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THE HINDU

New paddy variety yields good results



Agriculture officials inspecting the paddy field of farmer S. Manoharan at Balasamuthiram village near Palani in Dindigul district on Thursday.

Balasamuthiram farmer raises it on six acres

Farmers in Palani area are betting on a new variety of paddy, CO-51, thanks to high tillers and large quantum of grains in each tiller raised on a trial field. “The crop raised on the trial field is ready for harvesting. I expect to get 12 tonnes,” said S. Manoharan, a farmer who has raised this variety on six acres at Balasamuthiram village.

“Unlike other varieties with a gestation period of 140 days, this new variety is ready for harvest in 105-110 days. I not only save 30 days but there is also reduction in production cost, use of water, fertilizers and other inputs,” he said.

Even if there was a delay in transplantation owing to delay in release of water or late arrival of monsoon, the crop could be harvested. Such delays would have adverse effects on other varieties of paddy.

Above all, CO-51 was tolerant to blast disease that affected yield drastically.

136 research projects under way at veterinary varsity



Grants to the tune of Rs. 76.61 crore received

Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University has undertaken 136 research projects in various fields to help animal farmers, Vice-Chancellor C. Renuka Prasad said here on Thursday.

Addressing presspersons, he said, “We have got a total grant of Rs. 76.61 crore for research projects to bring out new hybrids, new treatment techniques, detection and prevention of epidemics, fodder development, use of food waste and other related fields.”

The grants were instituted by the State government, Bio-technology Department of the Union Government, Indian Council for Agriculture Research and private agencies. “Some foreign firms are also funding us,” he said.

Projects in progress

A software tool has been developed to track and document fish production in inland areas, sea and salt water regions in Karnataka. A cell-culture based vaccine against sheep pox is being developed. Field trials are on and the vaccine would be available to farmers soon. Four new disease-testing

laboratories have been set up in Bagalkot, Sira, Kolar, and Sirsi, apart from the existing nine diagnostic centres.

A state-of-the-art laboratory has been set up at the Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals, Bengaluru. Classical swine fever vaccines for pigs, pasteurella vaccines for ducks, turkeys, and micoplasma diagnostic antigens for sheep and goat were released.

A proposal to develop Gokula Grama under the Rashtriya Gokul Mission for strengthening the native Deoni breed of cattle has been forwarded to the State government. A project to develop Malenad Gidda variety is under progress.

A project to strengthen native sheep breeds by inculcating the characters of Dorper and Boyer breeds by artificial insemination is reaching conclusion. A project to develop characters of Nari Suvarna sheep in Kenguri by cross breeding is in progress. A project to identify white dot disease in prawns has been developed and the technology transferred to a private healthcare company.

A solar biomass hybrid drier has been developed with assistance from Europe. An organic fish food production technology has been developed using farm waste.

KVAFSU scientists have given timely advice to 16,742 farmers in animal farming. The university's laboratories have tested 49,358 animal, bird and fish samples for diseases and other purposes.

The Veterinary Council of India has accorded permission to the colleges in Hassan and Shivamogga to admit students this year. As many as 48 additional post-graduate students will also be admitted (Hassan-24, Bengaluru-15 and Bidar-9) this year.

It could withstand adverse weather conditions, he said.

While his crops stood erect, paddy crops in nearby fields were battered down by the recent rain. His fields have become a model farm as many farmers come and inspect it.

Entire produce to be procured

Having impressed by the successful trials, agriculture department officials plan to procure his entire produce for multiplication and distribution. The procured grains will be processed at a seed processing unit and distributed to farmers for multiplication. Though farmers in Virudhunagar district had already placed orders for the seeds, priority would be given to farmers in Dindigul district, said M. Thangasamy, Deputy Director of Agriculture.

‘We received breeder seeds from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and distributed them to farmers for field trials. The system of rice intensification (SRI) method has helped in increasing the yield. The new variety is well suited for ‘kuruvai,’ late samba and ‘navarai’ seasons,’ he said.

To maintain physical purity in grains, farmers should remove ‘rogue’ (other variety of paddy) from the trial field. Training would be imparted to workers to identify other varieties.

Failure in detecting the foreign variety would affect the seed quality, said Assistant Director Suruliappan.

Adoption of latest technologies, maximising use of organic and green manure and split application of chemical fertilizers were behind the farmer’s success, he added.

Palani, Athoor, Batlagundu and Nilakottai blocks are the major paddy producing centres in Dindigul district where paddy has been raised on 20,000 hectares.

Rabi sowing picking up in Ballari district

As much as 15 per cent of the targeted area of sowing for the rabi season has been covered in Ballari district.



The district received more than normal rainfall in October first week

With the district receiving more than normal rainfall in October first week, farmers are hopeful of getting a good yield in the rabi season.

The farmers had suffered crop loss due to the failure of the monsoon during kharif season this year.

The district recorded an average actual rainfall of 77.2 mm against the normal of 40.9 mm in October first week.

The rainfall received was not only in excess, but was also widespread enabling farmers to take up sowing.

Following is the taluk-wise break-up of the rainfall recorded in the district in the first week of October. Figures in bracket indicate normal rainfall in mm. Ballari 79.2 (38); Hadagali 95.8 (42.8); Hosapete 66.7 (41.4); Hagari Bommanahalli 74.8 (29); Kudligi 72.6 (43); Sandur 101 (43.5) and Sirguppa 46.8 (49.3).

Due to the failure of the monsoon, vast patches of kharif area had remained unsown and the farmers destroyed the crops in rain-fed area.

These areas are also being covered under rabi. As a result, the targeted area has gone up from 1.67 lakh hectares (ha) to 2.04 lakh ha, sources in Agriculture Department told *The Hindu*.

Bengal gram, rabi jowar, sunflower, cotton, maize are among other main crops cultivated during the rabi season.

With good rain in September and continuous rain in October first week, 15 per cent of the targeted area of sowing has been covered.

Concern over dwindling sugarcane production in TN

Issues confronting sugarcane farmers, especially in the last two seasons, were highlighted at a meeting of sugarcane research and development workers of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, organised by the National Cooperative Sugar Mills, Alanganallur, here on Thursday.

Setting the tone for the two-day deliberations, Bakshi Ram, Director, Indian Council for Agricultural Research Sugarcane Breeding Institute (SBI), Coimbatore, said that sugarcane and sugar scenario in Tamil Nadu, which accounted for 7 to 9 per cent of total sugar production in the country, was not too bright for the past two seasons. Compared to 2011-12, cane area in the State, cane crushed, sugar production and sugar recovery were on a declining trend, due to various factors.

Sugar recovery showed a decreasing trend due to factors such as drought, harvesting before maturity and degeneration of varieties. In 2013-14, recovery rate had gone down to 8.32 per cent, the lowest since 1995, which was a cause for concern.

The SBI, Dr. Bakshi Ram said, would initiate a project this year with the support of sugar mills to identify location-specific sugarcane varieties,

produce and supply disease-free planting material of improved varieties and conduct surveillance of pest and diseases across Tamil Nadu.

The meeting was inaugurated by L. Subramanian, Collector, who also released a compendium of research articles and status reports on the occasion. C. R. Anandakumar, Vice-Chancellor (acting), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, delivered the introductory address.

A. Sankaralingam, Additional Director of Sugar, outlined the current scenario of sugar industry in Tamil Nadu. The sugar industry in the State, he said, was in deep loss as the cost of production was higher than procurement price. If the trend continued, cane payment in 2015-16 would be in jeopardy. He attributed the present performance to use of obsolete technology, low production and low mill efficiency. Added to these were sugar price fluctuation and cyclical nature of the industry in which low production led to higher cost of sugar.

NABARD to extend aid to AP grid projects

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has promised to extend assistance for power grid, gas grid, road grid and fibre grid projects proposed by the Andhra Pradesh government to ensure accelerated development of the new State.

NABARD Chief General Manager (AP region) Harish Java, who met Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu at his camp office in Vijayawada on Thursday, said the bank would release funds under RIDF (Rural Infrastructure Development Fund) for eligible works in villages selected under Smart Village programme. Adequate funds would be provided for promoting greenery, drinking water and construction of individual toilets.

Mr. Naidu informed the Nabard CGM that his government planned to incorporate a green climate fund and an exclusive corporation would be established for promoting greenery in the State on the lines of Haryana. Accordingly, it was proposed to take up mangrove plantation along the

coastline and a nursery would be set up in every village. He urged NABARD to give funds in a big way for rural roads in the State.

The Chief Minister said the government had set a target of increasing the forest cover in the State from the existing 23 per cent to 40 per cent and several programmes had been lined up in this direction. Mr. Java promised that funds would be provided for every greenery programme taken up in the State.

The CGM said funds would be released under RIDF once the detailed project report on linking of Krishna-Penna-Cauvery Rivers was formulated. Outlining State government's plan to drought-proof Andhra Pradesh, the Chief Minister sought NABARD's cooperation. He also explained the initiatives being taken to increase groundwater levels under Neeru- Chettu programme.

Mr. Java also informed the Chief Minister that NABARD has released Rs.342 crore to build godowns for storage capacity of six lakh metric tonnes in the State.

Bank will release funds under RIDF for eligible works in villages selected under Smart Village programme

Scheme sought to help ryots quit tobacco farming

Ongole MP Y.V.Subba Reddy, flanked by Bapatla MP Sriram Malyadri and Prakasam District Collector Sujatha Sharma at a programme in Ongole on Thursday.- Photo: Kommuri Srinivas

'Compensation covers only select varieties of low-grade tobacco'

YSRC MP Y.V. Subba Reddy has urged the Tobacco Board to introduce a scheme to help tobacco growers switch over to alternative crops.

Chairing the Prakasam district Vigilance and Monitoring Committee meeting on Thursday, he shared the concerns expressed by TDP MP Sriram

Malyadri and MLAs over the spate of suicides by tobacco ryots in the wake of the slump in prices for the key commercial crop in Prakasam district. “The compensation of Rs. 2,000 per quintal of tobacco, which was announced by the Union Commerce Ministry, had disappointed growers, as it covered only select varieties of low-grade tobacco,” Mr. Subba Reddy said.



He also demanded that the district administration organise a meeting of officials of the Tobacco Board. “Farmers in the district will have to switch over to other crops in about one lakh acres this year,” YSRC MLA from Kandukur Pothula Rama Rao said and wanted the Centre to announce a compensation of Rs. 10 lakh per barn for farmers who were willing to quit tobacco cultivation altogether.

Vigilance and Monitoring Committee Co-chairman and TDP MP from Bapatla Sriram Malyadri said it was not just tobacco growers who were in trouble. “Those who had grown cotton, oil palm and other crops suffered because of the poor prices for their produce,” he added.

He also pressed for the implementation of the recommendations of the panel headed by noted Agriculture Scientist M.S. Swaminathan. Meanwhile, the houses of about 5,000 people’s representatives in the rural local bodies in Prakasam district were found without individual sanitary latrines(ISLs).

‘The compensation of Rs. 2,000 per quintal of tobacco, which was announced by the Union Commerce Ministry, had disappointed growers, as it covered only select varieties of low-grade tobacco’

ISRO eyes a global role in satellite navigation

Four of the seven IRNSS satellites are in orbit

The Indian Space Research Organisation has unveiled plans to gradually make its regional satellite navigation system global — akin to powerful position-telling systems such as the U.S.' GPS and the Russian GLONASS. ISRO Chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar said four of the seven Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) satellites are in orbit and the last three spacecraft would be added in orbit by March 2016. The IRNSS would provide self-reliance in the strategically important area of position-related information, he said at a users' conference on global navigation satellite systems on Thursday.

The focus now was on completing the regional constellation and extending it to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation countries. "After that we will look at taking it gradually over the entire globe, may be in less than a decade. It could be done by adding a set of regional satellites over adjoining countries. We are working towards this with other countries — [South] Korea and the Gulf nations, to name a few," Mr. Kiran Kumar said. The signals from the regional system were already available 1,500 km beyond the borders.

In April this year, ISRO and the Airports Authority of India also completed GAGAN, focussed on airlines, airports and the civil aviation sector but applicable to land and sea-based services. GAGAN enhances the GPS-derived details of location and time of objects or persons.

Both IRNSS and GAGAN, he said, would drive an unlimited set of personal, public and industrial users, from transportation, railways, forestry, farming, agriculture and security. Around 200 navigation receiver sets built by industry and using ISRO design would be out soon.

Tax sops on molasses

Currently, there is a fixed excise duty of Rs.750 per tonne on molasses, a by-product of sugarcane used for manufacturing ethanol, alcohol and other products.



The industry hopes that this benefit will be continued into next sugar seasons for the benefit of the ethanol supplies in the future

Sugar mills supplying ethanol to oil public sector undertakings (PSUs) in 2015-16 season starting this month, will be eligible to avail input credit on the excise duty paid on the raw material molasses, a move aimed at promoting 10 per cent ethanol blending with petrol.

Currently, there is a fixed excise duty of Rs.750 per tonne on molasses, a by-product of sugarcane used for manufacturing ethanol, alcohol and other products.

In a latest notification, the Finance Ministry has “amended the CENVAT Credit Rules, 2004 so as to allow input credit of duty paid on molasses in the 2015-16 sugar season used for producing ethanol for supply to the public sector oil marketing companies for the purposes of blending with petrol.”

The mills can avail the benefit if ethanol is supplied to Indian Oil Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation or Bharat Petroleum Corporation, it said.

To encourage ethanol production, the government had in April exempted 12.5 per cent excise duty on ethanol. As a result, the sugar industry had initially estimated Rs.5 per litre benefit to the mills on production of ethanol. However, the actual benefit of the exemption of the excise duty on ethanol was later estimated to be lower at Rs.2 per litre as mills could not avail the benefit of CENVAT credit against the excise duty paid on molasses. Now with this government's notification, mills can avail full benefit of Rs.5 per litre of ethanol.

Welcoming the move, Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) Director General Abinash Verma said, "Today's notification will benefit the 130 ethanol producing sugar mills in the country, by way of increase in their revenue realisation on ethanol supplies."

The industry hopes that this benefit will be continued into next sugar seasons for the benefit of the ethanol supplies in the future, he added.

Although 10 per cent blending of ethanol with petrol is allowed, oil marketing companies (OMCs) will achieve 3.5 per cent in 2014-15 season (October-September).

ISMA expects that ethanol blending with petrol could rise to five per cent in 2015-16 season. OMCs have already floated tenders for 266 crore litres for 10 per cent blending. So far, contracts nearly 100 crore litres have been finalised.

The country has an installed capacity to manufacture 450 crore litres of ethanol, of which 240 crore litres of capacity are with sugar factories, while the rest is standalone.

Anna Bhagya beneficiaries want quantity of rice increased

They also seek wheat instead of millets that is being provided now

Beneficiaries of the Anna Bhagya scheme on Thursday urged the State government to increase the quantity of rice being provided to the poor.

Participating in the Janamana programme, an interactive session with Public Works Minister H.C. Mahadevappa here, the beneficiaries of the scheme said that last year, the government was providing 30 kg. food grains, irrespective of the number of members in a family. This year, the quantity had been reduced to five kg. each for every member of the family. The interactive session had been organised by the Department of Information and Public Relations. Pavithra, a beneficiary, said that out of the five kg. food grains being provided to an individual, included three kg. rice and two kg. millets. “Three kg. rice is insufficient for an individual for a month. Earlier, we were getting two kg. wheat. Now, it has been changed to millets. We need wheat, instead of millets. Besides, the quantity of rice should be increased,” she demanded.

Amreen and Narayana Gowda, other beneficiaries, also expressed similar views.

Beneficiaries of Ksheeradhare under which milk producers get Rs. 4 a litre, urged the government to increase the amount to Rs. 10 a litre considering the plight of milk producers. “We are happy with the scheme, which has strengthened the milk producers, financially. But, the amount should be increased as we are facing severe drought and loss of crop,” said K.C. Kari Gowda, a milk producer from Koravangala in Hassan taluk. The beneficiaries also sought subsidy for purchasing fodder for cattle.

Students availing themselves of the benefits of Vidyasiri scheme thanked the State government for introducing the scheme for the benefit of those who fail to secure seats in hostels.

Kavya, a student of Agri Bio-Technology, said her father, a farmer, could send her for studies because of this scheme. “My father could not afford to bear the expenses. I would not have come here to study, if there was no Vidyasiri scheme,” she said.

Later, the Minister said the government wanted to understand whether the benefits were reaching the needy and to take suggestions from beneficiaries to make the implementation of such schemes more effective. “Many people have given good suggestions regarding various schemes. The government will take them seriously and implement them too,” he said.

Many people have given good suggestions regarding various schemes and the government will consider them for implementation, says Minister

Substandard pesticides hit agriculture

The latest problem to hit the country’s agriculture sector is substandard, spurious/counterfeit pesticides, which apart from causing crop loss and damage to soil fertility, leads to loss of revenue to farmers and the government.

This according to a Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) study on ‘‘ Sub-standard, Spurious/Counterfeit Pesticides in India’’ was released on the theme ‘Menace of Spurious/Counterfeit Pesticides in India’ conducted recently.

The report notes that India has fairly well developed agro- chemicals industry, with a size of about Rs. 25,000 crores, which not only caters to the domestic demand, but also undertakes substantial exports. Judicious usage of pesticides/agrochemicals is very important for the sustained growth of Indian agriculture and economy.

India faces a challenge of non-genuine pesticides in the market, which can be counterfeit, spurious, adulterated or sub-standard.

It is estimated that they constitute about 30 per cent of the total market and incidence is increasing at a dangerous pace.

The survey found that the incidence of spurious/counterfeit pesticides sector is to the extent of 25 per cent by value and 30 per cent by volume in the country.

“The problem is at the rate of 20 per cent per year and if not addressed will reach level of 40 per cent by value by 2019. The worst affected states include -- UP, MP, AP, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Haryana, Maharashtra, Karnataka,” noted the study.

Agro processing firm plans facility in city

The Nilgiri's – the Tamil Nadu-based fresh vegetable supply chain specialising in post-harvest management through Lawrence Dale Agro Processing (India) – plans to set up a facility to process the fresh produce in Hyderabad.

One of three such facilities the company has proposed in South India in the next financial year, it will be crucial for the company that has also launched the LEAF brand fresh produce in Hyderabad, eyeing a manifold increase in the total daily sales.

A chunk of the 30 tonnes daily sales comes from Kerala, with Tamil Nadu and Karnataka accounting for the rest. The company wants to increase this to 250 tonnes by 2017-18, for which it would engage with more farmers and foray into new markets, including west India. From about 3,000 farmers, the number would increase to 10,000 farmers, said CEO P. Vijayaraghavan.

At the launch of the fresh vegetables brand in Hyderabad recently, Mr. Vijayaraghavan said the other processing centres would be set up in Bangalore and Pollachi. The investment in each could be between Rs. 2-5 crore.

Here's how to include quinoa in your diet



Consume quinoa, a full of protein, nutritious, easy-to-digest and gluten-free food item, either plain or as an ingredient in a grain salad, an expert suggests.

Here are five easy ways to include more quinoa into your every day eating:

Just plain:

Quinoa has a lovely, nutty flavor, and it can boil in less than 20 minutes. So, it's a great alternative to pasta or rice for a quick meal. Use quinoa just as you would any other grain, like rice or barley. It makes a fantastic side dish for almost any meal, especially if cooked it with broth instead of water and add a bay leaf to the pot. It can also be used in breakfast porridges, and salads.

Stuffed into vegetables:

Quinoa makes a great stuffing. We can enjoy quinoa and mushroom stuffed with zucchini. Grilled zucchini is usually assigned the lesser role of a side dish, adding a hearty grain stuffing raises it to a main course. For the filling, quinoa is cooked in a mixture of cashews, garlic, and seasonings that are mix together until thick and creamy, and then the whole thing is stuffed into hollowed-out zucchini. Serve with a vegetable salad for a healthy and enjoyable meal.

Substituted for another grain:

It has a similar texture when cooked to other superior and fluffy grains like bulgur wheat. So it's a great substitute in dishes that call for bulgur, like in this quinoa tabbouleh. Quinoa is first toasted to deepen its flavor, then cooked by the absorption method and combined with herbs and vegetables. This dish can be finished by drizzling a tablespoon of good-quality, strongly flavoured olive oil on top just prior to serving. White quinoa is the most common variety, but red quinoa is also available and has a nuttier taste. They can be used interchangeably.

In a grain salad:

Quinoa is a fabulous base for easy, quick, filling grain salads. Use quinoa as the basis for a light, whole-grain salad. Toss cooled quinoa with lightly diced tomato and cucumber, minced parsley, olive oil and a bit of lemon juice for a refreshing warm-weather side dish. Organic chicken quinoa salad is a hot favourite. Combine it with a mixture of organic garlic clove, organic chicken breasts, parmesan cheese, thinly chopped red onion, tomato, unsalted butter, and avocado and mix warm quinoa and a bit of organic lime juice. Cook on low heat and once cooked remove it.

For breakfast:

Quinoa's high protein content and fast cooking time makes it an immense breakfast. Boil quinoa as you would oats, using twice as much milk or water as quinoa, until it's gentle and the outer germ begins to spiral away from the seed. For an appetizing, satiating breakfast, mix almonds, chopped apple, raisins, cinnamon and a pinch of brown sugar into a hot bowl of quinoa and top it with a plain yogurt. Other ingredient options include chopped dates, dried cranberries, chopped walnuts, sliced banana fresh berries, ground flaxseed, diced peaches, pumpkin seeds, honey and maple syrup.

Health benefits of banana you did not know about!



Rich in nutrients including vitamins A, B, C and E along with minerals like potassium, zinc, iron, etc, banana is a strong source of energy. Here are some other health benefits of this versatile fruit.

Controls blood pressure:

According to research, the potassium in this fruit keeps the blood pressure levels in check and it can also help decrease its levels.'

Improves brain power:

A good source of vitamin B, banana helps perk up nerve function and boosts learning abilities.

Decreases the risk of stroke:

According to studies, regular consumption of a banana helps reduce the occurrence of stroke. Rich in antioxidants and dietary fibre, consumption of bananas is also said to reduce the risk of cancer.

Maintains bones:

Probiotic bacteria present in bananas is known to absorb calcium in the body. Hence, it helps in building better bones.

Enhances digestion:

The probiotics in banana help produce enzymes that enable absorption of nutrients, thus enhancing the digestive ability and preventing unfriendly bacteria from harming the body. Astringent in nature, raw bananas are effective in treatment for diarrhoea.

Relieves constipation:

Pectin found in bananas helps to alleviate constipation and improves bowel function.

Foods to avoid for high blood pressure



Do not panic if you have been diagnosed with High Blood Pressure. Besides regular exercise, one can control it with diet low in sodium and fat.

So here are some of the top foods you should avoid:

1. Pickles are low calorie but they are loaded with sodium.
2. Papads are again low calorie but high in sodium.
3. French Fries provide a large dose of fat and sodium. A medium serving of fries has about 19 grams of fat and 270 mg of sodium.
4. Bacon is mostly fat. Three slices have 4.5 grams of fat and about 270mg of sodium.
5. Readymade soup may be comfort food but it has about 800 mg of sodium in one cup serving.
6. Dairy is a great source of calcium, but high fat dairy sources, like whole

milk, provide more fat than you need. A one cup serving of whole milk provides eight grams of fat, five of which are saturated.

7. Alcohol consumption actively causes the blood pressure to elevate. It also damages the walls of the blood vessels, while simultaneously increases risks of further complications.

8. Donuts may be yummy, but they sure aren't very good for your health and body. Just one donut packs in 200 calories with 12 grams of fat.

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Get ready to pay more for those imported apples



With the Centre restricting imports of apple by allowing its inbound shipment only through Nhava Sheva port in Maharashtra, consumers down South and in the eastern parts of the country will have to shell out more for those imported apples.

Apples are the most heavily consumed imported fruit in India.

“Import of the item 'Apples'...is allowed only through Nhava Sheva port,” a DGFT notification said recently. If traders are to import apple consignments only via Nhava Sheva, they will have to transport the fruit in refrigerated

containers trucks to other parts of the country, which will push up the retail prices, trade sources said.

Chozha Naachiar Rajasekar, President of Tamil Chamber of Commerce, told *BusinessLine* that the Centre's move will affect the trade as the time taken for clearing consignments (obtaining no objection certificates, lab certificates from FSSAI) is likely to go up from five days to 25 days.

“Since apples come in reefer containers, the handling charge is high and now with all these delays in clearances, these handling/logistics costs are likely to go up by 5-10 times and will be passed on to the consumers,” Rajasekar said. At the retail end, prices may be higher by 1.5-2 times, he added.

Chennai port alone handles around 7,000-10,000 reefer containers of the fruit per annum.

Retail cost of Fuji apples in Chennai is at ₹210/kg, while a pack of six pieces of Washington Apples are traded at ₹189. The domestic varieties – Shimla apples are available in Southern cities at ₹80-100 a kg, while the apples from Kinnaur region in Himachal Pradesh – the latest to arrive in the market – are at around ₹90-100.

The move, which is being interpreted as a non-tariff barrier aimed at protecting domestic producers, has drawn flak from the trade which feels it not correct to allow imports only through one West Coast port.

Keith Sunderlal, CEO of the Gurgaon-based SCS Group, which is the in-country representative of the Washington Apple Commission, said that there may be a 15-20 per cent rise in retail prices and the impact will be felt towards the end of this month.

“The congestion at the Nhava Sheva Port will lead to delays in clearance of fresh fruits apart from having a detrimental impact on quality and enhanced costs for consumers,” Sunderlal said.

SCS has marketing services based in Gurgaon, and offices in Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

Rajasekar, who is also the Trustee of Chennai Port Trust, says the move is affecting the East Coast ports. “Recently, we met the Minister of State for Shipping and submitted a memorandum. We have also forwarded a letter to the Ministry of Commerce requesting to withdraw the notification and we are waiting to meet the Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman,” he added. India is the world’s third largest producer of apples and imports from the US, China, Chile, Fiji, Iran and New Zealand. Data from the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority point out that apple imports stood at 1.97 lakh tonnes valued at ₹1,388.72 crore in 2014-15 fiscal against 1.75 lakh tonnes valued at ₹1,176.03 crore in fiscal 2013-14.

Godrej Agrovet to bring 20,000 hectares under oil palm in Karnataka



Godrej Agrovet Ltd has set a target of bringing around 20,000 hectares of area under oil palm in the districts allocated to it in Karnataka by 2020.

Samir Pai Raikar, Deputy General Manager, Oil Palm Plantations, Godrej Agrovet Ltd, told *BusinessLine* that the company has got allotments in Belagavi, Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts; two taluks in Dharwad

district; and three taluks in Uttara Kannada district. The Karnataka government has identified 2.5 lakh hectares of land as having potential for oil palm cultivation. As of now, it is grown on 13,000 hectares. The government is developing these potential areas under the public-private partnership model. Five agencies have been allotted specific districts for oil palm development activities. Godrej Agrovet is one among them.

Their role is to develop oil palm plants, expand the area of cultivation, take up farm extension activities, buy FFBS from the growers at the price fixed by the State government, and process them in their units.

In Belagavi, the area identified by the government is around 40,000 hectares; Udupi and Dakshina Kannada put together the potential is in around 2,000 hectares, and around 1,000 hectares in Dharwad and Kalghatagi taluks of Dharwad district.

“We would like to cover at least 50 per cent of the potential area target by 2020,” Raikar said.

Pepper continues to stay flat

Pepper markets continued to stay flat on sluggish activities as everybody was reportedly waiting. An estimated 100-120 tonnes of allegedly tainted pepper are being sold at ₹640 a kg including freight and tax and delivered anywhere in India.

Traders said 11 tonnes of high range pepper were traded on the terminal market at ₹647-650 a kg. On the IPSTA exchange, all the active futures (October, November and December) were steady at ₹67,000, ₹65,500 and ₹65,500 a quintal. Export prices were at \$10,550 a tonne c&f for Europe and \$10,800 for the US.

Spot rubber rules steady

Spot rubber was steady on Thursday. The market lost its direction following an almost similar trend in the domestic and international trendsetters. RSS 4 continued to rule unchanged at ₹114 a kg, according to traders.

The grade was flat at ₹113.50 and ₹110.50 respectively, according to the Rubber Board and the dealers. October futures closed at ₹115 (₹114.82) November at ₹114.77 (₹114.75), December at ₹114.62 (₹114.67) and January at ₹114.50 (₹114.75) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. RSS 3 (spot) slid to ₹88.44 (₹88.51) at Bangkok.

October futures closed at ¥158.6 (₹86.20) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange. Spot rubber rates ₹/kg were: RSS-4: 114 (114); RSS-5: 111.50 (111.50); Ungraded: 105 (105); ISNR 20: 101.50 (101.50) and Latex (60% drc): 86.50 (86.50).

Higher volume at Coonoor tea sale



A volume of 4.93 lakh kg has been catalogued for the Dust Sale No: 41 of Coonoor Tea Trade Association to be held on Friday. Together with 11.68

lakh kg of Leaf, the total volume offered for this week is 16.61 lakh kg. This is as much as 3.71 lakh kg more than last week's offer.

Among the dusts, only 66,000 kg belongs to orthodox while 4.27 lakh kg, CTC. Last week, some teas were sold for as low as ₹38 a kg. "At such low prices, neither the factory nor the grower gets any worthwhile return.

As we fear that some such tea is used for adulteration, we have requested Tea Board to initiate necessary steps to rid the market of such vulnerable teas," Ramesh Bhojarajan, President, The Nilgiri Bought Leaf Tea Manufacturers' Association, told *BusinessLine*.

Business Standard

Vegetable prices go through the roof



Vegetables are steadily slipping out of the common man's plate, due to skyrocketing prices. Since the monsoon started about three months ago, prices of vegetables jumped by upto 157 per cent.

Data compiled by the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC), Vashi, showed prices of almost all vegetables had shot up sharply on lower

arrivals. For example, pointed gourd (parval) has seen a price rise of 157 per cent to trade in the range of Rs 3,000 to Rs 3,600 a quintal on Thursday, as against Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,400 a quintal three weeks ago. Other vegetables like bitter gourd, [brinjal](#) and cauliflower firmed up by upto 78 per cent since September 16.

“There are three major factors that contribute to a price rise in vegetables. Firstly, sowing was delayed due to late onset of the monsoon this season. Hence, harvesting is likely to witness a proportionate delay. Secondly, the monsoons were deficient in major producing regions like Jalgaon and Dhulia districts in Maharashtra, resulting in a lower yield in these regions. Thirdly, there were two-weeks-long extended monsoon showers across these major producing regions which hit matured crops. So, arrivals have become very thin these days,” said a senior official at the [APMC](#) in Vashi.

The recently ended southwest monsoon season was deficient by 16 per cent.





So, the fruit size of average kharif vegetables remained lower, due to lack of irrigation.

“Apart from that, there are reports of 30 per cent crop damage across Maharashtra. So, supply will continue to remain lower this year until new crops arrive at mandis, which is three months away. By then, consumers will have to live with high vegetable prices,” said Sanjay Bhujbal, a wholesale dealer of cauliflower, cabbage and brinjal in Vashi.

Data compiled by the government-owned National Horticultural Board (NHB) showed average arrivals of bitter gourd in Mumbai stood at a negligible 20 tonnes in October, as against 27 tonnes last year.

UPWARD SPIRAL

Vegetables' price movement for Vashi market (₹/quintal)

Particulars	Sep 16, 2015	Oct 08, 2015	Change (%)	
Pointed gourd	1,000-1,400	3,000-3,600	157.14	
Pumpkin	400-600	1,000-1,300	116.67	
Bitter gourd	400-900	1,200-1,600	77.78	
Brinjal	1,000-1200	1,400-2,000	66.67	
Ladies finger	1,500-1800	2,400-2,800	55.56	
Onion*	5100	4,200	-17.65	
Cucumber	1,200-1600	1,000-1,200	-25.00	

Source: Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee, Vashi, *Model price for Mumbai wholesale market

Arrivals declined across all vegetables and markets throughout the country.

Ladies finger recorded a 56 per cent increase, with prices in the range of Rs 2,400 to Rs 2,800 a quintal, from Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,800 a quintal three weeks ago.

Interestingly, its arrivals in the benchmark Ahmedabad mandi slumped to a mere 48 tonnes now, from 72 tonnes on September 16. In Azadpur mandi (near Delhi) too total arrivals of ladies finger fell to 64 tonnes from 89 tonnes three weeks ago, Agmarket data showed.

“Ladies finger is a very moisture-sensitive vegetable, which — if it gets wet, has a reduced shelf life. So, vegetables attract high moisture this season due to the extended monsoon in September. Consequently, there has been higher spoilage this year as compared to past seasons,” said Samir Inamdar, a ladies finger wholesaler at the Vashi APMC.

Around this time, arrivals begin in large quantity from Jalgaon and Dhulia, among other centres. However, this year, arrivals have been very low from these centres as well. With the rabi sowing of vegetables on in full swing, and harvesting set to start only by the end of December, vegetable prices are likely to remain high for the next 10 weeks.