

08.11.2016

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Maize, cotton, cane turn cereal killers in Karnataka

Bengaluru, November 7:

Rising awareness of the nutritional benefits of millets such as finger millet (ragi) and foxtail millets notwithstanding, the acreage under such coarse cereals in major producer Karnataka is being lost to cash crops such as maize, sugarcane and cotton.

A recent analysis of the changes in cropping patterns in the State from 2005-06 to 2014-15 by the Karnataka Agriculture Price Commission (KAPC) reveals that farmers in the State were increasingly showing their preference for cash crops such as cotton and maize at the expense of oilseeds, cereals and millets. “This shift towards cash crops will have huge implications for food security,” warned TN Prakash Kammaradi, Chairman, KAPC.

Shrinking acreage

Citing the example of ragi — a staple in South Karnataka — Kammaradi said the acreage under the finger millet has shrunk by over a fourth during the study period (see table). The deficit in rainfall in the current year has further impacted the acreage, which has come down to 5.91 lakh hectares (lh) against the targeted 7.34 lh.

“At this rate of crop displacement, we may see ragi vanishing from the State in another 20 years,” Prakash said, adding that KAPC has already submitted its findings to the State government for necessary action.

Karnataka accounts for over two-thirds of ragi produced in the country, followed by Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Similarly, other cereals such as rain-fed paddy, jowar, bajra and wheat have also witnessed a drop in acreages in the State.

Also, the area under almost all oilseeds, except soyabean, has come down as farmers have opted for cash crops. The area under oilseeds has more than halved to 14.91 lakh hectares in 2014-15 from 28.63 lakh hectares. Sunflower seed witnessed the biggest loss of acreage, estimated at around 11 lakh hectares over the period.

Kammaradi said the impact of global demand-supply dynamics on pricing of crops such as maize, cotton, soyabean and sugar has been a major reason influencing farmers’ preference for these crops.

Other factors

Besides, the advantages of high yielding hybrids, aggressive promotion by private-sector seed companies and the ease of production, especially in maize, were the other reasons that have resulted in their rising acreage.

Interestingly, the shift in cropping pattern has happened at a time when the State has witnessed diversion of about 11 per cent of cultivable farm lands for various other usage, the study reveals.

Also, the area under horticultural crops has witnessed a marginal increase of 36,000 hectares during the period.

4% price fluctuation limit in pepper futures irks traders

Kochi, November 7:

The daily fluctuation limit of 4 per cent permitted at the National Commodity Exchange (NMCE) at the present price level 'is a suicidal move' and would send the wrong signals to traders, trade sources here claimed.

They said recommendations were made earlier to erstwhile regulator Forward Markets Commission (FMC) by the trade through the Spices Board to reduce the fluctuation limit to 2 per cent when prices crossed Rs. 450 per kg mark.

Similarly when prices touched Rs. 300 the fluctuation cap suggested was 3 per cent and at Rs. 250 a kg only 4 per cent was recommended as the daily fluctuation limit.

"To protect the interests of all concerned, the trade strongly recommends that the daily fluctuation limit be reduced to 2 per cent immediately," Kishor Shamji, a veteran trader/exporter, told *BusinessLine*.

Though the rules were discussed at length on reducing the lot size from 1,000 kg to 100 kg, the trade in general "is surprised by how the advisory committee with experts at the helm of the affairs missed daily fluctuation not being taken into account," he said.

Buyers were of the view that if one needs to cover 10 tonnes, one has to buy 100 lots, which itself would activate the market. Similarly someone wishing to sell 10 tonnes would have to sell 100 lots, resulting in bearishness.

Now, Vietnam has reduced prices to \$5,500 a tonne, which works out to Rs. 375/kg, delivered in India. The crop size is reported to be above two lakh tonnes. It is feared that large quantities of imported pepper may also enter the Indian market to take advantage of

the high prices prevailing in India even after paying the concessional ASEAN member duty of 25 per cent from Vietnam, he said.

The trade, he said, also believes that the minimum bulk density of 550 gram/litre should be fixed to avoid any quality disputes later.

Spot pepper slips

Meanwhile, bearishness continued in the pepper markets. On the terminal market, 30 tonnes were traded at Rs. 650-660 a kg. Spot prices fell further by Rs. 200 a quintal to Rs. 66,000 (ungarbled) and Rs.69,000 (garbled).

November and January contracts on the IPSTA remained unchanged at Rs. 70,000 and Rs. 57,000, while December moved up by Rs. 1,000 a quintal to Rs. 64,000.

Export prices were at \$10,625 a tonne c&f for Europe and \$10,925 for the US.

Solvent extractors for allowing bulk exports of groundnut oil

Ahmedabad, November 7:

Amid falling prices of groundnut and growers facing a net loss, the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) has appealed to the Union Commerce Ministry to open exports of groundnut oil.

In a letter to Commerce Secretary Rita Teotia, SEA President Atul Chaturvedi explained that groundnut exports, if allowed in bulk, could lift the prices without affecting the domestic edible oil supply scenario. Currently, groundnut oil export is allowed in consumer packs of up to 5 kg.

SEA noted that groundnut farmers are currently forced to sell their crop in distress below the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs. 4,220 per quintal (for groundnut in shells) at Rs. 3,700-3,800, which is likely to go down further.

Crop estimates suggest bumper kharif and rabi production, with 70 lakh tonnes in the current oil year against 45 lt last year.

“The packaging cost for consumer packs of groundnut oil works out to around \$150/tonne, which makes us outpriced in the world market. If bulk export is permitted, the cost in the flexi tank would cost hardly \$20-30 and make us competitive,” Chaturvedi wrote in the letter.

Oilmeal exports down 29%

April-October oilmeal exports have fallen 29 per cent to 554,147 tonnes from 783,565 tonnes last year.

The decline comes in the backdrop of a sharp surge in exports in October to 67,779 tonnes from 34,168 tonnes in the same month last year.

Slack buying weighs on oils



MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7:

Edible oils market ruled weak on slack demand despite a rebound in futures. On the BCE, groundnut oil jumped by ₹25. Increase in arrivals and selling pressure cooled down soya and cotton oil by ₹3 and ₹2 per 10 kg each. Sources said as stockists preferred to fulfil old commitments, the volume remained thin and isolated. Liberty's rates: palmolein ₹565, super palmolein ₹598 and soyabean refined oil ₹670. Allana traded palmolein for ₹567, soya refined oil ₹662 and sunflower refined oil ₹725. At Rajkot, groundnut oil *telia* tin increased to ₹1,450 (1,400) and loose (10 kg) jumped to ₹925 (900). BCE spot rates (₹/10 kg): groundnut oil 950 (925), soya ref. 652 (655), sunflower exp. ref. 660 (660), sunflower ref. 720 (720), rapeseed ref. 860 (860), rapeseed exp. ref. 830 (830), cottonseed ref. 648 (650) and palmolein 560 (560).

Small cardamom continues to gain on good demand

KOCHI, NOVEMBER 7:

Firmer trend continued in small cardamom prices last week at auctions held in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

At the Cardamom Planters' Association (CPA) auction on Monday (today) in Bodinayakannur, the individual auction average soared to ₹1,206.86 a kg. Only 10 tonnes arrived and of this 9 tonnes were traded. The maximum price was at ₹1,420.

“There is an artificially created shortage here in the market to push up the prices and there are no buyers at these inflated prices,” Ranganathan, a dealer, told *BusinessLine*.

Trade sources, however, attributed the firmer trend to strong demand from upcountry markets following fear of sharp fall in current crop output due to erratic monsoon rains.

North Indian dealers were actively buying on the apprehension about a likely squeeze in availability due to the unfavourable weather conditions prevailing even now, PC Punnoose, General Manager, CPMC, told *BusinessLine*.

Exporters were staying away from the market as the prices were ruling much above their affordable levels, they said. Good colour current bulk was being traded at ₹1,150 a kg. Arrivals at the auctions last week dropped to 583 tonnes from 705 tonnes the previous week.

Total arrivals during the season up to November 5 were at 7,364 tonnes and sales were at 6,964 tonnes.

The individual auction average for the season as on November 5 stood at ₹977.78/kg. Last week auction average was at ₹1,165.26 against ₹1,100.22 the week before.

Prices in ₹/kg: 8mm bold good colour 1,500; 7-8 mm 1,300; 6-7 mm 1,200 and below 6 mm: 1,100.

Sugar stays steady in routine trade

MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7:

Sugar prices at all level ruled unchanged on routine demand-supply. Producers continued to sell at prevailing rates so supply remained enough and prices under check. Arrivals at Vashi were about 62-63 truck loads and local dispatches were at 60-61 loads taking market inventory at 110-115 truck loads. The BSMA spot rates: S-grade ₹3,542-3,785 (3,542-3,785) and M-grade ₹3,650-3,896 (3,650-3,896). *Naka* delivery rates: S-grade ₹3,510-3,590 (3,510-3,590) and M-grade ₹3,610-3,700 (3,610-3,700).

Cotton remains unchanged

RAJKOT, NOVEMBER 7:

Cotton traded flat on the back of moderate demand from domestic mills. Though, arrival of kapas or raw cotton was quite slow as the farmers' selling was limited after one week Diwali holiday. Trader said that, Southern mills demand was there and some export inquiries were also came in the market which kept the cotton price unchanged. Gujarat Sankar-6 cotton traded at ₹38,000-38,300 per candy of 356 kg. After Diwali festival, supply flow becomes normal at the cotton producing states. About 1.20 lakh bales arrived in India. Arrival of cotton in Gujarat was stood at 32,000 bales, Maharashtra 25,000 bales, North India 25,000 bales and Madhya Pradesh registered 14,000 bales cotton arrival on Monday. Kapas quoted ₹980-1,010 per 20 kg and gin delivery kapas was stood at ₹1,010-1,040 per 20 kg.



Paddy stubble management: Zero biomass power plant in 3 years

Even while Punjab attempted to wash its hands of the air pollution that is plaguing Delhi, the state has not been able to set its own house in order either.

Apart from sitting over the subsidy applications for agriculture machines, which can help curb the practice of burning paddy stubble, the state has not been able to add even a single biomass power plant in the last three years.

The process of setting up biomass power plants started in 2005 and the last one came up in Mansa in 2013. These power plants produce about 63 MW of power per day due to

which they cannot consume more than 1 million tonnes of paddy stubble. The state produces more than 15 million tonnes of paddy stubble.

M P Singh, joint director, Punjab Energy development Authority, said: “A few projects are in the pipeline and they will generate up to 190 MW of power per day. However, that will take another two years to come into operation and not before that.”

The plants of today are not running at full capacity either. With an installed capacity of 63 MW, the plants are producing just around 50MW per day. All biomass plants are being run by private entities with PEDDA acting as facilitator. Apart from paddy stubble even cotton stalks are being used as fuel.

“In the absence of any biomass plant, farmers don’t have much choice left and not all are progressive enough to avoid stubble burning,” said Sukhdev Singh Kokri Kalan, general secretary, Bharti Kisan Union (Ugrahan).

Over 100 applications of balers are lying pending in agriculture department’s office because subsidy amount for these machines is yet to be received.

Genetically speaking we’re all chicken, banana too



Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said the opposition to cow slaughter was “not linked to only faith and culture, but has economic, historical and scientific aspects”. According to a “report of the US Department of Agriculture”, 80% of genes found in the cow are found in humans too, he said. Indeed, a 2009 report in the journal Science said domesticated cattle share about 80% of their genes with humans — however, as other

studies have shown, seen in terms of genes, we're similar to several other living things as well. A few examples.

96% Chimpanzee

A 2005 study by the Chimpanzee Sequencing and Analysis Consortium, and published in Nature, found that the typical human protein has accumulated just one unique change since chimps and humans diverged from a common ancestor about 6 million years ago.

90% Cat

A 2007 study published in Genome Research reported that about 90% of the Abyssinian domestic cat's genes are the same as humans'. Cats help in the study of human infectious diseases; feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) is a genetic relative of HIV.

85% Mouse

The National Human Genome Research Institute states that rats share nearly 85% of human DNA — a similarity attributable to a shared ancestor about 80 million years ago, and the basis for use of mice in lab experiments.

84% Dog

The best friend shares 84% of its DNA with man — and is, therefore, important in the study of human disease. Researchers are especially interested in diseases like retinal disease, cataracts, retinitis pigmentosa, cancer and epilepsy.

70% Acorn worm

It is not just land animals that humans share their DNA with. As per a study published in Nature in 2015, in terms of genetic makeup, we are 70% similar to acorn worms — a kind of slithery, underwater critter.

61% Chicken

Even the bravest human is (more than half) chicken, genetically speaking. A study published in Nature in 2004 said that the DNA sequences diverged in ways that may explain important differences between birds and mammals.

60% Banana

As humans are chicken, they're bananas too, it would seem. Research shows that we share about 60% of our DNA with the humble fruit.

26% Yeast

These single-celled organisms have many genes that are the same as those in humans, including those that enable the breakdown of sugars.

We're all the same, almost

99.9 % No two individuals, except for identical twins, are genetically identical, but our differences are in fact only 0.1% of the entire human genome. According to the National Human Genome Research Institute, we each have approximately 3×10^9 base pairs of DNA, of which any two people have about 6×10^6 different base pairs, which translates into a difference of 0.1%. It adds that this minuscule unique DNA, plus the interaction of genetic and environmental factors, is what leads to our different phenotypic features.

Business Standard

Chhattisgarh launches campaign to complete irrigation projects



Chhattisgarh government has launched a campaign to complete the irrigation projects that could not be completed.

Under the campaign called “Lakshya Bhagirathi”, the water resources department had identified 108 projects that could not be completed. Most of the projects are minor and middle. For the last three decades, the projects were pending for required clearances.

“Of the 108 projects, the department has set a target to complete 88 projects in the financial year 2016-17,” state’s water resources minister Brijmohan Agrawal said. The projects on completion would provide irrigation in additional 71322 hectares of area, he added. The districts where irrigation potential has been below 10% had been given priority in the campaign.

Agrawal said the projects would be milestone in enhancing growth in the agriculture sector in the state (that falls under Rice-agro-climatic zone). About 80% population of the state is rural and the main livelihood of the villagers is agriculture and agriculture based small industries.

The economy of the state is mainly based on agriculture and forestry. The agriculture sector contributes around 38% to the State’s Net Domestic Product. Of the total workforce of 8.3 million, 5.9 million (71%) are engaged in agriculture.

Net sown area of the Chhattisgarh state is 4.683 million hectares while the gross sown area is 5.561 million hectares. The state’s Irrigation potential was 1.328 million hectares at the time of formation of the state (in November 2000) which was 23% of the gross sown area.

The irrigation potential has now been raised to 1.844 million hectares which is 33.15% of gross sown area. Agrawal said the state government had set a target to raise the irrigation potential to 3.2 million hectares by 2028.

Govt urges farmers to join hands for greening of highways

Expressing grave concern over the rise in pollution levels, Minister of State for Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Mansukh Lal Mandaviya on Monday urged for greater public participation, especially of farmers, in development and maintenance of highways as “green highways’ and said it would help curb the rising pollution levels.

“The current pollution levels in Delhi are an indicator of how we have erroneously adopted the European industrial model, while abandoning our very own age-old Indian Ayurvedic traditions, thus moving away from nature,” he said, addressing the maiden national convention on ‘Innovations in Green Highways’.

The Minister also suggested linking of the Green Highways Project with the ongoing Swachh Bharat Mission. “There would be a greater success in greening highways if the

local farmers are also involved,” the Minister said adding if farmers are roped in plantation, maintenance, and protection of trees, it would give them a sense of responsibility and ownership.

National Highways Authority of India Chairman, Raghav Chandra said he was happy that his organisation while constructing the National highways would also be associated with restoring the environment through aesthetic greening.

Chandra said NHAI was confident of awarding 6000 km of National highways for greening by the end of the year, as per a statement from Road Transport and Highways Ministry.

He stressed that that greening of National highways would improve the scope for rural employment and create jobs for lakhs of people associated with it.

The statement said National Green Highways Mission (NGHM) also inked several pacts including with ITC for undertaking plantation, management & sustainable harvesting activities along NHs besides with Yes Bank for funding roadside plantations under CSR programme and TERI technical collaboration for fostering research & innovation in Green Highways.

"NGHM will also sign MoUs with JK Papers for undertaking plantation, management & sustainable harvesting activities along NHs; INBAR for promoting bamboo based applications in Green Highways; World Bank for strengthening Green Highways Programme," the statement said.

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has promulgated Green Highways (Plantations, Transplantation, Beautification & Maintenance) Policy – 2015 to undertake highways plantations along National Highways.

For the quick roll out of the scheme NGHM, NHAI has been entrusted with the responsibility of implementing entire green highways programme for the Ministry, NHIDCL & NHAI.