

TIRUNELVELI,

Farmers net better profit from vegetables under shade-net

Lucrative subsidy available under National Horticulture Mission



Conducive atmosphere: Deputy Director of Horticulture S.Raja Mohamed inspecting the crop grown under shade-net cultivation in Alangulam block, Tirunelveli district.

Small and marginal farmers, hitherto cultivating vegetables under conventional method, have slowly started shifting to shade-net technique for higher yields with premium price, thanks to the lucrative subsidy available under National Horticulture Mission (NHM).

To achieve the goal of reducing yield gaps in important crops like vegetables and flowers through focused interventions like protected cultivation, and to maximize the returns to the farmers, the NHM was being implemented in the district. Thanks to the conducive

agro-climatic conditions like soil temperature, which is best suited for cluster beans, chillies, coriander, etc., farmers in Alangulam block are shifting from conventional cultivation practices to hi-tech methods such as shade-net cultivation for higher yield after being motivated by the Department of Horticulture.

Farmers of Alangulam block prefer cultivation of high yielding variety (PNB) cluster beans and hybrid chillies (Ananya) to the traditional variety, for the yield and the attractive price they get for the crops in Alangulam, Sankarankoil, Tirunelveli markets. Under the NHM, a subsidy of Rs.300 per square metre is being given to farmers to a maximum of 1,000 sq.m. per beneficiary for cultivating vegetables under shade-net.

During 2013 - 2014, shade-nets were established on 4,500 sq.m. area with a subsidy of Rs.13.50 lakh for this component under the NHM, says S. Raja Mohamed, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Tirunelveli.

Progressive farmer R. Somasundaram from Shanmugapuram in Alangulam block, growing cluster beans, says he was growing it on 500 sq.m. under shade-net conditions with fertigation system. He has been harvesting about 150 kg cluster beans twice a week and selling them for about Rs.20 to Rs.25 per kg.

“As of now, I am getting about Rs.10,000 as profit from cluster beans in three months,” Mr. Somasundaram adds.

Vegetable farmers at Shanmugapuram were troubled by peacocks. Since they have switched to shade-net cultivation, the peacocks are kept at bay.

Another farmer, S. Johnson, a hybrid chilli grower from Sivalarkulam, is growing hybrid chilli and coriander on 500 sq.m. under shade-net conditions with sprinkler irrigation. “I’m able to get Rs.1,000 from 20 kg coriander being grown as an intercrop. I am getting Rs.2,000 from hybrid chillies. I am expecting another Rs.4,000 to Rs.6,000 from chilli,” Mr. Johnson says.

The Department of Horticulture has started establishing shade-nets in Keezhapaavor, Kadayam, Tenkasi and Palayamkottai blocks, benefitting seven farmers. “We expect more vegetable growers to join this programme,” Mr. Mohamed added.

VILLUPURAM,

Technical training for farmers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The sugarcane farmers at Moongilpattu underwent training under the Athma Scheme on the technical aspects of pest management and drip irrigation on Sunday.

The training programme was conducted under the aegis of the Rajshree Sugars and Chemicals. They were also initiated into the modern planting aspect and choice of sugarcane varieties.

Conducted under the aegis of Rajshree Sugars and Chemicals, the event taught farmers about the importance of drip irrigation

Compensation: farmers demand change in guidelines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

MLA and officials visit rain-hit villages in Challakere



T. Raghumurthy, MLA, visiting rain-affected areas in Challakere on Sunday.

T. Raghumurthy, Challakere MLA, and officials of Horticulture and Agriculture departments on Sunday visited Chickgondanhalli, Muddapur and Surenhalli villages to inspect the losses incurred by farmers due to heavy rain and gusty winds in the last three days.

The officials noticed that horticulture crops such as banana, sapota and papaya on more than 15 hectares (ha) had been destroyed. They also came across the fact that similar incidents have happened in the taluk in the last one and half months.

The officials said a survey of the damaged crops was on and a report would be sent to the State government for recommending compensation. A similar exercise was carried out last year too.

G.T. Nagaraj, a resident of Chickgondanhalli, told the officials that he had grown 500 banana plants on his four-acre farm and was expecting a good yield.

But the gusty winds on Friday and Saturday destroyed all the plants making it difficult for him to repay the loans.

K.B. Rajanna and Ravindra, farmers, appealed to the officials to change the guidelines for providing compensation for crop loss.

“The compensation given by the government now is only 2 per cent of our total expenditure,” they added.

Zilla panchayat standing committee chairman G.T. Babu Reddy, Assistant Horticulture Officer Pavan and Assistant Agriculture Officer Ramkrishna Reddy were present.

KOCHI,

Pokkali farmers facing shortage of seeds

K.A. MARTIN

With a serious shortage of pokkali paddy seeds looming large, farmers are likely to try out varieties such as Uma and Jyoti, which are better suited to drier conditions.

Puthukkad Joseph, a farmer, said a shortage of the traditional Chettivirippu seeds in the past had forced the farmers' collective in Kombanthuruthu in Ezhupunna panchayat to try out the Jyoti variety quite successfully.

Another reason why farmers are switching to other seed varieties is the purple moor hen menace — a regular feature during the pokkali season.

Purple moor hens thrive in water-logged fields that have tall stalk plants. The traditional pokkali varieties are tall plants, but Uma and Jyoti are semi-tall. The condition was expected to help reduce the attack of the migratory birds, said Mr. Joseph.

However, the shortage of seeds threatens to stamp out the unique rice variety that has been recognised worldwide and enjoys government subsidy of Rs. 10,000 per hectare. A senior scientist at the Rice Research Station of Kerala Agricultural University said a long-term plan was needed to overcome the periodic shortage of pokkali seeds. The Rice Research Station, Vyttila, is currently the hub of efforts to infuse genes that build submergence tolerance and salt resistance into rice varieties such as Jyoti, Jaya and Uma.

Baby Joseph, another farmer, said she had just about 50 kg of seeds salvaged from last season's harvest, which was affected by heavy flooding.

According to a scientist at the Rice Research Station, germination percentage in pokkali seeds is lower than in other varieties because of the time factor involved. A hectare of pokkali field requires 100 kg of seeds against the 80 kg for other varieties.

Meanwhile, acreage under pokkali rice has come down considerably.

MALAPPURAM,

Kudumbasree scales new heights with rice product

STAFF REPORTER



Education Minister P.K. Abdu Rabb launches Thennala Rice, a brand produced by Kudumbasree units of Thennala grama panchayat in Malappuram, on Sunday.

The new rice produced by the Kudumbasree units of Thennala grama panchayat was launched at a function held at Thennala, near Kottakkal, here on Sunday.

Minister for Education P.K. Abdu Rabb launched the rice specially cultivated and packaged by 90-odd farmer groups led by the women of Thennala. The rice brand, Thennala Rice, became an instant hit. Nearly half of the 220 tonnes of the Thennala Rice was sold on the first day itself. Many people have placed orders for the rice. The Kudumbasree women of Thennala cultivated paddy in 240 acres of barren land they took on lease. They cultivated such varieties as Uma, Jyothi, and Aiswarya without using machines. The women got capacity training and training under the Mahila Kisan

Sashakteekaran Pariyojana of the Kudumbasree Mission. With the loans amounting to Rs.70 lakh, the 450-odd women of Thennala could produce 220 tonnes of paddy.

District panchayat president Suhara Mampad presided over the function. Abdurahman Randathani, MLA, inaugurated the Buds Rehabilitation Centre set up by the Kudumbasree. K.B. Valsalakumari, Executive Director, Kudumbasree Mission, made the introductory remarks. She called upon the women to begin fish-farming at Thennala. K. Abdullakutty, Kudumbasree governing body member, inaugurated a Gender Corner set up by the women. Thennala grama panchayat president Matholi Nafeesu welcomed the gathering.

Vengara Block panchayat president Kazhungil Suleika, District Grama Panchayat Presidents Association president C.K.A. Razak, Vengara Block panchayat member M.P. Kunhimoideen, and Thennala panchayat vice-president Ashraf Thennala spoke.

Yasmin Arimbra, chairperson of the Community Development Society, proposed a vote of thanks.

PATHANAMTHITTA,

Palace distributes rice kits to Sabarimala tribes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Pandalam Palace distributes rice kits to Sabarimala tribes

The Pandalam Palace managing committee (PPMC) distributed rice and other essential commodities to nomadic tribes in Sabarimala forests on Saturday.

The PPMC team led by president P.G. Sasi Varma said the initiative was part of its charity venture. Tribespeople of Sabarimala forests were believed to be the mainstay of the army of Lord Ayyappa in his fight against marauders.

The PPMC had decided to extend a helping hand to the descendants of the tribal chieftains of yore in an effort to improve their quality of life and bringing them to the mainstream in a phased manner, Mr. Varma said.

Tribal Extension Officer Sasikumaran Pillai and tribal promoter Sajeesh brought the tribespeople to Chalakkayam, Nilackal, and Plappally. They were provided with a kit comprising rice, wheat flour, sugar, pulses, red chilli, salt, coconut oil, etc., along with a trunk box to keep their clothes, Mr. Varma said.

The outgoing block panchayat president, Benny Puthenparampil, inaugurated the distribution function. Besides the PPMC president, R. Rajaraja Varma, secretary; Deepa Varma, Ambika Varma, Kerala Varma, P. Ravi Varma, all office-bearers; Prasad Kuzhikkala, Thiruvabharanam Path Protection Council general convener; G. Ratheesh, Ravi Kunnackattu, Sabarimala Ayyappa Seva Samajom leaders; P.G. Sasidharan Pillai, Malikappuram Devi Temple administrative committee treasurer, were also present.

Water released from Manimuthar dam for 'kar' paddy irrigation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



Lifeline for farmers: Hindu Religious and Charitable Minister P. Chendur Pandian releasing water from Manimuthar dam in Tirunelveli district on Sunday.

In a bid to fulfil the ritual of water release from a reservoir for 'kar' paddy cultivation on June 1, the discharge of 40 cusecs of water from Manimuthar dam was started on Sunday for the benefit of just 2,756 acres in a few villages close to the reservoir.

Minister for Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments P. Chendur Pandian released water from the dam following a simple 'puja' for the benefit of 2,756 acres of land in Zamin Singampatti, Ayan Singampatti, Vairaavikulam, Ermaalpuram, South Paappaankulam, Moolachchi and South Kallidaikurichi, all hamlets situated close to the dam under Ambasamudram taluk.

For 105 days

The discharge of 40 cusecs of water will be sustained for 105 days.

Though release of water from the dams on June 1 for 'kar' paddy cultivation has been in force for several decades now, the practice was postponed several times in the past whenever the storage level in the reservoirs was precarious.

Since Papanasam dam now has only 49.55 feet of water against the maximum capacity of 143 feet, it was decided to release 40 cusecs of water from Manimuthar dam as storage level in the reservoir was 67 feet on Sunday.

"The quantum of discharge will be increased if storage level in the dam goes up from the present 67 feet following copious influx of water expected after the onset of southwest monsoon," Mr. Chendur Pandian said.

Cheranmahadevi Sub-Collector Rohini Ramdas, MPs K.R.P. Prabhakaran, Vasanthi Murugesan, S. Muthukaruppan and Vijila Sathyananth, Ambasamudram MLA Esakki Subbiah and chairman of Tamil Nadu Housing Board R. Murugaiah Pandian were present.

Wholesale vegetable prices fall steeply

LAKSHI BHATIA

Prices expected to go up post storm



Vegetable sellers seen at Azadpur Mandi, in New Delhi.—Photo: Sushil Kumar Verma

The Azadpur market has witnessed a sharp decline in the wholesale prices of vegetables this summer, when the rates are usually at their highest this time of the year.

This has been good news for the citizens who had been reeling under a spell of high commodity prices over the past few months.

Incidentally, while many have been attributing the fall in prices – which has been to the tune of 50 to 80 per cent in case of vegetables like gourd, lady finger and bitter gourd – to the change in political environment, calling it the “Modi phenomenon”, the farmers have been denying this and are instead calling it a ‘play of nature’.

On the reason behind the fall in prices, primarily ever since the general election had entered its last leg, Ashok, a wholesale trader, said: “The production by and large has been three times more than last year.”

Due to the increased production, the traders said the prices are significantly lower for many of the vegetables like onion, tomato and gourds than what they are around this time of the year.

On how the prices of onion stabilised despite about 40 per cent of the crop being destroyed due to bad weather, Ashok said: “Onion is exported to countries like Pakistan, Colombo, Singapore, Malaysia and Dubai. The exports have come down while the supply has become more regular from Rajasthan, and Pune and Nasik in Maharashtra because of which it is being sold at the rate of 10-14 rupees per kg.”

Similarly, tomato is being sold at low rates of 4 to 5 rupees per kg. On the other hand, potato prices have gone up from Rs.10 to Rs.25 per kg over the last two months.

Another vegetable trader, Lalit, said: “Farmers preferred to grow tomatoes this season in place of other vegetables, hoping to earn more than last year. As such there has been over supply.”

As for the green vegetables, traders insist that the weather has remained favourable and this has resulted in surplus production. Ghiya or gourd is currently selling at Rs.4 per kg in wholesale and has seen a 50 per cent decline; *Karela* or bitter gourd has also come down from Rs.12-15 per kg to Rs.4-7 rupees per kg since last month and lady finger is being sold at Rs.8 per kg.

Parvinder Bhalla, a wholesale trader at Azadpur Mandi, said following recent storms, the prices are expected to go up. “After the storm, prices are expected to shoot up in a week. However, major changes will be noticed in the coming weeks, following monsoon in early June,” he added.

It also emerged that it is the middlemen who are making profits while the farmers continue to toil hard to cover their basic costs.

For their part, the traders also insist that the margins this year have been less due to various counts. One, the prices have reduced and secondly the sales are relatively lower. “The vegetable produce has almost doubled this year in comparison to last year but a significant reduction has been observed in the overall sale. This is primarily due to mixed factors like increased inflow of vegetables produced locally from Panipat, Sonapat, Ghaziabad and Gurgaon, low quantum of exports due to poor quality of produce and a resultant reduction in prices,” said a wholesaler.

KATTAPPANA,

Tamil Nadu opens dam shutters

A CORRESPONDENT



Tamil Nadu opened the shutters of the Mullaperiyar dam on Sunday to make water available for irrigation there.

Minister for Public Works and Finance O. Paneerselvam opened the shutters as per a directive of Chief Minister Jayalalithaa following a request from farmers. The Minister reached the area, along with officials, at 11 a.m. and opened the shutters at a ceremonial function.

The water level in the dam was 113.80 feet. The shutter was opened early this year in anticipation of an early monsoon. Last year, the shutters were opened on June 28 when the level was 124.70 feet. The shutters were downed on February 28.

The early opening of the dam is said to be a follow-up to the recent Supreme Court order, allowing for the raising of the water level from 136 feet to 142 feet. Usually, Tamil Nadu draws water at a level of 200 sq ft per second for four months for irrigating 14,000 hectares in Uthamapalayam, Theni, and Bodi.

NAGERCOIL

79,000 acres to get water from Pechipparai dam

STAFF REPORTER

Around 200 cusecs of water was released from Pechipparai dam for irrigation purposes on Sunday.

The Collector, S. Nagarajan, opened the shutters of the dam formally releasing the water.

The inflow of water into the dam was 191 cusecs. When compared to last year, there was 7 feet more water in the dam this year.

Around 79,000 acres of paddy fields under Kodayar irrigation system could be irrigated with the water from the dam.

The Executive Engineer, PWD (Water Resource Organisation), S.K.Subramani, has appealed to the farmers to make use of water released judiciously to get the maximum yield in the first season.

Meanwhile, the chairman of Kodayar Irrigation Project (Water Resource Organisation), A.Vins Anto has urged the PWD officials to replace damaged shutters in the dam to stop the leakage of around 50 cusecs of water.

Prevent seepage

He also asked the officials to strengthen the bunds of supply channels to prevent the seepage of water for the benefit of farmers and to ensure that water from the dam reaches the farmers in tail-end areas.

Earlier special pujas were performed at Pechiamman temple situated near the dam.

THEKKADI

Water released for first crop in Cumbum valley

STAFF REPORTER

Finance Minister says initially 200 cusecs will be released from Periyar dam for the next 120 days

Water was released from Periyar dam on Sunday for irrigation of the first crop in the double-cropping areas of Cumbum valley.

Releasing water from the dam, Finance Minister O. Panneerselvam said initially 200 cusecs of water would be released from the dam for the next 120 days continuously. A total of 14,707 acres — 11,807 acres in Uthamapalayam, 2,412 acres in Theni and 488 acres in Bodi blocks — would benefit. He appealed to farmers to raise short-term crops and use water judiciously.

Public Works Department engineers said turn system would be introduced if the storage level failed to improve or in case of failure of monsoon.

Collector K.S. Palanisamy, Theni MP R. Parthiban and MLAs A. Lazar and Thangathamizh Selvan and PWD officials accompanied the Minister.

At present, the water level stood at 113.80 feet in Periyar dam with an inflow of 100 cusecs. The combined credit was only 1,860 mcft. Normally, water would be released only when the combined credit was 4,000 mcft, the officials said.

Hope on monsoon

But the PWD officials and the farmers hoped that the Southwest monsoon would improve the storage level in the coming months to maintain the discharge for the first crop till harvesting without any hassles.

Despite poor storage, the PWD officials released water from the dam last year, and the farmers raised seedlings and did transplantation in the entire valley.

With the sudden failure of monsoon and depletion of storage, the PWD officials could not supply water for irrigation continuously last year. Standing paddy crops on only 5,000 acres out of the 14,707 acres were protected till harvesting, and the crop in the rest of the areas completely withered last year.

Brushing aside the appeals of the farmers, the PWD officials had refused to release water from the dam on June 13, 2013, as the level was below 114 feet.

The storage level in Vaigai dam was not also very encouraging.

The sudden summer rain helped improve the level from the dead storage. The present storage level in Vaigai dam was sufficient only to meet the drinking water needs of Andipatti-Sedapatti Drinking Water Projects, Madurai city and the hamlets in southern districts, the officials added.

WATER LEVEL

Madurai

The water level in Vaigai dam stood at 32.19 feet with an inflow of 24 cusecs and a discharge of 40 cusecs. There was no rainfall recorded during the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday, PWD officials here said.

TIRUNELVELI,

The water level in Papanasam Dam on Sunday stood at 49.55 feet. The dam had an inflow of 17.70 cusecs and a discharge of 206.75 cusecs.

The level in Manimuthar Dam stood at 67.39 feet. The dam had an inflow of 3 cusecs and a discharge of 40 cusecs.

Kanyakumari

The water level in Pechipparai dam stood at 21.60 feet, 46 feet in Perunchani, 7.94 feet in Chittar I, 8.03 feet in Chittar II, 6 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in Mamabazhathuraiyaru dam.

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Sunny

Monday, Jun 2

Max Min

35° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 38

Sunset: 06:31

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1001

Tomorrow's Forecast



Sunny

Tuesday, Jun 3

Max Min

34° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

Jun 4



39° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Thursday

Jun 5



38° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Friday

Jun 6



35° | 29°

Sunny

Saturday

Jun 7



35° | 30°

Sunny

Sunday

Jun 8



34° | 29°

Sunny

Airport Weather

Chennai

Chennai

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 75

Sunset: 06:32

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1005



Vegetable oil may cool on excess supply



Flaking mill, Roller, CHINA - Flaking mill, flaker, flaking roller 50-2000T/D, 20 years in China

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Palm and other oils are currently fighting for market share as their aggregate output is up

June 1, 2014:

The global vegetable oil market is at the crossroads. The short-term fundamentals are weak, with consumption lagging behind production and stocks rising at the origins.

Prices seem to have no upside in the next two-three quarters because of anticipated rebound in production of palm oil as well as major oil bearing crops in the northern hemisphere.

Large crops of soyabean, rapeseed and sunseed are expected to be harvested by September 2014.

However, the key to market direction in 2015 will be El Nino, the weather phenomenon that triggers acute dry conditions in South-East Asia and lower-than-normal monsoon rains in India.

Palm and other oils are currently fighting for market share as production of all oils has been rising.

Palm oil is usually quoted at a price discount to soft oils and is therefore able to garner a bigger share of trade.

However, the usual average differential of \$150 a tonne between palm and soft oils has currently narrowed to about \$80/t with abundant availability of the latter.

This narrow price spread means consumers have a choice and substitution is happening at the expense of palm oil.

Risk factors

Going forward, the biggest downside risk to palm prices is a potentially bumper crop of soyabean in the US in the coming months, over and above large supplies currently available from Brazil and Argentina.

It is evident that the edible oil industry is oversupplied at present.

With demand conditions remaining weak, an aggressive build-up of palm oil inventories at the origins — Indonesia and Malaysia — may be nearly unavoidable.

To regain market share, palm oil prices will have to be adjusted down relative to other oils. Crude palm oil is currently traded at Ringgit Malaysia 2,500 a tonne and has the

potential to fall by 5-6 per cent in the next quarter. At the same time, the biggest upside risk to palm oil prices is El Nino.

The weather phenomenon has not struck yet; but experts assert it could strike sometime in the second half of this year.

Again, the timing and intensity of El Nino will determine palm oil production growth prospects but the impact will be felt only next year.

So, in the current scenario of looming oversupply of edible oils and weaker demand (summer season in the northern hemisphere usually slows vegetable oil consumption growth), prices will have to correct lower in the near term despite the threat of El Nino, which will impact production later in 2015.

India picture

An interesting feature is that whenever El Nino strikes South-East Asia, North America enjoys excellent weather conditions that boost spring-planted crops.

India is the market everyone is watching. Import volumes have clearly slowed down in recent months.

The first six months of oil year (November 2013 to April 2014) saw arrivals aggregate to 50.7 lakh tonnes versus 51.4 lakh tonnes during the corresponding period in the previous year.

The share of palm group of oils has declined to 37 lakh tonnes versus 43 lakh tonnes in the previous year while the share of soft oils (mainly soya and sun oils) has increased sharply.

India has, of course, harvested a large crop of groundnut in kharif season and rapeseed in rabi season.

It is highly likely that Indian importers are waiting for further price correction in palm oil before making large-scale purchase commitments to meet the festival demand that should kick in by August.

Softer palm oil prices and a firming rupee (making imports less expensive) make up a good mix for Indian consumers. The onset and progress of the south-west monsoon will also have a bearing on edible oil prices.

Business Standard

Chana up 1.1% on good demand



Chana prices rose by 1.17% to Rs 2,855 per quintal in futures trade today as traders enlarged their holdings driven by rising demand in spot markets.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange, chana for June delivery rose by Rs 33, or 1.17%, to Rs 2,855 per quintal, with an open interest for 92,170 lots.

Similarly, chana for delivery in July increased by Rs 32, or 1.11%, to Rs 2,918 per quintal, with an open interest of 1,08,490 lots.

Traders said the rise in chana prices at futures trade was mostly on the back of fresh positions created by speculators supported by rising demand in the spot mark

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Take urgent step for payment of dues to sugarcane farmers: HC

Allahabad High Court today asked the Uttar Pradesh government to take "immediate" action for ensuring payment of dues, running into thousands of crores, to sugarcane farmers in the state.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice Dilip Gupta, passing the order on a petition also asked the state government to "persuade" sugar mill owners for payment of dues to farmers at the earliest and ordered that the state's Cane Commissioner shall be held accountable in the event of "breach of the court order".

The Public Interest Litigation was filed by Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan.

It was alleged in the PIL that several farmers in the state have been driven to suicide as the process of recovery of loans given to sugarcane growers was being initiated, even though the cultivators were unable to get their dues from the mill-owners who were allegedly "hand-in-glove" with government officials.

Vegetable prices decrease, Congress calls it political conspiracy

The prices of vegetables in the city are once again decreasing soon after the completion of the general elections. Similar trend was observed during the assembly polls when rates were reeling high but reduced after results were declared. Traders have attributed this price decrease to rise in supply and Congress has termed it as a political conspiracy.

Onions, which were selling at Rs 30 per kilo (retail) before May 16 came down to Rs 15 per kg in a week's time. On Saturday, onions sold in the wholesale market at Muhana Mandi for Rs 8 per kg. Similarly, prices of seasonal vegetables like spinach and carrot have come down by Rs 10-15 per kg from the earlier price of Rs 30-40 per kg.

Tomatoes, which were selling for anything between Rs 50-60 per kg, are now available for Rs 25 per kg in the retail market. Just a month ago, potatoes were selling at Rs 50 a kg

and are now available for Rs 15-20 per kg in the retail market.

The issue of decreasing prices has not gone down well with the Congress party. "Increase in the vegetable prices was one of the strongest issues used by BJP to woo the voters during their election campaign. But suddenly it came down after the elections. This is something that needs to be probed," said former CM Ashok Gehlot after losing the assembly polls.

A senior leader of Congress reiterated the stand of Gehlot and said, "The trend suggests that there is a link. It certainly needs to be analyzed and proper action should be taken against those engaged in hoarding and black-marketing."

"New crop has started coming from states like Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. This has led to reduction in prices. Also vegetables from the local farms are available," said Radhey Shyam Phatak, president, Wholesaler Dealer Association.

He refused of any link with the elections and added, "Earlier the vegetables faced the brunt of erratic weather, which led to delay in the normal supply. Due to less availability in the market the rates shoot up. This may even happen now as soaring temperature will reduce the production."

Post a comment

Cultivation to start in three districts as reservoirs open

In a few days hundreds of acres in three southern districts in the state would commence agricultural activities.

Water from Periyar, Manimuthar and Pechiparai reservoirs were released on Sunday to facilitate short-term kuruvai cultivation in about 93,000 acres in three districts. While Periyar reservoir would irrigate 14,707 acres of land in the Cumbum valley of Theni

district, Manimuthar would irrigate 2,756 acres in Tirunelveli and Pechiparai about 79,000 acres in Kanyakumari district. Chief minister J Jayalalithaa had ordered the release of the water a few days ago. Agricultural activities are likely to commence in the next few days as water would reach the plains.

State finance minister O Panneerselvam pressed the switches to open the sluice gates of Periyar reservoir on Sunday morning. Special pujas were performed near the sluice gate and flower petals were sprinkled in the water before the release. A number of farmers from the region too participated in the function. Farmers in the Cumbum valley are buoyant as the water release comes after the Supreme Court judgement upholding the rights of Tamil Nadu in increasing water level to 142 feet in the dam. Water would be released from the reservoir at the rate of 200 cusecs for the next 120 days. Theni collector K S Palanichamy said that 11,807 acres would be irrigated in Uthamapalayam taluk, while 2,412 acres would be irrigated in Theni and 488 acres in Bodi. He urged the farmers to make judicious use of the water to reap a good harvest. For the last three years, water could not be released on the scheduled date of June 1 due to abysmal storage in the reservoir. Farmers say that early release of water was essential for a good harvest.

From Pechiparai reservoir 200 cusecs of water was released by Kanyakumari collector S Nagarajan. While irrigation tanks in much of the southern districts remain dry, Kanyakumari presents a contrast as most of its tanks have water. So water would be released according to the demand in the coming days, said PWD officials.

Mango prices go up as supply from Andhra dips

The inflow of mangoes to the Gandhi Market and the fruit market at Amma Mandapam is lower over last year. Subsequently, most mango varieties are sold at prices 10% more than last year. However, one has to wait for one more month to pick the popular mangoes varieties from outside the state as currently the local varieties dominate the market.

Wholesale traders at Gandhi Market said prices have inched up due to declining output. "The market had received at least 200 vehicles carrying a load of about 40-50 bags of mangoes from Andhra Pradesh and other districts in TN by this time last year. Now, we are managing with the local produce from Thuvrankurichi and Senthamangalam," said Hakim S of Vanilla Wholesale and Retail.

On Sunday, only 50 vehicles came with loads of mangoes, though most of them were mini-trucks carrying produce from the groves in several parts of Trichy district. These include fruits of outside varieties grown locally. Hakim further added that the mangoes coming from the local markets are available throughout the year. It is only during summer more varieties are seen in the market, but this year there are fewer varieties, he noted.

Kannan S, another wholesale vendor, said the quantity of mangoes in the market is 40% lower than it was during the same time last year. Poor rain affected the healthy growth of trees and hence the subsequent fall in output. "Arrival of mangoes from other states in another three weeks will slightly bring down the price," he said.

Prices of all varieties of mangoes have gone up over last year. Imam Pasand, which is regarded as the king among mangoes, has good demand though it is quoted at Rs 90 to Rs 100 per kg in the wholesale market. Vendors are hopeful that arrival of more mangoes may cool the prices in the days to come.

MP creates record, clocks 24.99% agricultural growth rate

Madhya Pradesh has created a record by posting the highest ever agricultural growth rate. As per advance figures for 2013-14 released by Central Statistics Organization (CSO), the state has clocked a 24.99 per cent agriculture growth rate. This includes animal husbandry sector.

Madhya Pradesh was bestowed the prestigious Krishi Karman Award by government of India for last two years in a row in recognition of its outstanding performance in agriculture sector. This rate was 20.16 per cent in 2012-13 and 19.85 per cent in 2011-12 in the state.

In farm sector in base year 2004-05 the income from GDP was Rs 31238.30 crore which rose to Rs 69249.89 crore in 2013-14 representing a 121 per cent increase compared to the base year.

As per the advance estimate figures of CSO, Madhya Pradesh registered 11.08 GSDP growth at constant prices in year 2013-14, which is the highest in major states. GSDP of Madhya Pradesh in base year 2004-05 was Rs 112926.89 crore which increased to Rs 238526.47 crore in 2013-14.

The state has clocked over 350 per cent increase in per capita income. In year 2004-05 on current prices the per capita income of the state was Rs 15,442 and this increased to Rs 54030 in 2013-14.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Madhya Pradesh registers record agriculture growth at 24.99% in 2013-14



Madhya Pradesh registered a record growth at 24.99 per cent in FY 2013-14 in the agriculture sector, including animal husbandry.

The agriculture growth rate was 20.16 per cent in 2012-13 and 19.85 per cent in 2011-12 in the state, according to an official release issued today.

"Madhya Pradesh has created history by posting the highest ever agricultural growth rate. As per the advance figures for 2013-14 released by Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the state has clocked a 24.99 per cent agriculture growth rate including in animal husbandry sector," the release said.

Because of continuous record growth in the agriculture sector, the state has been bestowed with the prestigious "Krishi Karman Award" by the government of India for the last two years in a row, it said.

The wheat production was 73.27 lakh tonnes in 2004-05, which increased to 193 lakh tonnes in 2013-14. Similarly, soybean production has increased from 37.60 lakh tonnes to 50 lakh tonnes during the period. Rice production increased from 13.09 lakh tonnes in 2004-05 to 69.50 lakh tonnes now.

The area under these crops was 104.80 lakh hectare which has risen to 140.15 lakh tonnes now, representing a 34 per cent increase, according to the release.

THE  NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

Agriculture: Make Every Farm Wired for Information Technology

Over the last 10 years, governments have been making efforts to take welfare to the doorstep of every individual in need of it. For example, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme tries to provide employment to every farm worker. The Public Distribution System supplies basic food items to every needy family through fair price shops. The Aadhaar scheme provides an ID to every individual. Similarly, why can't we use our information technology capability to deliver actionable expert advice to every farm and track every pond/tank? Current developments in information technology enable us to build cost-effective knowledge delivery systems for each farm. By disseminating information on the best practices in agriculture management, storage and marketing to every farm in India, it is possible to produce export-quality farm products while securing food security and conserving our soil and water. Accordingly, our policy should aim at handholding every farm and farmer and help him/her to extract more profitability from his investment.

The birth of a separate state of Telangana affords us a unique opportunity to build rewarding linkages between agriculture — the mainstay of our economy but presently in a state of difficulty — and information technology, a sector in which we have developed impressive capabilities in the 15 years or so. Such a linkage would provide a very desirable momentum to the new state's economy.

Another important departure we must make lies in the area of performance metrics, the method by which we measure the efficacy of our policies and schemes in agriculture. All existing systems measure performance based on the number of stakeholders who benefit without relating it to the total number of stakeholders. The performance metric for any scheme should be about the percentage of stakeholders covered. For example, the

performance of an insurance system should not be measured in terms of the number of farmers insured. It should be measured as the ratio of the number of farmers insured to the total number of farmers.

Here are some problems and opportunities and the solutions for Telangana's agriculture.

Problem Area: Quality Seed Production

Currently, seed is not produced in sufficient quantities to meet demands of farmers. Spurious seed companies are dominating the market. New varietal research should be taken up as a top priority. By providing the appropriate seed to every poor and marginal farmer, crop failure and low productivity/income risk can be mitigated to a significant extent.

Recommendations

1 Initiate new research on agroclimatic region-specific varieties.

1 Produce sufficient seed.

1 Ensure that seed reaches all farmers.

Opportunity: Use IT to Deliver Scientific Advice to Farms

Poor and marginal farmers are not getting the maximum yield due to unscientific practices. Scientific agriculture advice is crucial for efficient crop production. By providing scientific advice to farms at regular intervals, it is possible to improve productivity significantly. Each farmer should be helped to use best practices. It is thus possible to produce the crop products with export quality by conserving natural resources.

Recommendation

Deliver actionable agricultural knowledge to every farm. The eSagu model built at the IIIT Hyderabad aims at providing actionable agricultural knowledge to farms based on photographs sent by farmers. The eSagu model can be replicated across Telangana.

Problem area: Crop insurance

Currently farmers are dissatisfied with the crop insurance schemes and the sampling procedures adopted for settling claims. Often, genuine farmers' do not get insurance benefits and are pushed into a crisis. By exploiting developments in IT, it is possible to track every farm. If insurance is decided on the basis of individual farms, risks can be mitigated.

Recommendation

Develop and implement a farm-specific insurance to mitigate risks. Farmer gets the claim if unexpected failure occurs.

Opportunity: Toddy research centre

The toddy palm provides livelihood to a significant number of families in Telangana. Without wasting any time, a research centre should be set up to investigate new varieties of toddy palm, and preservation and marketing of palm produce.

Recommendations

1 A research centre should be started for the Palmera (toddy) family which will investigate efficient seed, production, distribution and marketing.

1 Develop Palmera-based cropping zones and utilizing problematic soils (such as sodic, saline and alkaline soils and rainfed regions).

Opportunity: Pig farming

There are a significant number of families which depend on pig farming in every village in Telangana. Currently, pigs randomly wander in the villages, make the surroundings dirty and spread diseases. By propagating professional piggery, these families can lead a sustainable life in addition to contributing to food/nutritional security.

Recommendations

1 Identifying interested farmers in every village.

1 Encourage professional pig farming

1 Connect to export markets

Problem: Respectability for agriculture

Our youth are losing interest in agriculture. They have a feeling that it is an insult to be in the farming profession. For example, youth are not interested in picking up agriculture practices from their parents.

Recommendations

1 Take up a massive social sensitising programme to make agriculture a primary profession.

1 Modify high-school/intermediate/degree syllabi by linking agriculture and allied activities.

1 In the cities, create a mechanism for interested individuals to cultivate vegetables by getting a small developed land on lease.

Opportunity: More agriculture colleges

Being a state dependent on agricultural, it makes sense for Telangana to have more agriculture colleges than engineering colleges. The question is how to provide employment to agriculture graduates. Taking the analogy of medicine, we should encourage agriculture consultancy.

Recommendations

1 Start about 100 agriculture degree colleges during the next five years and 10 agriculture universities.

1 Ensure that pesticide shops sell pesticides on prescription from certified agriculture expert.

Problem: drudgery in Agriculture

Agriculture is labour-intensive. It is important to encourage the design of robust and cost-effective agriculture machinery.

Recommendation

Ensure a robust, small, farmer-friendly machines from sowing to harvesting are available.

Opportunity: Recover and manage every tank

Tanks are vital natural water resources in Telangana. Delineate the existing tanks and ensure that they are filled regularly. Also, manage tanks by desilting and enriching farm land.

Recommendations

1 Recover, fill, manage tanks

1 Construct new tanks

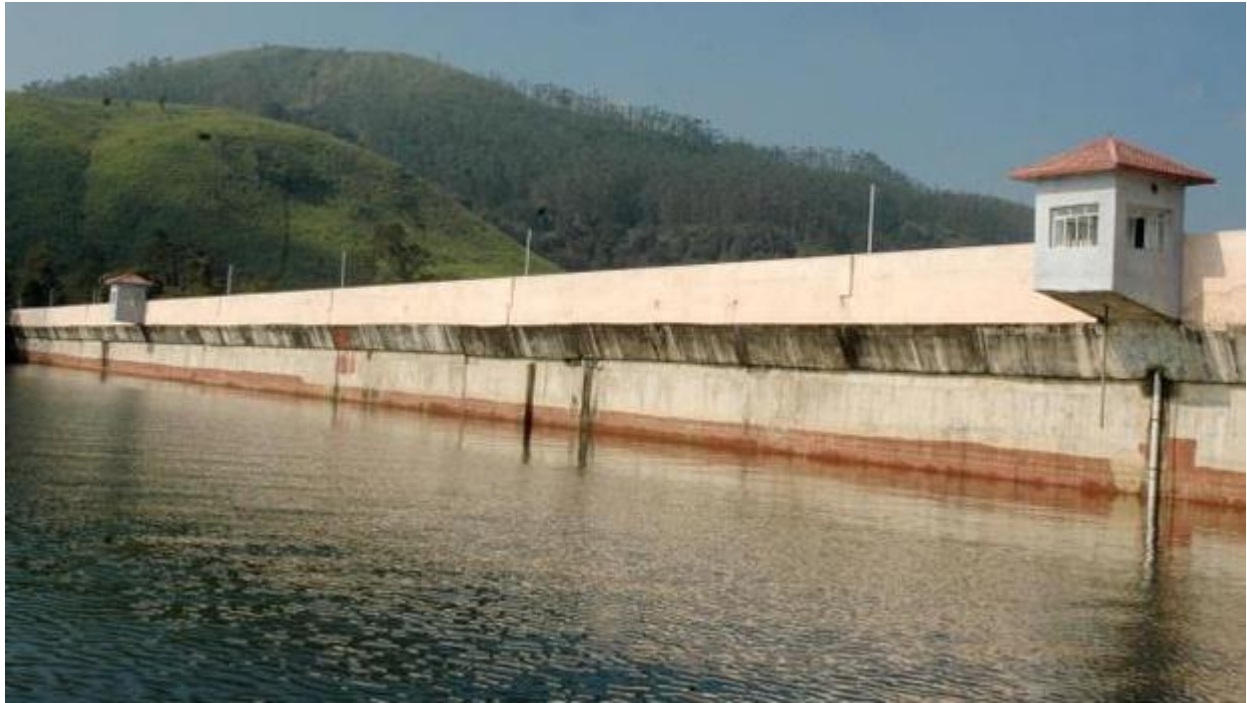
Problem: Encourage sustainable crop

During the year, based on resource availability several kinds of agricultural production systems are possible. Research should be carried out to identify potential crop production systems.

Recommendation

Encourage sustainable crop production systems by identifying opportunities for every family which are ecologically sound and economically viable by encouraging agro-forestry.

Mullaperiyar: TN Starts Drawing Water



KUMILY: Tamil Nadu on Sunday started using water from Mullaperiyar dam, for the irrigation of different areas in the state, following complaints from farmers about water shortage to irrigate their land. The water would be used for irrigating areas in Uthamapalayam, Theni and Bodinaikanur in the adjoining Theni district.

A total of 14,707 acres of paddy field will be cultivated using this water.

Tamil Nadu Finance and PWD Minister O Panneerselvam opened the shutter at Thekkady entrance gate to allow water to flow through Tamil Nadu for the second phase of irrigation in the state.

Newly-elected R Parthipan MP from Theni and Theni District Collector Pazhaniswami attended the function.

Paddy cultivation in this region of Tamil Nadu is wilting owing to poor rainfall and the farmers had given petition to the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister seeking water for irrigation. At present, the water level in Mullaperiyar dam is 113.80 ft. The inflow of water into

dam is 100 cubic feet per second while Tamil Nadu has decided to release 200 cubic feet water for four months.