

THE HINDU

Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences can be good options



Dr. Brijesh Nair, Associate Professor, VIT, Vellore interacting with students during the The Hindu Education Plus career counselling in Puducherry. Photo: G.Krishnaswamy

The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling also featured a psychometric test for students

“Agriculture is the next big thing,” Jayaprakash Gandhi said while delivering his career counselling talk at The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling session here recently.

There are many vacancies that will soon come up in both Government and private sectors in agriculture. For those who have completed Class XII and are confused about options, B.Sc. Agriculture is a good choice, for all biology students.

For those who are not able to get into medicine, studying at the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University should be the next logical choice, followed by Veterinary Sciences. The most number of vacancies in the Tamil Nadu Government is for veterinarians, he said.

Other solid options are law, B.A. Economics and B.A. English Literature.

Lawyers tend to make the most money, while all banks and large corporations need economists for them to be able to run.

B.A. English Literature students can work in a variety of different fields including corporate communications, journalism and even technical writing, he said.

Speaking of the engineering options, he said mechanical engineering is a very good choice, both for girls and boys. He encouraged more girls to take up mechanical engineering.

Biotech Engineering, on the other hand, is not a great option for students unless they are willing to study for periods ranging from six to ten years and possibly move abroad. The field is research-based, and it requires a lot of investment and patience before it yields the desired dividends, he said. "Parents and students should carefully understand the students' capacity and the scope of courses before they push their children to study a certain course in a certain college. Don't just go by the college name, also analyse the course you are choosing," he said.

Professor Brijesh Nair from Vellore Institute of Technology stressed on the need for soft skills in order to pursue the career of one's choice.

The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling also featured a psychometric test by *Bodhi* that would allow the students to better understand their aptitude.

The title sponsor for the counselling was Vellore Institute of Technology, the associate sponsors were Adhiparasakthi Engineering College, Melmaruvathur; Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engineering College and the Sabari Group of Institutions, Puducherry and Arunai College of Engineering, Thiruvannamalai. The venue was sponsored by the Achariya World Class Educational Institutions and the prize sponsor was Pulkit TMT Bars.

Parents should carefully understand the students' capacity and the scope of courses

Training programmes on farming techniques

The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) here has organised free training programmes on recent farming techniques on its premises on Tuesday and Thursday.

On Tuesday, the programme will be on the recent techniques in groundnut and castor cultivation, in which training will be provided on the different varieties of groundnut and castor cultivation, de-weeding and other crop management techniques.

The training programme on Thursday will be on the recent cultivation techniques in banana, in which the participants will be elaborated on the benefits of tissue culture, selection of the right varieties for plantation, plantation techniques and their benefits, installing drip irrigation for the plants, pest control, rectifying minor nutrition defects and to manage the plants.

Interested persons should register in the Kendra in person or over phone at 04286-266345, 266244 or 266650 at the latest by 5 p.m. on the eve of the training programmes.

Cultivate traditional crops, farmers told

“Demand for nutritious produce picking up”

Laying emphasis on the benefits of traditional farm products, Minister for Handlooms and Textiles S.Sundararaj has called upon farmers to cultivate traditional crops.

Addressing a seminar, which was conducted to promote awareness on the benefits of traditional agro-products in Paramakudi near here on Sunday, the Minister said farmers should cultivate traditional farm products as demand for nutritious produce were picking up in the State. People had started realising the importance of these products. Agriculture Department officials should encourage the farmers to revert to the practice of cultivating traditional farm products and small millets such as varagu, samai, pani varagu and kudhirai vali and kambu by imparting the latest technical knowhow and training.

These millets were once the staple food of the people of the State as they had high fibre content and were more nutritious, he said. Many of the popular energy drinks contained the malt of these millets, he added.

P.Banumathy, Dean, Home Science College and Research Institute, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Madurai, explained the values and importance of small millets. She said the institute would offer training for making biscuits, ‘sevu’ and other snacks using maize.

Collector K.Nanthakumar said India had become the capital of diabetes after people changed their food habits. Stressing the need for reverting to the consumption of traditional farm products, he said the change of food habit had led to change in cultivation pattern. The district administration would help the farmers in reversing their cultivation pattern, he assured.

The Minister and Collector visited an exhibition showcasing various traditional agriculture products.

Those attended the seminar were distributed milk mixed with malts of small millets and biscuits and 'sevu' made of maize. Each participant was given a kit of samai, varagu, shikakai powder and a booklet detailing the benefits of traditional farm products.

Ka.Sakthimohan, Joint Director, Department of Agriculture, said the seminar was organised in accordance with the announcement made by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa in the Assembly last year to organise rallies and seminars at the block level to popularise traditional agro products such as tender coconut, shikakai and cotton, besides small millets and create awareness of the benefits of these products.

M.Murugan, Mudukalathur MLA, P. Ilangovan, Deputy Director, Horticulture, Manimaran, Deputy Director, Seed Inspection, and M.Rajagopal, Deputy Director, Agri- Business were present.

New norms may hit job potential in farm sector

Exclusion of agriculture from MGNREGS

: The new guidelines to exclude the farm sector from the purview of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) would have a negative impact on the scope for employment generation, especially as the sector stood third in the State in total employment generation in the farm sector in the last fiscal, after Thiruvananthapuram and Alappuzha, said M. Santhosh, MGNREGS joint co-ordinator.

Talking to *The Hindu* on Saturday, he said it provided employment to 1,19,048 families at an estimated expenditure of Rs.130.75 crore.

Major share

The agriculture sector accounted for the major share of employment generation.

The other sectors were less prominent owing to the special geographical and economic factors in the district. Unlike the other two districts, forests formed a large area and the prominent sector was agriculture, he said.

The district unit had already submitted watershed schemes for nominal and medium farmers in the 50 grama panchayats and as per the new guidelines, it may not be possible to implement the scheme.

Work days

The average number of working days for each family under the MGNREGS was 63.8.

The total number of working days for women was 58.51 lakhs.

A major feature of the scheme in the district was large employment generation for women in the farm sector. In the district, except in plantations, women employment in the farm sector was negligible.

A large number of homemakers joined employment in the farm sector — making a major change towards empowerment of women.

The continuance of the farm sector under the MGNREGS would have enabled it to make major strides in production.

Farmers with below 5 acres of land could utilise the services under the scheme before the new guidelines were issued by the Union government.

Adimaly first

The Adimaly grama panchayat topped the list of highest employment under the scheme, at an expenditure of Rs 786.76 lakh followed by the Vathikudy grama panchayat.

In these two grama panchayats, agriculture remained a major employment generator.

Mr. Santhosh said in the newly created Edamalakkudy tribal grama panchayat, all 621 families who had requested for work under the scheme were given employment.

He said the farm sector could have been made a model in employment generation in this panchayat had it remained under the MGNREGS.

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- *Idukki stood third in employment generation last fiscal*
 - *Adimaly grama panchayat topped the list in district*
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Plea to take back tribal farmland given on lease

Tribal people have no means for cultivation, says Samiti

The Attappady Samrakshana Samiti has urged the government to take back over 5,000 acres of fertile land given on lease by tribal people on the banks of the Bhavani and Siruvani rivers in Attappady.

In a statement here on Sunday, Samiti convener M. Sukumaran said the government should take back the land given on lease to the non-tribal people under the new agriculture package announced for Attappady.

Since the tribal people had no means to take up farming, the land were given on lease for farming. If they were given direct financial aid and enough water for irrigation, they would be able to take up cultivation themselves, he said.

Mr. Sukumaran said commercial banks should give loan to tribal people under the Kisan Credit and other schemes to help them take up agriculture. This would be a major step in ensuring food security to the tribal people, he said.

“Unless the government brings back the tribal people to their traditional agriculture on more than 25,000 acres of land still they hold in Attappady, no government packages will succeed in Attappady,’ Mr. Sukumaran said.

According to him, no other place in Kerala had such agriculture diversity as in Attappady. Here more tan 100 crops, including cotton, groundnut, onion, potato and sugarcane, are cultivated. But the problem was that more than 20,000 acres of land had been kept fallow as the tribal people had no means to take up farming, he said.

Proposal

Reacting to the demand, Integrated Tribal Development Project officer P.V. Radhakrishnan said the Tribal Department had submitted a proposal to the government to provide direct assistance to the tribal farmers who were willing to return to agriculture. Under the scheme, they would be given financial assistance to prepare the land for sowing, procure seed and fertilizer.

A meeting of the commercial banks in the Attappady area would be convened to explore the possibility of providing loans to the tribal farmers, he said.

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- *5,000 acres given on lease to non-tribal people*
 - *Agriculture loan and irrigation water sought*

Farmer couple shows the way

Seetarami Reddy and Venkata Lakshmi get good high yield using natural fertilizer



Green initiative: Venkata Lakshmi and Seetarami Reddy preparing 'Panchakavya' at Kaja.

Experimenting with preparation of natural fertilizers, a couple, P. Seetarami Reddy and Venkata Lakshmi from Kaja village, has come up with a natural fertilizer, Panchakavya, an alternative to high-priced chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Cow urine and dung, milk, coconut water and banana are prime natural ingredients required to prepare the Panchakavya, which saves almost 30 per cent of irrigation water for crops such as paddy, vegetables and Black Gram. “Per acre, 90 litres of water is mixed with all the ingredients and kept in stock for two-weeks before spraying the Panchakavya in the fields. Paddy barely requires four-time spray,” said P. Venkata Lakshmi.

Venkatalakshmi takes care of preparation while her husband observes its effectiveness on the crops. Following an advice from a Nimmakuru-based farmer, the couple adopted the method in 2006. They attained perfection in preparation of the fertilizer, and also

gave up using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. They used Panchakavya in their 30-acres of land recently.

“We received maximum yield of 42 bags (each 70 kgs) per acre in the last Kharif. The yield is four to five bags higher than other fields where chemical fertilizers are used,” Mr. Seetarami Reddy told *The Hindu*. He said half of the input cost on chemical fertilizers and pesticides can be saved by opting Panchakavya. It mainly addresses the prevailing problem of chaff, significant in all varieties paddy in Andhra Pradesh apart from increasing the number of grain per each plant”.

Being progressive farmers from the region, the couple make themselves busy with the sharing of the techniques of Panchakavya preparation with interested farmers during off-season. “Spraying Panchakavya is purely helps maintain the soil fertility. The cooked rice will not spoil till 24-hours after its preparation,” they say. They warn that one should not expect high yield in first three years of using Panchakavya as it requires time to change the soil towards giving quality produce.

Curtain comes down on Vegetable Show

With a number of tourists and residents returning with the satisfaction of having witnessed an event which showcased their favourite vegetables in different forms, the curtain came down on the two-day sixth Vegetable Show organised by the Department of Horticulture and the district administration at the Nehru Park in Kotagiri on Sunday.

A sharp shower on Saturday evening notwithstanding, the show evoked a good response and about 16,000 people enjoyed it on the two days.

Organised in an impressive manner, it lived up to expectations and also marked the commencement of the season-related activities.

Participating as the chief guest in the valedictory function, Collector, Archana Patnaik, distributed prizes. The Joint Director of Horticulture, G. Mohan, welcomed the gathering. The Deputy Director of Horticulture, N. Mani, and Kotagiri Panchayat Union Chairman K. Manoharan spoke. Assistant Director of Horticulture K. Rajendran proposed a vote of thanks.

While the trophy for the best collection of temperate vegetables went to E. Krishnappa of Ooty, the prize for the best collection of tropical vegetables was bagged by M. Padmakumar of Ooty.

The prize for the best vegetable garden over 500 square metres was won by Ranji Kuruvilla of Coonoor. The San Remo Guest House in Ooty won the prize for the best vegetable garden between 200 and 500 square metres.

The prize for the best vegetable garden between 100 and 200 square metres went to Rani Meyammai of Coonoor.

Ashok of Coonoor won the cup for the best vegetable garden between 50 and 100 square metres and Ravi Sam of Ooty lifted the cup for the garden below 50 square metres. In addition to the cups, cash prizes worth Rs. 14,250 were distributed.

Visakha Dairy launches Rs. 5 toned milk packet

Dairy chairman says a processing plant is being set up at a cost of Rs. 20 crore

With a view to address the requirement of the lower income group consumers the Visakha Dairy launched toned milk in a handy 100 ml package priced at Rs 5.

The ultra high temperature (UHT) treated milk has no preservatives and does not need boiling. It can be consumed straight from the pack. It has an increased shelf life and does not require refrigeration, Dairy chairman Adari Tulasi Rao said at a function organised to launch the product here on Sunday.

The 100-ml Visakha Tetra Pak would be sold in AP, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. He said the Visakha Dairy's plant could process 6 lakh litres per day and it had the most advanced processing plant.

He said the dairy was selling 75,000 litres of high quality milk per day with varying fat content in toned, double toned, skimmed and standard milk variants. He said the dairy was aiming at a target of 1 lakh litres per day by the end of the year.

Processing plant

He said the Visakha Dairy was procuring milk from Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam and the two Godavari districts. “We are setting up the Rangampeta processing plant at a cost of Rs 20 crore with a capacity of 2.5 lakh litres to 3 lakh litres, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to bring the milk all the way from the two Godavari districts. We have to cut down on the transport costs. We tried to acquire the sick Godavari Dairy and turn it around, but the government was not very keen on it. Therefore, we decided to put up a plant on our own,” he said. The plant would be ready by August-September, he added.

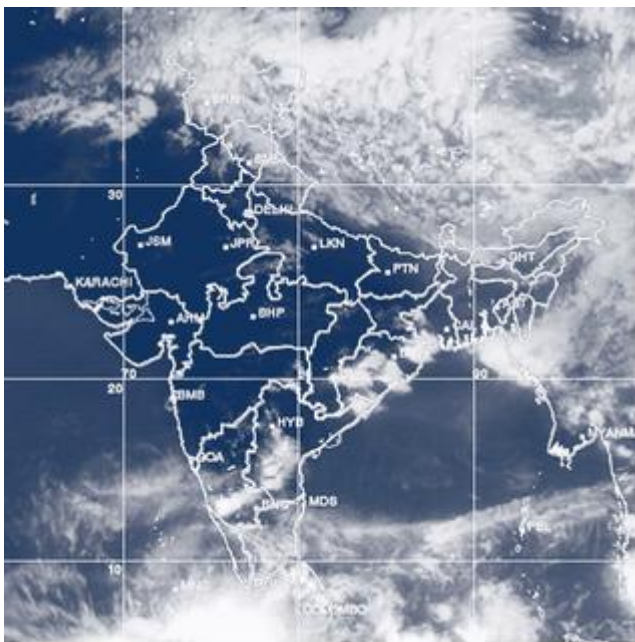
He said Visakha Dairy was procuring milk from more than 2 lakh farmers in the five districts, covering 2,800 villages.

“Our primary objective is to provide quality milk and milk products to consumers and at the same time do justice to our farmers by paying them a remunerative price. Of course, a balance has to be struck between the two aims. We have set up a hospital with excellent facilities here for the sake of the farmers and the staff and we also try to provide educational facilities to the children of the

farmers,” he said and added that the Visakha Dairy would always strive to be a responsible co-operative conscious of its social responsibilities.

The ultra high temperature treated milk has no preservatives and does not need boiling

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 14.00 hrs. Observations recorded at 8.30 a.m. on May 5th.

	Max	Min	R	TR
New Delhi (Plm)	43	27	0	26
New Delhi (Sfd)	42	24	0	22
Chandigarh	39	26	0	26
Hissar	43	23	0	41
Bhuntar	33	14	0	139
Shimla	25	17	0	113
Jammu	38	22	0	36
Srinagar	25	11	tr	173
Amritsar	40	24	0	10
Patiala	40	25	0	25
Jaipur	42	29	0	15
Udaipur	41	28	0	15
Allahabad	44	25	0	11
Lucknow	41	22	0	1
Varanasi	43	23	0	21
Dehradun	37	22	0	39
Agartala	28	19	62	220
Ahmedabad	43	25	0	6

Bangalore	36	23	0	39
Bhubaneshwar	39	28	0	52
Bhopal	42	28	0	53
Chennai	37	28	0	32
Guwahati	32	21	2	141
Hyderabad	42	27	0	51
Kolkata	35	29	0	32
Mumbai	34	28	0	0
Nagpur	45	26	0	24
Patna	42	26	0	14
Pune	37	22	0	3
Thiruvananthapuram	33	27	0	157
Imphal	26	16	7	206
Shillong	25	11	7	124

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 isolated places over Jammu and Kashmir . Weather was dry over rest of the region.

MAXIMUM TEMPERATURES: The maximum temperatures rose appreciably in Haryana and west Uttar Pradesh, rose in east Uttar Pradesh and changed little elsewhere. They were appreciably above normal in Haryana and west Rajasthan, above normal in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, east Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and normal in rest of the region. The highest maximum temperature in the region was 44.5°C recorded at Churu (Rajasthan).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 07th May 2013: Rain/thundershowers may occur at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 24 hours and at one or two places thereafter. Rain/thundershowers may occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh and

Uttarakhand. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 07th May 2013: Mainly clear sky.

Water level

Water level in the Periyar dam was 112.50 feet (permissible level is 136 feet) with an inflow of 100 cusecs and a discharge of 100 cusecs on Sunday. Water level in the Vaigai dam was 35.96 feet with an inflow of 36 cusecs and a discharge of 60 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit stood at 1,925 mcft. Gudalur recorded 5 mm rainfall, Shanmuganathi 4 mm, Uthamapalayam 15 mm, Veerapandi 45 mm, Manjalaru 2 mm, Sothuparai 8 mm, Idayapatti 5 mm and Kodaikanal 4 mm, according to PWD officials.

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Sunday stood at 57.25 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 163.01 cusecs and 608.50 cusecs was discharged. The level of Manimuthar dam stood at 82.21 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 10 cusecs and 55 cusecs was discharged.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, May 6

Max 33° | Min 28°

Rain: 0
Humidity: 79
Wind: normal

Sunrise: 05:46
Sunset: 06:24
Barometer: 1007

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, May 7

Max 37° | Min 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday May 8	Thursday May 9	Friday May 10	Saturday May 11	Sunday May 12
37° 28° Partly Cloudy	38° 27° Overcast	37° 27° Overcast	37° 28° Overcast	36° 29° Overcast

Business Standard ^{beta}

Sugar exports from India poised to rebound

End of state curbs on local sales will pull down domestic prices and encourage mills to boost overseas shipments



Sugar exports from India, the world's second-biggest producer, are set to climb next season as an end of state curbs on local sales sends domestic prices lower and encourages mills to boost overseas shipments.

Supply will be available for exports in the 2013-14 season that starts in October, according to Abinash Verma, director general of the New Delhi-based Indian Sugar Mills Association (Isma). Domestic prices in India for white sugar are about 10 per cent higher than futures in London, discouraging exports for now.

Global refined sugar prices have dropped 11 per cent in the past year as oversupply of sweetener overwhelmed processors. India's government said April 5 it will allow mills to freely sell sugar in the local market for the first time in four decades. The crop starts being harvested in India in October.

"With deregulation in India, there may be changes in the marketing patterns of the mills resulting in more material hitting the market immediately when crushing starts," Vijay Iyengar, managing director of Agropcorp International Pte, a Singapore-based commodity trader, said by phone on April 30. "In the months between October to let's say when the crush is going on, to March or April, sugar prices should be under pressure and at that point, there could be some exports."

White sugar futures on the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Ltd in Mumbai are Rs 2,928 a quintal (\$542.90 a tonne) today, compared with \$500 a tonne on NYSE Liffe in London. The London price is down 4.5 per cent this year after falling 33 per cent the past two years.

India shipments

Shipments from India have been about 35,000 tonnes since the current season started on October 1 compared with 3.4 million tonnes for the entire 2011-12 season as high domestic prices discouraged exports, Isma estimates. Exports in 2013-14 could be 500,000 tonnes if domestic prices fall below global levels, according to Charlotte Kingsman, an analyst in New Delhi at Kingsman SA, a Lausanne, Switzerland-based research company.

The nation's stockpiles will climb 37 per cent to 9.2 million tonnes by October from a year earlier, the most since 2008-09, said Vinay Kumar, managing director of the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd.

Indian sugar makers were curbed by a policy that set limits on sales by each mill to cap prices, while states fixed cane rates to help 50 million farmers. The government also said it will stop buying sugar from producers at below market prices, with the changes to take effect this season. A notification of the exact date has yet to be published.

"Freedom unfortunately means that people tend to sell quicker than they buy," Robin Shaw, an analyst at Marex Spectron Group in London, said on May 1. "Producers need cash and they can only get cash from sugar, so they have to sell their sugar while the buyers don't need to buy in advance, so you could see that the first effect of de-control will be a tendency to sell."

Sugar surplus

Sugar output in India will be 24.6 million tonnes in 2012-13, beating consumption of 22.5 million tonnes, leaving a surplus of 2.1 million tonnes, according to Isma. Production may be as high as 25 million tonnes, Green Pool Commodity Specialists Pty, a Brisbane, Australia-based researcher, estimates.

"Uttar Pradesh had a very good crop and Maharashtra wasn't as bad as what people thought," Tom McNeill, a director at Green Pool, said in a telephone interview on April 30. "There were numbers as low as 20 million tonnes for this year and it's going to end up near 25 million, an incredible outcome really, but that's because cane prices have been very good."

Foodgrain output seen rising 2%; storage woes likely for wheat

Foodgrain stocks in state-run warehouses are estimated at 60 mt, almost thrice the required quantity



For the 2012-13 crop marketing year ending June, India's wheat production is estimated at 93.62 million tonnes (mt), close to last year's record output of 94.88 mt. This could aggravate the already grim foodgrain storage scenario in the country.

According to latest data, foodgrain stocks in state-run warehouses are estimated at 60 mt, almost thrice the required quantity. With the government planning to purchase an additional 40 mt of wheat from farmers this year, officials said the inventories could swell to about 90 mt by the first week of June.

Ramesh Chand, director, National Centre For Agricultural Economics and Policy Research, said, "Estimates of another year of a near-record wheat harvest in 2012-13 would surely aggravate the storage problem, as already, foodgrain stocks are at record levels and the storage capacity is limited. The only ray of hope is to aggressively promote wheat exports at whatever price possible, without thinking of a loss to the Food Corporation of India or anyone else."

Meanwhile, the government's third advanced estimate for the 2012-13 crop marketing year released today showed mustard seed production was estimated at 7.4 mt, 0.8 mt more than last year. In 2012-13, overall foodgrain production is expected at 255.36 mt, 3.96 mt less than last year, owing to the poor output of rice, coarse cereals and moong. The production of rice is estimated at 104.22 mt, 1.09 mt less than last year, while production of coarse cereals is estimated at 39.52 mt, against 42.04 mt last year. Moong production is estimated at 1.18 mt, 0.45 mt less than last year.

However, pulses production would exceed that in 2011-12, owing to good production of urad and tur. For 2012-13, production of pulses is estimated at 18 mt, a rise of 0.91 mt compared to 2011-12. The production of oilseeds is estimated at 30.7 mt, about 0.9 mt more than in 2011-12.

Soybean production is estimated at 14.1 mt, against 12.96 mt last year, while groundnut production is seen at about 5.4 mt, about 1.56 mt less than last year. Among cash crops, production of cotton is estimated at 33.8 million bales (1 bale=170 kg), against 35.2 million bales last year, while that of jute is seen at 10.6 million bales (1 bale=180 kg), against 11.13 million bales in 2011-12.

GRAIN BASKET

Crop production in million tonnes 2012-13

Crops	2011-12*	2012-13#	% Change
Total pulses	17.09	18.00	5.32
Oilseeds	29.80	30.70	3.02
Rice	105.31	104.22	-1.03
Wheat	94.88	93.62	-1.32
Foodgrains	259.32	255.36	-1.52
Cotton	35.20	33.80	-3.97
Coarse cereals	42.04	39.52	-5.99
Sugarcane	361.04	336.10	-6.90
Jute	11.40	10.60	-7.01

Note: A crop year runs from July to June

*Final estimate 2011-12; #Third advanced estimate for 2012-13

Source: Department of Agriculture

THE HINDU

Business Line

Glut triggers price war among Bt hybrid cotton seed makers

Farmers have choice of buying from over 1,000 brands



More means competition: Workers busy sowing in a cotton field. (a file photo).

New Delhi, May 5: A glut in Bt cotton seeds has triggered a price war among various brands in States such as Punjab and Haryana, where planting of the fibre crop has commenced for the 2013-14 season.

Seed companies, amidst intensifying competition, are under pressure to slash prices of Bt hybrids, considering the huge surplus in the market.

Against the requirement of around four crore packets of 450 gm each for the season across the country, the supplies of Bt cottonseeds for the current season are estimated at nine crore packets.

maximum retail price

Against the maximum retail price (MRP) of Rs 1,000 a packet in Punjab, the Bollguard II seeds are being sold at Rs 800-850 for various brands, trade sources said.

Similarly, the Bollguard I seeds are being sold at around Rs 750 a packet, against the MRP of Rs 825.

The Bt hybrids account for 93 per cent of the cotton area estimated at over 11 million hectares.

“We are being forced by the market to cut prices,” said Sushil Karwa, Managing Director of Krishidhan Seeds, which claims a market share of 10 per cent in the northern States.

Krishidhan’s Bt hybrid brands are selling at around Rs 800-850 a packet in Punjab and Haryana.

Karwa suggested that the State Governments should stay away from fixing the MRP and should allow market forces to decide the price.

“State-fixed MRPs will only help a few large players, creating a sort of monopoly in the market,” Karwa added.

northern States

Though the prospects for cotton look better than last year in the northern States as farmers are seen coming back to the fibre crop, the planting is yet to pick up.

Farmers across the country have a choice of buying cotton seeds from over 1,000 hybrid brands from over 50 companies in kharif 2013, trade sources said.

“We expect the season to be good this year, but so far it has not picked up. Planting has already started in areas where mustard was planted last rabi.

“The delay in harvesting of wheat is delaying cotton planting in some areas,” said Paresh Verma, Research Director of Shriram Bioseed, an outfit of DCM Shriram Consolidated Ltd. Shriram Bioseed is a market leader in the North with a share of around 30 per cent.

Price pressure

Admitting price pressure, Verma said the company had adopted promotional schemes and planned to reach out to more customers to retain its market share.

A retailer in Mukthasar (Punjab) said almost all the Bt brands were being sold at Rs 800-850 a packet in the district.

He expects that due to the rising cultivation costs, cotton area may see a decline based on the initial trends as farmers were seen shifting to crops such as basmati rice, which commanded better prices last year.

Planting acreage

Cotton was planted in some 6.5 lakh ha in Haryana last year, while the acreage in Punjab stood at 5.5 lakh ha.

In Rajasthan, the acreage stood at 4.2 lakh ha.

Seed companies attribute the glut situation to the huge stocks carried forward from the past two years, when they faced a drop in demand as farmers had switched over to other crops such as guar and soyabean among others.

They expect the price war to extend to other cotton growing regions in the central and southern parts of the country, where planting will start with the onset of monsoon.

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Increase in supplies pulls down tomatoes



Karnal, May 5: Season demand in the coming days may push tomato market back into positive territory.
steady demand

Heavy arrivals in the market coupled with steady domestic demand pulled tomato prices down by Rs 200-450 a quintal for the different varieties, on Sunday.

Around 1,200 crates (a crate is 25 kg) of different varieties of tomatoes arrived at the Karnal vegetable market and were quoted between Rs 800 and Rs 1,800.

Around 2,200 crates of varieties such as Anoop, Himsona, Trishul and Rajasthan were received in the markets of Karnal district.

According to the market sources, increase in supplies pulled tomato prices down.

With the arrivals of previous crop, arrivals of new crop have also started but the domestic demand hasn't picked up yet, said sources.

Arrivals have improved over the last one week and it may increase gradually in the coming weeks.

quality lower

However, the size of tomatoes is smaller and the quality is lower.

Out of total arrivals, about 35 per cent stocks were of low quality; around 40 per cent medium quality while about 25 per cent was of superior quality.

Prices of superior quality decreased by Rs 450 and quoted at Rs 1,600-1,800.

Medium quality went down by Rs 300 at 1,200-1,500 while the low quality was Rs 200 down at Rs 500-1,000.

Following heavy arrivals, about five-seven per cent of total arrivals remained unsold.

Traders expect that the market may witness some good buying in the coming days on account of upcoming season demand.

Tea prices up in Kolkata sale

Kolkata, May 5: This week at Sale No. 18, the average prices of both orthodox and CTC at Kolkata tea auction were up, according to J. Thomas & Company Pvt Ltd, the tea auctioneers.

Thus, the average price of orthodox at Rs 224.32 was higher than last week's (Sale 17) price of Rs 207.15 for one kg.

The corresponding figures for CTC were Rs 156.63 and Rs 154.03 respectively.

An estimated 91.34 per cent (76.3 per cent) of orthodox and 75.4 per cent (68.98 per cent) of CTC volumes were sold.

This week, the total offerings (packages) at at Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri auctions centres were 1,58,205 compared to 1,08,114 in the corresponding sale (No. 18) of last year.

The offerings at Kolkata comprised CTC/dust 44,353 (31,956), orthodox 6,802 (2,379) and Darjeeling 2,588 (1,204).

The offerings at two other centres, handling mainly CTC/dust, were Guwahati 49,848 (34,086) and Siliguri 54,614 (38,489).

Selected liquoring Assam CTC brokens sold well while the remainder were easier.

Tata Global operated on the top liquoring sorts. There was selective support from Hindustan Unilever.

Western India operated actively. There were good enquiries from other internal and local sections.

Clean well made orthodox whole leaf and larger broken grades were firm with a few lines appreciating.

Smaller brokens and bolder whole leaf were around last and at times dearer. Fannings eased in value. Continental exporters

operated on the tippy teas on offer. The CIS and the West Asian shippers operated actively. There was fair interest from local dealers. Well made Darjeeling first flush teas witnessed useful enquiry from traditional exporters and sold well.

Similar brokens and fannings also moved well owing to export enquiry. Whole leaf varieties showing a decline in quality met with less enquiry and sold at lower rates, while similar brokens and fannings were readily absorbed by local dealers.

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Pepper rises on domestic demand



Kochi, May 5: Despite efforts by short position holders to pull the market down last week, the market ended much above the previous weekend closing. There were no sellers at lower levels. The efforts of the short position holders do not seem to have worked in their favour. Sellers were aggressively covering back.

Karnataka based exporters were estimated to have traded 500 tonnes of pepper to the US market at \$6,725 a tonne (c&f).

Meanwhile, at the just concluded Asta Convention in the US multinational companies with multi-origin operations based in South-East Asia were reportedly spreading bearish sentiments.

Prices of the active contract moved up during the week.

May contract increased by Rs 540 a quintal last week to close on Saturday at Rs 35,885. Total turnover dropped by 314 tonnes to

close at 1,341 tonnes. Total open interest decreased by 383 tonnes to 600 tonnes.

Spot prices showed a decline of Rs 100 to close at Rs 34,100 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,600 (MG 1).

Reports arriving from the ASTA convention currently under way in the US claimed that Karnataka-based exporters were offering pepper at \$100-150 a tonne below the price for Malabar c&f New York.

Idukki-based dealers were also covering Karnataka pepper for mixing with the high range pepper and selling to Tamil Nadu-based dealers. Indian parity in the international market was at \$6,700 a tonne (c&f) for May shipments to Europe while \$6,800 a tonne (c&f) for June shipments based on IPSTA prices.
