

Today Farm News

12.09.2012 A.M

Visionary extraordinaire

Vergheese Kurien transformed a small-scale household activity into the world's largest milk producing enterprise

Much has already been said and written about the monumental contributions of Vergheese Kurien to the development of the Indian dairy industry, rooted on the Gandhian Principle of production by masses. I met Dr. Kurien soon after his return from Michigan State University and his taking up residence at Anand. From then on, we shared ideas and experiences in the area of rural transformation through agriculture and dairying. Among the very many unique contributions of Dr. Kurien which led to India becoming the leading milk producer of the world, I would like to highlight a few.

Decentralised production

First, he rightly concentrated on the processing, pricing and marketing aspects of milk production. He knew that if dairying became profitable, farm women and men would automatically care for the animals and look after breeding and nutrition. He also knew that in our country, only a decentralised production of milk, done by women, supported by key centralised services in the fields of animal nutrition, health care and processing would help to ensure both the income security of rural families and the production of the necessary quantities of milk for the country. He therefore saw great merit in the power of cooperative milk societies in conferring concurrently the advantages of production by the masses and the benefits of modern

centralised dairy processing technology. He developed a “one stop” method of meeting the needs of over 75 million women engaged in milk production. Thus, the Amul cooperative units not only purchased milk but also provided breeding, health care and nutrition support for the animals, to the great benefit of the milk suppliers. Thanks to Dr. Kurien’s emphasis on payment based on butterfat content, the buffalo started getting attention once again. The survival of milch buffalo breeds and their dominant role in the dairy industry today is primarily because of the milk purchase and pricing procedures introduced by Dr. Kurien.

Processing and marketing

His other major contribution was the diversification of processing and marketing channels. Thus, milk became available through bulk vending machines, as well as through direct home delivery procedures and distribution through sachets. Such a multiple delivery channel made it easy for consumers to get milk whenever and wherever needed. Dr. Kurien ensured the economic viability of milk processing plants by deputing multidisciplinary spearhead teams to assess the quantity of milk available in an area and the capacity needed for the optimum functioning of the processing plant before it was established. When milk became available in plenty, he diversified the product mix by converting milk into milk powder. He also ensured a steady supply of milk throughout the year by the judicious combination of milk powder and raw milk. Above all, he developed a unique system of training potential dairy managers through the organisation of a Siksha Dairy at the Anand Agricultural University, designed to impart training in all aspects of the dairy industry, ranging from milking the animal to processing, value-addition and marketing.

IRMA

A lasting contribution of his was the establishment of the Institute of Rural Management at Anand to provide the country with well trained and competent managers for handling rural enterprises including dairying. I was the Principal Secretary in the Union Ministry of Agriculture when the inspiring report prepared by Dr. Kamala Choudhary and Dr. Kurien came for approval. This was the first time that a serious attempt was being made in our country to professionalise rural cooperatives. Looking back, it is difficult to believe that one person could have achieved so much in his lifetime, transforming a small-scale household activity into the world’s largest milk producing enterprise. More than for any one else, the following description of an extraordinary individual by Rainer Maria Rilke fits Dr. Kurien.

“Again and again in history some special people in the crowd wake up. They have no ground in the crowd, and they emerge according to much broader laws. They carry strange customs with them, and demand room for bold actions. The future speaks ruthlessly through them.

They save the world.”

(M.S. Swaminathan is Member, Rajya Sabha.)



MILKING IDEAS: Verghese Kurien saw merit in the power of cooperative societies and developed a ‘one-stop’ method of meeting the needs of those involved in milk production

Jayalithaa announces sops for delta farmers

Some more concessions have been announced for agriculturists to raise the long-term samba crop in the Cauvery delta.

In a statement on Tuesday, Chief Minister Jayalithaa said the subsidy per acre for farm work had been increased from Rs. 240 to Rs. 480. The extent of area would go up from one lakh acres to 2.5 lakh acres.

Thirty kg of certified seeds per acre would be supplied, of which the subsidy would be Rs. 10 per kg. For purchase of seed drills, 50 per cent grant would be available

Referring to her statement last month, the Chief Minister said there had been an overwhelming response from farmers to her original announcement of a comprehensive package of sops. In total the government earmarked Rs. 70.63 crore for the benefit of the delta farmers.

In the last 10 days, farmers had taken steps for raising community nurseries over 2,754 acres. In the next 10 days, the extent would go up by 7,250 acres.

As regards direct sowing, the operations had been completed on 47,000 acres. Besides, farmers had taken up the crop on 3,000 acres too, she added.

Organic farming the way ahead for State: expert

Kerala should take serious steps to switch over to organic farming, Lynette Abbott, internationally-renowned soil biologist and professor with the School of Earth and Environment of the University of Western Australia, has said.

She is here to meet faculty and students of the Kerala Agricultural University and the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, and deliver a series of 12 lectures to KAU's Academy of Climate Change Research and Education.

Land use practices

"It is interesting to investigate what will be required to convert farming systems in Kerala into fully organic systems. Compare the areas where conversion to organic production is likely to be easy and where it is likely to be difficult. The background to such an investigation requires details of soil and land use practices at a local level, economics of production systems, understanding of supply chains for food in the market place, and understanding of knowledge of farmers and their willingness to adopt new practices," she told *The Hindu* .

Optimum production

She stated that the aim of organic agricultural systems was to achieve optimum production of nutritious food without the use of artificial fertilizers or manufactured pesticides.

"In organic agriculture, nutrient inputs are capped and soil biological processes supported. The biological capacity of the soils should be used for sustaining agriculture production," she said.

She noted that organic food cost more because of a smaller market and certification costs, which included inspection of farm records and soil testing.

Different standards

“There are differences between organic standards of different organisations and also between standards of countries. For example, the allowable levels of manure use differ in different countries.”

She observed that organic agriculture in Australia had a strong knowledge base.

“This has been developed by farmers who have excellent knowledge of issues related to their own farming systems. Australia has a very good system of organic certification too. Kerala could learn a thing or two from these systems,” she added.

Kerala should take steps to switch over to organic cultivation, says Lynette Abbott, internationally-renowned soil biologist.

Innovative farm practices need of the hour

There is something with commercial agriculture that dissuades farmers from taking to best practices in farming which can reduce investment and raise their income.

Cotton farmers in Adilabad district have failed to adopt eco-friendly and much cheaper methods of pest control though they have been tormented by sucking pests since the last few years.

Sucking pests like the white fly and thrips are threatening to spoil the party for cotton farmers whose hope of good season has been strengthened by a belated but adequate monsoon.

The farmers will be forced to spend as much as Rs. 10,000 per acre during the next month-and-a-half to control these pests if they choose to spray chemicals in their fields. “They would do well if they go for hanging the yellow and blue plastic sticky traps in the fields instead of using regular pesticides.

The sucking pests are attracted to the colours of these plastic sheets and get stuck on coming in contact with the gum”, explains B. Ramakant, a progressive tomato farmer from Tosham in Gudihatnoor mandal who is among the few in the district to have adopted best practices in agriculture.

The investment for the sticky sheets could be as low as Rs. 500 per acre over a period of one month. Suspending 10 sheets each of yellow and blue colour in one acre of the crop, involves an expenditure of Rs. 250 and is sufficient to control about 60 per cent of sucking pests, Mr. Ramakant says.

“The sheets need to be replaced with fresh ones once the surface is full of dead insects. Besides saving on the cost of the expensive pesticides, this method also saves money in terms of labour charges”, the farmer from Tosham adds.

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University of Agricultural Sciences begins BTech in food technology

HUBLI: University of Agricultural Sciences has started a four-year B.Tech programme in food technology from this academic year in North Karnataka. The varsity received over 100 applications, but only 30 students could be admitted.

The four-year course will train students in food processing and technology, engineering, and industrial microbiology, food science and nutrition, food trade and business management.

Nodal officer of B Tech in food technology of UAS Ashok Rokhade said that the food industry is booming in the country and jobs are aplenty in the field. They will be placed as technicians, lab analysts, quality executive, quality manager, R&D manager in the food industry.

The only other college which offers B.Tech in food technology is in Hassan, he added.

Watch out for 'poisoned' fruits

JAIPUR: There is no guarantee that fruits and vegetables you bring to home are free from chemicals and harmful substances. In the past five years, the state government has not tested even a single fruit or vegetable in its laboratory in Jaipur.

Vendors often use harmful substances, said sources, such as acetylene gas and by-products of carbide to ripen fruits through artificial methods. Some chemicals, if not harmful, do affect the nutritional value of the fruits and veggies.

The state government has not initiated any step in testing the quality of the fruits and vegetables sold to the aam aadmi. While campaigns are being run to check adulteration of milk and milk-based products and spices across the state, fruits and vegetables have been given a miss.

Two years ago, officials of the medical health and family welfare department had visited Muhana Mandi to collect samples of fruits and vegetables. However, following a protest by traders, they didn't collect any samples.

Furthermore, the department has not issued guidelines to officials regarding ways in which sampling of fruits and vegetables should be done. Food safety commissioner Dr B R Meena said, "If we receive any guidelines on fruit and vegetable testing, we will do that. Our officials regularly test quality of fruits and vegetables being sold in the market and they do not let the vendors sell stale fruits and vegetables."

The lack of measures may prove costly for the consumers who go by the 'look and feel' of the vegetable and not know if it contains harmful chemicals. The government has not carried out any raids at godowns storing fruits and vegetables in the past five years. Jaipur's food safety officer Virendra Kumar Singh said, "Whenever we get the guidelines regarding fruit sample collections, we will work according to it."

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K'taka for new formula for Cauvery water sharing

Karnataka on Tuesday said it would seek from the Cauvery River Authority headed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh a new formula to share the river's water with Tamil Nadu and other states when monsoon fails, like this year.

The decision to seek "fresh distress formula based on

ground realities" was taken an all-party meeting held in Bangalore ahead of the Sep 19 meeting of the Cauvery River Authority at New Delhi

Chief minister Jagadish Shettar, who convened the meeting, told reporters that the state would apprise the CRA meeting of the drought situation in Karnataka and the problems the state would face if water is released to Tamil Nadu and other riparian states that are sharing the water on a formula decided in 2007.

Karnataka on Monday agreed to release 10,000 cusecs of water daily to Tamil Nadu till Sep 20 on orders of the Supreme Court.

Farmers in Mandya and neighbouring Mysore have been holding demonstrations since Monday evening opposing release of water. In Bangalore also, Kannada organizations staged a demonstration.

Karnataka government has declared over 150 of the state 176 taluks (revenue subdivisions) as drought hit as monsoon, that started June first week and lasts till this month end, has failed this year.

The water level in Krishnaraja Sagar reservoir (KRS) in Mandya district, about 80km from Bangalore from where most of the water is released to Tamil Nadu, stood on Sept 11 at 110 feet as against the full level of 124.8 feet, according to official figures.

Shettar said he would hold another meeting Sep 15 with leaders of all political parties in the state and invite MPs from the state to attend it also.

Water Resources Minister Basavaraj Bommai said Karnataka had been seeking since 2002 a "distress formula based on ground realities".

The distress formula is so called as it entails sharing the distress as well as the available water between the two state when monsoon fails.

Leader of Opposition assembly Siddaramaiah, of Congress, said after the meeting that the chief minister had been urged to inform the CRA that Karnataka could not release Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu in view of the severe drought and consequent drinking water problems.

Siddaramaiah said 30 TMC of water was available in Mettur Dam (in Tamil Nadu) and this amount was sufficient for it as that state would start receiving north east monsoon rains.

The sharing of waters of the Cauvery river has been the source of a serious conflict between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The genesis of this conflict rests in two controversial agreements - one signed in 1892 and another in 1924 - between the erstwhile Madras Presidency and the princely state of Mysore.

Karnataka claims that these agreements were skewed heavily in favour of the Madras Presidency, and has demanded a settlement based on "equitable sharing of the waters".

Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, pleads that it has already developed almost 3,000,000 acres of land and as a result has come to depend very heavily on the existing pattern of usage.

Any change in this pattern, it says, will adversely affect the livelihood of millions of farmers in the state.

Jaya announces sops for Cauvery delta farmers

In view of the ensuing long-term Samba crop season, Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa today announced an additional subsidy of Rs. 17.10 crore to farmers of the Cauvery Delta region, taking the total to over Rs. 70 crore in this regard.

Jayalalithaa had earlier allotted Rs.53.53 crore towards various sops and subsidies for farmers to take up the Samba crop in the Cauvery Delta region, whose prospects had initially looked bleak in the wake of low water levels at the Mettur Dam.

Among today's sops, she said farmers will be provided with 30 kg of sample seeds per acre for direct sowing with a Rs. 10 subsidy and also announced increasing the acreage for certain other farm subsidies.

Due to these measures, the government will incur an additional expense of Rs. 17.10 crore, and a total sum of Rs. 70.63 crore had been allotted to the Cauvery Delta farmers for Samba crop cultivation, she said in a statement here.

She had earlier announced releasing water from Mettur Dam from September 17, the first time in the year, as water was not released for the previous kuruvai (short-term) crop.

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Tomorrow's Forecast



Wednesday, Sep 12

Sunny

Max Min

35.4° | 25.2°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:57

Humidity: 62

Sunset: 06:11

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1008



Thursday, Sep 13

Rainy

Max Min

33° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Sep 14

Sep 15

Sep 16

Sep 17

Sep 18



31° | 26°

31° | 26°

32° | 27°

34° | 27°

32° | 27°

Rainy

Rainy

Rainy

Rainy

Rainy

Airport Weather

Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs Sunrise: 7:14

Humidity: 79%

Sunset: 17:48

Delhi

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1005



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Rice exporting firm seeks patent for parboiling unit

The wheat-eating belt of north India likes it raw when it comes to rice.

Even as parboiled rice, that is soaked, steamed and then dried, now accounts for over 90 per cent of rice exports from the country and over 60 per cent consumption in the southern states, north India still needs to develop an appetite for it.

A Karnal-based rice company, Chaman Lal Setia Export, has now filed for patenting a novel technology to make parboiling more water-economical and cost and fuel effective.

It has received a go ahead from the Intellectual Property Rights to scale up the technology after no objections were filed against it.

Though parboiled rice is more nutritious, less prone to insect-pest attacks, has better storage span and less possibility of broken rice, the process could involve huge costs, large quantities of water, effluent treatment plant (ETP) and emission of gases into the environment.

Entailing a cost of Rs 5 to 10 lakh, it could be added to the existing parboiling infrastructure, said Vijay Setia, former president of All India Rice Exporters Association, and company's

director. "It also eliminates the need to have an ETP plant, saves 80 per cent water, as drained water is reused for steaming and uses lesser chemicals in boilers.

"Nearly 80 per cent water will be saved, benefiting the depleting water-table of Punjab and Haryana. The process has been validated by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute and NDRI, Karnal," Setia said while addressing mediapersons on Tuesday.

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Fruit, veggie prices drop at Koyambedu

Prices of fruits and vegetables have come down at the premium wholesale market complex in Koyambedu, thanks to the commencement of the crop season in different parts of the country.

While the vegetable rates have dropped by approximately 20 per cent this week, prices of fruits like apple, banana and mosambi were reduced as less as about 50 per cent, traders claimed.

According to S Chandran, president of the Koyambedu Periyar Wholesale Vegetable Market Merchants, the market received 550 trucks, each carrying 10 tonnes of vegetables, on Monday.

“The arrival of vegetables increased following the beginning of the crop season in the neighbouring states. For instance, if a trader from Oddanchatram in Dindigul district was sending 100 gunny bags of vegetables to Karnataka till last month, he would have reduced it by half as the yield in Karnataka would meet the local demand,” he said. Henceforth, the remaining 50 bags are diverted to the wholesale market in Chennai, contributing to the drop in vegetable prices, he added.

Currently, brinjal is sold anywhere between Rs 5 and Rs 8 per kilogram, while it was priced at Rs 10 10 days ago. Likewise, radish is now sold at a price range between Rs 6 and Rs 8, yam

at Rs 18, carrot at Rs 15 and drumstick fir Rs 13. But onions and double beans continue to be sold at a static price of Rs 10 and Rs 40, respectively, Chandran said.

There is a marked difference in the rates of certain fruit varieties when compared with last month's prices. Srinivasan, president of the Chennai Fruit Commission Agents Association, said that a kilogram of apple from Shimla was sold anywhere between Rs 80 and Rs120, which was a considerable dip.

"Shimla apples were sold at around Rs 225 per kilogram, about a month ago. The increase in the number of apples at the Koyambedu because of the good yield in Himachal Pradesh, the prices have dropped significantly," he said. On an average, 300 tonnes of apple reach the Koyambedu market for sale by truck, he added.

The juicy mosambi and fibre-rich bananas cost less due to their abundant arrival from Andhra Pradesh and central Tamil Nadu, respectively. "The cyclone-hit Cuddalore district is back to business and is producing bananas to send it to the city market," Srinivasan said.



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**Kurien was always clear that the cooperative was a business model: Amrita Patel
Interview with Chairperson, NDDB**

The late Verghese Kurien left an indelible mark on **Amrita Patel**. As a young veterinary scientist during the early days of the dairy cooperative movement at Anand in the 1960s and later as his successor at the helm of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), Patel saw Kurien's ideologies shape the lives of millions of farmers for the better. In an interview with *Vinay Umarji*, she talks about this and what lies ahead. Edited excerpts:

What are your earliest memories of Kurien and the milk movement? How did you come to Anand and begin your work with Kurien?

I came to Anand when I was 15, when my father retired and decided to settle here. In those days, Amul was the only outfit to have a bulldozer and I used to wonder how it ran. One day, Dr. Kurien made me sit with him in it and showed me how it worked. He also smoked like a chimney; in those days, he had a tin of Red & White cigarettes. It was because of my father that at an early age, I could see so many villages and observe veterinary science work.

After I studied (Bachelors in veterinary science) and came back, I felt I was something and asked him for a job. But he said he had no space for me because in those days, Amul was an all-male outfit. But I said I would work in an honorary capacity, so I was attached to three veterinary doctors. After seven-eight months, I got a call from the GM (Kurien), saying, “We have built a cattle-feed factor and are getting an FAO expert as a nutritionist. She is a lady and is insisting on a lady assistant. I am giving you this job for three months. Don’t expect anything after that.”

But I was asked to continue. Later in life, when I joined NDDDB, I asked him if he gave me the job because I was H M Patel’s daughter. He said, “I can’t deny that the first three months of your job was because of your father. But, later, you proved yourself.” I felt a relief, because in those days, there was resentment if you were a woman. In those days, as a woman, you were seen as denying a needy man a job.

And, then, I was a real headache for Amul because I used to fight for little things. I was quite defiant.

How would you sum up his contribution to the dairy movement?

It’s not so much about his contribution, as about his qualities. When he came to Anand, he didn’t expect to stay, but Tribhuvandas (founder of the co-op) made him understand. What he was involved in initially was development of one district cooperative. But his contribution to the dairy was in taking a farmer-owned structure and converting it into a business model. Today, in our country when we talk about cooperatives, we think these are government-owned. That was not Dr Kurien’s message. He was clear that the cooperative was a business model and its shareholders were its members. It’s got to be sustainable and pay for itself.

In the movement, Kurien had a team, including Tribhuvandas and H M Dalaya, who trusted him completely. That was a great thing for Amul, that it had a benevolent chairman, whose thinking was in the interest of the farmers. And, there were these two professionals who had the integrity wherein all the decisions made were in the interest of farmers. What Dr Kurien had combined in him was ideology, professionalism, integrity and business sense. I used to ask him, “You have these qualities, but when you build the next cooperative, and unless that cooperative have a Kurien, what will happen?” He used to say that if you had a Tribhuvandas, you would have a Kurien. But the fact is that finding the Kuriens will be equally difficult.

At a very early age, he had recognised the essential elements of what contributes to success. Kurien was clear, that unlike other agricultural products, in milk, the market would stimulate the demand. He did not provide inputs first. He developed markets first, that gave stimulus to production. In Operation Flood-I, he knew the best markets were the metros, and around them, one needed to develop cooperatives, so that the milk moved to those metros. Also, right to the bitter end, he argued with the cooperatives that you had to employ professionals to market the milk.

How do you see it carried forward so that the maximum people benefit from it? Is there a meeting point between corporatisation and cooperatives, so that the farmer gets a share in the brand?

The thing that Dr Kurien also recognised in his lifetime is that the real problem with our cooperatives is the Cooperative Societies Act and the way it is written. It is a legacy of the British; it was never meant for big cooperatives but for small credit cooperatives. He spent his entire life, till he retired, fighting and pleading with the government to amend the Cooperative Societies Act and give cooperatives the freedom they need. N T Rama Rao passed another parallel cooperative societies Act (when chief minister of Andhra) which says if people come together and form a cooperative and they take no money from the government, no equity, they are completely free to operate under a separate Act. In this new cooperative, the responsibility to hold regular elections is with the board, holding an annual general meeting is with the board, and if the board does not do it, then the penalty is on the board. So, here is a progressive legislation.

Then, a couple of unions came from Andhra and said we have taken a government loan which we want to return; will you please help us? We gave them a loan to make them free. They started operating free under the Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies Act, but the Congress government then ordered them all back under the original Act by issuing an ordinance. So, this is the extent to which the government does not wish cooperatives to be fully autonomous. This was what he fought against. That's why he himself was supporting another legislation to give cooperatives the status of a producer company.

Unfortunately, the media has understood a producer company as corporatisation, which it is not, it is a cooperative registered under the Companies Act. Look at the differences -- there is a cap on dividend, it is an institution of users, selling shares among themselves, no investor can come

and take hold. It is what we call new-generation cooperatives. Kurien had said this is the only hope for cooperatives.

Despite the movement being considered successful, we are still short of milk. How can this be corrected? Does it mean the revolution is over? In the last 10 years while demand has grown at six million tonnes per year, the supply has grown only by 3.5 mt annually. What is the road ahead?

We are not short at milk. The demand is growing faster than production. That is why (we are working on) the National Dairy Plan. Cooperatives in our country have been given the responsibility to first meet liquid milk demand. Today, the private sector milk processing capacity is more than the cooperative capacity. When the international prices are not good, the private sector downs its shutters. We know the demand is going to increase and we have to prepare for that. And, that's what the National Dairy Plan is all about. Until the government puts in a mechanism to know what is the milk production, how much butter is made, how much powder is being made, and is there a shortfall or not, we cannot plan. We are also saying that we will double the 3.5 mt annual growth in the next 15 years.

Kurien always kept politics at bay from the organisations he was heading. Do you think politicisation comes in the way of running cooperatives professionally?

It (politicisation) happened under his nose. It happened the entire life he struggled. That's why I am saying in our dialogue with every state government that, let the board appoint a chief executive and not let the state government put a person. Put professionals in key positions, starting with a marketing head and finance head who knows about managing money. Which is why a producer company has a provision for co-opting. We can't blame a farmer-elective board. Are they equipped to manage? They are very good at managing at the village level but when it comes to a business of many hundred crores, I am looking at the economics of processing and marketing beyond them. In the 1960s, there were six men with PhDs in one union in Amul. That was the importance given to professionals to run the business of farmers. Today, you don't see that.

In the producer company, from day one when a person is elected, he undergoes a six-month course which teaches him how to run a business. It is not fair to expect him to know the business. Then you can bring in a finance man and marketing man to grow the business but cooperatives don't allow that.

Professionalising the cooperatives is getting its members to understand (business). How are our cooperative elections held today? Party panel? Where do you get the right man? It's a party of the day and not a man of the day. That's what we have to change and he (Kurien) tried hard to change (it).

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Paddy farmers in Cauvery delta to get Rs 17.1 cr additional subsidy

Paddy farmers in the Cauvery delta district will get an additional subsidy of Rs 17.1 crore towards cultivation cost for the coming long-term 'Samba' paddy season, according to an official press release.

This takes the total subsidy for the season to Rs 70.63 crore.

With the South West monsoon expected to set in during the third week of October, the Tamil Nadu Government has decided to release water from the Mettur Dam on the Cauvery River from September 17 to enable farmers start cultivating paddy.

The Government had earlier announced a subsidy of Rs 53.53 crore to enable farmers take up new cultivation practices for the season.

Agri dept programmes

The programmes conducted by the Agriculture Department to encourage measures like direct sowing, and raising social nurseries are on in Thanjavur, Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur, Tiruchi and Cuddalore Districts.

In the last 10 days, over 2,754 acres of nursery beds are being raised and in the next 10 days, over 7,250 acres of such nurseries will be established.

Land preparation is on in 53,225 acres to take up direct sowing of paddy and seeding has been done in 47,000 acres. Paddy planting is also on in 3,000 acres.

The additional subsidy has been granted based on farmers' feedback, the release said.

Subsidy on cultivation cost

The subsidy towards cultivation cost has been doubled to Rs 480 an acre to cover 2.50 lakh acres compared with one lakh acres earlier.

Farmers will get 30 kg of certified paddy seed for direct sowing for every acre of cultivation along with a subsidy of Rs 10 per kg; and in addition, a 50 per cent subsidy will be granted towards purchase of planting equipment, the release said.



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Govt working on stable export-import policy on select agri-commodities

To overcome the inconsistencies in farm export-import policy, the Government is considering allowing a minimum level of quantity for the export of select agri-commodities to help India

become a stable player in the global market.

“We are working on a mechanism to have a stable export-import policy on select agricultural commodities such as sugar, wheat and rice,” Food Minister K.V. Thomas said at the Kingsman 4th Indian Sugar Conference here today.

“It is not good that some years we start exporting and suddenly we stop. We are in discussion with the Commerce Ministry to allow wheat, rice and sugar exports at certain level,” he said.

The stable policy on export will help both farmers and industry, he added.

Thomas also noted that the present export policy on wheat, rice and sugar will continue.

The country has exported 3.15 million tonnes of sugar so far this year. Besides, about 2.5 mt of wheat and more than 4 mt of non-basmati rice have been shipped since September 2011, when the export ban on these two items was lifted.

Sugar decontrol

On decontrol of the sugar sector, Thomas said: “We have been conscious about the need to revisit the regulatory norms on the sugar sector. The Rangarajan Committee on sugar decontrol has finalised the report and will very soon submit to the Prime Minister.”

Once the report is approved, it will be ready for implementation, he added.

Sugar sector is the only industry which is fully controlled by the government. It is regulated right from production through distribution in domestic and global markets.

Sugar production

On next year’s production, Thomas said, “We are likely to produce enough sugar to meet the consumption demand and will perhaps have a small exportable surplus.”

However, the Government will formulate the first estimate on sugar output by the end of this month in consultation with the state sugar commissioners, he added.

The country’s sugar economy is approximately \$16 billion and impacts 50 million farmer

families.

India is estimated to have produced 26 mt in the ongoing 2011-12 marketing year (October-September) against the annual demand of 22-23 mt.

TN hikes subsidy for paddy cultivation in delta districts

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Nursery beds

In the last 10 days over 2,754 acres of nursery beds are being raised and in the next 10 days over 7,250 acres of such nurseries will be established. Land preparation is on in 53,225 acres to take up direct sowing of paddy and seeding has been done in 47,000 acres.

Paddy planting is also on in 3,000 acres.

The additional subsidy has been granted based on farmers' feedback, the release said.

The subsidy towards cultivation cost has been doubled to Rs 480 an acre to cover 2.50 lakh

acres as compared with one lakh acres earlier.

Farmers will get 30 kg of certified paddy seed for direct sowing for every acre of cultivation along with a subsidy of Rs 10 per kg.

In addition, a 50 per cent subsidy will be granted towards purchase of planting equipment, the release said.