

ARIYALUR, January 28, 2014

“Introduce innovation in cashew cultivation”

Horticulture department officials should motivate cashew cultivators to take to innovative cultivation technique for registering higher yield, said Sandeep Saxena, Secretary to Government and Commissioner for Agricultural Production.

Cashew cultivation was registering headway through modernised farming techniques and the officials should transfer it to the potential belts in the district, he said while addressing officials at a review meeting held here recently.

Make institutions accessible, urge ornamental fish farmers



Fish farmers feel that a community-based approach is the need of the hour to improve the ornamental fish industry. A collective effort by scientists, researchers, administrators, traders and others connected with the fish farming sector was required to boost productivity.

These suggestions by the fish farmers were made at the Orna farmers meet, held as part of an international seminar on ornamental fish breeding, culture and trade in connection with the ongoing Ornaments Kerala 2014 expo.

They also spoke about problems and challenges in the fish farming sector. Experts from different parts of the world took part in the interactive session. Institutions connected with the fish industry like the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), CMFRI, CIFT, FIRMA and Matsyafed should be networked and be made accessible to farmers, they said.

When the farmers aired their difficulty in getting brood stock of some species at affordable prices, Dr. B. Madhusoodana Kurup, Vice-Chancellor of KUFOS said that the institution was prepared to support them in various ways.

Buyer-seller

A buyer-seller meet will be organised on Tuesday at Marine Drive, the venue of Ornamentals Kerala 2014. The show will end on Tuesday with a public meeting scheduled for 5 p.m.

More than 300 fishermen participated in *Kadalarivukal*, a seminar on traditional knowledge base in the fisheries sector, organised as part of the exhibition. Fisheries Director Mini Antony said that the department would compile the traditional knowledge of fishermen and bring out a book.

ELURU, January 28, 2014

Meet on family agriculture

A district-level convention on 'family agriculture' will be held at the District Central Cooperative Bank (DCCB) here on Tuesday. Joint Collector T. Baburao Naidu will inaugurate the workshop. District Cooperative Officer Rammohan Rao said the workshop intended to promote agriculture under the management of joint families in the district.

Farmers for monitoring panel to prevent adulteration

Demanding that a monitoring committee be appointed to prevent adulteration in tapioca starch and also to protect the industry, members of Tamil Nadu Farmers' Association staged a demonstration outside the Salem Starch and Sago Manufacturers Service Industrial Cooperative Society Limited (Sagoserve) here on Monday.

Led by district deputy chairman P. Ayyacounder, members said that tapioca was cultivated in about 20 lakh acres in 18 districts in the State and 10 lakh small and medium sago and starch manufacturing units were functioning in Salem, Namakkal and other districts.

Through tapioca and starch manufacturing, transaction worth Rs.1,000 crore were taking place.

But due to adulteration of sago and starch with maize starch, the procurement price of tapioca and sago starch have fallen drastically.

Last year, the price of 75 kg tapioca gunny bag was sold over Rs. 1,000 and 90 kg starch bag was sold for Rs. 6,700. But it was priced at Rs. 800 and Rs. 5,500 respectively. If the present situation continues, cultivation of tapioca and manufacturing of starch and sago would get affected leading to closure of industries.

Hence, they demanded that the government immediately constitute a committee to prevent further deterioration of the situation and also to take action against persons involved in adulteration.

MYSORE, January 28, 2014

‘Link needed between farmers, govt.’

Noted agricultural scientist M. Mahadevappa on Monday said the country’s food production would increase if farm policies were properly implemented, and a linkage established between farmers and the government.

Dr. Mahadevappa, whose name was announced for the Padma Shri award by the Union government, was speaking at the inauguration of the six-day Jathra Mahotsava at Suttur, about 25 km from Mysore. The scientist lamented that farm technologies were not used effectively in fields despite their availability.

“The institutions promoting agriculture have done much for the country’s food production despite noticeable contributions from agricultural scientists,” he observed. The division of the agriculture sector into agriculture and horticulture has confused farmers, he added. He said the country was a leader in milk production, but it needed to overcome challenges and boost food production. The governments can play an important role in raising the food production, he added. The State-level Bhajana Mela, Rangoli drawing competition and Krishi Mela were also inaugurated on the occasion.

Farmers demand insurance refund in all firkas



Pudukottai farmers evoked a mixed response for the first instalment of crop insurance during the year 2012. The fund was distributed to only 17 firkas.

PUDUKOTTAI, January 28, 2014

Limited crop insurance: ryots upset

First instalment for 2012 losses disbursed to affected farmers in only 17 firkas

Even while welcoming the release of the long-awaited first instalment of crop insurance for the loss suffered during the year 2012, the farmers of the district resent the disbursement of the indemnity in only 17 firkas.

Farmers associations urged the government to ensure that the crop insurance is disbursed to the affected farmers of all the firkas in the district. The National Agricultural Insurance Company sanctioned Rs. 14.78 crore as first instalment towards indemnity for the loss of samba crop. The sum has already been released to 75 primary agricultural cooperative credit and thrift societies, which will disburse the same to about 29,000 farmers.

KURNOOL, January 28, 2014

Onion farmers seek fair deal

Farmers led by the Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham staged a demonstration at the Kurnool market yard on Monday, urging the government to come to the rescue of onion growers.

Sangham district secretary K. Jagannatham said that the price of onion had declined to Rs. 600 per quintal from Rs. 4,000 in a few months.

“Given the price slump, the farmers are incurring huge losses,” Mr. Jagannatham said.

ANGAREDDY, January 28, 2014

‘Scientific farming need of the hour’

An inclusive, science-based, resilient and market-oriented agriculture is the key to addressing key challenges hampering agricultural growth in West and Central Africa (WCA), and in attaining food and nutrition security, economic prosperity and environmental sustainability in the region, said International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) Director General Dr. William Dar.

Tackling the question of how agricultural research can make smallholder farming more profitable and sustainable, scientists from the regional and country offices in WCA and from its headquarters, convened in Bamako for a regional planning meeting to map out its research agenda.

“Working with our partners, we can deliver on our mission to lift the people out of poverty ,” Mr. Dar said.

Water level

TIRUNELVELI:Water level in the Papanasam dam on Monday stood at 88.85 feet (maximum level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 257.80 cusecs and 1,054.75 cusecs of water was discharged from the dam.

The water level in Manimuthar dam stood at 83.74 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of 22 cusecs and 195 cusecs of water was discharged.

Kanyakumari

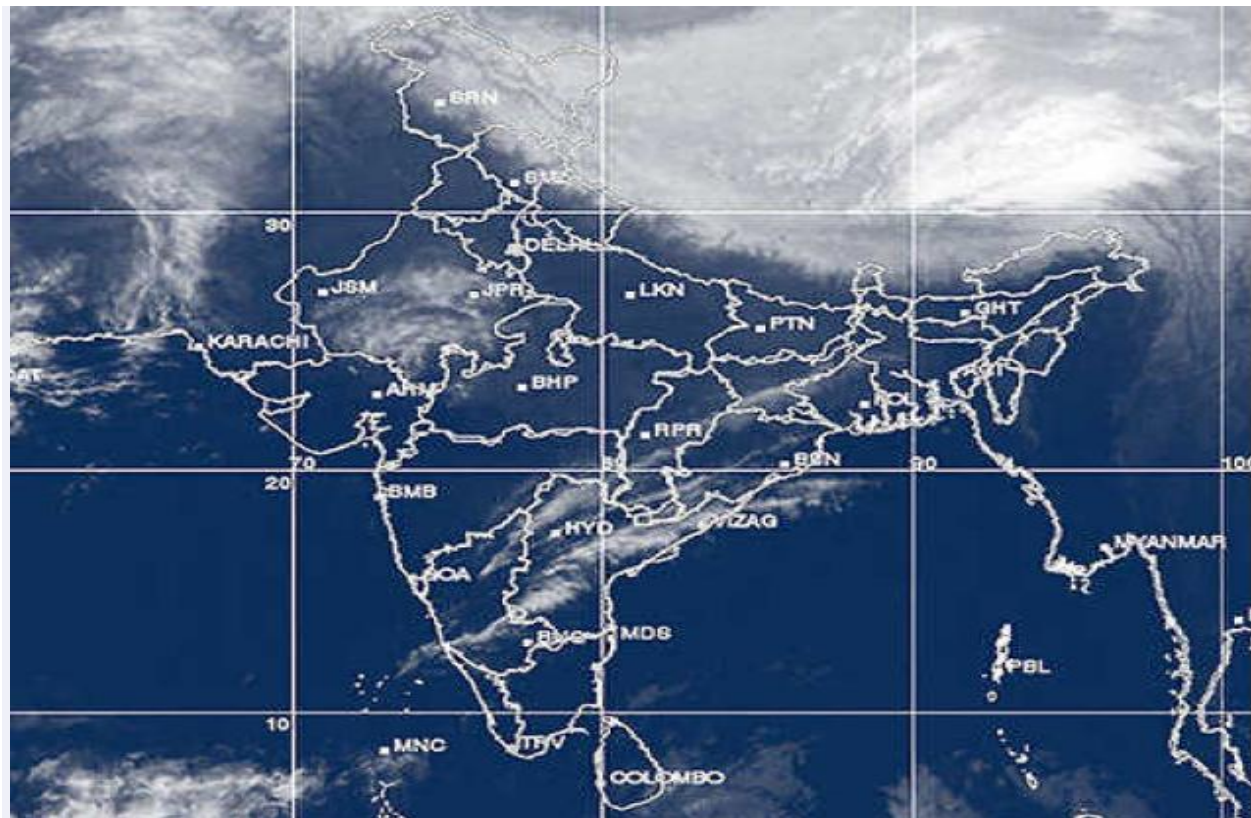
The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 18.09 feet, 52.50 feet in Perunchani, 10.04 feet in Chittar 1, 10.14 feet in Chittar 11, 4.02 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazathuraiyaru.

Mettur: The water level in the Mettur dam stood at 51.44 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 320 cusecs and the discharge 2,000 cusecs.

MADURAI:

Water level in the Periyar dam stood at 111.70 feet (permissible level 136 feet) on Monday with an inflow of 20 cusecs and a discharge of 200 cusecs. The level in Vaigai dam was 35.93 feet (total level 71 feet) with an inflow of 75 cusecs and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 1,128 mcft. There was no rainfall recorded during the last 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Monday, PWD officials here said.

Weather



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs. Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on January 27.

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Jan 28

Max 30° | Min 20°

Rain: NO

Humidity: 0

Wind: 0

Sunrise: 0

Sunset: 0

Barometer: 0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, Jan 29

Max 29° | Min 23°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday Jan 30	Friday Jan 31	Saturday Feb 1	Sunday Feb 2	Monday Feb 3
30° 22° Partly Cloudy	24° 22° Overcast	24° 22° Overcast	24° 22° Overcast	24° 22° Partly Cloudy

THE HINDU BusinessLine

With AP mills desperate for cane, farmers demand higher price

Hyderabad, January :

Growers seek ₹ 3,500/tonne, ask State to scrap 5% VAT on sugar

Farmers in Andhra Pradesh are demanding ₹3,500 a tonne for the sugarcane they are supplying to mills during the current season to September.

They want the State Government to scrap the five per cent value-added tax on sugar.

Opposing the Centre's decision to fix the cane price at ₹2,100 a tonne for a recovery of 9.5 per cent sugar, they contend that they will end up with a loss of ₹21,000 for every acre of cane they have planted.

Mills are paying an average price of ₹ 2,500 a tonne. The sugar industry in the State is facing severe shortage of cane. That the State is expected to crush only 90 lakh tonnes of sugarcane against an installed capacity of 200 lakh tonnes in 40 factories is an indication of the severity of the problem.

“We want the Centre to encourage use of ethanol. This will help farmers and sugar factories to tide over the losses. In order to do this, the Government should increase ethanol blending in petrol to 20 per cent. It has to declare a price of ₹60 for a litre for ethanol,” Bharatiya Kisan Sangh State Vice-President Paryada Anji Reddy said.

The organisation convened a State-level conference last week where representatives of industry and farmers' organisations discussed the challenges faced by the sector. The Federation of Sugarcane Growers' Associations, too, demanded ₹3,500 a tonne. “If you pay ₹60 a litre, you can pay farmers ₹4,000-4,500 a tonne,” a BKS resolution said.

Reddy said that the Brazilian Government has mandated blending of 25 per cent of ethanol. The meeting pointed out that no other State levies value-added tax on sugar, putting the industry at a disadvantage. The Federation of Sugarcane

Growers' Associations has asked the State to revive the pricing mechanism based on a recovery of 8.5 per cent sugar.

Chickpea gets cover against climate change

Hyderabad, January :

Farmers will soon be able to get climate change ready chickpea (gram) varieties that can withstand extreme weather conditions.

Scientists at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (Icrisat) have identified 40 lines of germplasm of chickpea with resistance to drought, high temperature and salinity. They had screened about 211 lines of chickpea over a period of 14 years to zero in on the 40 lines. An offshoot of this laborious research process is that the team, led by Hari D. Upadhyaya, Head of Genebank at the Patancheru-based institute, has identified six germplasm lines of chickpea that are resistant to extreme weather and for pests and diseases.

Rich in protein, starch, fibre, minerals, and vitamins, chickpea is an important legume in the world, with a total worldwide production of 11.6 million tonnes from 13.2 million hectares. India accounts for 71 per cent of the world chickpea production, while Australia, Turkey, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Iran and Pakistan are among other important chickpea producers.

Icrisat Director-General William Dar said the climate resilient germplasm lines would strengthen institute's efforts to develop adaptation measures; support mitigation measures to help small farmers.

Icrisat scientists identify 40 lines of germplasm that can resist drought, high temperature and salinity

Global coffee body plans to take the cuppa to students

We can help India market its coffee if it has a plan, says ICO Executive Director



Bangalore, January :

Roberio Oliveira Silva, the Executive Director of International Coffee Organisation (ICO), was in Bangalore to attend the India International Coffee Festival and tour coffee growing region Kodagu (Karnataka) last week. In a free-wheeling interview with *Business Line*, Silva outlines the global coffee body's plans on generic campaign, promoting coffee consumption among students and the organisation's strategy to combat climate change.

The ICO is willing to help India promote its coffee, provided it has a plan, he says.

Excerpts:

Low productivity is affecting small growers globally. Is there any effort by ICO to increase productivity?

We have many projects in terms to increase productivity and transfer technology from some countries which have achieved high productivity. We are currently in discussion for creating common friends for productivity and for funding.

For promoting shade-grown coffees as practiced in India, we can always help the country.

What is ICO's stand on tech transfer from advanced countries like Colombia/Brazil to other coffee growing countries?

ICO has signed an agreement with the Brazilian agency for co-operation. It allows Brazil and ICO to work together in transfer of technology to countries that do not have such technologies. We have signed up some small countries at present. Our initial experience is that it is something that we are finding very complicated to take it forward.

We may face some hurdle in countries like India. But India can take help from Columbia as the situation is the same there.

Countries such as India grow coffee under shade. Are there any efforts by ICO to help market it exclusively?

ICO helps promoting coffee, in general. Not a coffee that is in open sky or under the shades. We help generic promotions and the countries promote themselves. Obviously, the generic promotions also help. For promoting shade grown coffees, if India has a plan we can help. Currently, India chairs International Coffee Council (ICC). They ask we give.

What is ICO doing to promote consumption?

We are developing a plan. The plan at this moment is at the discussion stage with both producing and consuming countries involved. The discussions are around as to how to find funds. Producers have agreed to put money along with consuming nations. So, we are waiting for their initiative and for their response.

Is ICO preparing a generic campaign to boost global consumption?

Yes, we are preparing a generic plan. The plan is to help boost consumption and we have prepared a manual. The manual deals with providing the experience of countries that have successfully promoted consumption in their domestic market. Currently, there is a clash of interest. If we boost consumption in the domestic market, we have to move south, in terms of internal pricing and it will also help international coffee price and naturally. And so, we have various steps. One of them is to initiate coffee consumption among students in schools, to create awareness about coffee.

Low prices have affected coffee growing countries. What is ICO's stand in this regard?

ICO does not play a role in terms of economics. As you know, we (ICO) don't have any economic roles. What we can do is bring in transparency in the coffee market in terms of the statistics and in terms of providing talk show (dialogue) between producing and consuming nations. And also help and try smooth out these fluctuations.

Climate change is playing havoc in coffee growing countries is ICO working out to find any solutions?

Yes, we are concerned about it and working in this field. A lot needs to be done and we are bringing this element in our (ICO) website to help producers. We are going to announce it shortly. Most probably, by mid September, you will have this climate box in our website.

Many countries have been affected by pest menace. Has ICO initiated any research to tackle it?

I visited five countries that were most affected last year. I visited the entire Central American region. And what we are doing is help them open doors at the World Bank, at the Inter-American Development Bank to fund projects to overcome these problems. Also, help them with transfer of technologies from Brazil and Columbia. They are also having similar set of problem.

Is ICO working on any strategy for growers or countries to access finance to take up initiatives like market research or to develop new plant varieties or species?

Yes. We are working together with the World Bank.

It's fantastic, we are publishing a manual for best practices in coffee and it's a work that we have been doing for the last one year.

And we are going to publish it by September, this book, it's going to be conducted by a team of economists of ICO and the World Bank jointly. We are also working on strategies to help in terms of managing the situations. Also we at ICO have a forum for finance.

The forum has everybody - growers, the trading houses and the industry.

Spot rubber dips to 4-year low

Kottayam, January :

Spot rubber prices dropped to a four-year low on Monday. This followed steep fall in the domestic and international markets.

Tokyo rubber futures tumbled, as growing stockpiles in China signalled a sharp slowdown in global demand and the yen strengthened against the dollar.

Sheet rubber declined to ₹146 (₹149.50) a kg, according to traders.

The grade dropped to ₹148 (₹150) and ₹145 (₹147), as reported by the Rubber Board. February futures dived to ₹142.28 (₹148.20), March to ₹144.49 (₹150.51), April to ₹147.90 (₹154.02) and May to ₹150.55 (₹156.50).

June futures remained inactive on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) slipped to ₹141.89 (₹142.89) at Bangkok. January futures closed at ¥224.1 (₹138.13) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

Spot rubber rates ₹/kg were: RSS-4: 146 (149.50); RSS-5: 142 (145); Ungraded: 137 (140); ISNR 20: 143 (145.50) and Latex 60%: 121 (124).

Indigenous edible oils under pressure on bright prospects for rabi crops

Mumbai, January :

EDIBLE OILS UNDER PRESSURE

Imported palmolein and soyabean refined oil increased by ₹2 for 10 kg each in the Mumbai commodity exchange as local refineries raised their rates considering higher import costs. Groundnut oil declined by ₹10, tracking extended loss of ₹15 in Rajkot-Saurashtra market. Resellers sold about 250-300 tonnes of palmolein. At Rajkot, groundnut oil declined further by ₹30 to ₹1,170 (₹1,200) for *telia tin* and loose (10 kg) dropped by ₹15 to ₹745 (₹760). Our Correspondent

Cold spell fires up natural gas



Prices up 18% in a week as demand soars, stockpiles drop; spot rates zoom to record
Chennai, January :

The frigid weather in North America has virtually set natural gas prices on fire. Prices rose 18 per cent last week to top \$5/MMBtu (million British thermal units used to measure gas). It is for the first time in four years that prices have increased to such levels.

On Monday, natural gas contracts for delivery in February increased to \$5.44 on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Futures have gained over 20 per cent in a month. Spot gas prices, on the other hand, have zoomed to a record \$120 per thousand cubic feet.

Natural gas, used by half the households in the US as fuel for heating, has gained as the cold blast across North America has resulted in demand surging and inventories decreasing. Gas stockpiles declined by 1.386 trillion cubic feet (TCF) to 2.423 TCF between November 1 and January 17. This is 50 per cent more than the average decline of 927 billion cubic feet in the last five years, according to the US Energy Information Administration. According to the agency's analyst, it is a record withdrawal for the period.

Coldest month

Some States in the US going through the coldest month of the century is aggravating the situation. The drop in inventories has resulted in natural gas prices gaining 57 per cent in the last 12 months and over 20 per cent in the last one month. Besides decrease in stockpiles, gas production has been hit by freezing weather.

Goldman Sachs has cut its March-end inventory outlook to 1.388 TCF from 1.605 TCF estimated earlier. Lower stockpile levels with the weather being average in February and March will mean gas prices could rule closer to \$4.40 to \$4.50 this year. Goldman Sachs has forecast that natural gas prices will average \$4.25 this year.

In India, natural gas contracts maturing for delivery in February and traded on the Multi Commodity Exchange of India, gained 11 per cent last week. For the month, the contracts are up 22 per cent. January contracts, expiring on Tuesday, have gained 25 per cent.

Though some analysts are of the view that natural gas prices are expected to plateau around \$5.30, weather forecasts are bullish for the commodity.

Weather forecasts

Weather forecasts have warned of the chill stretching from Canada to the US Gulf coast. A winter storm is set to sweep from Houston to Pensacola in Florida on Tuesday. The US National Weather Services has projected extreme cold conditions until this weekend. It expects conditions to continue next week too in US Midwest and Northeast.

Power utilities in the US have been using natural gas for several years now as it is cheap. But capacities have not been built to meet the surging demand.

This will mean that there will be short-supply in natural gas and its prices could see further rise, at least until the weather relents.

Canada, Pakistan frown at India's foodgrain exports, farm subsidies

WTO to take up questions on India's wheat stocks, export price, rice subsidies

New Delhi, January :

This comes less than two months after Western countries promised India that no action would be taken against it for breaching food subsidy levels prescribed by the multilateral body at least for the next four years. The WTO's Committee on Agriculture (CoA) will take up the questions raised by Canada and Pakistan on India's wheat and non-Basmati rice exports, existing levels of stocks and the subsidies extended, in a meeting scheduled on January 29, a Commerce Department official told *Business Line*.

Canada has asked India to give details on the volume of wheat stocks held by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in the light of recent reports that the country would be exporting up to 20 lakh tonne of wheat due to surplus stocks.

In a representation to the CoA, Canada has also asked India to specify how it calculates the floor price (minimum price) for wheat exports. "Reports (news) indicate that the Government of India has lowered the floor price for wheat to \$260 per tonne from \$300 per tonne which is lower than the price of the same quality wheat from Canada (and other countries) sold in the range of \$270 to \$275 per tonne," the representation said.

WTO concession

India and a number of other developing countries have been granted a reprieve by the WTO against legal action for breaching farm subsidy limits, fixed at 10 per cent of total produce, on items covered under the country's food security programmes.

This was part of the deal struck at the WTO Ministerial meet in Bali, Indonesia, in December. Members are now supposed to work on a permanent solution to the problem.

India is likely to breach the prescribed subsidy limits once it fully implements its Food Security Programme which offers 5 kg of subsidised foodgrain to about two-thirds of its population. The reprieve, however, would not be applicable if the subsidised foodgrain is released in the export market and affects global prices. India is also obligated to supply all data related to production, pricing, procurement and subsidies demanded by WTO members who would want to ensure that subsidised food was not distorting the global market.

A number of civil society organisations, such as Right to Food Campaign, Action Aid and Third World Network, had earlier warned that the temporary reprieve, called the Peace Clause, would lead to insufficient protection and onerous data sharing obligation.

Pakistan, in its representation to the CoA, has asked India to furnish details of rice exports in the last two years. It has also asked the country to clarify if all non-Basmati rice varieties were eligible for market price support. "India will get some time to reply to the questions," the official said.

TRADE TANGLE

- ***WTO panel to look into wheat and non-basmati rice exports by India***

- *Canada is seeking details of wheat stocks held by FCI*
- *The Bali deal allows developing nations to breach farm subsidy limits with riders*

DECCAN Chronicle

Lingonberries accelerate weight loss

Research has revealed that lingonberries, black currants and bilberries may help in shedding weight while acai berries resulted in weight gain.

Researcher at Lund University said that their study has shown that the acai berries led to weight gain and higher levels of fat in the liver while daily supplementation with lingonberries, blackcurrants and bilberries had pronounced antiobesity and beneficial metabolic effects, Discovery News reported.

The study was published in the Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism.





Farmer harvests carrot, a first in Cumbum valley

THENI: A farmer in Theni district has set a record by raising carrots on his farmland where only paddy and grapes were cultivated before and is elated about it.

Sannasi (55) was a grape farmer from Koovapalayam near Kamayakoundanpatti in the Cumbum valley one of the fertile regions in the district. He had been a grape farmer for many years but had decided to refrain from it last year as the crashing grape prices did not bring good returns. Also, there was no proper cold storage facility for the fruits, according to him.

Deciding to do some experimental farming, he had gone to the market in Batlagundu in Dindigul district and purchased carrot seeds. Many of his counterparts had tried to discourage him as carrots had not been cultivated in the valley so far. Undeterred, he had sown the 1.200 kg of seeds on one acre of land in October last year and irrigated the crop with a sprinkler system as he knew carrots needed a cool environment.

He is elated now as he has reaped four tonnes of good carrots from his acre in the first harvest last week. "I used only organic manure and cow dung to fertilise the crop and the results are very good," he said. Sannasi said that he had

believed that carrots, potatoes and butterbeans grew only in the cold climates of the upper hilly regions. Five tonnes is what he would get this time but he says that as he had been apprehensive of the results he had not done it in a full-fledged manner. In places like Kodaikanal and Ooty they get about 10 tonnes per acre and "maybe I will go for a larger scale next time," he added.

According to S Murugan, deputy director of horticulture, Theni this has been a very good effort. "The colour of the carrot is good and the size too, but I feel that the taste has to be slightly better and maybe that could be achieved if the carrots are harvested after 10 more days giving them the benefit of remaining in the cold season," he said.

Greater flamingos found in Tenkasi tank

TIRUNELVELI: The third leg of bird monitoring undertaken by the Tirunelveli forest circle spotted a good number of greater flamingos in the water bodies. Interestingly, some of them were spotted for the first time at the Sundarapandiapuram tank near Tenkasi.

Tirunelveli forest circle consisting Tirunelveli, Tuticorin and Kanyakumari districts has undertaken six months' aquatic bird monitoring in the water bodies. The third leg of bird monitoring took place on Saturday. According to forest officials, the monitoring was conducted in about 20 tanks across the three districts. Different species of birds, ranging from 10 to 40, were noted in each tank with numbers ranging from few hundreds to as high as 15,000. Important water birds noted

were spot-billed pelicans, bar-headed geese, little grebe, Indian spot-billed duck, comb duck, Asian open-bill stork, painted stork, pheasant-tailed jacana, terns apart from egrets, herons, variety of ibis, cormorants and moorhens, forest officials said.

District forest officer C H Padma said a group of greater flamingos was noticed first time in Sunderpandiyapuram tank near Tenkasi. In many of the irrigational tanks, an increased water level is observed due to release of water from dams. "It is happy to note that local people were aware of these monitoring works going on around their villages. Local people were also involved in some of the tanks on Saturday," she said.

Conservator of forests Tirunelveli, Rakesh Kumar Dogra also participated in the monitoring exercise in Kadambankulam and Tuthukuzham of Tuticorin district and spotted around 100 greater flamingos. Commenting on the greater flamingos spotted in Tenkasi region, he opined that they could have migrated from nearby tanks. "We have learnt from the local people that flamingos do visit different tanks but not regularly," he said. Though the flamingos normally prefer tanks nearby seashore areas, they could have visited this Sunderapandiapuram tank in the interior area for food, said M Mathivanan, coordinator of Agasthiamalai based Conservation Centre of ATREE.

The bird-monitoring exercise is yielding positive results and helping in the conservation of the tanks and the winged visitors, Dogra said. "The monthly presence of the department around the water bodies improves conservation. Officials were also instructed to specifically look for any mortality of birds or abnormal behaviour. This activity has definitely improved the protection status of winter visitors to these bird habitats," he said.

The next monitoring is on February 23.

