

17-06-2015

# THE HINDU

**U.S. to curb trans fats by 2018**



*New law may ban use of partially hydrogenated oils or trans fats, which clog arteries, without prior regulator approval.*

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has announced that it will seek to eliminate majority of partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) from the country's food supply by 2018. The decision comes after years of lobbying by health advocates and scientists that artificial oils, commonly called "trans fats", clog arteries and raise the risk of heart disease.

The FDA aims to revoke the current status of PHOs as a "generally recognised as safe" food product and reclassify it as a "food additive." This implies that manufacturers would no longer be able to use the oils in other foods without prior regulator approval.

The new policy could prevent as many as 20,000 heart attacks and 7,000 deaths from heart disease each year in the country. FDA said the action "demonstrates the agency's commitment to the heart health of all Americans."

The popularity of trans fats in the U.S. soared in the 1940s, emerging as a key ingredient in everything from cake mixes to pizza. Since 2006 the FDA has insisted that food firms include trans fat content information on labels. Although the consumption of trans fat fell nearly 80 per cent between 2003 and 2012, more studies emerged suggesting its harmful effects. A 2002 investigation by the Institute of Medicine found there was "no safe level of trans fatty acids and people should eat as little of them as possible."

By November 2013 the FDA recognised trans fats as a threat to public health. It released a tentative determination that PHOs were not generally recognised as safe and opened up the matter for public comment from consumers, industry, advocacy groups and academic researchers.

This week's reform could hold lessons for the regulation of trans fat use in foods in developing countries such as India, where the weight of scientific evidence pointing to the risk between PHOs and heart disease is considerable.

### **Pesticide testing lab gets permanent building**



A permanent building for State Pesticide Testing Laboratory constructed at a cost of Rs. 60 lakh under National Agriculture Development Program was commissioned on Tuesday by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa.

The facility set to function in the 4,000 sq ft building, was long-awaited. So far, the laboratory used to function out of a rented building at Karunkalpalayam.

Pesticide sellers flouting norms, determined on the basis of analysis at the laboratory, face prosecution under the Insecticides Act 1968, said District Collector S. Prabakar after the building was commissioned by Chief Minister through videoconferencing.

Last year, 1,007 samples were collected and 884 were analysed for their properties. On an average, 850 pesticide samples are tested every year, the Collector said.

The laboratory was among a handful of buildings inaugurated on Tuesday.

The other facilities include an agricultural complex constructed at a cost of Rs. 1.2 crore and a cold storage established at an investment of Rs. 1 crore at Sathyamangalam, and a regulated marketing complex worth Rs. 1 crore at Poolapalayam.

In all, buildings worth Rs. 4.24 crore were launched, officials said.

### **Farmers prepare land for sowing**

Though the district is yet to receive monsoon, farmers and the agriculture department are ready for kharif sowing.

According to sources, kharif sowing normally starts in the second week of May. However, owing to the slight delay in receiving rain, the sowing is expected to commence in the last week of this month.

“The district has received scattered rain, but full rain is expected within a week. This would enable the farmers to take up sowing operations extensively,” said an official. Meanwhile, the farmers have already prepared their land for cultivation and are waiting for the rain.

He said that the department this year has set a targeted sowing area of 4.32 lakh hectare for kharif season in the district.

Of the total targeted area, Toor has the highest share of 1.83 lakh hectare, which is close to fifty per cent of the total targeted showing area for kharif season.

“Though over the years, Toor cultivation has been constantly increasing, now, it apparently has reached the saturation limit. At the most, this year, Toor would be cultivated in a maximum of 2 lakh hectare,” the official said. The reason for the increasing attraction for Toor is believed to be higher revenue within a short period.

“The market price for Toor has been encouraging for the farmers. Moreover, several pest-resistant varieties have also been developed by the universities, which are helpful for the farmers,” the officials said.

### **Other crops**

The other crops are: Bajra (millet) which is targeted to be sown in 77,500 hectares, groundnut in 24,500 hectares, sunflower in 21,000 hectares, cotton 10,500 hectares and green gram in 14,500 hectares.

## **‘Ensure GPS is installed in trucks transporting fertilizer’**

*To avoid illegal supply, issue permits only to such trucks: zilla panchayat president*

Umesh Kolkur, zilla panchayat president, has directed ZP CEO K.B. Shivakumar to ensure the installation of GPS system in all lorries that transport fertilizer from warehouses to cooperative associations.

Chairing the KDP meeting here on Tuesday, he asked the CEO to permit the transport of fertilizer only to those vehicles that are fitted with GPS.

### **Illegal supply**

This would avoid illegality in the supply of fertilizer, he said.

Mr. Kolkur instructed the officials of the Agriculture Department to ensure adequate stock of seeds and fertilizer, as the sowing is expected to start in a few days.

### **Dual admission**

Stating that according to a rough estimate, there were about 10,000 students taking dual admissions in anganwadi centres, Mr. Kolkur instructed the officials of Women and Child Welfare Department to conduct an investigation and submit the report.

### **Online recruitment**

He directed Mr. Shivakumar to submit a proposal for recruitment of Anganwadi workers through the online process to avoid any discrepancies and frauds.

Stating that the demand for Morarji Desai and Kittur Rani Chennamma residential schools had been increasing, the president asked the officials of social welfare to seek more schools from the government.

### **Tough stand**

Taking a tough stand on the reports of increasing number of quacks and unregistered hospitals in the district, Mr. Kolkur directed the officials of District Health and Family Welfare to investigate and conduct raids to curb these illegal doctors and hospitals. “If required, take the help of police to arrest and book criminal cases against such people who are playing with the lives of innocent people,” he said.

Gundappa, DHO, informed that meeting that as per the preliminary investigation, the district has 387 unregistered clinics.

### **‘Produce documents’**

Already notices have been served to 100 clinics asking them to either produce the legal documents or face action.

“FIR has been filed against three clinics.

“In the next three months, action would be taken against all quacks and illegal clinics of the district,” he assured.

Vice president Ninganagouda Patil and officials of various departments were present.

### **Merger of extension plans sought**



R. Muralidhara Prasad, former Associate Director of Extension, Kerala Agricultural University, inaugurating a training-cum-workshop at the CPCRI in Kasaragod on Monday.

There is a greater relevance for convergence of extension initiatives in the plantation sector for inclusive development, R. Muralidhara Prasad, former Associate Director of Extension, Kerala Agricultural University, has said.

There are many institutions, schemes, and programmes to develop farming and to serve the agrarian sector. However, they work in isolation and there is no convergence, which is viewed as the new mantra of development, Dr. Prasad said.

He was inaugurating a three-day training-cum-workshop on ‘Convergence of extension initiatives in plantation sector for inclusive development’ at the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) here on Monday.

Institutions working in the plantation sector are now on a common platform, which is the need of the hour, he said. Dr. Prasad said there were many challenges facing agriculture, categorised such as demographic, technological, organisational, ecological and economic. Those situations have to be addressed by the extension system.

Farming has to be considered as an enterprise and extension personnel should facilitate the farmers in this direction, Dr. Prasad added. Presiding over the function, P. Chowdappa, Director, CPCRI said the initiatives taken by the CPCRI achieved convergence in implementing the front-line extension services in coconut, areca nut, and cocoa.

### **Now, get cyclone alerts on your mobile phone**

Your phone will alert you to cyclones brewing off the coast. In line with its various user services, the India Meteorological Department recently started a service to send mobile-phone alerts on cyclones.

S.P. Thampi, Deputy Director-General of Meteorology, says those wishing to receive the text messages may register their details on the department's website.

Many people, including many officers involved in disaster management and farmers, are now registering for the free national-level service.

The department's officials say registered users will get alerts relevant to their region. The department has already been offering Agromet advisory mobile services to over two lakh registered farmers to enable them to plan activities.

The text messages sent twice a week comprise weather forecast and advice on crops and other agricultural aspects.

Several agencies such as the Horticulture Department and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University too provide advisories.

Farmers who have registered on [mkisan.gov.in](http://mkisan.gov.in) too benefit from the Agromet mobile service. At present, users log in on the website to know the forecast before going on a tour or planning other activities.

The department is considering offering venue-specific forecasts and weather alerts through text messages.

### **Ryots intensify farm activities**

Buoyed over the bountiful rains during the last few days in various parts of the district, the farming community had intensified their farm activities by taking up cultivation on a massive scale.

Though, the rains have started during the first week of this month, but they were intensified during the last one week.



## SOWING COMMENCES



*Farm labourers sowing maize seed in a field in Ramadugu mandal of Karimnagar district.*

PHOTO: THAKUR AJAYPAL SINGH

District receives average of **72.4** mm rainfall against the expectations of the authorities.

**27** mandals received excess rainfall and **12** mandals received normal rainfall against a total of **57** mandals.

Area of cultivation is likely to go up from normal area of **5.16** lakh hectares to **5.8** lakh hectares.

Good inflows into the minor irrigation tanks due to removal of silt under the Mission Kakatiya programme.

Farmers confident of further intensification of rains during July and August

The Agricultural Department authorities had instructed the farmers to take up sowing of seeds only after they receive average rainfall of 65 mm to 70 mm. But, the district had received an average of 72.4 mm rainfall, which was more than the expectation.

Incidentally, 27 mandals had received excess rainfall and 12 mandals received normal rainfall against a total of 57 mandals in the district. There was deficit rainfall in 14 mandals and scanty rainfall only in four mandals viz., Husnabad, Sarangapur, Jagtial and Medipalli mandals till June 15.

The farm activities have been intensified in the Sircilla, Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Manthani and Huzurabad and Jagtial divisions. Surprisingly, the 'Mission Kakatiya' programme had become a boon to farming community with the minor irrigation tanks receiving good inflows following the recent rains.

Agricultural Department authorities said that the area of cultivation of various crops during this kharif season is likely to reach 5.8 lakh hectares against the normal area of 5.16 lakh hectares. Thanks to the 'Mission Kakatiya' programme and increase of groundwater table in the minor irrigation tanks and the availability of power to the farm sector, the paddy cultivation is also likely to increase from 1.63 lakh hectares to 2.2 lakh hectares.

The cotton cultivation is also likely to increase during this kharif season from the normal area of 2,30,589 hectares to 2.60 lakh hectares. The farmers have also intensified the cultivation of maize, soyabean and other crops following the bountiful rains.

Officials said that there were taking all measures to provide adequate quantity of BT cotton seed and fertilizer to the farmers. They had also constituted special mobile teams to check the supply of spurious seeds and hoarding of fertilizer.

### **Low rainfall in dam catchment area**

While power generation has remained low, water level in the Idukki dam is yet to rise owing to less rainfall in the catchment area.

The water level on Tuesday was 2,330.32 ft against 2,308.88 ft the same day last year.

An official of the Dam Monitoring and Research Station, Vazhathope, said the dam had water over 33 percentage of the total reservoir level.

It does not raise concern on the power generation front, the official said adding that power production at the Moolamattom power house was 4.88 mu on Tuesday. On Monday, it was 4.14 mu, Sunday, 4.75 mu, and Saturday, 6.46 mu.

Rainfall recorded in the catchment area on Tuesday was 20.4 mm. With a high level of water storage and good summer rain, the Kerala State Electricity Board hopes for better water level this monsoon season.

### **Water level to go up**

The water level is expected to increase in a couple of days after the monsoon gains strength, the official said adding that there had been a minor decline in water level each day for the past few days.

The water level in Idukki had reached the brim in 2013 at 2,411 ft.

Rainfall gained strength on June 24 and 25 last year to show a marginal increase in the water level.

This season, the summer rain contributed positively to a better water position, the official said adding that if the catchment area received average rainfall, there would be considerable storage in the dam.

Meanwhile in Peerumade taluk, which lies in the upstream of the Periyar, the main source of the Idukki dam, there was a rainfall of 38 mm on Tuesday.

The water level in the Mullaperiyar dam in the upstream was 115.5 ft on Tuesday.



Each day, the water level was 0.1 ft lower than the previous day due to the controlled intake of water by Tamil Nadu.

### **Eatables sold after expiry date destroyed**

Food Safety officials raided shops in and around Corporation Bus Stand and confiscated eatables sold beyond expiry date.

The raids carried out based on a complaint were conducted at shops selling snacks and fruit juices. According to the Designated Officer for Erode District, Food Safety and Drug Administration G. Karunanidhi, junk food worth more than Rs. 20,000 were destroyed.

A five-member team Dr. Karunanidhi led also found a few hotels using rotten fruits for making fresh juice.

The fruits were also confiscated and destroyed. Food safety officers in the team also fanned out to roadside push carts selling gruel made of millet varieties using harmful colouring agents and destroyed the stock.

### **Yet another food product in trouble**

Yet another food product is in trouble as a consumer, accompanied by around 50 friends and relatives, approached Tamil Nadu Food Safety and Drug Administration Department (Food Safety Wing) office here and claimed that they found live weevils, a type of beetle, inside a baby food packet.

In his complaint, he claimed that he had purchased a packet of product from a retail outlet in Selvapuram four days ago. When he opened it on Tuesday, he found live weevils in it. Following the complaint, Food Safety Wing Designated Officer R. Kathiravan led a team and found out the batch from which this packet was sold. He traced it to the wholesale dealer and took three samples.

These would be tested at the Government Food Safety Laboratory here. Coimbatore has one of the six laboratories approved under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

### **CM inaugurates four cold storages**

Collector M.Ravikumar at the grading laboratory in Tuticorin on Tuesday.— Photo : N. RAJESH

To preserve freshness and maintain quality of vegetables, four cold storage units have come into existence at the regulated markets in Kovilpatti, Ettayapuram, Pudur and Kalugumalai.

The facility established through the Department of Agriculture was inaugurated by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa through video-conferencing on Tuesday.



Each of the cold storage unit with a capacity of 25 tonnes was set up at a cost of Rs.31.80 lakh. Besides, a new grading laboratory (State Agmark lab) at a cost of Rs.20 lakh in Tuticorin to certify agriculture crops was also inaugurated by the Chief Minister.

Collector M. Ravikumar along with officials from the Agriculture Department visited the lab and a cold storage unit at Pudur and took stock of the facilities.

The Collector said the farmers could avail these new facilities at low rent.

Joint Director of Agriculture, V. Jeyakumar, Deputy Director of Agriculture Marketing, Marimuthu, and others accompanied the Collector.

### **Ancient rainwater harvesting structure to be renovated**

*Project report ready at an estimate of Rs.87.19 lakh with community support*



Facelift: The rainwater harvesting structure built during the Chola period in Nagapattinam district.

An unused rainwater harvesting structure near Tirukadaiyur, built during the Chola period, will be restored to its past glory thanks to an initiative taken under the 'self-sufficiency scheme.'

The rainwater harvesting structure is a large square tank, measuring 85 metres on each side. Though it was up to the brim during the monsoon in the past decades, the storage got dried up during the summer. Formation of silt was another major problem due to the absence of bund walls.

The tank is located at Pillaipereumalnallur beside the Sri Brahmmapuriswarar Temple. Even now water for some daily rituals for the presiding deity of Sri Abirami in the adjoining temple at Tirukadaiyur is taken from one of the wells of this temple. Inaccessibility to the tank has been one of the main problems faced by the residents of a cluster of village in and around Pillaiperumalnallur which has a population of about 2,500.

Based on repeated plea from villagers, the district administration mooted a plan to take up the work under the self-sufficiency scheme.

A project report was prepared at an estimate of Rs.87.19 lakh with community support. "It has been planned to dredge the entire tank so as to enhance its capacity for storage. Steps would be taken to facilitate access to the tank for the villagers," said S. Palanisamy, Collector.

The PPN Power Generating Company has come forward to contribute Rs. 29,06,400, being one-third share of the public.

"The power plant has contributed the share under the Corporate Social Responsibility," said S. Gopal, senior vice-president (Plant) of the firm.

He said the water available in the tank would facilitate re-charging of the groundwater table in the cluster of hamlets in the vicinity. "Acute drinking water scarcity is often witnessed during the summer season. The firm has come forward to contribute the share on behalf of the villagers," he said.

"PPN Power Generating Company is a private power plant having its name derived from the name of the village Pillaiperumalnallur where the plant is located, which is in operation since April 2001. It is a gas turbine / steam turbine based combined cycle power plant of 330 MW capacity. PPN village panchayat comprises small hamlets like Kezhaththeru, Vadkkuththeru, Naduththeru, Melaththeru, Therkuththeru, Chettimedu, Vepencherry, Thazhampettai.

During summer, the groundwater in the panchayat gets depleted. As part of corporate contribution to the environment protection in the area, PPN has a huge well maintained

natural rainwater harvesting facility within their premises which supports the groundwater level.

He handed over the cheque to the Collector on Monday. The work would be completed well ahead of the monsoon, he added.

## *The Indian* **EXPRESS**

### Centre set to follow ‘Madhya Pradesh model’ to help farmers



A small community shares a field of 60 acres, half of it under paddy and half under wheat.

Inspired by a scheme conceived by the Shivraj Singh Chouhan-led Madhya Pradesh government — to provide minimum income to farmers even when their crops fail or the price of their produce nosedives — the NDA government is planning to introduce a crop insurance scheme on similar lines.

At an event in Bhopal on Tuesday, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said the central government will launch a new crop insurance scheme next year which will provide minimum income to farmers.

Singh praised Chouhan for the “pro-farmer initiatives” undertaken by the state government as well as the double digit agriculture growth rate the state has achieved in the last few years. The MP government is set to introduce, on a pilot basis, an Agriculture Income Assurance Scheme in a few districts. The scheme will not be based on agricultural yield of individual farmers but it will ensure that farmers get an assured income to compensate for crop damage or price fluctuations, said Chouhan.

## Accident insurance cover for farmers: Rs 134 crore sanctioned in seven years



Farmers live at the mercy of unpredictable weather and are under constant fear of drought and floods. The state, notorious for suicides by farmers, had in 2005 launched a Farmer Public Accident Insurance to give them some monetary relief.

In case of death or injuries caused to farmers in an accident or causes specified in the scheme – the range includes snake bites, drowning, naxal attacks – his family is entitled to Rs1 lakh. In case of permanent disability, the injured farmer is entitled to Rs 50,000. A query filed by [The Indian Express](#) under the Right to Information (RTI) Act revealed that between August 2008 and June 5, 2015, as many as 13,515 farmers claimed amounts sanctioned under the insurance scheme.

Over the past seven years, Rs 134.54 crore have been sanctioned to cover claims.

The scheme covers all the 1.37 crore farmers across Maharashtra. The premium is borne entirely by the state government. While 18,909 applications were received since 2008, nearly 4,500 were rejected for not meeting requirements for entitlement of the insurance claim. “The amount given under the scheme is a huge help for farmers, especially when they aren’t required to pay any premium,” said a senior officer from the Commissionerate of Agriculture.

The official said that the maximum applications get rejected due to farmers not being able to produce papers that prove the land is in his name; or there is a delay in submission of form; or the age bracket (10 to 75 years) is crossed. Some were rejected as they did not have a driving licence and were involved in road accidents.

The official added that some claims to be settled for 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-2015, are being processed.

Every year, the state government invites proposals from insurance companies and those with the lowest premium are selected.



## **ACCIDENT COVER**

*Death: Rs 1 lakh*

*Loss of eyes: Rs 1 lakh*

*Loss of one eye: Rs 50,000*

*Loss of two limbs: Rs 1 lakh*

*Loss of a limb: Rs 50,000*

*Loss of an eye and a limb: Rs 1 lakh*

**Spare your two minutes: Know the long-term health hazards of consuming instant noodles**



There is no quick-fix when it comes to a healthy, clean and nutritious meal, but the question is who is going to cook such meals? The age of ‘instant’ solutions is here, and instant noodles have become our children’s staple.

The main ingredients used in instant noodles are wheat flour (mostly maida), palm oil, and salt. Common ingredients in the flavouring powder are salt, monosodium glutamate (MSG or E 621), seasoning, and sugar. MSG is the sodium salt of glutamic acid, also known as excitotoxin.

In simple words, excitotoxins are substances that over-stimulate (excite) the brain and interfere with human hormonal system – appetite is increased, feeling of satiation is subdued, making people eat more than they need. Some people even get nightmares after eating a meal loaded with MSG. Look for anything that says ‘hydrolysed protein’ in the label. It is not something nutritious as you may imagine, it is just another name of MSG, a wolf in disguise, as in the story of the Red Riding Hood.

If the brand of instant noodles does not have MSG, then it may have some other flavour enhancers like disodium inosinate (E631) and disodium guanylate (E 627). It is a proven fact that MSG and other flavour enhancers are highly addictive and once hooked to them,

the taste buds crave for more. If people, especially children eat more of the foods containing flavour enhancers, all other foods start tasting bland by comparison. The 'enhancer addicts' will insist on foods containing the same. Not only these are highly addictive but are also known to cause obesity. Numerous researchers around the world are using MSG or E 627 as a tool to create obese rats and mice to carry out research on.

Don't just look for E 621, look for E 627 which in many countries is not permitted in foods for infants and young children. E 627 is isolated either from sardines (fish) or yeast and may trigger gout in adults, hyperactivity and asthma in children. Gout is a kind of arthritis or inflammation of joints. It can cause an attack of sudden burning pain, stiffness, and swelling in a joint, usually a big toe.

Citric acid is a normal component of human cells that is metabolized, degraded, and eliminated from the body. Also known as E330, and is present in citrus fruits. It is one of the main ingredients in food and beverage mainly as an acidity regulator.

Unlike the food enhancers, citric acid has several health benefits but it has some other health effects on the consumers. Its regular consumption (from processed foods) can cause stomach upset, dark stools and weakened hair roots. It is not advisable to give citric acid to infants and very small children.

Study the label for food colours (150a, b, c and d). These are caramel colours. Caramel colour is one of the oldest and most widely used food colourings, and is found in many commercially produced foods and beverages. It is derived from sources such as wheat, malt syrup, or lactose (from milk); most of them are common allergens (substances that cause allergic reactions). Many people, especially children are sensitive to these. Instant noodles are highly processed foods and are marketed worldwide in hundreds of different brands.

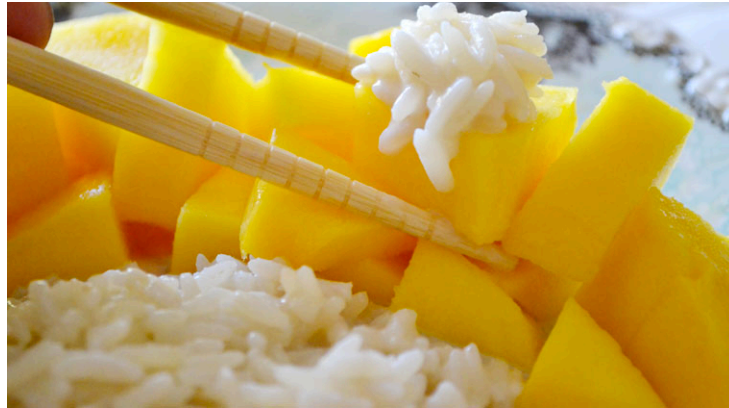
To manufacture the instant (two minute) noodles is a long process. The noodle shaped dough needs to be dried in one of two ways: by frying or by hot air drying. Fried instant noodles (more than 80% brands follow this method) are dried by frying in oil for a few minutes at very high temperatures.

The frying process drastically decreases the moisture content for preservation or a longer shelf life. Common oil used for frying is palm oil that is odourless, tasteless, and solid at room temperature, making it ideal for enhancing the consistency and shelf life of commercial food products. Palm oil is also high in saturated fats that increase the bad cholesterol and clog the blood vessels. Last but not the least, buy simple pasta or noodles and cook them for ten minutes instead of two and add masalas available at home. One can spare those extra eight minutes for avoiding all the toxic and allergic substances in the instant noodles.

Unless you want your children to be the 'enhancer' junkies, feeding on loads of maida, sugar, and artificial colours, the foods that disturb their hormonal balance. The choice is yours, when it comes to nutrition, there is no free lunch. The author is a microbiologist

and has worked for food and pharmaceutical companies in marketing as well as business development in countries like Germany, India and the United Arab Emirates. She has written articles on 'health & medicine' in a leading Marathi newspaper and was also a freelance health columnist for a leading English newspaper in the Gulf for several years.

### **Five exotic Mango recipes you must try this summer**



Rich in sweetness, flavour and succulent texture, we bring 5 exotic mango dishes for you.

#### **#1 Sticky Rice with Fresh Mango**

##### **Ingredients**

1 1/2 cups uncooked short-grain white rice

2 cups water 1 1/2 cups coconut milk

1 cup white sugar 1/2 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon tapioca starch 3 mangos, peeled and sliced

1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

##### **Method**

1. Combine the rice and water in a saucepan; bring to a boil; cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until water is absorbed, 15 to 20 minutes.

2. While the rice cooks, mix together 1 1/2 cups coconut milk, 1 cup sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a saucepan over medium heat; bring to a boil; remove from heat and set aside. Stir the cooked rice into the coconut milk mixture; cover. Allow to cool for 1 hour.

3. Make a sauce by mixing together 1/2 cup coconut milk, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and the tapioca starch in a saucepan; bring to a boil.

4. Place the sticky rice on a serving dish. Arrange the mangos on top of the rice. Pour the sauce over the mangos and rice. Sprinkle with sesame seeds

## **#2 Pan Seared Chicken with Caramelized Mango**

### **Mango jalapeño salsa**

2/3 cup diced peeled ripe mango

2 tablespoons minced red onion

1 tablespoon minced seeded jalapeño pepper 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro

1 1/2 teaspoons fresh lime juice Salt & pepper to taste

### **Chicken**

2 skinless, boneless chicken breast

1 teaspoon raw mango purée Salt & pepper to taste

### **Caramelised mango**

1 mango slice

1 teaspoon sugar

### **Method**

1. To prepare salsa, combine first 6 ingredients. Cover; refrigerate 30 minutes.
2. To prepare chicken, place each chicken breast marinate it with raw mango purée, salt & pepper.
3. Place chicken on a grill rack, grill 3 minutes on each side or until done.
4. Caramelize mango in a non stick pan with some sugar.
5. Serve chicken on the bed of cracked potato with caramelised mango. Pour mango jalapeño salsa over the chicken to the plate.

## **#3 Mango Cheese Cake**



Mango Cheese cake

### **Ingredients**

Cream Cheese – 500 gm  
Whole Egg – 3nos  
Sugar – 140 gms  
Sour Cream – 75 gms  
Heavy Cream – 40 gms  
Vanilla – 1 stick  
Mango Puree – 200 gms  
Fresh Mango – 175 gms

### **Method**

For the base

- 1) Crumble the cookie with a rolling pin
- 2) Add melted butter & honey in a bowl. Mix well to make a base.3. Set aside.

### **For cheese cake base**

1. Beat the cream cheese and sugar and ensure it is folded in well.
2. Add the eggs into the mixture slowly in order to get a smooth and fluffy mixture.
3. Add the vanilla, sour cream and heavy cream to the mixture.
4. Finally add Mango puree and Fresh mango that has been chopped into small pieces.
5. Pour the mixture into the prepared cake base.



6. Bake the mixture in the oven at 150 degree Celsius for a period of 1 hour.
7. Cool down once out of the oven
8. Decorate with more pieces of fresh mango and chocolates and serve slightly chilled.

#### **#4 Smoked Mango Salad**

##### **Ingredients**

Chicken roasted – 200 gms  
Mango dice – 150 gms  
Asparagus spears – 70 gms  
Olive oil – 50 ml  
Dijon Mustard – 10 gms  
White wine vinegar – 30 ml  
Sea Salt – 5 gms  
Crushed Black pepper – 2 gms  
Dill – 5 gm

##### **Method**

1. Mix the oil, vinegar, mustard, black pepper to form a dressing.
2. Chop dill and add to the dressing.
3. In a salad bowl, mix mango, asparagus and roasted chicken.
4. Drizzle the dressing and sprinkle some sea salt to taste.
5. Serve chilled.

#### **#5 Mango Fruit Cake**

A soft and moist cake made with vanilla sponge, whipped fresh dairy cream and fresh diced mangos, garnished with Mango puree, scoop of fresh mango and white chocolate.



##### **They took plunge and reaped rich harvest**

G Ramasamy, 52, a farmer in Arasur, a small village off Avinashi Road in Coimbatore, has not been using any chemical pesticides or fertilizers on his farm for the past one

decade. The man who owns 3.5 acres of agricultural land is fully into organic farming and earns a profit of `32,000 a month if rain is good.

Like Ramaswamy, many farmers across Coimbatore district are getting into organic farming because it is close to their heart and remunerative as well. About the reason for getting into organic farming, Ramaswamy said, "I heard about the endosulphan tragedy in Kasargod in Kerala, and how badly the pesticide affected the people". K V Muralidharan, a cardio-thoracic surgeon in Apollo Hospital who took to organic farming two decades ago in Palayam near Kalpakkam, said he wanted to promote healthy living and organic farming was the key to it.

Cow's urine acts as a natural pesticide on organic farms. "I only get insects and not pests, and my crop is good because the soil is fertile," said N G Prabhuram who cultivates paddy in Kuniam uthur. "If needed, there are so many organic pesticides like neem oil, garlic spray and even pepper," says Muralidharan. "Once you stop using fertilizers, the walls of plants become thick, helping them to keep pests at bay," he said. Farmers say organic farming is not instantly profitable but does become remunerative a few years down the line.

T R Govardan, a software engineer-turned-organic farmer, has no regrets about quitting a highly-paid job. He started off cultivating greens and vegetables on 15 acres three years ago with the help of bio-inputs. Today, his clientele of scores of families in Sethumadai in Coimbatore long for his organic produce. From vegetables to pulses and millets to groundnuts, the list is long and he gets a decent income.

"My neighbours discouraged me, but I stood firm on continuing organic farming. Today, they are convinced about my work and have begun emulating me," said the 25-year-old from Dasarapalayam in Tirupur district.

G Nandini, a homemaker, did a six-month diploma in organic farming before plunging into it. "After initial hiccups, we are getting to see high returns," Nandini said.

### **Organic farming: Time Tamil Nadu dug deep**

Tamil Nadu has unveiled an ambitious plan to set up special organic zones (SOZs) on the lines of special economic zones to promote organic farming in the state. But the proposal, which forms part of the proposed organic farming policy of the state government, is yet to materialise as the policy has not seen the light of the day though the draft was prepared almost three years ago.

In the wake of Kerala raising concerns about the high level of chemical pesticide traces in vegetables grown in Tamil Nadu, organic farming policy has once again come into focus.

Like many other development projects in the state, release of the organic farming policy was also delayed owing to the conviction of chief minister J Jayalithaa in September last year. "So far, no concrete step has been taken for its implementation," said a member of the committee that drafted the policy. "But we have indications that the policy may be rolled out soon," he said.

The policy, apart from other things, proposes forming a department of sustainable organic agriculture, directorate for organic agriculture and setting up a centre for excellence for organic farming at TNAU. The government plans to have regulatory mechanism to improve soil health, promote animal husbandry in organic farming, forestry and biodiversity. The government will also set up seed farms and banks and give financial assistance to organic farmers.

Sources in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University said the policy would be presented in the assembly once the byelection to R K Nagar assembly segment was over. The policy envisages helping farmers every step of the way, said an official. "It aims at capacity building among farmers, providing them seeds, helping them in marketing and buying their produce for distribution through the PDS (public distribution system)," said the official.

For farmers struggling to sustain organic farming, the new policy may provide much needed succour. "Despite the best efforts put in to ensure safe farming, indiscriminate application of pesticides by neighbours spoils groundwater table," said V M Parthasarathy who grows pulses, vegetables and paddy on eight acres in Avadi. "Hope the government promotes native seeds with seed banks. They can be reused for generations, are rare," he added.

For others, marketing is the biggest challenge. "Let the government think of unified markets for organic produce in all district headquarters," said T R Govardhan, an engineer-turned-farmer from Dasarapalayam in Trichy, who extensively cultivates vegetables and fruits on his 15-acre farm. He does delivery of produce to 50 families in Coimbatore at their doorstep. "It may be slow in getting great results," he said and added that success would follow.

"Gujarat drafted and introduced organic farming policy is less than six months. States like Kerala, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Odisha already have comprehensive policies," said a TNAU professor. "Now, with the pressure from Kerala, which has raised concerns about high traces of pesticides on vegetables that are grown in Tamil Nadu, we hope Tamil Nadu quickly implements the policy," he said.

## **Integrated farm systems help these tribal farmers double their income**

To enhance the livelihood of tribal farmers in Kanker district, scientists of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) are imparting training for fish rearing and animal husbandry via integrated farming systems (IFS) models in selected villages of Kanker district. They are doing this with social mobilisation through village meetings with farmers and panchayat.

In Kanker, rice occupies more than 90% of agricultural area in kharif season. Majority farmers are involved in cultivating rice, subjected to a high degree of uncertainty in income and employment.

The solution lies in changing the agricultural system itself by integrating crop yield with vegetables, animal husbandry, fishery, poultry and vermin-composting. This will not only supplement the year round income but also help in increasing employment to raise their socio-economic status further.

KVK started working in Kulgaon panchayat with social mobilization through village meetings. KVK scientist visited the fields and selected five farmers considering physical, social and economic limitations. A training programme was organized and visits were arranged as part of IFS. Critical inputs like maize seeds for replacing paddy, a pair of poultry and male goat for breeding, portable vermi beds for organic waste recycling were provided. Technical guidance from KVK and local line departments with regular monitoring and scientific capacity building resulted in uplift of these tribal farmers.

Laluram Koreti, who adopted IFS model and fetched Rs1,74,420 in the year 2014-15 compared to Rs 65,100 in the year 2011-12 by producing rice and backyard poultry, is now a source of inspiration for all other farmers of the locality.

Ghasiya Ram is one such beneficiary, who accepted and adopted the technology. He successfully harvested 54 qt rice from 0.8hectare area and also reared fish from pond in 0.15ha, poultry flocks and fetched Rs 1,60,950 in the year 2014-15 compared to Rs 62,500 in the year 2011-12 by producing only rice and poultry.

The success story continues with Mankuram Kange, SukhalalMandavi and Santosh Kawde, who earned net profit of Rs 1,58,200, Rs 1,42,500 and Rs 1,56,400 respectively by adopting integrated farming system models.

## **Warming Indian Ocean impedes rains: Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology**

The rapid warming in the Indian Ocean has been weakening the monsoon in central India consistently which has resulted in 10% to 20% deficient rains over Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Chhattisgarh during the past century, says

a study conducted by the city-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).

The picture this monsoon is not rosy either with the met office predicting below average rainfall and the possibility of a back-to-back drought.

The study, led by IITM scientists and published in the journal 'Nature Communications', points out a significant decreasing trend in the summer monsoon rainfall over the central Indian subcontinent during the past century. The authors suggest that rapid warming in the Indian Ocean is playing an important role in weakening the monsoon circulation and the rainfall. The study found that rainfall has been decreasing over central South Asia - from south of Pakistan through central India to Bangladesh. The drop is highly significant over central India where agriculture is mostly rain-fed, with a reduction of up to 10%-20% in the mean rainfall over the last 112 years.

The study, which is part of an Indo-French collaboration under the National Monsoon Mission setup by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, was led by IITM scientist Roxy Mathew Koll whose student Ritika Kapoor and collaborators Pascal Terray, Raghu Murtugudde, Ashok Karumuri and B N Goswami contributed to the analysis and research.

In an ideal global warming scenario, the monsoon drivers should get stronger, causing increased rainfall. One of the major monsoon drivers is the land-sea temperature difference in summer, which drives the monsoon circulation towards the subcontinent. "However, the study found that contradictory to this and what earlier studies have noted, the land-sea temperature difference over South Asia domain has in fact reduced in the past decades. This reduction in land-sea temperature is primarily contributed by a strong warming in the Indian Ocean. The surface warming in the Indian Ocean, especially that in the western regions, has reached up to values of 1.2°C during the past century, much greater than the warming trends in the other tropical oceans," said Koll.

Besides ocean warming, a part of the decrease in land-sea temperature difference is also due to suppressed warming over the Indian land mass, possibly due to an increase in aerosols (tiny particles or droplets in the air, such as dusts, mists, or fumes) from pollution or reasons which are still uncertain, said Koll.

"Previous studies have suggested that the land in the northern hemisphere is warming much faster than the oceans, which implies that the monsoon driver (summer) should be getting stronger. Also, the rising ocean surface temperatures involve increased moisture availability in the atmosphere," said Koll. Increased land-sea temperature contrast and moisture availability hence should ideally increase the monsoon rainfall. However, that is not the case with the Indian monsoon, the study found.

### **HC verdict on Bt seeds price hike today**

The Nagpur bench of Bombay High Court on Tuesday kept a plea filed by Seed Industries Association of Maharashtra for delivering interim order on Wednesday. The petitioners, including Dr Shaligram Wankhede, moved the judiciary for directives to



Maharashtra government for hike in maximum sale price of Bt-I and Bt-II cotton seeds.

During the last hearing, justice Bhushan Gavai and justice Indira Jain had sought reply from respondents - state agriculture secretary, commissioner (Agriculture) and director of Pune-based Agriculture Input and QC/Licensing Authority. They also directed the authorities to keep their original files ready for perusal.

The petitioners have challenged the June 8 notification issued under Section 10 of Maharashtra Cotton Seeds (Regulation of Supply, Distribution, Sale and Fixation of Sale Price) Act, 2009, by which the government has fixed maximum sale price of Bt-I and Bt-II cotton seeds.

They prayed for quashing notification and sought directives to respondents to fix Bt Cotton hybrid seeds price on increase in costs of production/factors specified under Section 10(1) of the 2009 Act.

#### **‘Govt must form board to protect khazan lands’**

BJP MLA and chairman of Kala Academy Vishnu Wagh called upon the government to constitute the khazan land development board to protect and preserve khazan lands.

He was speaking at the inauguration of Krishi Melava organized by the directorate of agriculture in association with zonal agricultural office, Bhati, Tiswadi, where agriculture minister Ramesh Tawadkar was the chief guest.

Impressing upon the youth to take up agriculture, Tawadkar shed light on various governmental schemes available in Goa for farmers and youth in particular to undertake agriculture as a profession.

Stressing the need for a khazan land development board, Wagh said it would control all sorts of lawlessness due to which khazan lands remain neglected, sometimes barren.

"If these lands are protected from saline water, a large portion of land can be brought under cultivation which will boost agriculture. Farmers must therefore avail of the benefit of government schemes so that agriculture in the state flourishes," said Wagh.

Director of agriculture, Orlando Rodrigues said there is vast scope for agriculture in the state thus youngsters must undertake farming as profession.

Zilla panchayat member Dhaku Madkaikar said, "Farmers have a vital role to play in enhancing agricultural prosperity of the state. The government, through the directorate of agriculture, has implemented various schemes to assist and motivate farmers to increase

farm produce and make Goa self reliant in agricultural production."

Rasik Kuttikar, Susan Coutinho, Bismarque Dias, Chandrakant Gaonkar and local farmers shared their experiences of working in the agriculture sector with the audience.

### **Soil fertility in Tamil Nadu reduced by half in 30 yrs, says govt paper**



Indiscriminate fertilizer and pesticide usage, coupled with mono-cropping and non-application of base manure like cow dung and green manure (dead plants), has taken a severe toll on the organic content in soil and thereby soil fertility across the state, says the draft organic farming policy of the state government, which is yet to be rolled out. The issue has come into focus now in the wake of Kerala raising concerns of high pesticide level on vegetables grown in Tamil Nadu.

Experts in the field say organic matter in the soil dropped from 1.2% in 1971 to 0.68% in 2002. Organic matter has further reduced to 0.5 % in several districts, according to a study conducted a year ago by the Department of Soil Science and Agriculture Chemistry of TNAU. This is against a desirable level of 0.8% to 1.3% of organic carbon, say experts.

Madurai is the worst with just 0.23% of organic content in soil, followed by Krishnagiri (0.36). Erode and Vellore are well above the ideal limit with 4.04% and 4.2% respectively. Scientists at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University say that carbon content of soil depends on the amount of carbon matter that is replenished. "In some districts in the Cauvery delta region, farmers leave behind the rest of the crop after harvest. This

recharges the carbon content. However, this practice is dwindling across the state," said vice chancellor of TNAU K Ramasamy.

Organic matter in soil includes humus - which is made of decaying plant and animal matter - as well as insects, earthworms and micro-organisms. Healthy soil ideally has 25% air and between 5% and 10% of living organisms and organic matter like dead leaves and animals. But as fertiliser and pesticide usage increases, the level of organic matter comes down. "Any fertilizer is a salt. These salts prevent growth of micro-organisms," said director of Ecoscience Research Foundation, Sultan Ahmed Ismail.

Scientists agree soil quality gets affected even if chemicals are not directly used on them. "In our studies on population of earthworms - which are good indicators of soil health - even places like Guindy National Park had a low count. This is due to poor water management and soil erosion," said Ismail.

Indiscriminate use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers has resulted in soil quality deteriorating in several districts. This becomes a vicious cycle with farmers further increasing chemical fertilizer usage to reap better yield. "When a neighbouring farmer left water stagnant on his field for three to four days, the water turned ash in colour due to chemicals on the field," said an organic farmer from Thiruvannamalai, C Parasuram. "Though I practice organic farming, water in my well too has become salty and undrinkable as chemicals from nearby farms percolate into ground affecting ground water in the whole area," he said.

But hope is not lost. Officials from Tamil Nadu Agriculture University say those practicing organic farming have started seeing positive changes. "In our surveys, we have found that organic carbon content in soil, where organic farming is being practiced, has gone up and stabilized," said professor and head of Department of Sustainable Organic Agriculture, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, E Somasundaram.

Farmers also need to be told to rotate crops to keep soil healthy. Paddy crops always need to be followed by legumes like peanuts for increasing nitrogen content in soil. "In traditional farms, animals had a role. Now cows have gone missing - as farmers use tractors for ploughing - and key nutrients from their dung and urine are missing, adding to the deteriorating health of the soil," said an ecologist, V Arun.

### **Rs 50 hike in paddy MSP likely today**

The Cabinet is likely to approve the proposal to hike the minimum support price (MSP) of paddy by Rs 50 per quintal on Wednesday. This will increase the prices to Rs 1,410 per quintal for this year from the present Rs 1,360.

Sources said keeping in mind the political implications of such a revision in the MSP, a section in the government had pushed for an even higher price for paddy growers. In the past four years, MSP of paddy has increased over 26%. The maximum jump in MSP was in 2012-13 about Rs 170 per quintal from Rs 1,080 to Rs 1,250.



According to officials, the agriculture ministry has moved a CCEA note on MSP of various crops for the 2015-16 kharif season taking into account the recommendations of the commission for agricultural costs and prices (CACP). The commission had recommended an increase of Rs 50 per quintal for the 2015-16 kharif season.

Officials said CACP had also suggested a hike of Rs 100 per quintal in the support price of ragi to Rs 1,650 and Rs 30 per quintal for groundnut to Rs 4,030. CACP has also recommended a higher MSP for pulses to boost domestic production and reduce country's dependence on imports.

Sources said it is to be seen whether the Cabinet will approve the CACP's suggestions on paddy or take the political route to fulfill the BJP's poll promise of fixing MSP at 50% profit margin over the cost of production.

## Renewable energy: best bet for farm sector



India is primarily an agrarian society with 52 per cent of the population directly engaged in agriculture. Pumping water is critical for India given the seasonal rainfall and competitive usage of scarce land resources. India has more than 26 million installed water pumps – 10 million are run by diesel gensets while the rest are grid-connected. Cost of energy to drive water pumps constitute about 30 per cent of the total input cost for a farmer. Indian farmers are currently drawing more water 212 million mega-litres from the ground each year to irrigate about 35 million hectares.

Diesel-powered pumps still account for bulk of the Indian agricultural pump market primarily because of their low upfront cost translating into an annual market size of \$1.2 billion.

Total installed diesel pump capacity in India is estimated to be 30 GW, equivalent to almost 15 per cent of India's total installed power capacity and an annual diesel subsidy of \$6 billion.

Diesel pumps, however, are fraught with social, environmental and economical challenges – high operating cost, carbon emissions, deplete water table more than necessary by pumping heavily at short intervals.

These challenges result in difficulty in utilising the pumps forcing farmers to practice deficient irrigation of crops, considerably reducing their yield and income



## **A better alternative**

.India's geographical advantage makes solar-powered water pumps an excellent alternative to diesel powered pumps in particular. Studies estimate India's potential for solar PV water pumps for irrigation to be 9 million to 70 million pump sets.

Further solar pumps can substantially improve the financial health of State Electricity Board (SEB) by reducing subsidised power to farmers and eliminating incremental capital expense to connect farms to grid which is estimated to be ₹1.7 lakh per connection.

While the upfront capital cost of solar powered pumps is higher than traditional pumps, a lucrative payback economics of 3-5 years is possible given the high operating cost for diesel pumps.

Indian government led by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) has placed a substantial emphasis on further penetration of solar PV power pumps with a vision to replace existing 26 million pumps with more efficient solar power pumps.

In the Union Budget, the Finance Minister announced a ₹ 415 crore package for installing 100,000 solar powered pump sets. In November 2014, the government launched a programme for promoting 30,000 solar pumping systems per year for the purpose of irrigation.

The programme will be implemented alongside state governments. MNRE will provide a subsidy of 30 per cent (maximum amount is capped per category of pump) and soft loan at 5 per cent with an additional subsidy from state governments.

Rajasthan has been a pioneer in promoting solar water pumps, and offers an additional subsidy of 56 per cent over and above the MNRE subsidy, which means that the solar water pump owner gets 86 per cent subsidy in total.

In Tamil Nadu, a total of 80 per cent subsidy is provided, whereas in Punjab, the total subsidy comes to about 70 per cent. Maharashtra has recently proposed a plan to provide 5 lakh solar pumps to farmers and is in the process of formalizing the program.

In spite of favourable macro-economic and government support, solar power pumps have still lagged considerably vis-a-vis diesel power pump addition. Total installed solar pumps are merely 25,000 vis-a-vis 10 mn installed diesel pumps.

So, what is the reason for this limited penetration?

Firstly, solar power pumps have a substantially higher capex vis-a-vis diesel pumps. With limited capability of upfront payment, the market is heavily dependent on government



subsidies. While subsidies are in place, it is typically very difficult to make use of these payments (especially the state portion)

Secondly, the solar pumps are not portable unlike diesel pumps. Movable pumps protect from theft and can be easily rented out. Lastly, diesel pumps have a higher degree of user confidence vis-a-vis solar pumps which have limited track record.

### **Recommended action**

We believe solar pumps provide an exceptional opportunity to not only improve the productivity of farm lands but also substantially improve the energy security of the nation and reduce the subsidy bill.

However, in order to realise the utmost potential, several steps need to be taken.

Firstly, in our view, heavily subsidised model is not feasible in the long run.

Emergence of PPP model to install these pumps on a pay per use basis by private entrepreneurs would assist in increasing the market penetration.

Pay per use model would enable shared usage of solar pump infrastructure by multiple farmers. This will result in deeper penetration amongst marginal farms and maximum utilization of the system resulting in lower payback period. This model has worked quite well in rural micro and mini grid installations in India.

Support could be provided to these entrepreneurs via soft loans. Subsidies could be better utilized in undertaking R&D efforts to reduce the initial capex of these products which would be more productive in the long run


Secondly, no power cost in solar powered pumps, poses the risk of over usage by farmers, resulting in wastage and affecting the water table. Pay per use model stated above could assist in reducing the wastage. Further usage of solar pumps should be accompanied by efficient mechanisms such as drip irrigation and water storage facility – most of the subsidy schemes have already included this as a requirement

Further, a strong local eco-system needs to be created to promote and provide cost effective O&M solutions for the system. This will not only assist in cost effective maintenance of the system but will also increase rural employment

Finally, educational and promotional campaigns to explain the economical and social impacts of solar pumps vis-a-vis traditional pumps would be critical to increase the penetration and acceptability of the products amongst farmers.

## Potato growers will have to wait for better times

Potato price and arrival trend at Agra APMC					
Date 2014	Arrival (quintal)	Price (₹ per quintal)	Date 2015	Arrival (quintal)	Price (₹ per quintal)
02-Apr	23,000	900	06-Apr	32,000	300
15-Apr	17,800	1,050	15-Apr	32,000	410
30-Apr	18,600	1,140	30-Apr	31,000	415
02-Jun	13,500	1,215	02-Jun	27,800	425
17-Jun	13,500	1,420	15-Jun	21,000	590
30-Jun	10,800	1,500			



Source: NHRDF

Potato growers in the key growing regions of North India are set for a long wait for better return of their crop.

The second advanced estimates in May had pegged the total potato production at a record 44.89 million tonnes (mt) for 2014-15, which is about 8 per cent higher than the 41.55 mt produced in 2013-14.

Following the bumper crop, potato prices this year have remained subdued at around one-third of what was seen in the previous year. However, over the past one month, prices have started firming up as farmers hold back their produce.

### Prices recover

At the Agra market, potato prices were quoted at ₹590 a quintal with arrivals of 21,000 quintals on June 15. A year ago, on the same day prices hovered around ₹1,420 with arrivals of 13,500 quintals.

The prices have recovered from their bottom levels of ₹300 in April 2015, when arrivals were at a peak of 32,000 quintals.

### Cold storage stocks

“Farmers who could stock their produce in the cold storages, have already done it. But still there is a large quantity lying in the fields with the farmers. They will first bring that to market and then cold storage stock will get released. There is likely to be heavy supplies till the next sowing in September,” said Gopal Singh, a potato grower from Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district in Punjab. According to the estimates of National Horticultural Research & Development Foundation (NHRDF), about 250 lakh tonnes (lt) of the tuber is stored in cold storages across the country, while the total monthly consumption is estimated at around 25-26 lt.

The major produce is stored in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

Small quantity is also stored by the growers in temporary storages, which they dispose of within 2-3 months of harvesting.

### **Higher exports**

“This year, we have seen bumper potato production. The prices have recovered from their lowest levels and have almost stabilised at these levels. Currently, there is not much profit for farmers, but they get reasonable price for their crop, while same way it is a good price for consumers,” said RP Gupta, Director, NHRDF.

Gupta further maintained that inspite of having record potato exports this year, there will be supply pressure in the market. India’s potato exports have grown by close to three times since 2012-13 from 1.14 lt to 3.05 lt in 2014-15.

Also, the export value per unit has increased from ₹9,500 a tonne in 2012-13 to ₹23,817 in 2014-15.

With record exports this year, farmers do not see potato prices to fall. But due to supply pressure, it is likely to take longer for them to see profit with attractive price.

### **Outlook for soyabean brightens with timely onset of monsoon**



The South-West monsoon’s timely onset in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and parts of Maharashtra including the Marathwada region, has buoyed hopes of a good soyabean crop – the main kharif season oilseed.

## **Acreage edges up**

Agriculture Ministry data show oilseeds acreage is already up nearly 29 per cent to 1.21 lakh hectares (lh) ) as on June 12 from 0.94 lh during the corresponding period in 2014-15.

Madhya Pradesh accounts for a bulk of soyabean output and steady showers across the southern part of the State appear to be improving the market sentiment with the prices stabilising.

“The monsoon has entered MP and there’s good rainfall in the Indore and Hoshangabad divisions, in parts of Ujjain and most of Jabalpur. It should approach Bhopal over the next two-three days,” said Anupam Kashyapi, Director and Scientist-in-charge, India Meteorological Department (IMD, Bhopal).

## **Short duration varieties**

Last year, soyabean acreage in MP was affected by the late arrival of the monsoon by nearly 20 days after the usual onset date around June 12-13.

“The delayed monsoon last season saw lower acreage but it should be around 11 million hectares (mh) this year, which includes 5.8 mh in MP and the rest across Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Karnataka,” said VS Bhatia, Head, ICAR-Directorate of Soybean Research in Indore.

Farmers in the central region are planting short duration varieties, such as JS-9560, which mature in 85-88 days.

“Sowing has just started, but it’s gathering pace in MP and the crop does not need much water. If there’s 500-600 mm of rainfall through the season and it’s well distributed, there should be no issue,” added Bhatia.

## **Prices firm up**

From its ₹4,300-4,400/quintal peak a few months ago, prices have firmed to around ₹3,600 as of Tuesday. Industry officials attributed it to sentiments raised by the monsoon and the expectation of sufficient arrivals by September end.

“Sentiment has changed with rain in the region and prices have softened. It is around ₹3,605 for June and ₹3,280 for October,” said BV Mehta, Executive Director, Solvent Extractors’ Association of India.

Industry officials expect sowing to pick up by next week and appear confident of matching last year’s acreage of around 10 mh. The new crop hitting the markets by early-

October should further help soften prices to around ₹30,000/tonne from the previous highs that many felt were due to speculative trading.

### **Exports minimal**

However, in terms of exports, few harbour optimism with Indian soyabean and soyameal outpriced in the international market. While soyameal is trading at a freight-on-board price of \$350/tonne, soyabean is at \$375/tonne.

“Indian soyameal is quoting \$500/tonne and soyabean at \$550/tonne. It’s unlikely there will be much improvement on last year’s export volumes of roughly one million tonne,” said Davish Jain, Chairman, Soyabean Processors Association of India.

### **Coir exports up 10.5%; surge to ₹1,630 crore**

Overseas demand for coir pith and coir fibre boosted country’s coir and products exports in the 2014-15 fiscal, witnessing a 10.5 per cent growth in value and 16 per cent growth in quantity.

The exports clocked a revenue figure of whopping ₹1,630 crore during the period compared to ₹1,476 crore in the previous fiscal.

The country exported 6,26,666 tonnes against 5,37,040 tonnes in the preceding year.

China emerged as the major importer of coir fibre for manufacturing mattress boards and their focus to import more coir pith/grow bags to cater to horti/agricultural requirements have also contributed more to the export kitty, Surendra Nath Tripathi, Chairman, Coir Board, said.

Coir fibre with export earnings of ₹419.23 crore constituted 26 per cent of the total products exports.

Similarly, coir pith with an export of ₹432.95 crore comprised 27 per cent. All other value-added items put together constitute 47 per cent of the total exports, he said.

Of the total 115 countries, the Chairman said that China topped the importing countries with 28.6 per cent in value and 39 per cent in quantity.

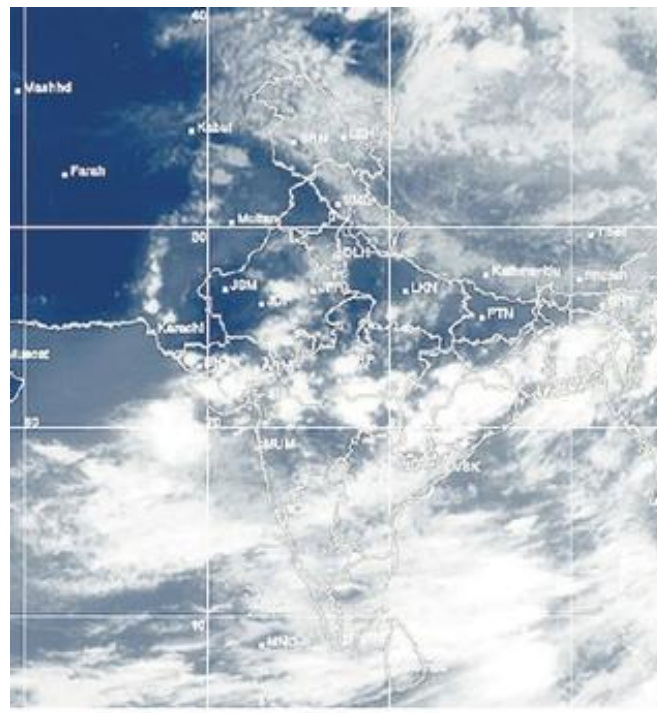
The US emerged as the second largest importer with a share of 21.3 per cent in value and 12.4 per cent in quantity.

According to board officials, coir handloom products exports also showed a marginal increase by quantity but no increase by value compared to last year.

While coir pith, coir fibre, handloom mat, coir rope, curled coir and coir rugs and carpets registered a growth ranging from 12 to 45 per cent, the officials said that coir yarn, tufted mat, power-loom mat, handloom matting, coir geo-textiles and rubberised coir recorded a decline.

The Board's export market development assistance to popularise coir and products abroad also yielded results given the growth in exports both in quantity and value terms, the officials added.

### **Monsoon to remain active over central and east India**



India Meteorological Department picture at 18.00 hrs

The monsoon did not make further progress towards North on Tuesday, apparently waiting for the Bay of Bengal to get active and push more rain into central and east India. Global models have been suggesting the formation of a low-pressure area off the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha coast this week to boost the monsoon in the region.

### **'Low' expected**

India Met Department has spotted an upper air cyclonic circulation over west-central Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-south Odisha coasts. Its projections too favour the formation of a 'low,' which would cross coast and travel almost along a straight line across central India towards Mumbai-Gujarat.

This would likely bring another round of heavy to very heavy rainfall over central India and west India, covering Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.



The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts and the US Climate Prediction Centre agree with this outlook.

The US Centre predicts that the rains will cover entire east India and northern parts of northwest India (Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir) by June 28.

### **Dipole event**

The Application Laboratory (APL) of Jamstec, the Japanese national forecaster, persists with the outlook that the Indian Ocean would witness a 'positive dipole phase' soon.

It could start influencing the regional weather (which includes Indian monsoon) from August, the APL said in its latest update.

Indian Ocean Dipole mimics El Nino-La Nina in the equatorial Pacific; the positive phase is when the western part of the ocean warms up relative to the east, and vice versa.

The positive dipole phase has come to the rescue of the Indian monsoon in the past, notably in 1997, which was a strong El Nino year.

### **July trend**

It will be interesting to watch how this El Nino year plays out with a positive phase of the dipole being forecast.

The Japanese forecaster also said that India would likely witness a deficient monsoon in July.

August may turn predictably better with excess rain seen for central India and parts of adjoining north-west and east India. South India too may get good precipitation. But come September, the situation may reverse again with rain deficit forecast for most parts except in the east and north-east.

This goes to cast doubts on the strength or tenure of the positive dipole event.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Australian Met Bureau credited the good monsoon to unexpected support from the higher levels of the atmosphere in the form of a passing wave to the east.

### **Jeera may remain volatile on quality issues, export demand**

Jeera (cumin) prices in the domestic market are expected to stay volatile in the coming months on expectations of increase in export demand. But concern over the quality due to unseasonal rains at the time of harvesting in Rajasthan and Gujarat has impacted the prices this season.

In last one month, prices have been quite volatile and moved in both directions.



### **Spot prices surge**

The spot prices of jeera have surged to Rs. 18,538 a quintal from Rs. 17,670 levels – an increase of 5 per cent and now again down 6.8 per cent to trade currently at 17,358 levels.

In the current season, spot jeera prices have surged about 18-22 per cent during April-May due to aggressive buying by traders and stockists on export demands amid reports on lower arrivals from the production areas.

The prices have touched a high of Rs. 17,900 in April and then move to season's high at Rs. 18,500 in May.

Meanwhile, during April-May, the most active NCDEX July contract, surged by 18.9 per cent to Rs. 19,075 a quintal from Rs. 15,015 levels and then recovered about 6.3 per cent to 17,855 levels .

Earlier, the prices during February – March were steady and trading near Rs. 15,200 as exporters were waiting for new season's arrivals, which were delayed due to late sowing of jeera, to place their export orders.

Spot jeera in June is trading in downtrend as export demand has been a little sluggish on arrival of lower quality jeera in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

However, the current market price is 57 per cent higher compared to prices prevailing last year during same time. Similarly, the NCDEX July contract is down more than 9 per cent in June.

### **Arrivals down**

In this season, jeera arrivals in Gujarat mandis have been quite low compared to last year.

According to agmarknet data, the arrivals during April-May period are down 62 per cent to 49,712 tonnes from 1, 31,260 tonnes last year.

Similarly, arrivals in Rajasthan also are down 31 per cent to 17, 590 tonnes (25, 441 tonnes).

The lower arrivals are mainly attributed to lower sowing area in Gujarat and damage reported in Rajasthan due to untimely rains in March.

### **Acreage slips**

According to the Agriculture Ministry, around 2.14 lakh hectares (lh) of jeera crop has been damaged in the Rajasthan, while 9,000 hectares were damaged in Gujarat.

In Gujarat, the total acreage of the spice is down 42 per cent to 2.64 lh compared to 4.54 lh in 2013-14.

Jeera lost ground to coriander, fennel and fenugreek seed on comparatively lesser profit realisation in jeera during the last two years.

### **Exports zoom**

According to the Spices Board, India exported 128,500 tonnes of jeera in the first nine months of the financial year 2014-15 (April-December), which is 28 per cent higher compared to the same period last year.

According to trade sources, exports are expected to have crossed more than 1, 62,000 tonnes this financial year.

Total jeera exports from India last year stood at 121,500 tonnes. Vietnam, the US, UAE, Egypt, Nepal, Spain, Brazil and UK were the major exporting destinations. Lower prices of cumin have boosted overseas shipments to highest levels during last year.

But, despite higher prices, the export demand for cumin seed has been going up this season due to the geopolitical concerns and a crop failure in the other two major exporting countries – Syria and Turkey.

The prices of near, mid and far NCDEX futures contracts of jeera are less than the spot market.

### **Positive basis condition**

This situation is indicating a major uptrend in the futures market, if prices converge during the expiry.

However, it may lack uptrend, if traders do not prefer delivery through exchange platform which results into less buying support in futures.

### **Outlook**

The supplies in 2014-15 are likely to be less than the demand. Jeera prices in the current season are above three years average price and expected to remain firm on regular export demand.

However, the market has already corrected down over 9 per cent in 2 weeks due to reports on quality issues, but domestic demand and below normal monsoon forecast may keep the prices in uptrend in coming months.

The writer is Associate Director – Commodities & Currencies, Angel Commodities Broking Pvt. Ltd. Views are personal.

# **Business Standard**

**Centre to come up with agriculture income insurance scheme**



The Centre will soon come up with an overhauled version of agriculture insurance scheme, which would be termed 'Agriculture Income Insurance Scheme' to ensure minimum income to farmers in case of crop loss.

"To ensure at least minimum income to farmers, we will launch Agriculture Income Insurance Scheme next year," said, Radha Mohan Singh, Union agriculture minister here on Tuesday. He was speaking at the plenary session of the two-day national seminar hosted by Madhya Pradesh government to give a final shape to the proposed new crop insurance scheme.

"There would be no more discussions on the proposed agriculture insurance scheme," Singh said.

The minister also said his government would soon shell out a considerable fund for Rs 50,000 per hectare under newly floated "Traditional Agriculture Development Scheme."

The Central government would also provide fund for soil health management to all states, Singh added.

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan suggested formation of a corpus known as "Kisan Kalyan Kosh' (Farmers Welfare Fund) in case the Centre delayed on the proposed alternative crop insurance scheme.

"Each year, the state government shells out Rs 2,000-3,000 crore to mitigate losses under crop loss scheme or otherwise," Chouhan said, adding, "the Centre and the state government would contribute to this fund."

Chouhan stressed that the scheme must be based on revenue-model instead of yield-based model. "To provide almost 100% cover to the farmers, we need to adopt revenue-based model of agriculture income insurance scheme, if launched," he said.