

DATE:22.11.2014

THE HINDU

Project to restore fertility of alkaline soil



A student of TNAU-Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Centre in Tiruchi showing the damaged paddy crop. — Photo: A. Muralitharan

The Tamil Nadu Agriculture University's Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute near here has taken up a research project on using spent-wash, a distillery effluent, in reclaiming alkaline fields in Manikandam block in the district.

The block accounts for 50,000 hectares of alkaline soil and the college was started 25 years ago for evolving suitable rice varieties. In fact, the institute is located at Navalur Kuttapattu village in the block with salt-affected soil in about 100 acres.

The Institute's Department of Soil Science has set up two plots, and paddy is being cultivated on one of the plots which has been reclaimed with the help of spent-wash. "The first plot has been registering excellent growth while alkalinity hinders the crop in the second plot," says P.Balasubramaniam, Head, Department of Soil Science. Explaining the procedure to be adopted for preparing the alkaline fields before raising paddy, P.Pandiyarajan, dean of the

college, said the spent-wash should be used only once and should not be repeated during successive seasons.

The scientists said that field should be properly ploughed before and after using spent-wash. The process enables to bring down alkaline content, enhances the pH level, and enriches soil fertility resulting in better growth of paddy.

Inform officials about hoarding of fertilizers'

Farmers in Vellore have been asked to inform the Agriculture Department if they come across irregularities in the sale of fertilisers or if fertilisers were hoarded and sold for higher prices

Contact information

In such circumstances, the Assistant Director (Quality Control), Agriculture Department can be informed on his mobile phone number – 94431 04780, according to Joint Director of Agriculture, Vellore R. Jayasundar.

After receiving 597 metric tonnes of urea last week, the district received another batch of urea on Thursday. A total of 2,600 metric tonnes of urea reached the Katpadi Railway Station for distribution to various districts, said a press release.

Of this, Villupuram will get 500 metric tonnes, Tiruvannamalai 1,000 metric tonnes, Kancheepuram 200 metric tonnes, Tiruvallur 400 metric tonnes and Vellore 500 metric tonnes. Meanwhile, samples have been lifted from the stock and sent for testing.

Of the total requirement of 3,180 metric tonnes of urea this month, Vellore has received 3,147 metric tonnes so far. This is being sold to farmers through private fertiliser outlets and cooperative societies.

Next week, another 1,000 metric tonnes of urea will be supplied to the district.

Stock

As of now, the district has a stock of 1,786 metric tonnes of the fertiliser. Currently, cooperative sale outlets have a stock of 559 metric tonnes of urea, 281 metric tonnes of DAP, 78 metric tonnes of MOP and 497 metric tonnes of Complex fertilisers.

Similarly, private fertiliser outlets have 727 metric tonnes of urea, 425 metric tonnes of DAP, 489 metric tonnes of MOP and 823 metric tonnes of Complex fertilisers, the release added.

Mr. Jayasundar, who along with officials of the department inspected the stock on arrival, said the government is taking steps early to ensure availability of fertilises to prevent shortage in supply for farmers.

*Assistant Director (Quality Control), Agriculture Dept.
can be reached
at 94431 04780*

Pineapple farmers in trouble as prices hit new low

Flood of oranges in fruits market, onset of winter in north India help lower prices



Farmers cite flood of oranges in the fruits market and onset of winter in north India as the major reasons for the fall in prices of pineapple.

Pineapple farmers in the State are reeling under an unprecedented price fall. The best of Vazhakkulam pineapple is now selling for Rs.14 a kg (A grade raw fruit) in the wholesale market. Farmers say that unless they realise Rs.18–20 a kg for the fruit, their finances will take a big blow.

The onset of the winter in northern India, heavy rains in upcountry cities and towns and the flood of oranges in the fruits market this season are instrumental in bringing down the prices so drastically. According to Pineapple Farmers' Association president Jose Kalappura, increased production was one of the other reasons for the fall in prices. He said that production was higher by about 10 per cent this season.

Higher production is reflected in the market arrivals going up to about 1,200 tonnes a day.

A member of the Pineapple Farmers' Association said that northern India had been experiencing heavy rains since cyclone Hudhud hit the East Coast, cooling demand for fruits in general. Pineapple from Kerala is exported to Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai in large quantities, he added.

"With production costs so high, prices have never fallen so low," said Baby John, a farmer in Moovattupuzha.

He said that prices had been falling continuously for about a month-and-a-half now with little intervention from State agencies entrusted with the task of supporting farmers in times of trouble.

However, Mr. Kalappura said that Vazhakkulam Agro and Fruit Processing Company, a government enterprise engaged in processing pineapple and other fruits, had promised to procure pineapple from farmers at Rs.18 a kg. The company was expected to start its procurement drive within a fortnight, he said.

Tail-end area farmers want water to save samba crop

Steps will be taken to fill all 168 tanks, says PWD



S.Ganesh, District Collector, advised farmers to insure their crops at the farmers' grievances day meeting held in Pudukottai on Friday.

Farmers of tail-end areas of the Grand Anicut canal ayacut have urged the district administration to ensure adequate supply of water to save the standing 'samba' crop.

Raising the issue at the monthly farmers' grievances day meeting held here on Friday, a cross section of the farmers also wanted all the tanks to be filled up through assured supply in the canal.

Initiating the discussion, M.Madhavan, district secretary, Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, said the district did not receive adequate rainfall over the past few weeks. The suspension of water release from the Mettur Dam on account of rains in the delta region had resulted in the poor realisation of waters, he said. An official from the Public Works Department assured that steps would be taken to fill all 168 tanks.

G.S.Dhanapathy, district chairman, Farmers' Forum of India, said that steps should be taken for interlinking the Cauvery and Kunder rivers. Appavu Balandar, a farmer, said that district administration should take steps for removing 'karuvel' trees from tanks.

When Arunodhayan, a farmer, pleaded for extending the deadline for insuring the crop, K.V.S. Kumar, Joint Registrar of Cooperative

Societies, said the State government had already been apprised of the farmers' demand in this regard.

S.Ganesh, District Collector, who presided over the meeting, said that 1,427 tonnes of DAP, 577 tonnes of urea, and 1,589 tonnes of potash had been stocked at cooperative societies and private shops for timely supply to farmers. Against the normal 829.40 mm of rain for the 11 months till November this year, the district has registered only 606 mm this year. He appealed to 'samba' farmers to utilise the crop insurance scheme to protect their crop.

International Centre for Land use and Bio-resources mooted

Indo-Swiss research unit proposed at Pondicherry University

An Indo-Swiss centre devoted to basic and applied research on sustainable land use and management of bio-resources is proposed at the Pondicherry University.

The proposed International Centre for Land Use and Bio-resources (ICLUB) envisages a multidisciplinary role as a nodal centre to undertake research that is relevant in a nation where gaps in food security persist in spite of agriculture being the livelihood for two-thirds of the population most of whom are small are marginal farmers.

The proposed centre would work in close collaboration with Puducherry Government, especially the departments of Agriculture and Fisheries to reach out to the farming society of Puducherry.

According to University officials, two premier Swiss institutions, the University of Basel and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Frick, have agreed to collaborate and ink MoU to set up a state-of-the-art research centre.

"The MoU formulation is in process and is due to be signed soon," said Prof. N. Sakthivel who heads the Department of Biotechnology.

The broad focus of the centre would be to develop innovative sustainable and organic solutions in agriculture, he said.

The idea for an Indo-Swiss research centre was mooted during discussions Prof. Chandra Krishnamurthy, Vice-Chancellor,

Pondicherry University, had with Swiss collaborators during a recent visit to Switzerland.

The proposal was formalised at a recent stakeholder consultation hosted by the Pondicherry University under the Indo-Swiss Collaboration in Biotechnology (ISCB) with a focus on 'bio-fertilization' and 'bio-irrigation' for sustainable mixed cropping of pigeon pea and finger millet.

The ISCB is a long-standing and well-established research and development programme, jointly funded and steered by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Government of Switzerland.

The overall goal of ISCB is to contribute towards food security in the Indian context through innovative life sciences and biotechnology approaches, supporting sustainable and climate resilient agriculture.

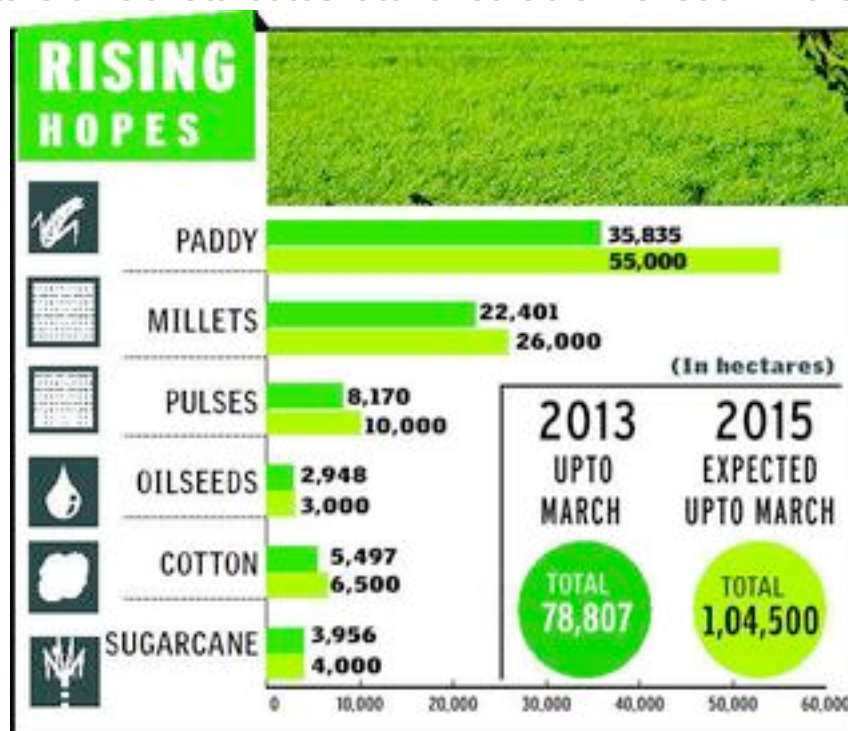
The BIOFI network comprises five Swiss institutions and six Indian institutions, including Pondicherry University.

The network has been advocating a combination of bio-fertilization and bio-irrigation as a novel biotechnological approach with a particularly high promise for stable, sustainable yield increases, even under conditions of drought. The goal of the BIOFI network is to deliver a 'package' of carefully selected plant cultivars and biofertilizer strains, together with the know-how of mixed cropping.

- *Proposal formalised at a recent stakeholder consultation hosted by the Pondicherry varsity*
- *Proposed centre will work in close collaboration with the departments of Agriculture and Fisheries*

Area under cultivation expected to grow

Agriculture official attributes it to favourable monsoon in the district



More area is expected to come under cultivation in the district by March 2015 when compared to last year, Department of Agriculture has predicted.

While paddy was cultivated in 35,835 hectares last year, the prediction for 2014-15 indicates that nearly 55,000 hectares of land will come under paddy cultivation by March.

“We see a rise in land under cultivation because the monsoon has been favourable in the district. While the total rainfall received in 2013 was 615.72 mm, as of November 7 this year the district has received 666.92 mm,” Jaisingh Gnanadurai, Joint Director of Agriculture, said.

While the prediction for cultivation of paddy, millets, pulses, oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane for March 2015 is high when compared to March 2014, the area under cultivation till October remains low.

While the area under paddy cultivation in October 2013 was 17,329 hectares, the figure for October 2014 stands at 10,877 hectares.

“Many farmers in Melur, Kottampatti and Tirumangalam are yet to start paddy cultivation since they are expecting more rains and

waiting for the tanks to fill up. But with the storage in Mullaperiyar dam nearing 142 feet, many farmers in the Periyar ayacut in Melur have commenced farm activities,” Mr. Jaisingh said.

A production target of 3.16 million tonnes has been fixed for paddy cultivated in an area of 62,100 hectares. While a production target of 1.36 million tonnes has been fixed for millets raised in an area of 62,700 hectares, the target for pulses in 10,893 hectares is 8,474 million tonnes.

‘Sirukizhangu’ grows to be farmer’s choice

who cultivated ‘Sirukizhangu’ on his field at Manthiyoor village near Kadayam.

With good rainfall, cultivation of Sirukizhangu (*Coleus parviflorus*), also known as Chinese potato, has yielded the desired results for the farmers of Ambasamudram taluk in the district. Since Sirukizhangu became the choicest horticultural crop among farmers of Kadayam, Ambasamudram and Pappakudi blocks, its cultivation increased considerably over the last year. This year, the area under cultivation of this crop has gone up to an extent of 300 hectares, whereas it was only 160 ha during the last year, according to Deputy Director of Horticulture S. Raja Mohammed, Tirunelveli.

Conducive agroclimatic conditions, especially red sandy soil with good drainage, water resources, photoperiodic response and positive activation of tuber development, humid warm weather during the vegetative phase with cool and dry weather during tuber development period, have all together contributed to the success. “It is a herbaceous annual crop, spreading or prostrate with succulent stem. Unlike other tuber crops, this is a transplanted vegetable. The tubers are rich source of carbohydrate. The African-origin plant is also grown in India, Sri Lanka and along the Indo-China border. The optimum temperature for the growth and development ranges from 25 to 30 degree Celsius,” he said. A well drained loamy soil health condition with a pH range of 5.5 to 7 would be ideal for the tuberization. Tubers could be harvested in five months after planting, he told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

Farmers of these blocks preferred this 180-day crop, since it required less water when compared to other crops. Moreover, the farmers were also content with a better market price at Alangulam and Pavoorchathram.

S. Gomathinayagam, a successful farmer of Manthiyur village, Kadayam block, said he was harvesting the crop cultivated on two acres during late April and expecting about 14 to 15 tonnes of yield. "The crop fetches a good price of Rs. 26 per kilo at the Pavoorchatram market. About 60 to 70 kilograms of tubers are being sold daily."

Farmers seek separate budget for agriculture at State, national levels

It is expected to go a long way in augmenting food production



Seeking a solution:N. Perumal, a progressive farmer of Puliyanurichi, explains his views at the farmers' grievances meeting, in Salem on Friday.- PHOTO: E. LAKSHMI NARAYANAN

The farmers' representatives who participated in the monthly farmers grievances day meeting held here on Friday made a forceful plea for a separate budget for agriculture, both at the state and national level.

C. Vaiyapuri, president, United Farmers Association of Tamil Nadu, who set the ball rolling, said that a ruling BJP MP, while speaking in the Lok Sabha recently, had demanded a separate budget for agriculture.

The MP had also demanded priority for organic farming. His demand was totally justified and the government should come forward to present a separate budget for agriculture, which will go a long way in augmenting food production. His demand was supported by other farmers.

N. Perumal of Puliyanurichi condemned the decision of Karnataka to construct two new dams across river Cauvery. He pleaded for a resolution urging Karnataka Government to do away with this move.

He said that plantain crop had been affected by some disease and pleaded with the agriculture department to take effective steps to check the same.

Mr. Perumal said that the TANGEDCO is announcing monthly load shedding for undertaking maintenance work on the week days. This affected the works in the government offices, banks etc.

S. Govindarajan of Ammanpalayam said that the agriculture department was giving figures of widespread rainfall in the district in the recent past. In reality, the district has got very minimum rainfall. Many parts of the district are reeling under severe drought conditions.

Providing exaggerated figures on rainfall received will harm the farming community, as the government may refuse to implement drought relief measures citing good monsoon.

A. R. Shanmugam of Panaimarathupatti and S. Jayaraman of Abinayam supported the view of Mr. Govindaraj.

Even while the Deputy Director of Agriculture clarified that he was only mentioning the figures provided by the Meteorological Department, K. Maharabushanam, Collector, said that 64 system tanks and their water sources were renovated in all the 16 blocks in the district under the MNREGS. But only one system tank had received adequate water in the recent rainfall.

Mr. Govindaraj expressed serious concern at the falling price of tapioca. Last year the tapioca farmers got bumper crop. But this year it is totally opposite. The price of tapioca has fallen drastically from Rs. 430 to Rs. 210 per point. The situation will only worsen if this trend continued for another month. In a similar situation in the early 1990s, the then Central regime intervened and procured

tapioca from the farmers and stored it in its cold storages. It marketed the same when price increases. Similar arrangement should be made this time too, he added. Mr. Jayaraman urged the Collector to convene a special meeting for fixing the price of tapioca.

Blueberries may not help night vision

Scientists have claimed that the belief that blueberries help healthy people see better in dark, may not be true after all.

Wilhelmina Kalt and colleagues note that studies published decades ago provided the first hints that blueberries might improve people's night vision. Later, lab experiments appeared to shore up these early findings. For example, anthocyanins, which are pigment molecules in blueberries and other plants, encourage the regeneration of key molecules in the eye involved in perceiving light. But reviews of the earlier clinical research that tested the effect of blueberries on night vision in human subjects revealed that the studies were poorly controlled. Kalt's team wanted to revisit the matter with a new set of carefully designed experiments. The researchers found that a blueberry-supplemented diet did not improve sight in the dark, but they did help subjects recover normal vision after exposure to a bright light. The findings are published in *ACS' Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* .- ANI

CM sets up panel on solar pumpsets

KCR seeks an estimate of the cost-effectiveness of replacing about 20 lakh agriculture pumpsets in the State

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has, on Friday, constituted a committee to study all aspects related to installation of solar agricultural pumpsets, and take decisions about government's investment in them.

The committee will be headed by Principal Secretary of Industries Pradeep Chandra, and will have as members the principal secretaries of Finance, Energy, and Agriculture namely Nagi Reddy, S.K. Joshi, and Poonam Malakondaiah respectively.

The decision came after a review meeting conducted at the Secretariat with representatives of Kirloskar Brothers Limited and government officials.

Going through various proposals submitted by the company over solar pumpsets, Mr. Rao sought an estimate about the cost-effectiveness of replacing all the 20 lakh agricultural pumpsets in the State vis-à-vis the current subsidy for free power.

As per official information, cost of seven-hour power supply worked out to Rs.15 crore per day for 30 million units. However, cost comparison is yet to be carried out.

The Chief Minister reminded that the budget allocation for the scheme was Rs. 240 crore and suggested a pilot project to check the feasibility, before being replicated throughout the State. For this, the associated vice-president of the company Rajendra V. Mahajan and GM Ajay Shirodkar said one lakh pumpsets may be installed in the first year, and the project may be completed in the coming ten years, a press communiqué from the CMO informed.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Rajiv Sharma, Advisor to the government B.V. Papparao and Principal Secretary, CMO, S. Narsing Rao, apart from four aforementioned committee members.



The Indian **EXPRESS**

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

Diet diary: Switch to sugar-free

I am often asked if consuming a certain amount of sugar is essential in our diet. During digestion in the body, all carbohydrates including starches like cereals — bread, roti, rice, pulses, dals, fruits and potatoes breakdown into sugars. The body uses these sugars for energy.

Sugars can be used in moderation by most healthy active people but must be used sparingly by weight watchers, those with abdominal obesity, diabetes, dyslipidemia (abnormal cholesterol levels) and inactive people.

So if you decide to eat a sugar-free diet, whether due to medical reasons or personal preferences, you need to get 'sugar-wise'. Don't get fooled by taste or appearances and claims on food labels. There is plenty of sugar in disguise which you may not account for. Here are some tips to make your transition to a sugar-free diet easier:

Tip 1: Cut back slowly on your sugar consumption. If you currently eat a lot of sugar, it can be hard to stop eating it all of a sudden. So, step down your sugar consumption slowly over a few weeks.

Tip 2: Learn how to decode the word 'sugar'. Just because something is labeled as sugar-free does not mean that it does not have some form of sugar in it. The following terms are all words to describe various forms of sugar: honey, jaggery, molasses, barley malt, brown sugar, cane sugar, corn sweetener, corn or agave syrup, sucrose, lactose, fructose, glucose, dextrose, maltose, galactose, grape sugar, mannitol, sorghum syrup and maple syrup.

Tip 3: Watch what you drink, not just what you eat. Drinks, even those that sound healthy like fruit juices, are often loaded with sugar. Most people know to avoid soft drinks, but you should be mindful of the amount of sugar in your tea, coffee, shakes and juices as well. Sugar can be found even in “diet” drinks and some kinds of flavored waters. Sweetened wines, beer, liquors and mixed alcoholic drinks add to sugar calories indirectly as well.

Tip 4: Make your own foods. Processed foods contain preservatives and massive amounts of sugar to prolong the shelf life and better taste. Buying fresh ingredients to prepare snacks and meals does not take that much more time and it is typically a lot healthier.

Tip 5: Limit refined carbohydrates. Carbohydrate rich foods like white breads, pastas, and so forth might not taste sweet, but they are forms of sugar. Choose healthy carbohydrates like whole grains and pulses rich in fiber.

Tip 6: Nourish your body adequately. Sugar cravings can often result as a consequence of missing nutrients. These include proteins, good fats, B-vitamins, magnesium, chromium and zinc.

Tip 7: ‘Sugar free’ fixes include mouth fresheners like fennel, cardamom, tea, coffee and sugar free sweets and gums

Tip 8: to your doctor — If you are diabetic or have another medical reason for wanting to cut the sugar, you should not suddenly switch to a drastic diet to avoid all sugars. Your doctor or a professional nutritionist can help you come up with a great sugar free plan that will fit your lifestyle.

Breakfast like a king: Here's how to make Aaloo Parantha

In my kitchen Aaloo Parantha presides over all other paranthas. It's undisputably the king of paranthas. Since past few weeks we have been having them at least once every week for breakfast. As they say breakfast like a king; we need a king to do justice to it.

Potato is a quintessential part of Indian cuisine, especially for a vegetarian. Breakfast, snack or main course – the menu is incomplete without potato dishes.

High in carbohydrates, it's not too good for your waistline though. Have you heard this Hindi saying – “*aaloo khayega, aaloo ho jayega*”? (If you eat potato, you will become like potato). So, it's recommended for breakfast when you need lots of energy for the day. Also on the days when indulgence is on your menu.

Aaloo Parantha/ Potato stuffed Indian Bread

Preparation: 10 mins| Cooking 30 mins| Makes 6-8

Ingredients

250gms wholewheat flour + ~50gms for dusting

3 medium sized potatoes

1-2 green chillies, chopped (optional)

½ cup fresh coriander leaves, chopped

1 tsp coriander powder

½ tsp cumin powder

¼ tsp red chilli powder

1 tsp chaat masala

1 tsp ajwain (carom) seeds

Salt to taste

Oil/ ghee for cooking

Method

Boil/Pressure cook potatoes in water until soft.

Remove from water and keep aside on a plate to cool down.

Removing them from hot water would let the water on the potatoes evaporate quickly while they cool.

In a deep plate or bowl, mix together flour, carom seeds (ajwain) and some salt. (Keep about 50 gms flour dry as you would need it for rolling out the parantha/ bread)

Knead into a medium soft dough using warm water.

Keep the dough covered with a damp cloth/ tea-towel while you prepare the stuffing.

Peel the potatoes and mash them with your fists. You want them to break down into small pieces but not as mashed as mashed potatoes.

Add to the potatoes, chopped chillies, coriander leaves and all spices (except carom seeds). Mix well. I simply use my hand, but you can also use a fork.

Now divide the dough into 6-8 balls

Roll out a ball into an approximate 4 inch diameter circle. Put a spoonful of potato stuffing in the middle. Bringing the edges towards the centre of the circle, close the ball and seal it tight.

Dust the, now, stuffed, dough ball with a little dry flour and roll out into an approximate 6 inch diameter circle. You would need to dust more dry flour in between while rolling.

Heat a flat non-stick pan or a tava. Sprinkle a little oil. Put the rolled parantha onto the hot pan and cook on both sides, using a little oil/ ghee until it becomes golden brown.

Repeat for the remaining dough and stuffing.

Serve hot with plain raita (plain yoghurt seasoned with a pinch each of salt, roasted cumin powder and red chilli powder) and pickle.

Why we don't need milk

Almost no one will dispute that when a baby is born, breast milk is the best nutrition a mother can provide. All mammals nurse their young, and breast milk benefits a newborn infant in ways above and beyond nutrition. In fact, until 1 to 2 years of age, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the World Health Organization, the Institute of Medicine and more promote breast-feeding as optimal.

More and more evidence is surfacing, however, that milk consumption may not only be unhelpful, it might also be detrimental. More than 10,000 years ago, when human beings began to domesticate animals, no adults or older children consumed milk. Many people don't drink it today because they are lactose intolerant. They do just fine.

But if you believe the advertising of the dairy industry, and the recommendations of many scientific bodies, they are missing out on some fantastic benefits to milk consumption: that milk is good for bones, contains calcium and vitamin D, and “does a body good.”

There’s not a lot of evidence for these types of claims. In 2011, The Journal of Bone and Mineral Research published a meta-analysis examining if milk might protect against hip fracture in middle-aged and older adults. Six studies containing almost 200,000 women could find no association between drinking milk and lower rates of fractures.

More recent research confirms these findings. A study published in JAMA Pediatrics this year followed almost 100,000 men and women for more than two decades.

Subjects were asked to report on how much milk they had consumed as teenagers, and then they were followed to see if that was associated with a reduced chance of hip fractures later in life. It wasn’t. A just-released study in The BMJ that followed more than 45,000 men and 61,000 women in Sweden, age 39 and older, had similar results. Milk consumption as adults was associated with no protection for men, and an increased risk of fractures in women.

It was also associated with an increased risk of death in both sexes. This wasn't a randomised controlled trial, and no one should assume causality here. But there's no association with benefits, and a significant association with harms.

Even studies that examine the nutrients in milk, trying to look for protective effects, often come up short. A 2007 meta-analysis in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* examined high-quality studies of how calcium intake was related to fractures.

The many studies of more than 200,000 people, age 34 to 79, could find no link between total calcium intake and the risk of bone fractures. It is true that vitamin D is necessary for calcium absorption, and for bone health, but that doesn't mean that most people need to consume more.

A meta-analysis published this year in *The Lancet* examined the effect of vitamin D supplementation on bone mineral density in middle-aged and older adults.

It found that, for the most part, consuming extra vitamin D did not improve the bones of the spine, hip or forearm.

It did result in a statistically significant, but less clinically meaningful, increase in bone density at the top of the thighbone. In addition, milk is not a low-calorie beverage.

Even if people drink nonfat milk, three cups a day can mean an additional 250 calories consumed. Low-fat or whole milk has even more calories. In an era when every other caloric beverage is being marginalized because of obesity concerns, it's odd that milk continues to get a pass.

Yes, it's full of protein. Most Americans aren't protein deficient, though. Even people who avoid animal milk are worried they're missing something. Rather than acknowledge that they get along just fine without it, many seek out "milk" substitutes, like soy milk, around which whole industries have been built.

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Rain: 0

Humidity: 70

Wind: normal

Tomorrow's Forecast

Saturday, Nov 22 Sunday, Nov 23

Max

30°

Min

24°

Cloudy

Max

31°

Min

24°

Sunrise: 06:10

Sunset: 05:39

Barometer: 1013

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday
Nov 24



31° | 24°

Cloudy

Tuesday
Nov 25



32° | 26°

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday
Nov 26



33° | 26°

Sunny

Thursday
Nov 27



33° | 27°

Sunny

Friday
Nov 28

33° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

THE TIMES OF INDIA

5 Must-have spices in your kitchen

Outlined below are some of the most commonly used Ayurvedic spices, which when used in cooking, not only enhance the taste of the meal, but also make it nutritious and balancing:

Coriander (Dhania): The coriander seed is truly a cook's best friend as it aids in the assimilation of other herbs and spices used during cooking. Known to be gracious to all the doshas, this spice is famous in Ayurveda for its use in balancing the body and mind. Coriander is also beneficial in digestive, respiratory and urinary disorders, as well as treating skin ailments caused by Pitta aggravation.

Ginger (Adrak): An irreplaceable spice in any kitchen, Ginger brings flavor and pungency to food and is used widely as a digestive. Known as 'the universal medicine' for its healing properties, Ginger provides an excellent remedy for respiratory conditions caused by aggravation of Kapha and Vata. Apart from vegetables and lentils, this invigorating spice is also used in herbal tea to treat common cold and cough.

Cumin (Jeera): Widely used as a flavoring agent and condiment in curries and lentils, Cumin is known for its aromatic qualities. This spice is used as a stimulant for digestive disorders and even as an antiseptic. It also enhances the functioning of the liver and pancreas, enabling the body to cleanse accumulated toxins and absorb nutrients better.

Fenugreek (Methi): Fenugreek is highly valuable for its healing properties. It is helpful in treating digestive, respiratory, nervous, and menstrual disorders, as well as purifying the skin and facilitating weight loss. Drinking water with Fenugreek seeds soaked overnight helps in reducing blood sugar levels in the body.

Bitter-sweet in flavor, this spice is popularly used in Indian cooking for vegetables and dals.

Turmeric (Haldi): Referred to as the Indian Saffron, Turmeric is bitter, astringent and pungent in taste. It has been known for centuries for its many therapeutic qualities, including anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-septic properties. Widely regarded as an indispensable part of Indian cuisine, Turmeric enhances metabolism and helps the body to reduce undesirable fatty deposits when used in cooking.

[How to make a quick Sindhi dish!](#)

Sail or Seyal is the process of a dish slow cooked in its own juices without the use of water. Says food aficionado Saloni Malkani, "Slow cooked is very important as the meat or any preparations slowly cooks in its own juices, giving the dish an outstanding and typical flavour." Here is her recipe to try...

Recipe of Seyal Mutton

Ingredients:

500 to 750 Grams mutton or lamb - with bone or deboned as per your choice

The lamb should be cut in cubes, or sized pieces as desired
3-4 normal medium sized onions chopped and then puree in a mixer

4 medium sized tomatoes chopped and pureed

200 grams curd (either hung or thick)

4 garlic pieces finely chopped

1 tablespoon garlic paste and 1 tablespoon ginger paste

1 cup coriander leaves and 2 green chilies finely chopped and pureed

1 teaspoon garam masala, jeera powder and dhania powder
1/2 teaspoon of cardamon which should be powdered
1/2 teaspoon of ajwain powder

3 tablespoons ghee

A pinch of haldi Salt to taste

Method:

1. Marinate the mutton in a mixture of the ginger ,garlic , coriander leaves puree along with the curd , leave in the for a few hours outside or if overnight refrigerate the mixture.

(Overnight marination does wonders to the dish)

2. Saute the onions in ghee, when slightly brown add the tomatoes and masalas and saute between 4-6 min.

3. Cool the sauteed onions, tomatoes and masala mixture then add to the marinated mutton and mix.

4. Keep aside 45 minutes and cook the mixture over high heat for 7-10 minutes.

5. Reduce the heat and cover the discharge to simmer for 60-75 minutes to ensure the mutton is tender

6. Once tender, serve in a nice bowl and garnish with fresh coriander leaves.

Your seyal mutton is ready.

The rise of high-rise gardens

Residents of high-rise buildings in the city are making their own garden patches and ensuring that they too have access to a little bit of greenery and home grown fruits and flowers of their choice.

"A lush green lawn with plantation all around is a beautiful sight to wake up to," said Swapnil Rane, a Savarkar Nagar resident who has a 460 sq feet terrace garden in his fifth floor apartment. Swapnil's terrace plantation that boasts of starlite ficus, black ficus, chafa and pudika plants, has employed professional help to take care of his garden. "Other than adding to the aesthetic beauty, plants help in reducing stress levels and a terrace garden provides all these benefits without the need of even stepping out of one's home. It is for the same reason that the demand for apartments with terrace gardens is increasing," Swapnil added.

While apartments equipped with terrace gardens are abundantly available, it is not too difficult to build one's terrace garden. Mahatma Nagar resident Sanjivani Deodhar has set up her terrace garden from scratch. "It began with my search for hurda (tender jowar), that I could not find anywhere. My requirement for it pushed me to grow it on my terrace." Sanjivani's garden now has plants like cucumber, bottle gourd and lemon grass. "Gardening is a stress buster for me and thanks to it my terrace looks beautiful and there is always fresh food available. It is also a great way to recycle household organic waste such as used tea leaves and vegetable waste which I now use as manure for my garden," said Sanjivani.

For starting a terrace plantation one needs a patch of space that gets ample sunlight. Regular watering of plants coupled with some professional advice is enough to yield good results. "A terrace garden provides a lot of scope for experimenting with different plantations," added Sanjivani.

With proper planning and maintenance one can grow their own organic and pesticide free vegetables that are rich in nutrients. Depending on the season, one can cultivate other plants as well.

These terrace gardens or the new age home accessory with multiple benefits can also be used for practicing yoga or hosting parties.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Kottaram Agro launches millet-based foods



MS Swaminathan, agricultural scientist and Founder, MSSRF and Prashant Parameswaran, MD, Kottaram Agro Foods, at the launch of 'Soulfull' brand of breakfast products, in Chennai on Friday. Bijoy Ghosh

Chennai, November 21:

Nutrition literacy is the need of the hour. Through consistent policy advocacy, the Indian Food Security Act now provides for enlargement of the food basket under the Public Distribution

System by including a wide range of millets that were terribly under-utilised but much healthier than rice and wheat, said eminent agricultural scientist MS Swaminathan.

Launching a range of ragi flakes, manufactured by Kottaram Agro Foods under the brand Soulfull, he said the consumption of such millets would enable the movement towards both food and nutrition security and eradicate hunger pangs.

Kottaram Agro Foods is a Bangalore-based company that has been producing and marketing traditional Indian foods based on a wide range of under-utilised millets. It has a variety of breakfast products such as dosa mix, adai and idli. "Our intention is to bring traditional millets back into Indian homes, and we work with various eminent nutrition research scientists for the purpose," said Prashant Parameswaran, Managing Director of Kottaram Agro Foods.

The company leaned heavily on the goodness of traditional Indian foods, and has reworked them to make it exciting and acceptable for the modern palette, and convenient for the modern homemaker. The company has so far invested over Rs. 12 crore and plans to invest another Rs. 25 crore next year.

Kerala planters seek import ban on tea, rubber, cardamom

Kochi, November 21:

Planters in Kerala have asked the Government to ban forthwith imports of tea, rubber and cardamom, in view of the crisis faced by the sector.

The Association of Planters of Kerala (APK) called for an immediate ban on the above plantation crop imports till domestic prices reach cost of production.

The planters' body also urged the Centre to implement the recommendations of the inter-ministerial group on sharing of social costs without further delay. The Plantation Labour Act should be amended so that part of the expenditure on social cost is borne by the Centre, Gilbert D'Souza, Chairman, APK said.

He was speaking to *BusinessLine* on the sidelines of a press conference to announce the APK's Platinum jubilee celebrations on December 4 in Kochi. According to D'Souza, the plantation sector was heading for a serious financial crisis, which would be worse than the previous crisis of 1999-2006.

The tea industry was today making a loss of Rs. 25 a kg; the gross mismatch between cost of production, which is between Rs. 110 and Rs. 120, and average auction price of tea of less than Rs. 85, had led to a severe cash crunch, he said.

On rubber, the industry was incurring a loss of above Rs. 50/kg of natural rubber produced. The average cost of production was above Rs. 150/kg, whereas the average price realised by the grower is around Rs.103.

The lower prices and oversupply in the international markets, coupled with uncontrolled imports, had brought about this crisis situation, he said. Cardamom growers are also suffering a loss of Rs. 200/kg due to cheaper imports, especially inferior quality Guatemalan cardamom.

"We are not against imports. But they should be regulated so that growers' interests are also protected," C.Vinayaraghavan, Vice Chairman, APK, said. The Association had already taken steps to bring down production costs, but the industry feels that immediate and innovative steps need to be taken by all stakeholders including the government and the trade unions to halt further deterioration of the situation, he said.

Heavy rain in South as North remains cold

Thiruvananthapuram, November 21:

Heavy to very heavy rainfall over parts of southern Tamil Nadu and Kerala may continue for the next couple of days as a causative weather system hung over the waters off Sri Lanka.

A US Climate Prediction Centre assessment said that Sri Lanka would bear the brunt of the rain generated by the cyclonic circulation perched in the upper air over south-west Bay of Bengal.

More to come

The island nation and the coast of adjoining Tamil Nadu in peninsular India would remain variously wet through the week ending November 26. Extended forecasts suggested that a rain wave may emerge from the equatorial Indian Ocean in the subsequent days with potential to hit Sri Lanka and coastal Tamil Nadu for a second round.

This could be the handiwork of a passing Madden-Julian (MJO) Oscillation wave from West Africa to the Pacific and traversing the equatorial Indian Ocean concurrently.

Heavy rain

An India Met Department update on Friday afternoon said that convective (rain-driving) clouds rose above many parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, south Arabian Sea, Comorin area, and south Bay of Bengal.

During the 24 hours ending in the morning, moderate to heavy to very heavy rain lashed Tuticorin (9 cm); Kanyakumari (8 cm); Palayamkottai (7 cm); Tondi (5 cm); and Nagapattinam (3 cm).

In the North, however, fog to shallow fog conditions prevailed over Punjab and Haryana and over Tripura in the North-East. Minimum (night) temperatures continue to be below normal at many places in the North-West and North-East as these regions await the arrival of a weather-altering western disturbance. Normally, the low-pressure and therefore warmer western disturbance has a favourable impact in weather over the cold plains of North-West India.

Feeble build

But the feeble build of the system meant that it would sign off without much impact, except dropping some rain and snow over the high reaches (Himalayas). North-West India along with colder central parts will now have to wait for the next western disturbance to come in by Monday to infuse some warming in the night accompanied by the odd showers during the day. Till such time, the cold wave over Madhya Pradesh may sustain.