

Growing coconut will reap rich benefits for farmers: V-C

COIMBATORE, September 3, 2012

With the theme “Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development of the Coconut Industry”, the World Coconut Day of 2012 was observed at Rathinam Institute of Management here on Sunday.

State-level celebration

It was a State-level celebration, organised in collaboration with CDB Coconut Growers Association, Tamil Nadu Agriculture Department and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU).

Inaugurating the programme, K. Ramasamy, Vice-Chancellor of TNAU, said growing coconut would reap rich benefits for the farmers provided they included modern technologies and harvesting techniques.

Innovative things

“Many innovative things are made from the by-products of coconut and they can be used as a good source of income. It is also a good medical by-product and can be used to cure many diseases,” the Vice-Chancellor said.

Hemachandra, Deputy Director of Coconut Development Board, Chennai, urged farmers to form co-operative societies to sell coconut products, to earn more benefits without the interference of middle men or brokers.

K. Sugumar, Member of Parliament (Pollachi), presided over the function.

Nearly 500 coconut growers from various parts of the State participated.

There was also an exhibition where products of the Coconut Development Board were displayed.

Programmes

Growers were made aware of the various programmes of the Government that would help them augment the cultivation of coconut.

Farmers go for short-term crop loans, neglect investments

MADURAI, September 3, 2012

Farmers in the district are leaning heavily on short-term crops and neglecting investment in long-term infrastructure creation and farm modernisation, which are vital to increase food production in the future.

Of the total Rs.1,656 crore lent to agriculture and allied operations in Madurai during 2011-12, short-term crop loans alone accounted for Rs.1,459 crore or 88 per cent of the total credit given to the sector.

An analysis of the Annual Credit Plan 2012-13 and other banking data reveals that banks exceeded their target for short term lending by Rs.215 crore with the target being Rs.1,244 crore. However in the long-term lending category used for capital asset creation such as post harvesting technology, marketing skills and modernisation, banks failed to achieve the target.

In place of the target of Rs.237 crore, banks achieved only Rs.197 crore. While minor irrigation accounted for Rs.31 crore, land development like reclamation Rs.18 crore, farm mechanisation Rs.44 crore, plantation and horticulture Rs.31 crore, milch animals Rs.65 crore and Other Category Rs.11 crore.

A bank officer who monitors the flow of credit told *The Hindu* on Sunday that the decline was mainly due to low returns on agriculture which makes farmers reluctant to invest in long-term asset creation. Also, banks tend to focus on short-term crop loans as recovery rate were good compared to long term loans.

Interest rate woes

Further the interest rate regime also discourages spending on infrastructure. While a farmer has to pay 4 per cent for crop loans up to Rs.3 lakh, a loan for tractor or other asset creation that fell in long — term loans entails an interest of 14 per cent. The officer also pointed out that car loans could be availed for 9 per cent.

In order to boost farm modernisation, the officer opined that the Centre must bring out an interest subvention scheme for long-term loans, along the lines of similar scheme implemented for crop loans.

Such a trend of lopsided investment is set to continue during the current fiscal also.

Several people witness Uzhavar Thiruvizha

Tuticorin, September 3, 2012

A large number of people congregated at Pearl City beach to witness Uzhavar Thiruvizha, which was organised by officials from the Department of Agriculture here on Sunday.

As part of the silver jubilee of the bifurcation of Tuticorin from Tirunelveli district, a variety of agriculture produce was exhibited in 24 stalls established at the venue.

Flower and fruit show was put up.

Collector Ashish Kumar, who presided, paid a visit to stalls, where officials explained the nature of flora and objective of the exhibition.

Besides farmers, common people got an exposure to methods being adopted to raise agricultural crops and horticultural crops with scientific knowledge.

The National Flag and the silver jubilee logo prepared with vegetables and flowers in one of the stalls caught the attention of viewers.

Fruits, vegetables, flowers, hybrid seeds, ornamental plants, medicinal herbs, vegetable carvings, flower bouquets, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and stalls highlighting concepts of seed certification, soil testing were showcased.

Exotic plants were exhibited by officials from the Department of Forests. Wood species including red sanders and mahagoni were exhibited. Many people approached the stall set up by the forest officials and received the exotic saplings free of cost.

Through the initiative, an awareness was spread among the people to grow more trees. Five farmers were provided with hand sprayers under subsidy scheme during the schedule.

N. Srinivasan, Deputy Director of Agriculture, S. Gurumurthy, Deputy Director, Farmers Training Centre, M. Syed Ahmed Miranji, Deputy Director of Horticulture and officials from line departments of Agriculture also attended.

Much to the likes of Tuticorin populace, entertainment programmes were staged by a troupe of artistes under the banner of 'Asatha Povadhu Yaru' and musical orchestra performed by artistes kept the audience spellbound at the crowded venue.

Mettur level

TIRUCHI, September 3, 2012

The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 76.70 feet on Sunday, against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 2,863 cusecs and the discharge, 2,006 cusecs.

Cooperative bank branch opened

TIRUVARUR, September 3, 2012

Food Minister R.Kamaraj inaugurated a branch of Thanjavur Central Cooperative Bank at Perugavazhndan village in Tiruvarur district on Saturday. He distributed benefits to the tune of Rs.1.04 crore to 398 beneficiaries on the occasion.

The Minister said Primary Agriculture Co-operative Credit Societies of Siddamalli, Puthavaram, Peruvidaimaruthur, Masinahari, Elavanur and Vallur would be attached to the branch at Perugavazhndan. He said the area is suited for raising paddy, and said that Mettur dam will be opened for samba cultivation on September 17, and appealed to farmers to go for direct sowing of samba paddy.

He advised those who had bore wells to raise community nurseries for which a farmer is paid Rs.4,000 per acre of land, Rs.12,500 for cultivating certified seeds and an incentive of Rs.3,000 per acre.

S.Natarajan, Tiruvrur District Collector, Jayalakshmi Ambigapathy, Chairperson of Tiruvarur District Panchayat Council, M.Antony Samy John Peter, Special Officer of Thanjavur Central Co-operative Bank participated, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

Demonstration of farm machinery

TIRUCHI, September 3, 2012

Farm mechanisation can bring down the cost of cultivation substantially, A. Tajuddin, Dean, Agricultural Engineering College, Kumulur, said on Friday.

At a seminar on 'farm implements to enhance productivity' organised by Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperatives Organisation (IFFCO), Agricultural Engineering College and Lalgudi Farmers' Club, he was certain that farm mechanisation alone was the way out when the entire agricultural sector is witnessing serious shortage of labour.

It would be ideal to go in for mechanisation which could reduce the cultivation cost even by 75 per cent apart from enhancing productivity.

According to a release from Tiruchi District Central Cooperative Bank, P. Krishnan, State marketing manger, IFFCO, said his organisation had introduced totally dissoluble fertilizers that would be eminently suitable for drip irrigation and fertigation.

Earlier, demonstration of 11 farm machinery was organised in order to enlighten the farmers.

Farmers leaning on short-term crops

September 3, 2012

Farmers in Madurai district are leaning heavily on

short-term crops and neglecting investment in long-term infrastructure

Rainfed farming enters crucial phase

September 3, 2012

Even as Tamil Nadu is closely watching developments on the Cauvery front to protect the Samba crop, the rainfed farming is entering a crucial phase now

Farmers confront official on subsidies

HYDERABAD, September 3, 2012

Agriculture Department principal secretary V. Nagi Reddy has expressed concern over the declining trend in oilseed cultivation in the country.

The steep fall in the cultivation of oilseed was imposing burden on the ex-chequer as the government was forced to import huge quantities. Mr. Nagi Reddy was speaking at 'farmers' day' organised by the Directorate of Oilseed Research here on Sunday. The senior official was, however, interrupted by farmers who gathered at the venue in impressive numbers when he claimed that the government was committed to provide 50 per cent subsidy on the implements and farm tools purchased by farmers.

Farmers termed Mr. Nagi Reddy's claims on the subsidies as "bogus" and raised slogans against the government. The farmers were pacified when Mr. Nagi Reddy announced that the department would soon bring out a booklet on the subsidies extended to farm sector .

THE HINDU
Business Line

Law to tighten cotton trade data on anvil

Coimbatore, Sept 2:

A law to strengthen statistical data on cotton trade is in the offing, said V. Srinivas, Joint Secretary, Union Textiles Ministry.

“The data for policy making should be accurate or near. There is consensus on statistical strengthening of cotton trade data across governments, industry and trade,” he said.

Srinivas was delivering the keynote address at a conference on ‘Challenges Facing the Cotton Industry 2013,’ organised by the Indian Cotton Association here on Saturday.

“Better data collection is important because right now there are differences in the production data presented by States, production data assessed by the Cotton Advisory Board with regard to consumption and stock, thus making it difficult for the Ministry to coordinate and identify on real-time basis, the actual position with data available. A Cotton Distribution Bill with monthly collection of data in public domain will therefore be highly beneficial,” he said.

“Several countries have a weekly collection of data for publication. But considering the size of our country and the data available, monthly collection should be good enough,” he said.

Reverting to contract defaults, Srinivas said that the International Cotton Advisory Committee has reported a sharp increase in contract defaults in 2010-11 at 10 per cent compared with 2 per cent in normal years. Significant defaults contribute to uncertainty. Initially ginners defaulted to traders anticipating higher prices, subsequently traders defaulted to textile mills in anticipation of higher prices.

By May 2011, textile mills defaulted on high value cotton contract with traders in anticipation of cheap cotton being available in the near future. There is therefore a need for further analytical work in this regard, the Joint Secretary said. He urged the Indian Cotton Federation to undertake an evaluation on contract performance in consultation with its members.

Potato prices decline in Bengal

Kolkata, Sept. 2:

After ruling firm for almost five months starting February this year, potato prices in West Bengal is on a declining trend.

The State Government's restriction on sale of potatoes to other States effective August 1, coupled with a pick up in the release of the tuber from cold storages across the State has helped bring down prices.

The recent ban on the launch of new Tarakeshwar potato contracts by the Forward Markets Commission (FMC) also helped in the easing of prices in the spot market, said Patit Paban De, member, West Bengal Cold Storage Association.

Wholesale prices of potato (Jyoti variety), which was ruling around Rs 1,250-1300 a quintal in end June and early July, has now softened to Rs 1,040-1,100 a quintal, De said.

Low Production

The rise in prices of the tuber during the first few months of this year was primarily on account of lower production. Potato production dropped to about 85 lakh tonne in 2011-12, against 95 lakh tonne last year.

"Farmers were also holding their stock in anticipation of further rise in prices. This led to 3-4 per cent lower release from cold storage as on end June," De said.

However, now with the release of potatoes picking up, prices have started inching down, he added.

"Cold storages have released close to 47-48 per cent of total potatoes stored as on August 31, against about 46 per cent during an average year. This has helped bring down prices," he said. The 403-odd cold storages in the State can hold about 58 lakh tonne of potatoes.

Futures market

Apart from banning the launch of new Tarkeshwar potato contracts, the FMC also ordered that effective August 1, no fresh positions would be allowed during the staggered delivery period in all running contracts of potato on MCX and NCDEX exchanges.

This brought down prices in the futures market thereby also softening spot prices.

Prices are likely to remain stable at these levels. “The potatoes produced in South India will come into the market by September and this will help keep prices stable around current levels,” De said.

Pepper market sees mixed trend on high volatility

Kochi, Sept. 2:

The pepper market last week witnessed mixed trend with the usual high volatility. There was liquidation and switching over as the premium was high in October. Activities were limited last week due to Onam in Kerala. There were no arrivals from the primary markets as growers and dealers were on holiday. Squeezing and cornering continued to affect the market negatively, market sources said. Much of the upcountry demand was met by direct purchases from growers on cash and carry basis.

Stocks were held in hands of traders who were not interested in releasing them at current prices. Therefore, arrivals at the terminal market was much below expectations.

Last week the September contract showed a marginal decline while October and November moved up.

September decreased by Rs 195 during the week to the last traded price of Rs 41,425 a quintal. October and November prices increased by Rs 475 and Rs 550 respectively to the LTP of Rs 42,600 and Rs 42,975 a quintal.

Turnover

Total turnover increased by 990 tonnes during the week to close at 14,801 tonnes.

Total open interest decreased by 208 tonnes to end at 6,812 tonnes.

Spot prices moved up by Rs 100 last week to close at Rs 38,800 (ungarbled) and Rs 40,300 (garbled) a quintal on Saturday. Prices of other origins showed a positive trend. If they climbed up to over \$7,000 a tonne level and at the same time Indian parity declined to somewhere near that level, some stability might take place in prices and that may attract buyers who prefer Malabar even at a premium of \$400 a tonne, trade sources said.

Overseas Trend

In the international scenario, all buyers were looking towards Indonesia and consequently, prices for Lampong Asta reportedly firmed up after the Eid ul-Fitr. Prices quoted last week for black pepper in dollar per tonne (c&f) New York were: MG 1 8,100-8,200; Lampong Asta 6,600-6,700; Brazil Asta – 6,600 (fob); Brazil B1 560g – 6,450-6,500 fob Madagascar light berries – 6,600-6,650 (fob); Muntok white – 8,850-8,900.

The market was extremely firm in Brazil also as more inquiries/bids were coming in from Europe, Dubai and Mexico. Meanwhile, there were bullish reports from Rotterdam and Hamburg last weekend.

Vietnam pepper prices remained steady.

The Vietnam Pepper Association is reported to have advised growers to hold back their produce as prices would move up and touch or even cross \$7,000 a tonne.

This phenomenon is said to have led to a squeeze in supply from Vietnam and the consequent firming up in prices.

Vegetable production up 3 % last fiscal

New Delhi, Sept 2:

Production of vegetables in the country rose by 3 per cent to 150.59 million tonnes last fiscal, while that of fruits was marginally up by 1 per cent at 75.27 million tonnes in the same period.

The country had produced 146.55 million tonnes of vegetables and 74.88 million tonnes of fruits in the 2010-11 fiscal, Minister of State for Agriculture Harish Rawat told Parliament last week.

On prices of fruits and vegetables, Rawat said they were governed by the market forces of demand and supply. The prices depend upon the prevailing weather conditions, transportation cost, storage and rising demand due to increasing income and urbanisation, he added.

“The government has been implementing the Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan states (HMNEH) and National Horticulture Mission (NHM) in the remaining states to enhance production of horticulture crops including fruits and vegetables,” the minister said.

Under these missions assistance is provided for establishing nurseries, seed production for vegetables, enhancing quality production, he added.

Emphasis is also laid on increasing productivity of fruits and vegetables through area expansion, protected cultivation, canopy management, integrated nutrient and water management, integrated pest management, rejuvenation of senile orchards and so on, Rawat said.

Global coffee exports rise 18% at 9.11 m bags in July

New Delhi, Sept 2:



Global coffee exports rose by 18 per cent to 9.11 million bags in July this year, International Coffee Organisation (ICO) said.

The worldwide shipments of the brew stood at 7.73 million bags of 60 kg each in the same month of 2011.

Higher quantity of shipments in July has boosted exports of the brew in the current coffee year. In the first 10 months of the current coffee year, the exports rose by 1.5 per cent to 90.36 million bags as compared to 89.05 million bags in October-July of the 2010-11 coffee year (October-September).

Coffee exports in the first three quarters of the 2011-12 coffee year were down marginally to 81.16 million bags from 81.41 million bags in the same period in the last coffee year.

According to ICO, exports in the first half of current coffee year fell by 2.3 per cent to 51.7 million bags from 52.9 million bags in the October-March period of the 2010-11 coffee year, mainly on account of drop in shipments by Brazil and Columbia.

For the 12 months ended July 2012, coffee exports rose marginally to 105.90 million bags as compared to 105.24 million bags in the year-ago period.

Directorate of Oilseed Research initiative to train tribal farmers

Hyderabad, Aug. 31:

To boost production in oilseeds, an initiative to train tribal farmers has been launched by the Directorate of Oilseed Research, Hyderabad.

A tribal sub-plan has been firmed up recently. The emphasis is on taking tribal farmers to farms and laboratories to expose them to the improved production technologies. To begin with castor has been taken up said K.S. Varaprasad, Project Director of the Directorate.

The objective is to enhance the income levels of tribal families. Select villages in Andhra Pradesh and some across tribal villages in the country have been involved in the project with promotion of castor crop.

The Hyderabad-based Directorate under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is focussed on castor, sunflower and safflower. It has come up with a wide range of varieties that are being cultivated across the country.

To further popularise some of these technologies among farmers, the Directorate is organising a farmer's day on September 2 at its campus. Queries of farmers would be answered by scientists, State Government Agriculture officials. An exhibition of inputs, equipment and seed, with the participation of private companies has also been planned, he said.

Oilseed production in the country is set to touch 30 million tonnes during the year 2011-12 as per indications, the Directorate said in a press release.

In the year 2010-11 it was 25.45 million tonnes. The bulk of this came from groundnut (5.8 m), rapeseed mustard (7.1 m) and soyabean (9.5 m). India is amongst the largest producers of oilseeds in the world. The present monsoon deficit across the country may hit the oilseeds and pulses crops says the Agriculture Ministry.

The growth has been driven by research efforts under the technology mission on oilseeds launched in 1986. New varieties and hybrids have been developed in 9 oilseed crops. These have higher yield and better tolerance to pests and diseases.

Offerings drop at N. Indian tea auctions

August 31, 2012:

Total offerings (packages) at the three North Indian auction centres at Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri were marginally lower at 4,05,674 at this week's sale no. 35 compared with 4,05,835 in the corresponding sale last year, according to auctioneer J. Thomas & Company Pvt. Ltd.

The composition of offerings at Kolkata was as follows: CTC/dust 1,48,327 (1,46,176), orthodox 27,215 (27,414) and Darjeeling 7,994 (6,097).

The offerings at two other centres, mainly CTC/dust, were as follows: Guwahati 1,14,055 (1,34,408) and Siliguri 1,08,083 (91,740).

Assam CTCs were barely steady around previous levels and irregularly lower. Dooars sold around previous levels and were irregularly lower. Tata Global was active and there was selective support from Hindustan Unilever. Western dealers supported the liquoring sorts. North India and local sections were selective. Exporters operated on the larger brokens and fannings.

Tippy and liquoring orthodox varieties sold readily in line with quality. Clean well-made whole leaf sold irregularly around last, while bolder whole leaf appreciated. Smaller brokens and fannings were irregular and at times dearer. Larger brokens were irregularly easier. There was good support from continental buyers on tippy and liquoring varieties. West Asian and CIS shippers were active. Hindustan Unilever operated selectively with some support from local and internal sections.

Darjeeling whole leaf continued to sell well with support from Tata Global, Hindustan Unilever and traditional exporters. Broken maintained levels while fannings rose owing to improved export enquiry.