

20.02.2017

THE HINDU

A success saga in organic farming

Way Farm, a farmer producer company, gets set to export vegetables

Scripting a success saga in producing organic vegetables and providing it to the public at an affordable price, Way Farm, a farmer producer company, sponsored by NABARD in Wayanad district, is gearing up to repeat the same success in exporting organic vegetables to countries abroad.

Cine artist Sreenivasan will flag off the first consignment of organic vegetables to the U.A.E at 11 a.m. at Edathana, near Valad, in the district on Tuesday.

“We have set up the company to promote organic farming among farmers in the district, ensure better prices for the produce by avoiding exploitation by middlemen and exploring the marketing potential of value-added farmer produce,” said P. Hariharan, chairman of the organisation.

‘It is also envisaged to attract more youths to the farming sector by promoting modern technologies such as precision farming and poly-house farming,’ Sabu Palattil, managing director, Way Farm, said.

The Way Farm was launched in June 2014 by as many as 52 farmers’ clubs functioning under various public sector banks and NGOs in the district. They started vegetable cultivation in September 2014 with its 100 members on nearly 45 hectares of land.

However, the company has now 500 organic farmers as members under 60 farmer clubs.

They are cultivating different crops on nearly 200 hectares of land including 10 hectares in Karnataka.

More than 100 farmers are being engaged in open as well as precision farming to ensure uninterrupted supply of vegetables and other farm produces.

The organisation is selling the produce through its eight outlets in the district and supplying it to consumers in Kozhikode, Ernakulam and Kannur districts as per demands .

“The organisation has signed an MOU with an exporting company in Kochi to export 15 types of vegetable crops to consumers in U.A.E., Qatar, and Oman in the first phase,” N. S. Sajikumar, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, said .

They are also exploring the possibility to export their produce to Australia and Germany.

The organisation also provides training to its members with financial assistance from NABARD.

It also provides good quality seedlings, organic fertilizers and pesticides and monitors farming activities of its members.

Paddy farmers hope for bumper crop



Farmers cultivating paddy in Telangana are set to overcome the loss suffered in kharif due to insufficient rains in the first half of 2016-2017, as they have taken up cultivation of the major food crop in second highest area this rabi (yaasangi) season in the last five years.

Prolonged dry spell during the crucial stages of crop cultivation twice during monsoons has not only affected the extent of cultivation but also its yield. However, with favourable conditions like ample water in irrigation projects, minor irrigation sources, improved groundwater table, and nine-hour power supply to the agriculture sector, the farmers were expecting a bumper yield this season.

“Cultivation of paddy on nearly six lakh hectares this yaasangi are also dispelling apprehensions of whether there would be enough procurement of paddy to meet the requirement of rice needed for welfare schemes such as public distribution system, supply of super fine variety rice to school and college hostels, and the mid-day meal scheme,” a senior official of the Agriculture Department told *The Hindu*.

Based on the increasing demand for energy from the agriculture sector, the Energy Department was estimating that that cultivation of paddy could have been taken up on nearly eight lakh hectares. “On our part, we are prepared to meet the demand from the farm sector as the total demand has been ranging between 150 to 170 million units (MU) a day for over a month now,” a TS-Transco official stated.

Considering the plans of the Irrigation Department to give water to about 22.35 lakh acres (8.94 lakh hectares) this season under major irrigation sources and estimates of cultivation of another 7.11 lakh acres (2.84 lakh hectares) under minor irrigation sources, the cultivation during rabi could be in over 12 lakh hectares with three-fourths of it covered by paddy.

Minister for Irrigation T. Harish Rao recently stated that they were expecting about 30 lakh tonnes of paddy production this yaasangi season, indicating that the actual cultivation of the food crop could be much higher than the statistics of the Agriculture Department.