

Farmers' parliament held

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University recently held a farmers' parliament to receive farmers' ideas, suggestions and opinions to provide inputs for the preparation of the Union Budget and the 12th Five Year Plan.

A release says that the University grouped farmers based on agro-climatic zones and held an interactive session to draw their attention on various aspects of agriculture that should find a mention in the budget.

Vice-Chancellor K. Ramasamy said that the farmers' inputs would also help the State Government reach its aim of doubling production and tripling farmers' income.

K.A. Ponnusamy, Director of Extension Education, welcomed the gathering and said that the meeting was the first of its kind. M. Chandrasekaran, Director, Planning and Monitoring, said that the farmers should give their suggestions on inputs, production technologies, post-harvest technologies and marketing aspects.

M. Chinnadurai, Director, Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development, spoke on budget preparation.

The release adds that the University will submit the farmers' inputs to the State and Central governments for their consideration.

Rain in The Nilgiris brings cheer to Erode farmers

Rain in The Nilgiris has brought joy to farmers in Erode district. Since surplus water from the hydel reservoirs in The Nilgiris flows into the Bhavani Sagar Dam, farmers are

hopeful that the storage position will be comfortable by mid-August when water is usually released for cultivation in the Samba season.

Compared to 1,139 mcft at the same time last year, the storage on Sunday at the Bhavani Sagar Dam was recorded as 3,504 mcft.

There was inflow of 637, 567 and 521 cusecs for three consecutive days last week. And on Saturday, the Dam area received rainfall of 12.1 mm.

The discharge from the Dam is being maintained at 155 cusecs: 150 cusecs into the Bhavani River and 5 cusecs into the Lower Bhavani Project

Canal.

Last year, owing to abundant rainfall in The Nilgiris during July-August, surplus water from the hydel reservoirs was let into the Bhavani Sagar Dam.

At the time of water release during August 2013, the Dam had a capacity of 18,663 cubic feet. Farmers here anticipate the utility of the Southwest monsoon to be the same as last year.

Of the Bhavani Sagar Dam's 2, 47,247 acres ayacut area, 2.07 lakh acres are in Lower Bhavani Project area. While 24,504 acres are irrigated by Thadapalli Arakankottai channel, the remaining area is covered by the Kalingarayan channel.

Though paddy continues to be the main crop for Samba season, in recent years, farmers have been increasing the acreage of turmeric cultivation due to better return on investment.

The Agriculture Department has a plan of action to enhance productivity of paddy crop by promoting the System of Rice Intensification method of cultivation early on, sources said.

Take up turkey rearing, farmers told



Turkey rearing provides an assured income and should be taken up as part of integrated farming activity.

The Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University has taken up several initiatives for hassle-free rearing of turkey, said T.J. Harikrishnan, Registrar of the TANUVAS, holding additional charge as its Vice-Chancellor.

Speaking at the valediction of training on “turkey rearing” organised as part of silver jubilee celebrations at TANUVAS regional research centre here on Saturday, Dr. Harikrishnan said the release of oral pellet vaccine by TANUVAS to prevent the incidence of ranikhet disease was a revolution in the area of cattle health.

He pointed out that deficiency in minerals was posing a major problem to the growth of livestock. He appealed to farmers to utilise mineral mixture which supplemented deficiency.

The mixture, he said, contained minerals including zinc, calcium, phosphorous, and manganese.

Dr. Harikrishnan gave away seven turkeys to each of the 25 trainees and released a booklet on turkey rearing.

M. Babu, Director, Centre for Animal Production Studies, TANUVAS, spoke on the positive impact of oral pellet vaccines on the health of the livestock. The fodder grown on various fields lacked some mineral or other but the mineral mixture compensated the deficiency. He distributed pellets to the trainees for ensuring proper health care of turkeys.

K.M. Shajehan, project director of Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) which sponsored the training, distributed concentrated fodder seed of 50 kg to each trainee. He said the seeds would be sufficient for rearing the growth of turkeys for the next few months.

P.N. Richard Jagatheesan, professor and head of the Regional Research Centre, said each trainee had been given four female and three male turkeys.

The birds which were four months old would fetch revenue after two months from August.

Each egg fetched a revenue of Rs. 7 for consumption and Rs. 25 for hatching.

The per kg meat would fetch a revenue of Rs. 300. The bird was much sought after during the 'Deepavali' season, he added. While the female bird fetched 4.5 kg of meat, the male weighed about 6 kg.

The regional research centre has currently taken up a programme on conservation of 'Ramnad white' a sheep species whose population was on the wane.

Farmers' grievances day meet postponed

The monthly farmers grievances day meeting will be held on May 29, Thursday, instead of May 30, Friday, as announced earlier, said a press release issued here by N.Subbaiyan, District Collector, here on Sunday. The meeting has been advanced due to administrative reasons, the Collector said in a press release. Farmers should register their names between 8.30 a.m. and 10 a.m. to speak in the meeting. Two persons out of those who registered their names will be allowed to speak from each taluk. — Special Correspondent

Bitter gourd cultivation sweetens farmer's life



Bitter gourd cultivation in a modified form has sweetened the life of an aged farmer. He used to toil hard in his farm in a rain-shadow region of the district under a scorching sun for a modest income from field crops.

The magic wand that transformed the life of K. Pasupathi at Mesiapuram near Melaneelithanallur is the 'pandal' cultivation programme that was introduced in 2012 with an attractive subsidy under National Agriculture Development Programme.

Under the scheme, small and marginal farmers receive 50 per cent subsidy to the maximum of Rs. 2 lakh per hectare for erecting 'pandal' with a view to increase the yield.

The farmer can also get 100 per cent subsidy for setting up drip irrigation facility.

Enticed by the lucrative subsidy, Mr. Pasupathi cultivated bitter gourd on 1.25 acres in his farm and received a subsidy of Rs. 1 lakh from the Horticulture Department during 2013-14.

"I used to get an yield of six tonnes and a net profit of Rs. 40,000 from other crops with limited water sources. But, through 'pandal' cultivation with drip and fertigation techniques, I have so far earned Rs. 70,000 from seven tonnes of bitter gourd in five harvests in 70 days. I am expecting another Rs. 80,000 from the remaining harvests in about 50 days," Mr. Pasupathi says.

On seeing his yields and earnings, other farmers in the area have switched over to bitter gourd cultivation with 'pandal' by getting the subsidy under this scheme.

S. Raja Mohamed, Deputy Director of Horticulture, Tirunelveli, says horticultural crops, compared to field crops, offer better returns. The district received Rs. 10 lakh to cover 10 hectares under the programme for promoting 'pandal' cultivation alone during 2013-14.

Need less water

Crops, such as bitter gourd, raised under 'pandal' required minimum water for irrigation.

"Since this revolutionary approach has increased productivity per unit area, vegetable production in the district has gone up substantially. Mesiapuram has become the cluster village for 'pandal' cultivation. Seven farmers have turned to 'pandal' cultivation of bitter gourd," Mr. Mohamed said.

Give share in toll to farmers: BSP

M. Krishnamurthy, leader of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), has welcomed the Union Ministry of Surface Transport's decision to upgrade the existing Bangalore-Mysore highway to a National Highway.

20 per cent share

However, addressing a press conference here on Saturday, he urged authorities to give 20 per cent of the toll collected to farmers, who would be losing their land for the project.

The National Highways authorities should give a share of the toll to these farmers, he said.

Implement projects

He also requested the State and Union governments to implement the projects proposed to increase the groundwater levels in the State. Venkatesh, Suresh, Dinesh, Swamy, Thammaiah and others were present.

A look at farmers' issues, up-close



They conducted a participatory appraisal after visiting farmers' houses in the Sulthan Bathery grama panchayat and an assessment of the resources of the community.

These 96 final-semester B.Sc. Agriculture (Honours) students, including 21 boys and 75 girls, of the College of Agriculture, Vellayani, under the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), are attending Polika-2014. The 10-day village stay programme being organised by the CAV, in association with the Sulthan Bathery grama panchayat, enables the students to learn about various issues of the farming community in Wayanad district.

The programme aims at providing the students a first-hand experience of the grassroots-level issues of the farmers and training them to address those issues effectively, A. Anilkumar, professor in the Department of Agriculture (Extension), KAU, told *The Hindu* .

A.J. Al Unais, a final-semester student and publicity convener of the programme, said various programmes, including house visits, seminars, classes by experts, and exhibition, were being held in connection with the programme.

O.R. Unnikuttan a student of the CAV said, dearth of labourers, climatic vagaries, spread of crop diseases, lack of interest in agriculture among the youth owing to low returns, sharp decline in area of cultivation after the intervention of the real-estate mafia, lack of modern technology, escalating man-animal conflicts, and marketing issues were the major concerns of the farming community.

“When we visited tribal colonies in the area, tribeswomen complained about the alcohol addiction of the men in their colonies,” V.G. Dhanya, another student, said.

Lack of drinking water, poor sanitation facilities, and malnutrition among the tribal children were the other issues faced by the community, she said.

The issues identified by the students would be handed over to the district panchayat authorities at the valedictory of the programme to be held on Wednesday, Dr. Anilkumar said.

‘Amend Act to protect landless farmers’

The Mysore Unit of the Karnataka Prantha Raitha Sangha has urged the government to bring in amendments to the Karnataka Land Reforms Act so that landless farmers, who have been cultivating ‘gomala’ (pastural land), forest land and government land, be allowed to continue cultivation.

Farmers who had been cultivating such land should not be evacuated, it said. K. Basavaraju, secretary of the Prantha Raitha Sangha has in a statement here today said he had information that farmers who had been cultivating gomala or forest land for many years had been evacuated forcibly in many places across the State, including Mysore and Davangere. He added that it was “inhuman” to evacuate such farmers.

The sangha has taken up a drive from Monday in Mysore district to create awareness among such farmers and give them moral support.

During the drive, farmers will be educated about the existing enactment to support their cause, and motivate them to protest if government officials try to evacuate them.

He added that the government should come forward to safeguard the interests of tribal people living in forests, as per the Forest Rights Act, 2006. The awareness drive would commence from Hunsur on Monday and culminate at the Deputy Commissioner’s office in Mysore city on June 2.

10-day training in marine ornamental fish farming

The Mandapam regional centre of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) is organising a 10-day national training programme on “Marine ornamental fish

breeding and aquaculture management technologies” for the benefit of entrepreneurs engaged in marine ornamental fish farming.

Giving details of the training programme, Scientist in-charge G. Gopakumar said the 10-day programme from May 28 would focus on breeding and production of a dozen indigenous species, which commanded demand in the international market, and marine aquarium technologies.

The training programme would be inaugurated by CMFRI Director A. Gopalakrishnan and about 25 entrepreneurs engaged in marine ornamental fish breeding from various parts of the country had registered themselves for the training, he said.

He said the global demand for marine ornamental fishes was expanding as the marine aquaculture was getting a lot of attention. “As the temperate countries depend on the tropical countries for marine ornamental fish, the export market is very lucrative,” he said.

On the controversies surrounding the wild collection of marine ornamental fishes from coral reef habitations, Mr. Gopakumar said there could be sustainable exploitation and green-certified collection methods for wild collection too without disturbing the coral reef eco system.

“As it (marine ornamental fish trade) is variety-oriented, development of breeding technologies for a few species will not suffice when we venture into the export market,” he said, adding development of breeding technologies was also not easy for marine ornamental fish species.

There could be accepted and eco-friendly methods for wild collection of the species from coral reef habitations and the same could be certified by agencies such as the Marine Aquaculture Council (MAC), Marine Products Exports Development Agency (MPEDA)

or the CMFRI, he suggested. India could have a tie-up with the MAC for the certification, he added.

“This is a combination of certified wild collection and hatching, and countries like India could emerge as a leader in the export market as green-certified species were much preferred in the international market,” he said.

Presently, marine ornamental fish collection was totally unorganised. It was better to make it organised by conducting training programme in wild collection in coral reef-rich areas of Andaman and Nicobar islands, Gulf of Mannar and Gulf of Kutch. “Sustainable exploitation is possible,” Mr. Gopakumar asserted.

Training programme on ornamental fish breeding

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Two-day Kodaikanal flower show attracts tourists in thousands

Thousands of tourists thronged Bryant Park here on Sunday to witness the two day-flower show. The salubrious climate and cloud-capped hills enthralled the tourists on the first day of the show.

Children have got a plenty of opportunities to enjoy themselves in the park. For the first time, play equipment were commissioned within the park campus. A horse doll made of yellow roses, an elephant made of white roses and another doll made of multi-coloured flowers attracted the young and the old alike. Amidst heavy downpour, the multi-coloured flowers stood out as special attraction.

The display of flowers and vegetables was, however, very limited at this year's flower show compared to the previous year's show. Giant-size pumpkins, mega-size raddish, cabbage, cauliflower, ash guard and yam were missing this year. Giant-size banana and big mangoes and medium-size cauliflower and radish alone have been displayed.

Beautiful carvings on beetroot, carrot, pumpkin, radish, papaya and water melon drew large crowds. Competitors said the growth of vegetables was not as expected this year owing to the acute drought condition.

However, a tank in the park was an eyesore owing to poor maintenance. Horticulture Department officials had converted empty land into a flower garden this year. The glasshouse too has rare plants, including cactus varieties. No stalls were set up at the function venue to maintain it as a litter-free zone.

With no proper direction, tourists struggled to reach shops selling eatables outside. A trader said the lease amount per shop was Rs.3,500 for two days, but tourists could not easily locate the shops, they added.

There were good crowds in the lake area. Cycling, boating and horse riding entertained the young tourists.

A large number of vehicles were stranded at Moonjikkal junction and on prime roads owing to a traffic snarl on Sunday, and traffic police had a tough time regulating traffic.

A sports meet and a cultural show have also been organised to attract tourists as part of the 10-day summer festival which will conclude on June 3.

Summer fails to lift sale of tender coconuts



Mercury levels are soaring in the city with every passing day but dealers trading in tender coconuts are not sporting smiles. Usually, there is a heavy demand for tender coconut water during summer season but many traders inform that demand is not encouraging this season for different reasons.

There is not much of activity at Sambamurthy Road, Kankipadu, Poranki and other areas, which are hubs for outlets that deal in wholesale business of tender coconuts in the city.

It has been a good harvest this year and in anticipation of high sales, farmers from Bheemavaram, Amalapuram, Rajahmundry, Ambajipeta, Razole, Narsapuram and other areas in West and East Godavari districts are flooding the market with fresh stocks. This

is leading to high supply and low demand scenario, says K.V. Subramanyam of Sri Karthik Tender Coconuts at Sambamurthy Road.

“Everyday we get three truck loads of stock from Rajahmundry and there are not many retail takers as stocks are remaining unsold at the outlets for a few days,” he explains.

Last year, traders offered 100 tender coconuts for Rs.1,100 in wholesale market. This year too the same price is being continued and this shows there is less demand in the market due to high supply, adds Narayana Murthy, another trader.

Consumption of tender coconut water is declining every year as people are preferring soft drinks and other energy drinks.

Changing lifestyles are also casting an impact on the sales, except for elderly people and patients, not many prefer to drink coconut water these days, he claims.

However, the price for a tender coconut in most retail outlets costs is Rs.15.

“We need to pay rent for stalls, labour salaries, transportation costs have gone up. Forget about profits, most of us would be happy if we don’t end up in losses,” says Ramesh, a retail stall owner at Patamata.

There is not much of activity at Sambamurthy Road, Kankipadu, Poranki and other areas, which are hubs for outlets that deal in wholesale business of tender coconuts in the city.

Tea growers face the heat as prices dip



The sudden fall in the prices of green tea leaves has put small-scale tea growers in a crisis in the prime season beginning with the summer rain.

The factories of main tea estates, the sole agencies that procure green tea leaves, are collecting the leaves at Rs.6 to 7 a kg as against the previous price of Rs.16 a kg. There are an estimated 12,000 small-scale tea growers who provide tea leaves to the factories. The factories sometimes reject the leaves, leaving farmers with no other option but to abandon the plucked leaves.

Small-scale Tea Growers Federation State chairman Y.C. Stephen told *The Hindu* that there were a number of farmers in areas such as Calvery Mount, Upputhara, Kunjithanny and Bison Valley.

In areas where there were no procuring agencies, the farmers themselves transported the leaves to the factories. If the transportation got delayed, the bundle would become unfit for use.

He said that had the three factories proposed for small-scale tea growers in the Idukki Package were set up, it would have come as a solution to their woes. Even if the leaves were rejected by the factories, the farmers had to pluck the leaves in time to maintain the plants.

P.P. Mathew, a farmer at Upputhara, said they got the highest yield in the two plucking after the summer rain. If a farmer got 500-kg yield in the two plucking after the summer rain, the entire yield during the year might not cross more than twice that. Farmers usually plucked leaves by hand every 15 days and if it was machine cutting, it would take 40 days for the next yield, he said.

Njanasikhamani, a farmer at Valardi, said the farmers had to suffer losses if the tea leaves were sold to distant factories as they had to bear the transportation cost.

Shiby, a farmer at Thankamani, said the factories kept the rate at as low as Rs.3 a kg while the prices of tea dust remained high, he said.

Mr. Stephen said farmers did not get financial aid for natural calamities as growing tea came under the Industries Department. He said the small-scale tea growers should be brought under the Agriculture Department and a minimum price should be ensured for the green leaves.

Popularise goat milk: Minister

Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Animal Husbandry T.B. Jayachandra on Sunday said goat milk had higher nutrients compared with other varieties of milk and called upon veterinary surgeons and farm staff to popularise it.

“I prefer to consume goat milk. Whenever I go to villages, particularly in my constituency, I prefer to drink goat milk. Goat milk has the highest medicinal value,” he said after the inauguration of a conference of veterinarians here. A paper presented by R. Jayashree, assistant professor, and S.N. Harish, doctoral scholar, Veterinary College, Hebbal, here, said India ranks first in the world in goat milk production and the milk had the highest nutrient content.

India produces 4 million tonnes of goat milk followed by Bangladesh (2.17 million tonnes), Sudan (1.47 million tonnes) and Pakistan (0.70 million tonnes). The global goat population was about 921 million, including 570 breeds, the papers said.

300 kg of stale meat seized in Kochi



About 300 kg of stale chicken and other meat was seized from the Kaloor slaughterhouse on Sunday morning in a joint operation by the city police, Health, and Food Safety departments.

Police found the meat, suspected to be more than a week old, stored in several crates packed with ice at a chicken and meat stall. Ravi, 45, of Thammanam, who operated the stall, and two employees Shekhar, 24, of Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu, and Moosa, 25, of Thenkashi in Tamil Nadu, were arrested. Police are on the lookout for the stall owner, Khalid of Karukappally.

The stale meat was allegedly procured from various hotels in the city. “Big hotels do not use chicken pieces with plenty of bones. The stall operators procure the meat thrown out by them and sell it here,” said a police officer. While chicken outside costs around Rs.120

per kg, the accused allegedly sold it for between Rs.30 to Rs.60 to individuals and small hotel and food stall owners, police said.

Police also suspect that the accused may have mixed the stale meat with fresh chicken and sold them to customers. Health officials said stinking meat could cause various health problems to consumers. The Food Safety department submitted a report on the matter and the North police have registered a case against the accused. The seized meat will be tested by Food Safety officials.

In a similar operation, the Kochi Corporation's health squad had seized 1,000 kg of rotten 'tsunami' meat from a vendor at Edakochi in September last year. The meat was allegedly being supplied to hotels across the city and outside.

The police suspect that the accused may have mixed the stale meat with fresh chicken and sold them to customers.

Water level

Mettur dam

The water level in the Mettur Dam stood at 36.74 feet on Sunday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 2,398 cusecs and the discharge, 500 cusecs.

TIRUNELVELI

Water level in the Papanasam dam on Sunday stood at 51.55 feet (permissible level is 143 feet). The dam had an inflow of 72.92 cusecs and 200 cusecs was discharged from the dam. The level of the Manimuthar dam stood at 67.67 feet (118 feet). The dam had an inflow of five cusecs and there was no discharge.

Kanyakumari

The level in the Pechipparai dam stood at 27.70 feet, 45.65 feet in Perunchani, 7.94 feet in Chittar 1, 8.03 feet in Chittar 11, 6 feet in Poigai and 54.12 feet in the Mamabazathuraiyaru dam.

MADURAI

The water level in Periyar dam stood at 114 feet with an inflow and a discharge of 100 cusecs each. The level in Vaigai dam was 32.78 feet with an inflow of 13 cusecs and a discharge of 40 cusecs. The combined storage in Periyar credit was 1,412 mcft.

Andipatti and Kodaikanal received one mm of rainfall each during the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m. on Sunday, PWD officials here said.

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Cloudy

Monday, May 26

Max Min

35° | 28°

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 71

Sunset: 06:30

Wind: normal

Barometer: 1006

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, May 27

Max Min

40° | 29°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday

May 28



39° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Thursday

May 29



38° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Friday

May 30



40° | 28°

Sunny

Saturday

May 31



40° | 28°

Partly Cloudy

Sunday

Jun 1



39° | 28°

Sunny

Airport Weather

Chennai

Chennai

Rain: 0

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 71

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Wind: normal

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THE HINDU BusinessLine

Supply shortfall to sweeten sugar



After a prolonged bear market, world sugar prices may be set to bottom out this year. To start with, supply may be lower this year. The world sugar market is likely to move into deficit this year after three successive seasons of surplus.

While many agricultural crops — grains and softs — are facing the threat of El Nino, the sugar market is likely to be the most sensitive to this weather phenomenon. Already,

surpluses of the last three years and consequent low prices (16-18 cents a pound) have resulted in an increase in demand.

Dry conditions in the last three months in the world's largest sugar producer and exporter Brazil can lead to lower supplies. Similarly, if the forecast of a below-normal monsoon for India turns true, this too can hurt cane yields and sugar production. This adverse combination in the world's top two sugar producers can result in firmer sugar prices. Dry conditions in Thailand and South-East Asia may also limit cane harvest in these regions. Possible El Nino-induced losses in India and tight credit availability in the former Soviet Union can impact prices too.

On the bourses, prices have already risen by 8-10 per cent since the beginning of the year, primarily driven by the Brazil factor.

On the demand side, strong appetite for fuels in Brazil will result in increase in usage. But while Brazil may see good growth in domestic demand, the export outlook isn't bright as the US looks set to harvest a large corn crop. This will help it to maximise its own ethanol production and rely less on imports from Brazil.

If Brazil's production holds, though, ethanol demand will drive prices.

Overall, the global sugar market is likely to be ranged 17-19 cents/lb with prices testing the lower end when cane crushing accelerates in Brazil. Prices can break out upwards in the second half of the year if El Nino strikes and production is affected in India. In that event, Brazil will have to play a larger role in the world sugar market. The price outlook till the end of the third quarter does not look bullish on current reckoning.

India factor

Clearly, India is the swing factor in the global sugar market. Whether India is an exporter or an importer determines the market outlook and price direction.

For 2014-15, India's sugarcane production target is 345 million tonnes compared with the 348 million tonnes in 2013-14. However, there are ominous portends.

The risk that actual cane harvest may fall short of the target is real. Slightly lower production and rising consumption is sure to result in tightening of stock and firming prices. Sugar has been a political commodity in India for long years. How the new Government treats the sector remains to be seen.

Mixed trend at Kochi tea sale

A mixed trend persisted for almost all varieties of tea at the Kochi tea auction with the prices quoting lower. In Sale No. 21, the quantity on offer in CTC dust grade was 11,27,000 kg.

With a fair demand, the market for select best remained barely steady. Others were irregular and lower by ₹3 to ₹5 and sometimes more following quality. However, Black Medium and Plainer PD and RD sold around last levels.

Orthodox grade

Arrivals of Orthodox grade stood at 10,000 kg, up against last week. The market for primary grade was steady, while others were irregular and lower. A small quantity of Orthodox dust was absorbed by exporters, auctioneers Forbes, Ewart & Figgis said.

In the best CTC dust, PD grade fetched ₹99/118, RD varieties quoted ₹100/125, SRD ruled at ₹115/141, while SFD stood at ₹115/152.

Leaf sale also witnessed a mixed trend and the quantity on offer in orthodox grade was 1,42,500 kg. The market for Nilgiri broken and whole leaf was irregular and depreciated in value by ₹5 to ₹10 and sometimes more. There was also some withdrawals. Fannings from the same origin was dearer.

CTC grade

The quantity on offer in CTC grade was 50,500 kg. The market for good liquoring teas was firm to dearer. Others were irregular and lower.

In the dust category, Injipara (Prm) SFD quoted the best prices of ₹156 followed by Injipara (Prm) RD at ₹155. In the leaf varieties, Chamraj Green FOP (S) fetched the best prices of ₹307 followed by Pascoes Woodlands Hyson Green Tea at ₹286.

Business Standard

Wheat procurement in Haryana up 11% to 64.83 lakh tonnes

Wheat procurement in Haryana rose 11% to 64.83 lakh tonnes (MT) during the current procurement season.

Wheat purchase stood at 58.66 lakh MT during the corresponding period last year.

The government agencies have procured 64.80 lakh MT of wheat whereas 2,788 MT of wheat has been purchased by traders, said an official of the Food and Supplies Department.

He said HAFED has purchased the highest -- 25.12 lakh MT of wheat -- followed by over 17.95 lakh MT purchased by Food and Supplies Department.

Similarly, Agro Industries Corporation has purchased over 5.76 lakh MT, Haryana Warehousing Corporation (over 6.34 lakh MT), CONFED (over 1.62 lakh MT) and Food Corporation of India had procured over 7.99 lakh MT of wheat during the current procurement season so far

The Telegraph

calcutta, india

Tips for farmers to fight weeds, pests

Agri varsity forecasts good monsoon

Ranchi, May 25: The Birsa Agriculture University (BAU) has predicted a few spells of pre-monsoon rain in coming weeks and asked farmers to gear up for ploughing.

“The rain is coming, be prepared,” said D.N. Singh, chief scientist (rice), BAU, in a special advisory to farmers across the state.

“With summer temperatures crossing the 40 degree mark across the state, good days cannot be far behind. The rain is coming, though for a short stint. As soon as it rains, make good use of the water. Take out your tractors and ploughs, and irrespective of the type — lowland or highland — go in for deep ploughing, at least two-three times to destroy weeds, pests and diseases buried under the soils,” the advisory further adds.

The BAU advisory is being relayed to farmers through 23 Krishi Vigyan Kendras spread across the 24 districts and three BAU zonal research stations in Dumka, Chiyanki of Palamau and Jamshedpur of East Singhbhum district.

Even if it rains, the pre-monsoon showers may drag down the mercury for a few days only, and the temperatures will soon return to the 40 mark. Then what is the logic behind advising ploughing now?

According to Singh, weeds compete with crops for space, nutrients, water and light, damaging them during the early growth stages. This apart, weeds host pests and diseases that damage the crops. Deep ploughing not only cuts the weeds’ roots but also exposes

the soil to the intense heat of the sun.

Temperatures around 40 degrees and above will kill the weeds, destroy pests and diseases furrowed deep inside the soil in a natural way.

“Instead of being afraid of the heat, farmers need to make use of the high daytime temperatures for reaping a bumper harvest and to improve the quality of the output,” Singh explained.

He added weed and pest control from the time of sowing to harvesting was a costly affair, comprising at least 25-30 per cent of the total cost of cultivation.

“It can be minimised by deep ploughing,” he added.

Once ploughing is done, farmers must leave the fields and wait for the monsoon.

“We are also telling farmers that the monsoon rains are expected to be normal this year. Last year, it was delayed but was more than 105 per cent of the normal, which resulted in a bumper harvest. This year too it will not be an exception,” he predicted.

But farmers have been asked to not irrigate fields to undertake deep ploughing, it will shoot up cost.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Japan to taste Kashipur mangoes

Mangoes from Odisha are all set to make a foray into Japan market next week after making a successful entry into Bangladesh earlier this month. Besides, for the first time the state will send jackfruits to markets outside the state on Sunday.

"Kashipur in Rayagada district was infamous for famished people eating poisonous mango kernels leading to deaths. But this year we are going to export mango from

Kashipur to Japan," said agriculture minister Pradeep Maharathy. He was speaking at the inauguration of annual state-level fruit festival here on Saturday.

According to sources, last year mango was cultivated in 600 hectare in Kashipur while this year mango plantation was carried out in around 1,200 hectare. "The Amrapalli variety of mango is harvested from Kashipur. Due to Rayagada's climate, the crop is harvested later than other parts of the state. So when inflow of mangoes to the market reduces, these mangoes will make their entry resulting in good business," said horticulture director Sanjib Chadha, adding, every day around 2,000 kg of mango from Odisha are being sent to North India.

At the three-day fruit festival, as many as 2,853 specimens of fruits were on display and 392 were preserved food products. Besides mangoes, 27 other varieties of summer fruits, including jackfruit, banana, stone apple, wood apple, guava, orange, lemon, berries, 'aonla' and 'sapeta', were on display at the festival.

Speaking on the occasion, chief minister Naveen Patnaik said, "I have been promoting agriculture as a profitable profession. We have to create cold chain facility in all blocks to reduce post harvest loss and ensure better market linkage to farmers."

Odisha produces about 21.48 lakh metric tonne fruits from 3.25 lakh hectare. Principal agriculture secretary Rajesh Verma said, "The aim of the festival is to bring people, government and scientists together so that they can see local fruits and their products.

25% fall likely in mango yield this year

The king of fruits has arrived in the city this season with its king-size price tag. Buffeted by either unseasonal or deficient rain in the fruit-growing regions, mangoes are beyond the reach of aam aadmi. In some instances, the price has almost doubled and the yield, too, has declined, including its size.

The entire mango belt of the state, including Darbhanga, Bhagalpur, Vaishali, Samastipur, Purnia and Saharsa, are hit hard by the lack of mango showers or northwesterlies and prolonged extreme summer conditions right from the month of April to May.

A kilogram of Bombay and Gulab Khas varieties of mangoes, said to be the first available variety in the market, is selling at Rs75-80 at Boring Road, Income-Tax roundabout and Kadamkuan. The income-tax outlets are selling the same at Rs 90 to 100. Sources at Bazaar Samiti said the price of Bombay and Gulab Khas varieties have almost doubled in a year.

Bihar gets exotic varieties from Patna, Bhagalpur, Darbhanga, West Champaran, Vaishali and Samastipur. "In 2013, some 15 lakh metric tonnes of mangoes flew off the shelf. This time, we've just about 12 lakh metric tonnes produce," said horticulture deputy director Nitesh Kumar Rai.

State horticulture department sources said the volume of mango crop has dropped by 25% this year. Patna's expectation of a good yield of 'Dudhia Malda' this year was badly hit by dry heat and nil rainfall. "Some 40% of the yield is damaged in intense heat," said Prabhakar, a farmer who looks after the sprawling Digha mango grove.

'Jardaloo' and 'Chausa', as they are called in Bhagalpur, are normally once-in-two-years unique yield. That, perhaps, explains why the bigger variety is sold at Rs 80-100/kg and the medium ones at Rs 50-Rs70 a dozen. The fruit is produced in 12,000 hectares of the district which is home to at least 5 more varieties, including Mallika, Gulab Khas, Prabha Shankar, Kishanbhog and Himsagar.

A Hajipur-based farmer Dhananjay Sah, who owns a huge orchard near Lalganj, said,

"Last year, we had 85% of the total expected yield, but this time we are expecting only 60% of the expected yield. Nevertheless, the fruit size has also been reduced due to lack of summer or pre-monsoon showers in April-May. Even the fruit quality has been hit due to deficient rain in the crucial months. One or two showers can ensure a quality crop yield."

In a near-arid Darbhanga and West Champaran, the mango crop largely depends on rain. The horticulture deputy director said over 2.6 lakh tonnes of crop are expected from 10,000 hectare land. This year, it's going to be a lot less. The shortfall is so acute that fruit-sellers are looking to procure mangoes from neighbouring states like UP and Maharashtra.



Govt Formulates Aquaculture Policy to Promote Self-reliance in Fish Farming

Though Kerala is leading in the production and export of fish, aqua farming in the interior parts of the state has not grown proportionate to its potential, said Fisheries Minister K Babu.

He was speaking after inaugurating the one-day workshop organised in connection with the formulation of an aquaculture policy, at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here on Saturday.

The minister said that the policy is being formulated for making the state self-sustainable in the field of fish farming.

As part of the initiative, the government has decided to open more larva rearing centres and to increase production at the existing centres.

The minister said that the government's 'Matsya Samridhi' project, implemented through local self-governing bodies in the interior areas, was a huge success.

In the first phase, the project was launched in 787 panchayats where production increased from 1.5 tonne to 2.8 tonne, with the involvement of 56,000 farmers. In the second phase, the project was extended to 906 panchayats and 64,000 farmers were included.

“The government’s aim is to exploit all the possibilities of fish farming in the state so as to increase production and make fish available to the public at low prices,” he said.

At the workshop, a 12-member aquafarming committee that was constituted for policy formulation submitted its draft policy.

Establishing model aquaculture farms at district-level, entrusting the right to cultivate fish in public water bodies with the Fisheries Department and setting up of multi-species larva rearing centres are some of the suggestions in the draft policy.

Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) Vice-Chancellor B Madusoodana Kurup, Pro-Vice-Chancellor C Mohan Kumar, Fisheries director Mini Antony, research students and farmers’ representatives took part in the seminar.

Rotten Chicken Confiscated at Kaloor Market



Around 300 kilos of rancid chicken meat was seized at the Kaloor market by the police and food safety officials on Sunday. The shadow police arrested three persons with the

assistance of Ernakulam North police who allegedly sold rotten chicken at rock bottom prices. The meat was sold at a shop called Bismillah Chicken and Fish Centre owned by Khalid.

The arrested have been identified as Ravi (45) of Thammanam, Ibrahim Moosa (25) of Tenkasi and Shekhar (24) of Sivakasi. The police are on the lookout for the owner, Khalid of Karukappally. The shop was managed by Ravi.

According to Anant Lal, sub-inspector, special branch, the weeks' old meat was supplied from two popular hotels in the city.

“The accused were selling the meat for ` 35 to ` 60 per kilo and the customers were not aware of the staleness of the meat. The police will also investigate if the meat was sold to small hotels and wayside eateries. Mixing rotten meat with fresh meat usually goes unnoticed and fetches a good profit. The rotten meat raised such a great stink in the area”, he said. Police sources suspect that the foul meat might have been supplied to roadside eateries which is generally served as chicken parts and also finds its way into the cutlets and puffs in bakeries. The chicken meat was neatly cut and stacked in cold storage in four to five bins. Each bin contained meat weighing around 40 kilos.

Food Safety assistant commissioner V K Beena, Veterinary doctor Acty George and health inspector Benny arrived at the spot later to inspect the meat thoroughly to determine its condition.

After the preliminary examination, the food safety officials confirmed that the meat was weeks' old and deemed unsuitable for human consumption.

The Ernakulam North police have registered a case based on the report submitted by the food safety officials. The police have charged the three under Section 328 which clearly states that whoever administers to or causes to be taken by any person any poison or any stupefying, intoxicating or unwholesome drug, or other thing with intent to cause hurt to such person, or with intent to commit or to facilitate the commission of an offense or

knowing it to be likely that he will thereby cause hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment.

Meanwhile, the meat traders in the market converged at the spot coming to the rescue of the accused and to protest against the media coverage on the issue and alleged that some media was wrongly interpreting the news. A long argument ensued between meat traders and the media personnel before a growing crowd.

Kunju Mohammed, Meat workers INTUC district president, alleged that the media was distorting the news.

“This meat was purchased by the traders from hotels for selling it to the people who own pets. It is really unfortunate that the media is misleading people with false news. Moreover, this will affect our business very badly and ruin our daily living”, he said.