

Today Farm News

15.09.2012

15.09.2012 Sep

Rice productivity

A second science-based Green Revolution is needed for increasing rice productivity, said Robert S. Zeigler, director general, International Rice Research Institute, Philippines, at TNAU on Friday.in Warangal

15.09.2012 Sep

Rice expert calls for science-based second Green Revolution



Robert S. Zeigler, director general of International Rice Research Institute, Manila, with K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, at the centenary celebrations of the Paddy Breeding Station at the University in Coimbatore on Friday.— Photo: K.Ananthan

A second science-based Green Revolution is needed for increasing rice productivity as the health of rice-based systems determines the fate of Indian agriculture, Robert S. Zeigler, director general, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines, said here on Friday.

At a seminar on “Rice Research Innovations for Addressing Global Food Security in a Changing Climate” held at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in connection with the Centenary Year of the Paddy Breeding Station, he said that this revolution would be made possible by tapping innovations in genetics, molecular biology and plant physiology, and linking soil biology and chemistry.

With the number of people going hungry on the increase, the world needed an additional quantity of 114 million tonnes rice by 2035, Mr. Zeigler said.

“The world’s rice will come, ideally by increasing productivity on existing rice lands, mostly in Asia, and may be later from Africa. But in Asia, land, labour and water are moving out of rice cultivation. If Asia does not produce sufficient rice, the world will go hungry,” the director general said.

“Rice, unlike wheat, has been tremendously diversified and domesticated. This is because it is more than just food for nearly 50 per cent of the world population and for more than 75 per cent of the poor. Without rice, it would be impossible to feed the Asian population, keeping in mind the climatic conditions,” he added.

Climate change

Pointing out that climate change effects in Asia would hit rice production hard, Mr. Zeigler said it was essential to produce climate-ready rice.

Global climate change would affect rice farmers for decades to come and could increase frequency of droughts, flooding and sea water intrusion. Flood resistant, drought resistant, and combined flood-drought resistant varieties of rice would help address climate change effects.

K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, tracing the partnership of IRRI and TNAU over the years, said the institute had been sensitive to the requirements of Tamil Nadu and had offered

many varieties starting from the miracle rice IR 8 to the most recent green super rice materials for evaluation and use.

“IRRI is developing rice varieties adapted to climate change and management strategies to cope with climate change. India has seen unprecedented adoption rates of rice, developed at IRRI, which can survive flooding for up to two weeks. These submergence tolerant rice varieties are helping farmers who are cultivating rice in areas that are experiencing flooding,” the Vice-Chancellor said.

15.09.2012 Sep

TNAU VC calls for a revolution in farm machinery



In addition to the second Green Revolution, the country is in need of an agricultural machinery revolution to tide over the present farm labour crisis and improve the efficiency of farm operations, K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), said in Coimbatore on Tuesday.

Inaugurating a two-day “Calorie 2012”, an all-India seminar on “Engineering Interventions for Profitable Agriculture” at the TNAU, the Vice-Chancellor said that there was a proposal to train Standard X students who had failed the examination, for two years in repair and maintenance of

agricultural machinery, thereby enabling them to start machinery rental and repair services in rural areas. This was a good strategy to retain youth in villages.

“Under the XII Five Year Plan, it is planned to launch the Pan India Science and Technology Missions across the nation. These missions will be launched to include four major areas, viz., affordable health care, energy and environment, research and development for water, and food and nutrition. The National Mission on Energy and Environment will give thrust to bio-fuels co-operatives in rural areas, development of energy efficient technology and bio-energy,” Mr. Ramasamy said.

Pioneer

Pointing out that TNAU was a pioneer in assessing the wind potential for the entire State for erecting wind mills, the Vice-Chancellor said the R&D efforts on bio-energy and bio-fuels would receive major impetus in the coming years. The Department of Nano Science and Technology of the university would work to develop bio-sensors, to be applied to crop health and animal health.

S. Radhakrishnan, Chairman, Institution of Engineers (India) Coimbatore, called for the need to manufacture indigenous design and fabrication of farm machinery rather than import them from other countries. Experts from the Institution of Engineers (India) and TNAU, also spoke.

15.09.2012 Sep

Sowing seeds for food security



Investing in the future Once the seeds sprout, they are transplanted into discarded plastic packets and given away to anyone who wants them—Photo: Special Arrangement

The famous Loyola College here is lined with rows of trees that start at its front gate, continue past the church, skirt the playing fields and hostels and end at the Loyola Institute of Business Administration (LIBA) that is nestled in the farthest corner of the lush green campus.

Behind the open air auditorium of the LIBA campus, however, is a sparse patch of soil that houses something very different — tiny saplings that rear their diminutive, perky heads from plastic packets arranged close together.

The saplings are the result of an enterprise called the Indo-International Initiative for Billions of Fruit Trees (IIIBFT). The man behind it, Dr Alagu Perumal Ramasamy, director of IIIBFT and professor of international business at LIBA, explains the origins of the name.

“Food security is a burning issue in our country and across the world. IIIBFT believes in planting not just trees but fruit trees. Not only do they prevent soil erosion and offer shade, but they also can supplement the nutritional needs of a family,” he says.

This initiative follows a simple model of functioning. “I collect seeds, dry them, plant them in old plastic packets and then donate them to the nature clubs of schools and colleges. Not only do I donate saplings, I also impart the knowledge required to raise them,” he says.

His efforts have borne fruit, literally. Several city schools and colleges, including Loyola, Good Shepherd and Vivekananda Vidyalaya now have fruit-bearing trees on their campus. But this is not enough, Dr. Ramasamy says. “I want to take this initiative to every educational institution in the city and expand it to include other cities too,” he says.

Volunteers of this enterprise meet every Sunday to sow the seeds. Once the seeds sprout, they are transplanted into discarded plastic packets and given away to anyone who wants them. We also conduct sessions in educational institutions where we teach children to plant and look after the saplings.”

The best thing about this exercise is the minimum investment required. “Some seeds, soil, water, discarded plastic packets and a few hours of our time are all that are required,” says Nishanthi, a volunteer.

“We are trying to involve the larger community in this mission. We start at the school level so that our children grow up to become environmentally aware citizens. It is also about creating a sense of ownership so people begin to respect trees and treat them better,” Dr. Ramasamy says.

Besides educational institutions, corporates are also being persuaded to adopt fruit trees. “Infosys has already adopted 500 trees,” says Chris, another volunteer.

15.09.2012 Sep

Rice productivity

Rice productivity

A second science-based Green Revolution is needed for increasing rice productivity, said Robert S. Zeigler, director general, International Rice Research Institute, Philippines, at TNAU on Friday.

15.09.2012 Sep

Coming soon: costlier fruits and vegetables

TRICKLE DOWN EFFECT

Increase in diesel price will put further strain on household budgets as rates of essential goods and services are likely to jump

- Wholesale price of vegetables and fruits likely to go up by Re. 1 to Rs. 3
- Lorry operators demand increase in transportation charges by Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 3,000 per trip
- In the last four years, transportation charges have gone up by 50 per cent
- Omni bus operators contemplate increase of fare by Rs. 30 in non-A/C buses and by Rs. 50 in A/C buses
- Tourist taxis may charge an additional rupee per kilometre

Forget your carefully-crafted monthly household budget. It will most likely go for a toss with the cost of essential commodities set to rise drastically.

In the wake of the diesel price hike, traders at Koyambedu wholesale market said the wholesale prices of vegetables and fruits, which had earlier dipped due to better arrivals from other States, were likely to go up by Re.1 to Rs. 3 in the next few days.

The increase in the price of diesel by Rs. 5 that came into effect on Thursday night has raised concerns in various sections of the society about its cascading effect on many essential goods and services.

Traders at Koyambedu said some lorry operators to the market had already started demanding an increase in transportation charges by Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 3,000 per trip, depending on the distance covered.

S. Chandran, a wholesale trader, said, "If the lorry owners propose to go on strike, we can manage only for a day, after which the costs of vegetable and fruits may escalate." In the last four years, transportation charges have gone up by 50 per cent, he said.

Meanwhile, the lorry owners' federation and other transport associations plan to hold meetings to discuss the rollback of the hike, and to decide whether to call for a strike.

R. Sugumar, president of Confederation of Surface Transport (Tamil Nadu), said representatives of All India Motor Transport Congress plan to meet in New Delhi on Monday to decide on an indefinite strike. The State Government must reduce the sales tax of Re. 1 on diesel besides requesting the central government to rollback the hike, he said. "We will have to face a loss of 15 per cent to 20 per cent in revenue per vehicle daily," he said.

Commuters too feel the increase in diesel price will have an impact on the fare of private bus tickets to other districts and states. Tourist taxi owners also feel that they will have to charge passengers more. "If the diesel cost is not reduced in the next few days, we will have to increase charges by Re. 1 per kilometre," he said.

However, Tata Magic Drivers Association in the city does not plan to increase fares immediately. "We are waiting to see if the Government provides any allowance," said K. Ramanathan, of the Association.

15.09.2012 Sep

Expect 10 – 15 per cent increase in vegetable prices



GOING OUT OF BOUNDS: The rise in the prices of vegetables, as a consequence of the diesel price hike, will have an impact across all income groups.—File Photo: M. Periasamy

The message from the wholesale and retail vegetable traders in the city is clear – expect a 10 to 15 per cent increase in vegetable prices soon. The traders also say that the impact will be more pronounced in big onion for other reasons as well.

Coimbatore, on an average, gets around 1,000 to 1,300 tonnes vegetables a day from neighbouring districts, Salem, Krishnagiri, southern Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, northern Karnataka and Maharashtra as well. Fifty per cent of the vegetables go to Kerala, and the city and its surrounding areas consume the rest.

It also gets a few vegetables from places within the district. But the impact of diesel price hike is likely to be negligible because of the relatively shorter distance.

The city gets a majority of the 'English' vegetables like carrot, beans, cabbage, etc. from southern Karnataka, particularly Chamaraja Nagar and Hassan. It gets chilli from areas around Hassan and also Andhra Pradesh. Given the distance and the Rs. 5-a-litre increase, there is bound to be an increase, says A. Subramani, secretary, Kovai Mavatta Anna Motha Kaikari Vyaparigal Sangam, MGR Market.

The traders or sellers despatch the vegetables in small or big lorries based on the order. The small or mini lorries transport up to 15 tonnes and the big ones up to 20 tonnes. For the small lorries the transport cost is likely to increase by at least Rs. 5,000 to around Rs. 40,000. And for the big ones by the same amount to around Rs. 50,000, he says.

The city is dependent on Karnataka for the vegetables because the vegetable supply from Ooty is way below the demand. And another reason is that over the years, the cultivation area has declined there and so has the produce, says M. Rajendra, a vegetable vendor at T.K. Market.

Notwithstanding any other factor, the diesel price rise alone will increase the transport cost by at least 10 per cent, says S.F. Abdul Althaf, president, Kovai Mavatta Anna Motha Kaikari Vyaparigal Sangam, MGR Market. This will push up the wholesale price and consequently, vegetable prices.

But the biggest impact will be on big onion as the sowing area in Karnataka and Maharashtra has come down because of poor monsoon, says C.N. Palanisamy, president of a wholesale traders' association. At present, the price is around Rs. 10-a-kg. It will increase 100 per cent by Deepavali and go up further as the demand increases.

This will have a cascading effect on small onion as well.

Mr. Palanisamy says that there will be a similar impact on potato as well because the cultivation is again in the North and areas there have suffered not-so-good monsoon.

15.09.2012 Sep

Milk production goes up in Madurai district

There is some good news from the farmers of Thenpalanchi and its peripheries in Madurai district.

The successful adoption of the latest technology in agriculture activities under the "I AM WARM" project has helped enhance milk production in the district. This was the message conveyed at a meeting-cum-inspection in which a World Bank consultant Marimuthu Swaminathan was present here on Thursday. According to the Agriculture Department officials, under the "I AM

WARM” project, eight government agencies including the PWD, Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry are involved . Through this novel initiative, the farmers are given an impetus to improve their overall performance in agriculture and allied activities.

Giving the details, the officials said prior to the “I AM WARM” project, which was given shape five years ago, the milch animal population in Thenpalanchi village was 240 and the milk produced daily stood at 450 litres. However, the data in 2010-11 revealed that the milch animal population had gone up by 322 and the volume of milk produced had gone up to 903 litres daily. Earlier, the fodder area was carried out in just half-an-acre, while it is now covered over an area of 15 acres in the village, Assistant Director (Animal Husbandry, Thirumangalam) Dr. Ravindran said and added that animal related diseases had been well contained. The goat population too had gone up from 633 to 1,350, he noted.

The Agriculture Department, which is the nodal agency for the ambitious project had identified seven ‘green’ villages to compete for the UN award. At least seven villages in Madurai district are qualified to compete, which include Thenpalanchi, Vilacheri, Surakulam, Perungudi and Vadivelkarai respectively.

The Water Users’ Association leader Pandi, said that the “I AM WARM” project helped farmers as officials from different government departments were present under one roof. Moreover, the issuance of gadgets such as rain gun for farmers at subsidised price had enabled in saving water to a great extent.

Assistant Director (Agriculture, Thiruparankundram) S. Kanagaraj said that under this “I AM WARM” project, health and sanitation and protected drinking water schemes too had been included, which qualifies for competing in the UN award. The RO plant at Vadivelkarai ensured potable water to residents at a nominal cost of Rs. 2 per pot. This had in fact enabled in a decline in incidence of waterborne diseases in the hamlet. Agriculture Engineering Department Executive Engineer Periasamy said that lazer levellers given at subsidised price had improved production as it ensured an even surface even after harvest. With drip irrigation in place, the farmers who are covered under the SRI too had shown commendable results in the just harvested season, Deputy Director (Agriculture) Rajendran said.

Banana is one of the most important crops cultivated in almost all the districts in the State.

The fruit is consumed by people from all walks of life including poor, middle, upper middle class and the rich. In banana plantations after the harvest, the pseudo-stems are thrown away. In this way tonnes of pseudo stems of the banana are wasted annually. This pseudo stems are useful source of extracting fibre.

Various research findings have revealed the untapped potential of banana fibre.

Gujarat – based Navsari Agricultural University has standardised a process of manufacturing high value paper from the banana fibre which it claims could be used to make currency notes that would last for even over a century.

It was found that the paper made out of banana fibre had a shelf life of over hundred years as it was one of the strongest long fibres ever found among the natural fibres.

With the growing focus on environmental concerns, a number of companies across India are experimenting with 'green' fibre and fabrics.

To provide an eco-friendly choice to customers, Anakaputhur weavers (Gujarat) are making saris purely from banana fibre.

A study by the National Research Centre for banana in this subject is under way.

If the proposition turns out to be viable, the country could very soon expect the domestic market to be flooded with an array of textile products made from banana fibre.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the Joint-Director for Agriculture, Nagamani Pillai said that the usual production process of textile industry released some hazardous chemicals that contaminated the water and the soil.

Natural fibres like banana fibre reduced such hazards and hence could be used to promote eco-friendly textile processes. The European Union's legislations forced producers to increase the recyclability and bio-degradability of their products.

Since natural fibres like banana fibre were cent percent biodegradable and recyclable, there was potential scope for this fibre to flood the European market.

Innovation sees no limit and a number of new products like sacks, ropes, twigs, sandbags, tents, canvas, screens, kit bags, gunny bags and covers were made from banana fibres. Crafts made from banana fibre received wide recognition from consumers all over the globe.

An epoch making effort to utilise this untapped precious fibre was made by the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business in the district.

The department formed several commodity interest groups in the district for 'banana fibre extraction.'

Initially, the group members were trained in manual extraction of the fibre.

Efforts to sign a memorandum of understanding with local traders are underway.

The manual process was laborious and only 500 grams of fibre could be extracted by a person per day.

To reduce the drudgery and to provide a clean working environment with increased fibre production, machine extraction of banana fibre, was being introduced, said the Deputy Director for Agriculture, Chandra Dhas.

A demonstration in coordination with S.S.K.J Private Limited in Tiruchi was organised by the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business on mechanised extraction of banana fibre at Vadaserry market committee complex at Nagercoil and YMCA at Marthandam recently.

The officials from the Department of Agricultural Marketing and Agri Business, Agricultural department and scientists of Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, progressive farmers of the district, members of banana fibre extraction commodity interest groups etc participated in the demonstration.

It was indeed a land mark of a contemplated revolution in fibre extraction, said the Deputy Director for Agriculture.

15.09.2012 Sep

NABARD sanctions Rs.4 crore for developing rural infrastructure

The National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned over Rs.4 crore for developing rural infrastructure in the district

RIDF

According to a NABARD release, under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) tranche XVIII it has sanctioned Rs.1.71 crore for strengthening and laying black-topped roads at Kattuputhur, Lalgudi, Mettupalayam, Musiri, Pullambadi, Thathaiangarpet, Thottiam, and Uppiliapuram town panchayats.

Besides, it has sanctioned Rs.51 lakh for construction of sanitary complexes at Kattuputhur, Uppiliapuram, Pullambadi, Poovalur, and S.Kannur.

For strengthening the market infrastructure and prevent post-harvest losses of farmers, it has supported construction of rural warehouses of 100 metric tonnes (MT) each at 12 Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies, 2,000-MT warehouse at Thuvrankurichi regulated market, and 25-MT cold storage facility at Ariyalur regulated market at a cost of Rs.1.25 crore, Rs.1.14 crore and Rs.30.21 lakh respectively.

15.09.2012 Sep

Camp for vaccinating cattle for foot and mouth disease

Vaccination camps will be conducted at various panchayats across the district from Saturday to prevent the Foot and Mouth disease. Animal Husbandry department officials have geared up to organise the third round of 21-day camp for the cattle.

As many as 43 teams have been formed to extend veterinary assistance during the camp, according to Joint Director of Animal Husbandry S. Ganapathi. A total of 1.5 lakh doses have been earmarked to be given during the vaccination camp in Tuticorin district.

Livestock census would also be undertaken, simultaneously, he said on Friday. The teams headed by veterinarians in cooperation with livestock inspectors and Animal Husbandry assistants would render their service at the camp. Ahead of the 21-day schedule, vaccines have been kept in cold storage. Cattle owners have been apprised of the vaccination camp at the special grama sabha meetings convened at all panchayats on Thursday.

The programme would go on till October 6 and all the cattle owners should come forward and utilise this opportunity to raise immunity against the disease. Pre-vaccination and post vaccination surveillance would be undertaken by professionals attached to Animal Diseases Intelligence Unit, Tuticorin comprising Assistant Directors, D. Nandhagopal and A. Josephraj. Such vaccination camps would be conducted twice a year to eradicate the disease, Dr. Ganapathi added.

15.09.2012 Sep

A flowering plant for all seasons



They are the flowers a child would love to draw and colour. Simple in shape, yet striking in hues, *Thunbergias* are versatile in providing gardening solutions too.

They can climb, creep, cover and screen, adapting dutifully to whichever responsibility they are assigned.

One only has to choose the ungainly locations in a garden and drown them in *Thunbergia*.

Thunbergia genus, which belongs to the family Acanthaceae, consists of about 100 species of mainly climbers and shrubs from warm areas of Africa, Madagascar and Asia.

Some of the *Thunbergia* species are commonly used in gardens for their showy foliage and large, bright flowers. *Thunbergia* is named after the 18th century Swedish botanist and explorer Carl Peter Thunberg.

Characteristics

Several of the best-known *Thunbergia* species are evergreen, fast growing climbers, excepting *Thunbergia erecta* which is a shrub. Leaves are large, thick, deep green, and oval shaped, with the edges often saw-toothed. Flowers are large, funnel shaped with five spreading lobes, in blue, white, orange, yellow, and purple varying with the species.

They bloom almost year round.

Gardening

Thunbergias are aggressive vines which can be trained on pergola, trellis, fence, porch, arch, or wall in short time. They can be grown in large containers. These easy-to-care-for climbing shrubs are ideal for creating a privacy screen or simply providing a lush green backdrop for other flowering plants.

Thunbergia erecta is used as shrub and can also be grown as topiary, hedge and as groundcover.

Thunbergia alata is a large spreading creeper that can be used in containers, hanging baskets or to cover very large spaces of the garden ground.

Thunbergia mysorensis is massive climbing shrub with pendant branches and inflorescences, which can cover large areas, creating green shade in the garden.

Great vines

Thunbergia grandiflora and *Thunbergia laurifolia* have very rampant growth habit and are great vines for the quick covering of arbours, trellises and fences.

They can be successfully used as a screen or as container plants and can cover large walls, buildings, lamp posts, old trees or any unsightly spaces of the garden.

With a robust and twining habit, producing long hanging clusters of blue or white funnel-shaped flowers and dense, deep green foliage, they can be trellised to create a spectacular effect.

Many of the *Thunbergias* prefer full sun and well-drained soil but can bloom in partial shade also.

Amend the soil with copious amounts of compost or well-rotted manure to improve texture and to retain moisture. Select a sunny location that receives direct sunlight for six or more hours a day.

Regular and deep watering is needed for the plants, allowing the soil to dry slightly between waterings (but total dry soil will cause wilting and premature flower drop).

Since *Thunbergias* are rapid growers, application of balanced fertilizer every two weeks during blooming period will help in better growth and blooms. *Thunbergias* need a sturdy fence or trellis to withstand the weight and to be protected from strong winds. Regular pruning is required to maintain the shape, or to train the vine in required direction.

But vigorous pruning may inhibit flowering. Pruning shall be taken up after the blooming cycle is complete.

Pests and problems

Though *Thunbergias* are generally very hardy, they are susceptible to spider mites, white flies, scale insects and nematodes. These problems can be overcome by normal pest management practices. Propagation of these plants is through seeds, cuttings and layers.

Today Farm News

15.09.2012

15.09.2012 Sep

Weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, Sep 20

Max Min

34.0° | 25.7°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 56

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:57

Sunset: 06:06

Barometer: 1006

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, Sep 21

Max Min

34° | 26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Sep 22	Sunday Sep 23	Monday Sep 24	Tuesday Sep 25	Wednesday Sep 26
33° 26° Rainy	32° 26° Rainy	33° 26° Rainy	30° 27° Rainy	30° 26° Rainy

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 59

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:08

Sunset: 06:19

Barometer: 1008

