

04.08.2017

THE HINDU BusinessLine

Dehydration units make nil gains from onion price surge



[Brent Hofacker/dhutterstock.com](#) Minced dehydrated onion

With low awareness, there are few takers for ‘packaged’ onion among Indian households

Even as onion prices are hitting the roof amid short supplies and escalating demand, producers of dehydrated onion are staring at a lost opportunity due to lack of awareness among consumers.

A suitable alternative to fresh onions is its dehydrated version, but a very small portion of household consumers in India go for it. This means the dehydration industry makes no gains from the onion short supply or price escalation.

According to industry players, dehydrated onions are largely consumed by wholesale consumers such as hotels, ready-to-cook food or masala makers, while only a marginal portion of about 60,000 tonnes of production is used by households.

“Indian consumers are less aware about the availability and usage of dehydrated forms of onion,” said Manoj Ram, President of the All India Dehydration Association (AIDA).

“From the price point of view, dehydrated products are more stable than fresh onions and you can store it for long.

“Out of the total 60,000 tonnes of production by dehydration units, about 85 per cent is exported, mainly to European countries, while 15 per cent is consumed by domestic wholesale consumers. The share of household consumers is negligible.”

Ram further said using dehydrated onion is financially more viable than fresh onion, which costs over ₹21 per kg at the wholesale market in Lasalgaon, Maharashtra.

Dehydrated onion is available in flakes, minced or powder form. Its usage in cooking works out to about ₹8 a kg.

Vitthalbhai Koradiya, Managing Director of Maharaja Dehydration Pvt Ltd, said the recent price surge of onions will not affect the units.

“Most of the units have already completed their processing and stored their dehydrated products. We start procurement at the beginning of the season, when the prices are low. Therefore, our prices have remained stable and there is no immediate impact of the recent price rise in onion prices,” he said.

Mahuva near Bhavnagar in Gujarat is the largest onion dehydration cluster in India with about 110 factories.

“The individual units can’t spend on marketing because that will increase the cost of their product,” said Ram of AIDA, ruing that the government is doing little to spread awareness of dehydrated onions.

Currently, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (Apeda) is providing financial support to the industry for promotions and awareness campaigns.

(This article was published on August 4, 2017)

Tea output drops 2.8% in June

India's tea production in June fell 2.8 per cent from a year ago to 143.02 million kg as plucking fell in the top producing north-eastern state of Assam, state-run Tea Board said.

The state produced 68.36 million kg in the month, down 10 per cent from a year ago, the Board said in a statement.

In Darjeeling, known for producing the world's most expensive tea, output plunged 89.5 per cent to 0.14 million kg due to ethnic unrest.

The country's tea production in the first half of 2017 rose 4.5 per cent from a year ago to 443.15 million kg.



India, the world's second-biggest tea producer, exports CTC (crush-tear-curl) grade mainly to Egypt, Pakistan and the UK, and the orthodox variety to Iraq, Iran and Russia.

(This article was published on August 4, 2017)

Rajasthan leads the way in kharif sowing

Maintaining pace			
	This year	Last year	% change
Rice	280.03	266.93	4.91
Pulses	121.28	116.95	3.71
Arhar	37.51	45.19	-17.00
Urdbean	36.14	28.29	27.72
Moongbean	28.89	28.31	2.05
Kulthi	0.20	0.47	-57.19
Other pulses	18.55	14.69	26.29
Coarse cereals	156.95	156.81	0.09
Jowar	14.70	16.73	-12.16
Bajra	63.50	54.95	15.56
Ragi	3.68	5.10	-27.88
Small millets	2.76	3.06	-9.64
Maize	72.31	76.97	-6.06
Oilseeds	148.88	165.49	-10.03
Groundnut	34.99	40.21	-12.97
Soyabean	98.97	110.45	-10.39
Sunflower	1.15	1.32	-13.03
Sesamum	10.50	11.64	-9.79
Castor	2.72	1.53	78.08
Sugarcane	49.71	45.64	8.92
Jute & mesta	7.04	7.55	-6.86
Cotton	114.34	96.48	18.51
Total	878.23	855.85	2.61

Kharif Acreage in lakh ha as on August 4

Above-normal rainfall boosts cultivation in State; pulses sowing at record high

Unprecedented farming activity in Rajasthan, which received more-than-normal rainfall during the ongoing monsoon season, has taken the total area going under cultivation in the country this week to a high of 878.23 lakh hectares (ha). This is 5 per cent more than normal for the week.

The total acreage covered in the corresponding week last year was 855.85 lakh ha.

Paddy has been sown over 280 lakh ha and pulses over 121.28 lakh ha by the end of the week, according to data released by the Ministry of Agriculture on Friday.

The area under pulses in Rajasthan has gone up to a record 32.5 lakh ha, surpassing both Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, known to be leaders in pulses cultivation. This is a whopping 19 lakh ha more than the area that normally goes under pulses cultivation in the desert State.

Pulses cultivation also picked up momentum in Madhya Pradesh, which covered an additional 10.60 lakh ha this week to take the total pulses area in the State to 24.7 lakh ha.

There is an unprecedented increase in the area under coarse cereals in Rajasthan, which has gone up to 47.47 lakh ha. The acreage under coarse pulses in the corresponding period last year in the States was 34.58 lakh ha.

Oilseeds cultivation

The cultivation of oilseeds, however, continued to be sluggish and the total oilseeds acreage so far is only 148.88 lakh ha.

This is 16.61 per cent lower for the week as compared to the previous year.

Much of the shortfall in acreage is reported from Madhya Pradesh (10.31 lakh ha) and Andhra Pradesh (3.15 lakh).

A nearly 18 per cent increase in cotton cultivation over 2016-17 is also reported for the week, with the total area of cotton cultivation going up to 111.34 lakh ha, compared to 94.48 lakh ha last year.

(This article was published on August 4, 2017)