. Besides, seedlings sometimes need to be shipped from North India, which adds to the cost.

The potato research centre in Ooty and the Horticulture Research centre produce potato seedling in their farms which are sold to farmers at a nominal price which is at least 30 percent less than the open market price. Currently, they have 10 tonnes of four varieties of seeds. Potato varieties like 'Kufrigidari', 'Kufrijothi', 'Kufrigiriraj' and 'Kufriwarna' are recommended by the horticulture research centre for cultivation as this autumn crop. "This 'Kadai bogum' is a very important cultivation as its yield is the source of seedlings for the main crop in April and May," said Selvaraj. According to him, seeds procured from North India contain Aphids, a kind of virus, which affects yield.

The Directorate of Marketing Intelligence Centre in TNAU has come out with a forecast for procurement price for potato this season. According to their analysis, the yield in December - January would fetch farmers Rs.20-22 per kg. This forecast is based on analysis of the selling price of potato in the Nilgiris Cooperative Marketing Society for the past 22 years.

According to records, potato, an important food staple and the number one vegetable crop in the world, was cultivated in 18.10 lakh hectares in India during 2011-12 and the production amounted to 413 lakh tonnes. According to National Horticulture Research and Development Commission, in [Tamil Nadu](#), about 62,940 tonnes of potato was produced in an area of 2,950 hectares during 2011-12.