

Broiler a golden goose for farmers

State government has announced several sops for encouraging poultry farms



LIFELINE: A progressive farmer checks the chick at a broiler farm at Keezhapazhur Puliur village near Perambalur.— PHOTO: R.M. RAJA RATHINAM

If at least half a dozen farmers, who have ventured out into the uncharted territory of broiler rearing in this non-traditional district, were to succeed, it could inspire farmers facing the slings and arrows of monsoon failure year after year.

Chief Minister Jayalalithaa has chosen to give a big push to poultry development in seven non-traditional and backward districts such as Perambalur by extending 50 per cent subsidy.

“But for such a huge subsidy, I would not have volunteered to undertake this,” says 46-year-old S. Rajendran of Keezhapazhur Puliur, who has set up a unit. “None of us ever got loan from the banks for poultry till this scheme is introduced under which our margin is just Rs. 82,000 (10 per cent) while the loan amount is 40 per cent,” he says.

K. Thangaraju, Assistant Director, Animal Husbandry, says while the shed and instruments cost Rs. 8.25 lakh, Rs. 2.06 lakh is given by the State government and an equal amount by the NABARD from the Poultry Venture Capital Fund as subsidy.

The district has been allocated a subsidy of Rs. 2.85 crore in 2012-13 to promote 138 broiler farms of 5,000 birds each.

“Nobody ever thought of farms of 5,000 birds in non-traditional districts such as Perambalur.

All that we could conceive was only backyard poultry. It has been the western region, led by Namakkal, that has been in the forefront of poultry for ages.

The announcement of the Chief Minister has changed the complexion of the game,” he says.

All that the farmers have to do is to put up sheds and do according to what the integrator, the company that provides chicks, feed and vaccine and buys back the birds, says.

“We are not allowed to bury even a single bird, if it were to die, without showing it to the supervisor of the company who visits our farm every day and we feed the birds according to his specifications. Our only work is to provide adequate water to the birds at a height accessible to them,” says Chellam, wife of Mr. Rajendran, who is directly involved in maintenance.

“I have chosen only those farmers who take up the rearing personally, involving their own family.

If they were to employ somebody else, they may not stick to the specifications of the company and ultimately the weight of the bird will be far less than 2.25 kg which it should attain within 35 to 40 days.

We are trying to make this scheme succeed as bankers, who have all along been hesitant to advance loans, have now come forward because of the direct intervention of District Collector Darez Ahmed,” Dr. Thangaraju said.

As the entire payment for the farms is routed through the banks, repayment is not an issue at all for the lending institutions, says S. Thirunavukkarasu, the veterinarian in charge of Keezhapazhur Puliur broiler farms.

So far, the department has received 605 applications for setting up broiler units and 305 of them are found eligible. Bankers have given provisional sanction for 176 units while tripartite agreement has been signed for 115. Works have started for 62 and in 12 units works have been completed.

In half a dozen farms, chicks have been placed while chicks have been lifted from two of them recently.

Dr. Thangaraju is happy that the farm of Selvaraj, one among the first to venture into poultry farming in the district, has earned a profit of Rs. 55,000 in 35 to 40 days.

The income generated by the targeted 138 farms would be substantial as the integrators have agreed to provide chicks and lift the birds five times a year and this arrangement would go on for five years.

For an agrarian district like Perambalur, this could prove to be a boon, he adds.

Girijans' traditional farming methods prove useful



Tribal people taking out a procession as part of the old seeds festival organised by Sanjeevani near Araku Valley in Visakhapatnam district on Saturday.— Photo: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

For people living in plains, varieties of food include a few types of vegetables, paddy and millets and it is strongly believed that chemical fertilisers and pesticides alone can increase the yield and protect the crops. But a visit to the annual Paata Vittinala Panduga (old seeds festival) held in the agency area of Visakhapatnam district is a revelation.

The festival has scores of varieties of paddy, millets and vegetables that are not found in large villages or even in urban markets.

While the agricultural produce exhibited there was a beautiful sight to behold, the important fact is that the Girijans have not forgotten their traditional methods of farming.

They seldom use chemical fertilisers and pesticides as organic farming is widely practiced. They do not generally buy seeds, but prepare them from the previous produce setting a part of it aside for sowing. Thus the crop from the yield is nutritious and healthy.

Sanjeevani, an NGO working among Girijans, with the help of another NGO Samata and CRYNET, a network of rural youth organisations, conducts the old seeds festival every year at different villages.

This year it was held at Panasavalasa in Dumbriguda mandal, 25 km from the famous tourist centre Araku Valley, on Sunday.

“The old seeds festival is organised to encourage farmers to retain and protect seeds of many varieties of high quality which are facing a threat due to changing food habits and farm practices.

There is also a threat to biodiversity if the seeds are not protected and promoted. Through our Paata Vittinala Panduga, we are also creating awareness among the people, NGOs and the government about various varieties of seeds,” secretary of Sanjeevani, P. Devullu said.

Work as a cooperative, tribal farmers told

'Old seed festival a wonderful example for success of NGO'



Tribal elders performing bhoomi puja after taking out a procession of old seeds in the Panasavalasa village on Saturday. —photo: C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

Old seed festival, being organised by Sajeevani in association with Samata and CRYNET, is a wonderful example of community and NGOs participation which ensures that farmers get quality seed, said Principal Scientist of National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resource's Regional Centre at Hyderabad B. Sarath Babu about the programme held at Panasavalasa, 25 km from here on Saturday.

Efforts being made for the last 18 years have resulted in farmers of this area regularly going to markets in Visakhapatnam, said Ravi Rebbapragada, executive director of Samata, an NGO, who has done a lot of work in the area to empower the local Girijans. He urged the tribal people, who are an enterprising lot, to work as a cooperative since the Savva panchayat area, under which falls Panasavalasa, has good potential to grow many kinds of crops. Coffee and pepper too can be taken up, he said. In the past, farmers of this area contributed Rs. 6 lakh to which Rs. 3.5-lakh subsidy from ITDA was added to purchase a van to transport vegetables to Visakhapatnam.

Mr. Ravi felt that the older generation Girijans do not know much of law, procedure and the weight a written word carries and wanted the educated younger generation to concentrate their efforts on these issues and help the community.

Pandoi Routh, former president of Vegetable Growers' Association, wanted the younger generation to change as it was giving more importance to consumerism, which was not right since the Girijans were surviving by following traditional farming methods. Present president Pangi Kamaraju said as many as 450 farmers who were unaware of the potential of reaching the urban market several years ago, were now selling vegetables at markets in Visakhapatnam. Vice-president Poddu Kasulamma felt the need to have a system so that such a large number of farmers do not overload the markets.

Krishna Prasad of Sahaja Samudha Organic Producers Company (Bangalore) felt that farmers must market their products on their own since the paddy they grow have curative qualities. They must mill the paddy and sell rice to retain its quality. He was happy that many old varieties were continuing here.

CRYNET president K. Manmadha Rao explained the activities of the network and how Sanjeevani's efforts helped it to win the prestigious Plant Genome Saviour Community Award for 2011-12 of the Central government. The ninth edition of the old seed festival also marked the launching of the Dhimsa paddy and millets seed bank. The bank had taken shape after a lot of efforts done during the last few years, its president Killo Dayanidhi said. Fifteen varieties of paddy and millets are available for distribution to the farmers. The old seed festival commenced after a traditional puja and taking some seed around the exhibition venue on a palanquin. The farmers and guests joined the Dhimsa dance and cultural programmes. Pupils of Samata's Balamitra school sang songs.

Farmers from Kuda, Sovva, Karakavalasa, Malivalasa, Killoguda, Bitraganda, Gondivalasa, Gasaba, Panasavalasa and other villages; representatives of organisations like Foundation for Ecological

Security of Koraput, WASSAN, IDRC-CDRI and Vikasa; Adivasi Mitra Welfare Society of Paderu; PTG Welfare Association of Araku; TREDS of Dumbriguda; Bittubhumi Seva Sanghatan of Sambalpur; Nature of Araku Valley; Dhimsa Organic Seed Protection Council of Killoguda and other organisations participated.

ITDA to train farmers in cashew grafting

The ITDA has chalked out a plan to train tribal farmers in cashew grafting under the horticulture scheme linked to MGNREGS programme for the year 2013-14. This was announced by ITDA Project Officer C. Nagarani during her visit to Peddageddada and I. Polavaram in Rampachodavaram mandal and Sunnampadu in Maredumilli mandal on Sunday.

Speaking to farmers during her visit, the Project Officer said that the satellite nurseries concept was working out well in the Agency and Rampa and Maredumilli mandals would be covered in the first two phases. In I. Polavaram, the ITDA would distribute 28,000 saplings to farmers for plantation in 400 acres. Similarly, in Peddageddada 23,800 plants and in Sunnampadu 18,550 plants would be distributed immediately after the first showers in the winter session, she said.

The official further explained that in each nursery unit, 25,000 seedlings can be raised for which material component would cost around Rs.55,000 and wage component would be Rs.30,000 and agriculture labour would get 202 working days for the seedling work.

Ms. Nagarani said that tribal farmers would be given 15-day training in Sirigindalapadu Training Centre on methods of grafting through which cashew plantation can be done and three-day training for family members of the those farmers. She hoped that in

future, tribal farmers would raise their own plantation and sell it in an open market through ITDA and get revenue.

Horticulture officials and others attended the programme.

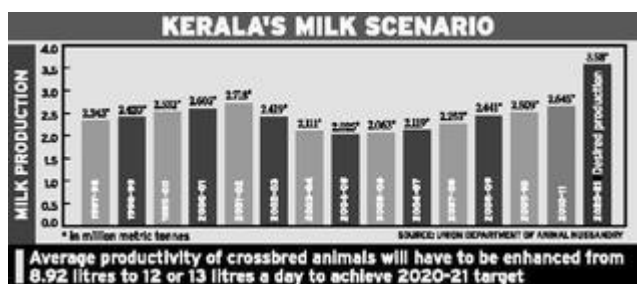
Agricultural Engg. at KITS

With the importance that agriculture has on the economy, the need for more agricultural institutes is the need of the hour. It is the role of an agricultural engineer to ensure that a revolution takes place.

Keeping this in mind, Kakinada Institute of Technology and Science (K.I.T.S) Divili, has introduced Agricultural Engineering course from academic 2013-14 with 120 seats and 84 seats in quota and 36 seats in management quota. Five colleges have this course namely at Bapatla Sangareddy, Madaksira and Palvancha, Khammam. But in the jurisdiction of JNTU-K only K.I.T.S, Divili is offering this agricultural based job oriented course. The management of the college hopes that students of coastal areas will take advantage of this course and get employed after its completion.

State's milk scenario looks bleak

Dairy development board adviser calls for arresting fall in cattle population



Kerala will have to take urgent steps to arrest the decline in cattle population and enhance productivity if milk production is to match the projected demand in the near future, according to Kamlesh R. Trivedi, adviser, National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Trivedi who was here to participate in a national workshop on breeding policy organised by the Kerala Livestock Development Board, stressed the need for the State to address the macro economic issues that had led to the drop in cattle population.

“Based on the projected population and consumption, the annual milk production in Kerala would have to be increased from 2.64 million tonnes in 2010- 11 to 3.58 million tonnes over the next 10 years. This means, the average productivity of crossbred animals in Kerala would have to be enhanced from 8.92 litres per day to 12 or 13 litres,” he said.

Crossbreds constitute 94 per cent of the total livestock in Kerala while at the national level, the percentage is less than 20.

“Despite all the talk of conservation, local cows constitute only 0.6 per cent of the cattle,” Mr. Trivedi observed.

He said the State would have to work out a concrete action plan based on consultations with farmers and other stakeholders in the dairy sector to prevent a drop in the population of crossbreds.

“Macro-economic issues like high labour costs and the scarcity of land for fodder cultivation that are making the dairy sector unremunerative for farmers will have to be tackled through wide ranging discussions with stakeholders.”

Milch cows

Mr. Trivedi said improving the productivity of milch cows was a more manageable task. “Pushing up the average productivity to 13 litres per day translates into a growth rate of 3.7. Considering the growth rate of 3.49 over the last 10 years, that figure seems achievable, though a lot of work needs to be done”.

Genetic side

On the genetic side, Mr.Trivedi said, uncontrolled breeding and the lack of a planned programme had resulted in a mosaic population of crossbreds. “The breeding programme in Kerala started with the Swiss Brown. The Jersey and the Holstein Freisen were added to the genetic stock at different stages, with the result that the existing population is a mosaic combination of all three,” he said.

Mr. Trivedi advocates the creation of a line of HF and Jersey crossbreds that are preferred by farmers instead of randomly crossing everything.

He sees the need for a technically sound progeny testing programme. “The current productivity of 8.92 litres/ animal/day is the second highest in India. It proves that what was done is technically good,” he said.

He feels that Kerala could tap new markets in other parts of the country to offset the diminishing demand for cattle semen within the State. “The demand for artificial insemination is going down, proportionate to the decline in population of crossbreds in the state. It will require a well thought out programme with branding and promotion to sell outside the State,” he said.

He said big dairy farms could come up in Kerala in the near future if farmers found fodder cultivation more profitable than food crops.

Milk mission catching up in Vizag district

Milk Mission involving Self-Help Group (SHG) women is catching up in the district, thanks to the efforts of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA).

The mission aimed at enhancing milk production in the state from its present 298.01 lakh litres per day to 496.31 lakh litres and the

per capita milk consumption from 269 grams per day to 426 grams is gaining support of the SHG women as they see in the 'Pala Pragathi Kendras' (mini dairies) another avenue for boosting their village and family economies.

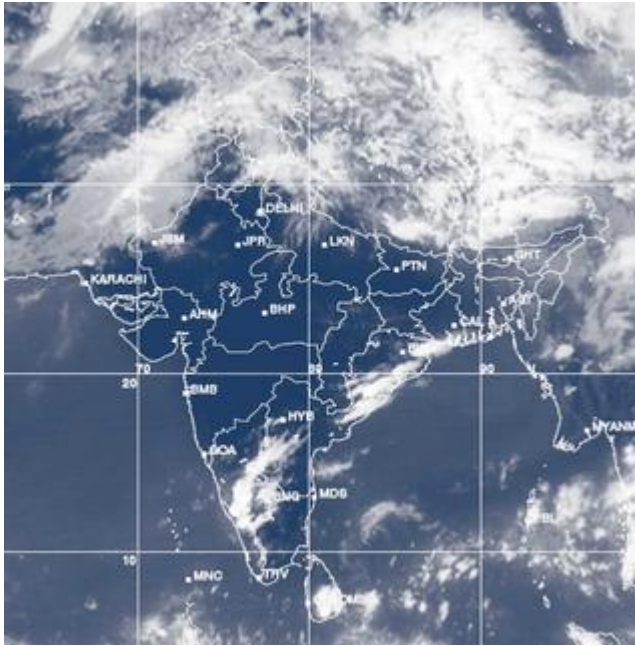
SHG women involving 700 members are today running 69 mini-dairies in the district producing nearly 1000 litres of milk per day. The mission launched at the fag end of 2011 started with three mini-dairies and by the end of the year 2012-13 increased to 69 mini-dairies. Due to the campaign launched by the DRDA in this regard a massive awareness had been created among the SHG women at every available forum. Members of SHG groups having sufficient land and inclination to earn a few rupees more for their family are finding the mini-dairies as a viable proposition, DRDA project director M.Maheswar Reddy said.

A mini-dairy consists of eight murrh buffaloes and eight cross bred cows. The animals will be purchased in two batches. The second batch of animals will be purchased 4-6 months after purchase of first batch of animals to ensure continuous milk production and income. In a span of one year DRDA succeeded in establishing 50 per cent of the target within a span of one year.

Each dairy unit is being established in 2 acres of land. The 10 SHG members who come forward to set up a dairy are formed into a Joint Liability Group (JLG) which is expected to earn an income of Rs.2,500 to Rs.3000 per month.

The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and the Department of Animal Husbandry are jointly training to women to run the dairies. DRDA additional project director Uma Devi told The Hindu that more and more women are coming forward set up mini-dairies.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on April 28th.

| | Max | Min | R | TR |
|-----------------|-----|-----|----|-----|
| New Delhi (Plm) | 39 | 24 | 0 | 26 |
| New Delhi (Sfd) | 38 | 25 | 0 | 22 |
| Chandigarh | 33 | 20 | 0 | 26 |
| Hissar | 38 | 21 | 0 | 41 |
| Bhuntar | 24 | 13 | 0 | 139 |
| Shimla | 21 | 13 | 0 | 113 |
| Jammu | 33 | 19 | 0 | 36 |
| Srinagar | 19 | 10 | 2 | 171 |
| Amritsar | 34 | 18 | 0 | 10 |
| Patiala | 35 | 21 | 0 | 25 |
| Jaipur | 39 | 25 | 0 | 14 |
| Udaipur | 39 | 25 | 0 | 15 |
| Allahabad | 43 | 25 | 0 | 11 |
| Lucknow | 40 | 23 | 0 | 1 |
| Varanasi | 42 | 25 | 0 | 21 |
| Dehradun | 34 | 18 | 0 | 38 |
| Agartala | 35 | 20 | 29 | 111 |
| Ahmedabad | 41 | 27 | 0 | 6 |
| Bangalore | 35 | 23 | 0 | 25 |
| Bhubaneshwar | 40 | 27 | 0 | 52 |
| Bhopal | 40 | 25 | 0 | 53 |
| Chennai | 35 | 27 | 0 | 32 |
| Guwahati | 27 | 21 | 26 | 110 |
| Hyderabad | 38 | 26 | 0 | 51 |
| Kolkata | 38 | 28 | 0 | 32 |
| Mumbai | 34 | 27 | 0 | 0 |
| Nagpur | 43 | 24 | 0 | 24 |
| Patna | 40 | 23 | 0 | 14 |
| Pune | 40 | 22 | 0 | 3 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| Thiruvananthapuram | 35 | 25 | 5 | 110 |
| Imphal | 31 | 18 | 4 | 118 |
| Shillong | 24 | 14 | 14 | 99 |

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st March.

RAIN AT FEW PLACES

RAINFALL: Rain/thundershowers have occurred at few places over Jammu and Kashmir. Weather was mainly dry over rest of the region.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES: The maximum temperatures rose in Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably below normal in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, below normal in Haryana and west Rajasthan and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 43.8°C recorded at Jhalawar (Rajasthan).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 30th April 2013: Rain/thundershowers would occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and at one or two places over Uttarakhand. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and west Uttar Pradesh during next 24 hours and mainly dry weather thereafter. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 30th April 2013: Weather Forecast

Water level

Water level in the Periyar dam stood at 112.50 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) on Sunday with an inflow and discharge of 100

cusecs each. In Vaigai dam, the level was at 36.78 feet (71) The discharge from the dam was 60 cusecs and the inflow was nil.

: Water level in the Papanasam dam on Sunday stood at 62.80 feet (the permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 139.65 cusecs and 394.75 cusecs was discharged from the dam. The water level of Manimuthar dam stood at 83.43 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 22 cusecs and 155 cusecs was discharged.

Nagercoil

Water level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 14.85 feet, 24.60 feet in Perunchani, while the level was 2.82 feet in Chittar 1, 2.92 in Chittar 11 and 0.20 feet in the Poigai dam.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Apr 29

Max 35° | Min 28°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 63

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:49

Sunset: 06:23

Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Apr 30

Max 35° | Min 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

| Wednesday May 1 | Thursday May 2 | Friday May 3 | Saturday May 4 | Sunday May 5 |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | | | | |
| 34° 28° | 33° 27° | 33° 27° | 35° 28° | 34° 29° |
| Partly Cloudy | Cloudy | Overcast | Overcast | Cloudy |

Jaipur CM Ashok Gehlot warms up to Israel tech to boost agriculture sector

JAIPUR: A delegation led by chief minister [Ashok Gehlot](#) met Israeli experts and explored the possibilities of cooperation in the fields of agriculture, horticulture and water management. Gehlot along with senior officials is on a seven-day visit to Israel.

Both Israel and Rajasthan share lot of similarities in climatic conditions. Gehlot expressed his desire to enhance bilateral cooperation to give a boost to agriculture in the water-scarcity state.

"Israel is a leading country in the world for desert agriculture management. Production can be enhanced by adopting Israeli techniques in crop and irrigation management. Dark zones of our state can benefit from water planning using Israeli technique," said Gehlot.

Collaboration is also expected in areas like treatment of sewage and waste water which can be used for landscaping and agriculture irrigation. Keeping in view the lack of water resources in the state, cooperation was sought from Israel in rain water harvesting and ground water conservation which would increase availability of water resources in arid and semi-arid regions.

The delegation also studied RO plants with desalination techniques. These plants are likely to be set up at identified places in the state. "For optimum use of canal water in irrigating lands, we can adopt Israel techniques. Fertigation (using of fertilizers with irrigation) is also something that has lot of potential for us," added Gehlot.

For hybrid and export quality crops of lemon, [mango](#) and pomegranate, plantation from Israel can be brought and cultivated in Rajasthan. Companies from Israel were invited for investment in projects like cold storage, warehousing and transportation of perishable agri-products.

The chief minister expressed his keenness to establish a dedicated industrial zone for Israel companies on the lines of the Japanese zone at Neemrana.

Rs 5.75 lakh crore agri loan to be sanctioned this year: PC



Agricultural loans to the tune of Rs 5.75 lakh crore would be sanctioned during this calendar year, informed Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram here on Sunday.

Speaking at the inaugural function of new branches of the State Bank of India at Sivagangai Collectorate and Silukkupatti on Sunday, he said that around 7,000 branches of several banks were being opened every year in the country and these branches helped in disbursing education loan, maternity assistance. Adding to these, the branches would also play a key role in transferring direct benefit transfer to beneficiaries.

Informing that 46 districts have been covered so far under the scheme he said all the districts would be covered before the end of this year. Besides, all bank branches would be provided with ATM facilities before the end of current financial year, the Minister said. He further said that the cash acceptor machine

(CAM) would soon be installed along with the ATMs through which cash could be deposited in the bank account round the clock.

Detailing the measures initiated by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in the banking sector, he said that due to the efforts of the government there was a remarkable increase in the banking service in the country.

Further the Centre was extending a housing loan of Rs 20,000 at 4 per cent interest under the Indira Housing Scheme. In addition to this, loans being given for construction of houses by individuals, for self-help group activities and education purposes.

Construction activities generate employment opportunities to several labourers. Similarly, as there is a constant demand for building materials production in this sector is also on a steady pace along with providing jobs to many persons, he underlined and added that this inter-linked process helps the growth of country's economy.

THE HINDU Business Line

Crop protection products to be dearer this kharif

Hyderabad, April 28: Farmers have to brace themselves for a steep hike of prices of pesticides and other crop protection products this kharif.

The Association of Pesticides Manufacturers expects the hike to be between five and 30 per cent across all products, including fungicides and weedicides.

The industry feels that it has to pass on to the farmers the increase in prices of certain raw chemicals, mostly imported from China.

“The hike will be most in the weedicides segment, which has shown the maximum growth in the crop protection market. Today weedicides have a share of almost 30 per cent in the market,” V.K. Garg, the association’s Vice-President and General Manager (Marketing-South India), Insecticides India Ltd, said.

For instance, glyfocate, a popular weedicide, which cost about Rs 230-235 a litre, could go up to over Rs 300, he points out.

The Rs 10,000-crore crop protection market may mirror an over 20 per cent growth this fiscal, as monsoon expectations are so far positive.

On Insecticides India Ltd, Garg said the company would be focussing on new technologies that would produce cheaper new generation products. “Today, only 20 per cent of the farmers were using technology products due to their costs. Our target is to provide cheaper products through indigenous technology,” he said.

The company, through a tie-up with Japanese major Otsuka Agri Techno, is setting up the first of its kind R&D facility at Chopanki, Rajasthan, which will be fully operational by December this year.

“By the end of the current fiscal, we hope to bring out at least three new products, which would have a total new chemical composition,” he said.

While the existing technology-based products are priced three to four times more than the conventional products, IIL expects its new generation products to be double than the conventional products.

IIL, which notched up a Rs 650 crore turnover last year, will also launch another two or three products through marketing tie-ups with MNCs this year. It recently launched a curative fungicide for paddy crop called Pulsor through a marketing tie-up with Nissan Chemicals.

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Agri-input makers see revival in demand on normal rain forecast

Fertiliser, pesticide companies bullish on monsoon prospects



Bright prospects: Farm workers spraying pesticide to protect mango trees at an orchard in Andhra Pradesh. A normal monsoon is likely to increase the offtake of fertilisers.

New Delhi, April 28: The prediction of a normal monsoon has raised the hopes for agri-input companies, especially fertiliser and pesticide makers, who are expecting a rebound in demand. “The monsoon forecast has been good and we believe there will be a pick-up in demand,” said Kapil Mehan, Managing Director of Coromandel International Ltd, which reported an 8 per cent drop in sales for fiscal 2013 over last year.

Stockpile

Fertiliser makers such as IFFCO and Coromandel had faced a double-whammy last year as prices of the non-urea, potassic and phosphatic nutrients had shot up on spiralling global prices and poor offtake by farmers due to erratic monsoon.

This had resulted in a build-up of stocks of these nutrients, currently estimated at about eight million tonnes, of which the di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) stocks alone are pegged at 5.5 million tonnes.

higher prices

“A normal monsoon should increase the demand for fertilisers,” said P.S Gahlaut, Managing Director of Indian Potash Ltd (IPL).

Gahlaut believes that with the normal rains, the farmers could be convinced to accept the prices of decontrolled complexes. The rise in prices of the potassic and phosphatic complexes last year had prompted the farmers to switch over and use more of cheaper urea. It's not only the fertiliser companies, even the pesticide makers are bullish on better monsoon prospects and expect sales to rebound.

Pesticide cos

“The forecast of a normal monsoon is important considering that there have been deficient rains in the past 18 months. There is a reasonable demand for crop care products from the distributor's perspective. The movement of products such as herbicide has already started ahead of the kharif sowings,” said Rajesh Aggarwal, Managing Director of Insecticides (India) Ltd.

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Nearly 31% tea unsold at Coonoor auction

Coonoor, April 28: The falling trend witnessed in the absorption rate at Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions in the last one month continued this week with only 69 per cent being sold at Sale No: 17 against 74 per cent in the previous sale.

slack demand

Due to inadequate demand, as much as 31 per cent of the nine-week high offer of 13.44 lakh kg remained unsold despite dropping prices by Rs 2 a kg.

CTC teas

Crosshill Estate topped the CTC market at Rs 176.

“Our four leaf grades and three dusts grades fetched Rs 159 and more a kg,” Crosshill Operations Head Dinesh Raju told *Business Line*.

Homedale Estate tea, auctioned by Global Tea Brokers, topped Leaf market at Rs 171 a kg. Hittakkal Estate got Rs 167 and Vigneshwar Estate Rs 166.

In all, 73 CTC marks got Rs 125 and more.

orthodox teas

Among orthodox teas, Chamraj got Rs 250, Highfield Estate Rs 185, Kairbetta Rs 180, Corsley Rs 177 and Kilkotagiri Rs 175.

In all, 31 marks got Rs 125 and more.

exports

On the export front, Pakistan did not buy.

The CIS gave selective support for Rs 85-94.

prices

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 80-85 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 115-150 for brighter liquoring sorts.

They ranged Rs 85-88 for plain dusts and Rs 130-160 for brighter liquoring dusts.

Kishor Spices bags award

Kochi, April 28: Kishor Spices Company here has bagged the award for topmost exporter of pepper in the year 2011-12 of the Spices Board.

The award for outstanding export performance was presented at a function held in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday night by Union Commerce Minister Anand Sharma.

The company exported 4,000 tonnes of pepper valued at Rs 130.5 crore in 2011-12.

The main export market was the US followed by Vietnam, Italy and Canada, Kishor Shamji, Managing Director of the company told *Business Line*.

Pepper continues to slide in volatile trade



Kochi, April 28: The pepper market witnessed the usual volatility last week also. The volatility appears to have been created by short position holders to show high turnover and consequently the prices of the active contract fell in early part of the week while it inched up in the latter part to close marginally down from the previous weekend close.

The total outstanding position was at 983 tonnes on Saturday. The stock at the exchange platform was said to be “0” tonne.

Those having long position with commitments and hedged on the exchange platform are now anticipating delivery. But, in the absence of stock, delivery appears to be unlikely and hence they may have to settle with some pittance, market sources told *Business Line*. “Everything is there in paper but without pepper,” they said.

The short position holders were doing all out efforts to pull down the market were buying back. The spot and futures prices have not converged.

Last week, May contract declined by Rs 155 to Rs 35,345 a quintal. Total turn over fell by 1,217 tonnes to 1,655 tonnes. Total open interest decreased by 192 tonnes to 983 tonnes.

Spot prices also fell, in tandem with the futures market, by Rs 300 to Rs 34,200 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,700 (Garbled) a quintal.

On the spot, moderate volume of fresh pepper used to arrive daily and that were all traded afloat at an average price ranging from Rs 342 and Rs 346 a kg last week.

According to the trade, all the domestic markets are empty as they were buying only hand to mouth hoping the prices would fall. Karnataka was selling lower grade pepper of 510 - 520 GL at Rs 310-320 a kg delivered anywhere in India.

In a bid to exploit the demand for lower grade pepper from some parts of the upcountry markets even spent pepper was allegedly being mixed with pepper and sent by rail to the North Indian markets from some centres in Kerala's Ernakulam district.

IPSTA MEET

Overseas buyers were asking for indications of prices for June/July/Aug. But, as they are not listed on the exchange and consequently in the absence of futures trading for these contracts, exporters are claimed to be unable to give any price indication. For June, they said to have taken the IPSTA prices. An extra ordinary General Body Meeting of the IPSTA was held here on Wednesday evening and according to sources, “everybody expressed the opinion that IPSTA should get the commodity-specific regional exchange activated so as to help the trade. Besides, they claimed, all the quality parameters of the IPSTA are in conformity with the requirements of the Food Safety authorities and hence it should get the permission from the Forward Markets Commission expedited. The participants also suggested that the deposit per trading unit should be raised to Rs 10,000 a tonne when the price band is increasing.”

Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,800 (c&f) for prompt shipments and \$6,700 a tonne for May shipments last week.

Dairy body develops new tech for fortifying milk

Karnal, April 28: A team of dairy scientists at the National Dairy Research Institute have successfully developed a technology for fortifying the milk with multiple micro-nutrients.

A.K Srivastava, Director, NDRI, said that micronutrient deficiencies, such as zinc, folic acid, calcium, and Vitamin D are also prevalent in India and have devastating impacts on the health and the productivity of the population, he added.

Sumit Arora, team member, said that two variants of milk were formulated, one contained iron in combination with vitamin A and the second variant was fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

A 250 ml serving of the iron and vitamin A fortified milk will provide 30-35 per cent of iron and vitamin A requirement on daily basis, he added.

Similarly, A 250 ml serving of the calcium and vitamin D fortified milk will provide 40-45 per cent of calcium and vitamin D requirement on daily basis.

The product has high heat stability and good sensory acceptability upto 7 days storage, he said.

Tomato prices decline on easy availability

Karnal, April 28: An increase in arrivals coupled with steady domestic demand pulled tomato prices down by Rs 50-300 a quintal for the different varieties, on Sunday.

Around 950 crates (of 25 kg each) of different varieties of tomato arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted between Rs 600 and Rs 2,450 a quintal. Around 2,000 crates of varieties such as Anoop, Himsona, Trishul and Rajasthan were received in the markets of Karnal district.

Vikas Sachdeva, a trade expert, told *Business Line* that easy availability of stocks pulled tomato prices down.

Apart from the arrivals from Rajasthan, local arrivals of the new crop have also started with small consignments. Arrivals may increase gradually in coming days, he added.

Traders expect that marriage season demand in coming days may push the market back into positive territory.

Out of total arrivals, about 20 per cent stock was of low quality; around 50 per cent of medium quality while about 30 per cent was of superior quality.

Prices of superior quality decreased by Rs 50 a quintal and quoted at Rs 1,800-2,450. The prices of Medium quality produce went down by Rs 100 and quoted at 1,500-1,900 while Low quality produce was at Rs 600-1,000 a quintal, Rs 300 down from previous levels.
