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Farmers' shift to bio-fertilisers, drop in global prices may dent IFFCO's turnover

Ahmedabad, November 3:
Fertiliser major IFFCO expects its turnover to drop this financial year on lower international prices of the nutrients and the increasing trend in farmers' preference for bio-fertilisers over chemical fertilisers.

"Last financial year, our turnover was Rs. 30,000 crore. But this fiscal we do not see the same turnover. International prices are down. Secondly, with our constant efforts, the consumption of chemical fertilisers has come down. Bio-fertiliser consumption and compost fertilisers consumption has increased," said US Awasthi, Managing Director of Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Co-operative Ltd (IFFCO) announcing the launch of the 50th year celebration of the co-operative at its Kalol unit here.

IFFCO is also a major producer of bio-fertilisers and the comapny has rapidly scaled up its production capacity from 1 lakh litres per year to 10 lakh litres over the past one year.

IFFCO has lined up investments worth Rs. 2,000 crore during the year towards energy saving and also plans to step up digital rural marketing through its initiative of e-Kisan Bazaar.

e-Kisan Bazaar

"The concept of e-Kisan Bazaar is to be a one-stop shop for agriculture requirements. From farm equipments, agri-inputs, insurance and seeds among others will be made available. By March 2017 we plan to have about 400 e-Kisan Bazaar pan-India and by the end of next fiscal we hope to have 1,000 such bazaars," added Awasthi.

Commenting on the progress of neem-coating of urea, Awasthi stated that under the previous government regime, only 35 per cent of the urea produced was allowed for neem-coating.

Neem coating

"In this government, this limit is removed and 100 per cent urea neem coating is allowed. This is very beneficial to the farmers and we welcome this move. This keeps the menace of blue-bull under control as the animal stays away from the smell of neem. Also, it keeps way the pests and reduces misuse and adulteration," he said.

T-Hub, ICRISAT team up for agri accelerator

HYDERABAD, NOVEMBER 2:
T-Hub, a start-up incubator promoted by International Institute of Information Technology, Indain School of Business and Telangana government, has teamed up with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) to start an accelerator exclusively for start-ups developing solutions and products for the sector. Riverbridge Ventures Innovations Platform (RViP) is also associated with the programme. The AgriTech Accelerator Programme will start on February 15, 2017. T-Hub has called for applications from entrepreneurs and start-ups to attend the programme. There will be three levels of application-screening, including manual screening to curate the most relevant applications to identify the top 10 participants.

ICRISAT will offer the technical know-how and domain knowledge in various aspects of farming, while T-Hub will take care of the running of the accelerator. "During the three-month acceleration period, RViP, in association with ICRISAT and T-Hub, will engage with start-ups through its unique scaling model and work as a full-time partner for enabling and scaling the efforts of the participating start-ups," said Jay Krishnan, Chief Executive Officer of T-Hub, in a statement.

The accelerator will help the start-ups scale their projects through real-time management. It will also help with go-to market strategies. "The programme will bring together agriculture, IT and finance entrepreneurs to develop tailored services, technologies and market integration to support sustainable rural development at scale," said ICRISAT Director General David Bergvinson.

"Scaling platforms need to redefine conventional accelerator programmes through well-designed and differentiated engagement. We at RViP intend to address this gap," said Vishnu Gorantala, founder, RViP.

Top grade accorded to Cuttack semen bank by Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation

BHUBANESWAR: The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation has accorded Grade A to Cuttack-based Frozen Semen Bank (FSB).

Of 56 semen stations in the country, 32 got Grade A and FSB, Cuttack was one of them. Fifteen stations got Grade B and two were rated as non-graded by the Central Monitoring Unit (CMU). Two semen stations have not been evaluated.

The CMU, constituted by Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries of the Union Ministry, evaluates FSBs based on various parameters such as management of donor bulls, disease protocol, semen collection procedure, laboratory practices, bio-security and progeny testing.

The good performance of FSB, Cuttack is also seen as the result of establishment of andrology laboratory, incinerator, improvement in bio-security measures, isolation shed, hydroponic unit, maintenance of pedigree record and progeny testing programme for evaluation of bulls as per the recommendation of CMU from time to time. It is also going to induct Binjharpuri bulls for which seven calves have already been procured.

The FSB, Cuttack was established in 1978-79 under Indo-Danish collaboration and saw upgradation under various national projects.

Anna University shows the way in water conservation

CHENNAI: The bustling Anna University campus generates over 3.50 lakh litres of waste water each day. While most of Chennai is letting such sewage into the heavily

polluted Adyar and Cooum rivers, the university is quietly raising a greenbelt watered by the waste recycled in the campus.

By ensuring that the waste water generated by the departments, canteens and hostels is recycled, the campus has managed to save as much as 3.50 lakh litres a day. Using this, it now has a greenbelt consisting of landscaping and gardening, and ornamental plants spread across over 32,000 square metres, shrubs and evergreen trees in another 18,000 sqm, said Centre for Envionmental Studies director Dr S Kanmani.

The university used to discharge the waste into the nearby Adyar river till 2000. But the then vice chancellor, A Kalanidhi, suggested setting up the greenbelt. In the initial

years, however, students used the sewage treatment plant for their research. “In 2010, it was modernised with latest facilties,” added horticulture expert in the university, K Muruganandam.

Explaining the network, Prof Kanmani said the treatment plant collects the waste water from all sources and puts it through various stages of cleaning. Organic waste is removed and the water undergoes various stages of purification and treatment, including biological processes. The cleansed water is then sent to seven distribution sumps and from there to the sprinkler system for gardening.

Meanwhile, the sludge is de-watered in a drying bed, and later used for manure instead of chemical fertilisers.

Business Standard

Scientists discover green rice in Chattisgarh

Chhattisgarh has discovered a new variety of rice that is light green in colour.

Though the development is at an early stage, scientists in the state have started scientific study of the variety. Only after conducting a detailed research, the scientists will come out with the character of the seed.

“The seed discovered is rare and is light green in colour,” A K Sarawgi, head of department of genetics and breeding in Indira Gandhi Agriculture University, told Business Standard. The university is conduction an in-depth study of the variety, he added.

The seed sample was provided to the university by farmers from Dhamtari and Durg districts. Thefarmers had stocked the sample as the variety was discovered far back and the farmers had even taken the crop.

Based on the sample, the university scientists were conducting the study. According to Sarawgi, the result will provide the additional characters of the variety that include its medical benefits, cropeconomy.

This year, farmers were given sample seed for multiplying. The scientists were waiting for the harvest that would enable them to further study the variety's character. More varieties of paddy seeds were expected to come out in the state.

Chhattisgarh is traditionally known as the Rice Bowl of India. Over 20,000 rice varieties have been recorded in the region. These are a result of centuries of rice farming through selection and adaptation to a variety of soil, water and micro-ecosystems conditions including predators.

According to experts, the varieties were extinct following market forces promoting high-yielding varieties and synthetic fertilizer and pesticide-based cropping.