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THE HINDU

Simple technologies offer effective solutions



Compared to grains like paddy or wheat, vegetables are considered quick money for a farmer. It takes 3-4 months for the vegetable crops to start yielding and generate income compared to paddy, wheat or fruit trees.

Having a shorter life span, the crops are more prone to insect pests and disease attack mainly due to their tender and soft skin.

Be it traditional varieties or hybrids the fact remains that the crop gets infested with pests and till date complete control over the pests has been a challenging task.

New problems

“Especially farmers’ dependence on pesticides and their indiscriminate use have made the pests resistant and also contaminate the vegetables since the soft skin absorbs the toxic within it. Introduction of high yielding varieties and hybrids, no

doubt, increased production manifold but also resulted in changes in pest scenario and many new pest problems have emerged,” says Dr. T.N. Devaraja, Programme coordinator, Taralabalu KVK, Davanagere, Karnataka.

A survey carried out in the country indicates that 50-70 per cent of vegetables are contaminated with insecticide residues, according to him.

It becomes the responsibility of the scientists and agricultural experts to create awareness among farmers about the right dosage of inputs to be used and if need be suggest alternatives to chemicals while taking care to see the yield does not dwindle.

Siddanur village in Davanagere district is a major tomato growing region and apart from tomatoes, maize, cotton, arecanut, banana, pomegranate and other vegetables are also cultivated.

Indiscriminate sprays

Farmers have been spraying huge amounts of pesticides for management of pest and diseases in these crops especially tomatoes.

But far from being solved the problem persisted.

Some of the farmers contacted the Taralabalu KVK for a viable solution.

“The village is situated 17 kilometres away from the district head quarters and has 200 farm families. When the farmers met us we decided to set up a pilot demonstration unit on composite management strategies for the crop in a field of a volunteer farmer,” says Mr. T.N. Prasanna Kumara, plant protection specialist at the institute.

It is a multidisciplinary model and has a special role in increasing the production of food grain, because it manages insect-pests through minimum use of pesticides, which helps in achieving

higher production.

Some of the technologies used in this method are nylon nets, planting marigold as trap crop, installation of bird perches, using 4-5 pheromone traps and application of bio inputs like trichoderma and neem cake.

Net income

The net return from these practices in the field for 4-5 months was Rs.1,69,000 from a hectare as compared to Rs.91,250 previously.

Farmers should take into account that this income has been generated in the field which had carried out all the specific instructions and was monitored by the expert team.

It was a pilot study to prove that adopting these types of practices can increase income from such crops, according to Mr. Prasanna.

“My personal opinion is that like grains, there should be a minimum support price for vegetables like onion, tomatoes and brinjals.

No proper pricing

“As of now there is no fixed slab on the market price for these vegetables and their sales has always been mercurial, sometimes farmers discarding the vegetables for lack of good price,” says Dr. Devaraja.

Farmers in the region were invited by the Kendra to see for themselves how this method has been helpful in increasing yield and income. The result is, today about 20 acres in the village have come under this technology.

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Farmers form a group, protect tank from plastics menace



People of Poongudi near Tiruchi have set an example of protecting a water body and for utilising it optimally for irrigating the fields.

The hard toil of the 60-odd farmers of Poongudi village in cultivating double crop every year has been paying dividend. About 200 acres of land is being irrigated by the tank which has a water spread of 140 acres. The villagers have formed “water user committee” which ensures proper maintenance of the tank, preventing it from pollution. “We do not allow plastic waste or garbage to be dumped in the tank,” says K. Seethapathi, organiser of the committee.

The committee meets periodically and keeps a close follow-up of the storage capacity and the quantum of water to be discharged daily. The people of the village had been forthcoming, facilitating farmers to raise two crops.

They have harvested “TNAU TRY Rice 3” introduced by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural College — Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute and are awaiting the second crop of ‘ADT 36’ or ‘CO (R) 50’ to be raised in a few months.

“We advise farmers not only to protect the tank but to ensure its judicious use through ‘tom tom’ during the course of irrigation,” says Mr. Seethapathi.

S. Narayanasamy, a progressive farmer and organiser of the People Welfare Committee, points out that the tank got its supply from Pudhu Kattalai Mettu Vaikkal.

Impressed by the proper management of the tank, Indian Farmers’ Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) chipped in with a free supply of gypsum to farmers to reduce the sodic effect. “The village, located in the Manikandam block, is affected by the sodic impact and the application of gypsum will ensure proper growth of the paddy crop,” says D. Subramanian, Chief Area Manager, IFFCO, which has adopted the village.

Farmers say they were not complacent with their achievement. “Although we have been raising two crops, we have the capacity to raise the third crop,” say Mr. Seethapathi and Mr. Narayanasamy.

They said that against the area of 140 acres, water was stored only on 80 acres. The villagers had been pleading for dredging the tank so that they could raise the third crop. “The villagers are prepared to even contribute their share if the State government mooted any proposal,” says Mr. Seethapathi.

After samba, dairy farmers head for Poongudi



Post-harvest period of “samba” crop every year marks a scramble for hay in several parts of the district. With poor availability of hay, livestock owners in and around Manapparai take all efforts to go in for bulk purchase of hay for sustained supply for their milch animals for the next six or seven months.

The hard efforts of farmers of Poongudi village near Navalur Kuttapattu has not only resulted in good yield in “samba” crop, but also fetched large volume of hay.

A large number of livestock owners make a beeline to Poongudi village to purchase the hay. A livestock owner from Kathikaranpatti, K. Rangan said that he owned 10 cows but acute scarcity of hay often resulted in poor milk yield. He had been purchasing hay from farmers of Poongudi village for the second consecutive year. A tractor load of hay was sold for Rs. 10,000. He had to compromise with the quality of the hay as the paddy had been harvested mechanically.

“Mechanical harvester damages hay to a great extent,” he says. The price would have been higher up to Rs. 15,000, had the paddy been harvested manually.

Livestock owners from Katthikaranpatti, Maravanur, Chinna Samuthiram, and Dhadha Naickanpatti –all about 15 km from Poongudi, make a beeline to the village.

Rangan, who owns and drives a tractor, says he could manage the expenditure on hay to a great extent through the bulk purchase. The fate of other members of the cooperative milk producers society at Katthikaranpatti was worse, as they could not afford to incur a huge expenditure on hay, he says.

Manapparai and surrounding areas are worst hit by serious depletion of groundwater which results in poor agricultural operation and less yield in hay. The gravity of this problem could be gauged from the fact that the Animal Husbandry Department operated special sales outlets in Manapparai and Valanadu, Valayapatti, and Marungapuri last season for the sale of subsidised hay to livestock farmers. Farmers in and around Thathaiengarpet have resorted to the use of maize trash as an alternative to hay.

N. Ganesan, state joint secretary of the Tamil Nadu Milk Producers Association, said the maize trash was a good alternative to hay. The abundant availability of the trash in places such as Thanthaiengarpet, Thuraiyur, and Uppliyapuram has come as a timely alternative fodder for the livestock in these blocks.

Official sources said the problem was less in villages in and around Lalgudi where the groundwater level was fairly good. There was a growing demand among farmers for starting similar depots in the “dry belts” such as Manapparai in the district this year too. A decision on starting the depots would be taken only after the model code of conduct was withdrawn, sources said.

Water release benefits farmers in Anthiyur



Water was released from the Varattupallam Dam on Wednesday for irrigating nearly 3,000 acres spread over Ennamangalam, Sankaraapalayam and nearby villages.

District Collector S. Prabakar and Anthiyur MLA S.S. Ramanidharan opened the sluices in the presence of senior officials of Public Works, Forest, and Agriculture departments.

According to officials, water will be released for 78 days in six stages into the main canal, and the first, second and third branch canals for cultivation of cotton, gingelley, ground nut, and other rain-fed crops.

The first cycle of water release for a duration of 18 days will end on March 1.

Thereafter, water will be released in 12-day durations for the rest of the five cycles.

In the final cycle, water will be released from May 13 to 25.

Thanks to comfortable storage owing to copious monsoon rain, farmers in Anthiyur area are able to get water for cultivation this time after a gap of a few years.

In all, 2,924 acres will benefit from the water release.

The dam owned by the Forest Department was being frequented by wild animals over the years, particularly during summer months. The Dam's location came under reserve forest area after the Forest Conservation Act 1980 came into effect.

Cooperation rendered by the Forest Department was vital for the Public Works Department to utilise the dam for irrigation purposes, official sources said.

Since the dam is an important water source for wild animals, the Forest department has not permitted tourism promotion.

Farmers advised to sell coconut soon after harvest



The Agro Market Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI&BPC), Tiruchi, has advised farmers to sell coconut and copra upon harvest immediately as prices are unlikely to increase after April.

In an advisory to farmers, the AMI&BPC said the price of coconut at the Pollachi market is expected to rule in the range of Rs. 14 to Rs. 15 per nut (550-600 grams in weight) during February-March.

Copra price will be range from Rs. 94 to Rs. 96 a kg at Avalpoondurai regulated market.

Citing an econometric analysis of coconut and copra prices over the past 15 years in Pollachi and 14 years in Avalpoondurai markets carried out by AMI & BPC, the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, the advisory said price of coconut would be lower by one or three rupees in other markets in comparison to Pollachi market.

The price of coconut is ruling around Rs. 28,500 a tonne in Pollachi market, accounting for approximately Rs.16 to Rs. 17 a nut for average size weighing 550 to 660 grams. Current arrivals from Tamil Nadu have commenced and arrivals from Kerala and Karnataka will begin from February first week onwards. The good monsoon would boost coconut production in forthcoming months. Currently, copra is ruling at Rs. 96 to Rs. 98 a kg in Avalpoondurai regulated market in Tamil Nadu.

India is the third largest coconut producer after Indonesia and Philippines. In 2013-14, coconut was cultivated on an area of 2.15 million hectares with a production of 16.56 million tonnes of nuts.

In 2012-13, coconut was mainly cultivated on 83,341 hectares of land in Coimbatore, 53,661 hectares in Tirupur, 34,747 hectares in Thanjavur, 29,932 hectares in Dindigul, 24,502 hectares in Kanyakumari, 22,720 hectares in Vellore, 19,967 hectares in Theni, 15,834 hectares in Krishnagiri and 15,806 hectares in Tirunelveli, the price advisory said.

Special subsidy scheme for agricultural inputs launched

A special subsidy scheme for agricultural inputs under the aegis of Department of Agricultural Engineering is opened for Adidravidar farmers here in the district.

According to a press release, de-weeders of 8 HP capacity, transplanters, harvesters, rotavaters, powertillers, automated plates, seed broadcasters, fodder cutters, hay binders, earth levellers, nursery machines, water sprayers, and other agricultural implements are proposed to be issued under subsidy under the scheme for Adidravidar and Scheduled Tribe farmers here.

Under this, an allocation of Rs.22.73 lakh has been made for the district.

Those seeking to benefit under the scheme are requested to make an application along with their pattas and sittas to the Executive Engineer, Agricultural Engineering, Dharmapuri Collectorate (04342-230948); Assistant Executive Engineer, Collectorate; and Assistant Executive Engineer, Govindasamy Nagar, Harur (04346-221316) .

Further details may be ascertained over 1800-425-7016.

Farm show at Pilicode RARS from today

The Regional Agricultural Research Station (RARS) at Pilicode will host an exhaustive six-day farm show from Thursday with the objective of luring more youth to farming and updating farmers with the developments in the sector.

The show is being held on over 30 acres of RARS as part of its year-long centenary celebrations.

The show, said to be the first of its kind in the country, will be inaugurated at 10.30 a.m. by select students from Kasaragod and Kannur districts. It is conceived as an innovative programme in which a visitor would be able to walk across the farm for a different learning experience in its rose garden, mango orchard, coconut groves, and crop and livestock units, RARS Associate Director K. Abdul Kareem said.

Exhibition stalls will be set up. Sale counters of planting materials and value-added products will be arranged at the show, which will conclude on February 17.

Cannonballs found in agricultural field

A cache of ancient cannonballs were found near Chengam. Chinnasamy of Thokkavadi Kollakottai found these balls when tilling his land sometime ago and heaped them near his land.

Officials informed

When an archaeological aficionado came to know of the thing he informed the authorities of it.

Officials led by Tahsildar Dinakaran and Deputy Superintendent of Police Vaithilingam rushed to the spot and appraised the object.

After consultations with experts in the field the officials came to the conclusion that the balls were cannonballs used in the past as projectiles.

130 balls

There were 130 cannonballs in the pot unearthed by the farmer. They were all deposited in the government treasury.

Managing sugary ergot in sorghum

Ergot, usually known as sugary disease is widespread in India. Individual grains are infected and in some years grain formation is reduced to a large extent.

In South India the disease is prevalent from October to January in the crop maturing stage during cold weather. Sometimes it is observed in the summer crop also. Ergot infection is conspicuous from blossoming of the cereals to maturity of the plants.

Symptom

Infection is first evident in the conidial honeydew stage of the pathogen when masses of conidia are exuded in sugary suspension on the inflorescence.

The exudation accumulates in droplets or adheres to the surface of the floral structure.

Insects feed on this nectar-like mass and their presence is conspicuous around the infected spikelet. Soon the infected ovaries are transformed into black, horn like structures.

Humid weather or rains at the heading time are favourable for infection. Late sown crops are infected to a large extent.

Commercial grain sorghum hybrids will likely have a negligible incidence of ergot during normal growing seasons, because their high self-fertility results in rapid pollination, greatly reducing the risk of infection.

Management

The seeds can be partially cleaned by immersion in 20 per cent solution of common salt.

The seeds float on the surface and can be manually removed.

Adjustment of sowing time may sometimes be helpful in managing the disease.

There is no effective method of controlling sugary disease, though fungicides like ziram, captan or Propiconazole 0.2 per cent foliar spray at the stage of just before earhead emergence and repeated 2-3 times at 5-7 days interval can help.

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Students urged to take up research in basic science

Deputy Commissioner K.V. Thrilokchandra has called upon students to pursue study and research in basic sciences.

“We are living in the research era. It was necessary to pursue studies and research in basic science, which is vital for the development of the country,” he said.

He was speaking after the inauguration of ‘Skopion Scientia’, a two-day lecture workshop on elevation in sciences at T. Chennaiah Rangamandira here on Wednesday.

The Deputy Commissioner exhorted the students from the district to concentrate on local issues. Taking up research in crop science will help farmers of water-deficient regions, he said.

Dipshika Chakravorthy of the Indian Institute of Science said such programmes aim at creating interest in science among students, particularly girls.

Anjanappa, principal of Government College for Women, said social norms, lack of time and lack of family support are acting as hurdles for women to pursue a career in research.

Jumbo plans to protect rainforests



Indonesia: Indonesian men ride on Sumatran elephants as they patrol through a dense jungle in the west of the tropical archipelago, like warriors on the front line of the fight against illegal logging and poaching.

They trek alongside rivers, over rough terrain and deep into the rainforest in an area that is home to numerous endangered species, from orangutans to tigers. The sprawling Indonesian archipelago has large swathes of tropical forest but vast tracts are being felled to make way for palm oil and pulp and paper plantations, destroying bio-diverse habitats and adding to greenhouse gas emissions.

Much of the logging that takes place is illegal as it happens outside concessions granted to companies, but it is hard for authorities to keep track. Poaching of endangered species is also common, with elephants killed for their ivory and tigers for their pelts.

The elephant patrol project, run with communities in the Trumon district of Aceh province, on Sumatra island, aims to give a helping hand.

It employs local men as “mahouts”, or elephant-keepers, who keep a lookout for illegal logging and poaching and report it to authorities to follow up.

25 keepers

Hendra Masrijal, 33, quit his job as a food vendor to become a mahout. He is among a group of about 25 keepers involved in the scheme, including former separatists who fought against the central government until a peace deal was struck a decade ago.

“It makes me sad when I see pictures of elephants killed by poachers for their tusks,” Masrijal told AFP. “Their habitat is also being encroached (on) by farmers and villagers.”

The patrols deep into the jungle last between two and seven days, with mahouts normally spending 15 to 20 days a month on expeditions.

The initiative covers a vast area of 27,000 hectares (66,700 acres) called the “Trumon Wildlife Corridor”, which is wedged between two conservation areas. Authorities are currently trying to push through legislation to give it protected status. The programme has staff who conduct training in local communities and develop eco-tourism to give villagers who have traditionally lived off illegal practices an alternative livelihood. Tisna Nando, a spokeswoman for USAID, which has funded the expansion of the project over the past year, said communities were “enthusiastic” about the initiative.

“They see that they can actually benefit economically from protecting the forest in the area, rather than cutting it down,” she told AFP.

A study last year published in the journal Nature Climate Change showed that Indonesia had for the first time surpassed Brazil in its rate of tropical forest clearance, despite a moratorium on new logging permits imposed several years ago.

E.G. tops in paddy procurement

East Godavari district topped in paddy procurement in the State by procuring 4.26 lakh tonnes of paddy by opening 180 paddy procurement centres, according to K. Ram Gopal, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of the Civil Supplies Corporation.

Reviewing the functioning of the department with district officials here on Wednesday, Mr. Ram Gopal said that in all 15.4 lakh tonnes of paddy had been procured from farmers this season, and that the direct purchase system had been implemented in six districts including East Godavari. “Following the successful procurement, we have decided to implement the same in the entire State from the next season. Arrangements are in place to make quick payments to farmers and to send the produce for custom milling at the earliest,” he said.

Joint Collector S. Satyanarayana was present.

Farmers urge CCI to open office in Perambalur

Farmers of Perambalur district have appealed to Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) to open its office and procure cotton from farmers of the district.

Raja Chidambaram, president of Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, said that CCI has opened 343 offices in 11 States but has not opened a single centre in Tamil Nadu.

Perambalur is a major cotton cultivating district in Tamil Nadu.

Reasonable price

Price of one quintal of cotton was Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 8,000 last year and this year it is only Rs. 3,700. CCI can provide a reasonable price for the cotton procured from farmers if it opens its procurement centres in the district, Mr. Chidambaram said.

He said that the Government should bring a Cotton Control Act such as Sugar Control Act.

Farmers have decided to organise agitation in support of these demands soon, Mr. Chidambaram said.

Mobile procurement: small farmers want to form clusters

The setting up of mobile paddy procurement centres has brightened farmers' hopes as they could now sell their produce at their doorsteps without the interference of any middlemen.

The harvest of 'samba' has been in full swing and mobile procurement enables them to sell their produce without hassle.

Each farmer sells a minimum of 300 bags of paddy, and they are now saved from the additional expenditure of transporting the commodity to the DPCs.

300 bags

However, small and marginal farmers with less than 300 bags are not covered under the scheme.

A cross-section of small farmers, who have less than 300 bags, demand formation of a farmers' clusters to help them pool their produce to cross the 300-bag limit.

“The objective of the mobile paddy procurement would be achieved through the formation of such clusters,” say a cross-section of farmers.

Farmers evince interest in high-breed bitter gourd

The farmers of Thammampatti, Gengavalli and the surrounding areas have evinced keen interest in raising high-breed bitter gourd.

The farmers procure the seeds of F1 variety bitter gourd from private farms in Kallakurichi and Sinna Salem areas. The cost of a kg of seed is Rs. 8,000.

The bitter gourd thrives in hot and humid climates and propagation is through direct seedling and transplanting. The availability of fertile, well drained soil has encouraged the farmers of Thammampatti and Gengavalli to opt for bitter gourd in a big way. Regular watering is essential for its growth.

Flowers will start appearing within a few weeks and fruition will occur from about two months after sowing and continues for about six months.

According to M. Sekar, a progressive farmer of Thammampatti, he procured 100 grams seeds from Kallakurichi for Rs. 800 and sowed the same in the recent past. A couple of F1 variety bitter gourds will weigh about half a kg, he says adding that fruition will be continued till six months.

This variety will be less bitter compared to the traditional variety, he says.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

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Agro apps make life easier for farmers

HUBBALLI: While the nation is talking about Prime Minister Modi's dream of Digital India and Make in India, a start-up firm from Hagaribommanahalli, Ballari district is taking the lead in digitizing the agri sector. Two young professionals, who worked in different corporates in India and abroad, are helping over 15,000 farmers of the state by developing 18 mobile apps about different crops.

Anand Babu Chitav adigi, 37, an alumnus of IIM Bangalore, who worked for 13 years in the corporate sector, and Shiva Lotinakari, 36, a mechanical engineer who worked in telecom companies for eight years, have floated the social entrepreneurship firm Jayalaxmi Agrotech. Anand and Shiva, who were in Hubballi for Development Dialogue-2015, said they started working together two years ago and realised their dream of apps for farmers last September.

"Ever since farmers started growing crops, raising livestock and catching fish, they always sought information. However, there is a huge information gap and that made us help farmers," they said.

Anand said their primary focus is to bring cutting-edge technologies like Mobility, Analytics and Cloud (MAC) together and place them into the hands of farmers. "We've developed several dedicated apps for specific crops for farmers in regional languages. Applications are designed with care to break the literacy barrier and deliver the information. They're equipped with audio-visuals and a graphic interface. Over 50,000 farmers have benefited by these apps," he said.

These apps can be downloaded from Google Playstore by using the search words 'Jayalaxmi Agrotech' for a nominal fee.

THE HINDU Business Line

Banana prices to remain stable till April



Agricultural economists expect the price of the poovan, karpooravalli and nendran banana to remain stable till April 2015 at least in Coimbatore.

After analysing the price movement of these cultivars, the Back Office of Agro Marketing Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI &BPC) operating in the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University said that the farmers can expect up to Rs. 17 a kg for the

poovan, Rs. 18 – 20 /kg for karpooravalli and nendran at the farm gate.

Poovan, a promising cultivar is used extensively in both – Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The leaf and the fruit is used during poojas in temples. The market price of the fruit is presently quoting at Rs. 22/kg in the wholesale commission market.

Karpooravalli, which has more sweetness than other varieties, has better consumer preference among Kerala buyers, though next only to nendran. The prevailing market price is Rs. 25 per kg.

Nendran is most preferential cultivars in Kerala is cultivated mainly to cater to the demands of Kerala consumers. Nendran banana fetches maximum price during the Onam and Magarajothi seasons. The price then slackens only to pick up during Vishu.

During April 2015, Chithirai First day will be celebrated as Vishu in Kerala and as Tamil New Year in Tamil Nadu. That particular week, the price of Poovan and Nendran may trade in high prices and remaining period will witness stable price, the CARDS spokesperson said, advising farmers to harvest the fruit around festival period.

Business Standard

Corn farmers pin hopes on local poultry feed demand

Exports likely to ease almost 12% to 2.2-2.3 million tonne in the year to September 2015



Indian corn producers, after scoring virtually no major export deal for months, are counting on local chicken farms to absorb millions of tonnes of the grain as [poultry](#) output heads for yet another record year.

India, a key exporter of the grain to Asia, has struggled to find takers for its relatively expensive corn after global benchmark prices hit five-year lows late last year on record production in the United States and South America.

"No major corn export deal has been signed since October," according to Amit Sachdev, India Representative of the US Grains Council, leaving grain with the producers.

Rising domestic orders for chicken feed will help soak up some of the grain, with poultry producers expected to increase corn consumption by around 10% this year, analysts say.

India's poultry output has been scaling yearly records as higher incomes boost demand for meat in the world's second-most populous country after China. India's broiler production will hit a fresh all-time high of 3.9 million tonne in 2015, US Department of Agriculture estimates published in October show.

"We expect to breed about 10% more chicken in 2015 from 2014," said Prasanna Pedgaonkar, deputy general manager at Venky's, an Indian chicken processing and product firm that also owns the English football club Blackburn Rovers.

The higher use of corn as feed would make up somewhat for weak exports that traders see easing by as much as 12% to 2.2-2.3 million tonne in the year to September 2015.

Indian chicken farms will consume 10-10.5 million tonne of local corn this year, up 1 million tonne from 2014, according to Deepak Chavan, a commodity analyst with Agro Futures.

LOCAL CORN DEMAND EYED

Major Indian [corn exports](#) have ground to a halt as buyers balk at the sizeable premium for Indian supplies.

Despite a 10% drop in Indian corn prices to around \$20 per 100 kg since August, export rates of \$210-\$220 a tonne, free on board, remain significantly higher than the \$180-\$190 quoted by the United States.

India usually attracts deals when it offers corn at a 5-6% discount to rival supplies. It is expected to produce around 22 million tonne of corn this year, dealers said, down 10% from a year ago.

With export deals hard to come by, demand from the poultry sector is what [corn farmers](#) are now pinning their hopes on.

It is more feasible for poultry farms to source their corn locally as imported corn would be expensive after including freight charges and other transportation costs, traders said.

India's per capita chicken consumption is among the lowest at around 3.5 kilogram (kg) versus a global average of 11.6 kg, but

that is fast changing due to new food consumption trends and a younger average age of the population, industry sources say.

Michelin-starred Indian chef Vikas Khanna said the age groups of 12 to 35 years order poultry the most, using his restaurant Junoon in New York as a case in point.

More than half of India's population is below 25 years and the average Indian age is set to be 29 in 5 years, a demographic that suggests poultry demand will continue rising.