

Date:16/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/16/stories/2010041657280600.htm>

'Marketing as important as production in agriculture'

Sustainability a major issue for many of the projects



Chairman of Research Programme Committee of Indian Council of Agricultural Research S.L. Mehta (second right) takes a look at a stall set up in connection with the annual workshop organised by TNAU and ICAR-National Agricultural Innovation Project in Coimbatore on Thursday. National Director of NAIP-ICAR Bangali Baboo (left) and Vice-Chancellor of the university P. Murugesha Boopathy (second left) are in the picture.

COIMBATORE: Marketing is as important as production in agriculture. And to provide enough thrust to the same the National Agriculture Innovation Project (NAIP) was started, Bangali Baboo, National Director of the project, said on Thursday.

Started under the Tenth Five-Year Plan, the aim of the project was to face the complexities and uncertainties in agriculture, he said at the Second Annual Workshop held at the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University here to review Component II of the Project.

Global trend

He asked the beneficiaries to undertake research before taking up market intervention initiatives. The intervention ought to reflect the market realities and also global trade trend but need not be based on research alone.

It could also be innovative intervention, as happened in Thailand after avian influenza affected the poultry industry. All that it did was just switchover from frozen products to cooked products to overcome the crisis.

Villages

Similarly, in villages in Mehaboob Nagar district in Andhra Pradesh, the people optimised the use of water by bringing bore wells into a grid than going in for complex solutions.

Mr. Baboo told the participants that the Central Government had conceptualised the NAIP after keeping in mind various factors and drawing lessons from National Agriculture Research Project and National Agriculture Development Programme.

One hundred and eighty-eight consortia had been formed taking in 620 organisations as partners under NAIP to devise ways and means to increase farmers' income, generate employment, provide food security, export and process agriculture produce and ensure optimal use of resources.

He lamented that many agriculture institutions in States had not responded the way they ought to have and it was becoming very difficult to work with such organisations.

The consortia started under the Project should soon become self-sustainable and not be dependent, said S.L. Mehta, Chairman, Research Programme Committee, NAIP.

Sustainability was a major issue for many of the projects started under the programme and it was for the purpose that public-private partnership had been mooted. He asked the consortia to prepare a blue print for sustenance beyond the funding period.

And in becoming sustainable it was important to keep sight of the farmer and his income.

Recognition

Tamil Nadu Agriculture University had enough research potential, the recognition of which was the award of 17 projects under NAIP, said P. Murugesu Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor.

A sum of Rs. 15.44 crore had been sanctioned for the projects. For five of those the university was the consortia leader and for the rest it was a partner. And, in six of the projects the university had made "commendable progress", he said.

R.K. Goyal, National Coordinator, NAIP Component II, said each of the consortia had been given Rs. 20 – 25 crore to carry out the project and the fund had been released in three instalments.

Date:16/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/16/stories/2010041653821700.htm>

Export of pulses by SEZs referred to Cabinet panel

NEW DELHI: Wiser from its earlier experience on export of sugar and fearing a political backlash on any unilateral decision, the Commerce Ministry has decided to refer the matter of export of pulses by SEZ (special economic zone) units to the Union Cabinet.

At present there is a ban on export of pulses to check the prices, but the Commerce Ministry had recently announced that SEZ units can export prohibited items if they import the raw material and take prior approval of the Board of Approval (BoA), headed by Commerce Secretary Rahul Khullar.

The issue of pulses exports from SEZs came up during the meeting of the BoA last week where it was decided to refer the proposal to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), as it involved policy decisions. SEZs are legal entities, which are set up for the sole purpose of exports. In February, the government had allowed exports of 10,000 tonnes of sugar to the EU, but later withdrew permission after the Opposition BJP attacked it for being insensitive to soaring prices in the domestic market.

Date:16/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/16/stories/2010041650750300.htm>

Fruits, vegetables distributed

Members of Koyambedu Periyar Vegetable Market Welfare Association distributed fruits and vegetables to children and senior citizens of Sevalaya near Thiruninravur on Wednesday. The association president, G.D.Rajasekaran, handed over Rs.10,000 as donation towards construction of new building.

Date:16/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/16/stories/2010041659230300.htm>

Agri clinics equipped to test soil content

A sum of Rs. 30 is collected for testing soil samples



Determining deficiency:V. Deenadhayalan, agri consultant, testing a sample of soil at the Thirupurambiam agri clinic near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur on Thursday.

THANJAVUR: Farmers of Thanjavur district can now test soil and water at 14 places in the district. It is an initiative of the agri clinics established under National Agriculture Development Programme.

The clinics have been functioning from October, 2009. "Previously there was only one soil testing laboratory at Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute at Aduthurai. Nearly 45,000 samples of soil will be tested in this laboratory per year. Now farmers need depend on this laboratory alone for testing. There are thirteen other places where agri clinics test soil and inform about soil health," said P. Loganathan, Joint Director of Agriculture.

Out of these 13 agri clinics, six are attached to Primary Agriculture Co-operative Banks(PACB) while others are run by unemployed agriculture graduates. Agri clinic at Thirupurambiyam village in Kumbakonam agriculture division is attached to the PACB of Thirupurambiyam.

“We have registered 296 farmers in the clinic. Fifty-five soil tests have so far been done. Depending upon the soil health the required nutrition will be found and farmers can add fertilisers accordingly,” explained K. Nedunchezhiyan, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Kumbakonam.

The clinic has various equipments like digital Ph meter, digital conductivity meter, flame photo meter, deep vision, spectrophotometer, distillation set, microscope, water still, electronic balance, chemical balance etc. A sum of Rs. 30 is collected for testing soil samples.

Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potash content of the soil can be determined.

Deficiency in any one of them can be removed by applying the required fertiliser. S. Thirunavukarasu, a farmer of Thirupurambiyam who owns six acres of land said that he tested the soil at the agri clinic.

Besides testing soil and water other technical inputs are also given.

A sum of six lakh is provided for establishing the agri clinics. Agriculture Department provides a subsidy of Rs. three lakh while Co-operative Department is providing Rs. three lakh.

Date:16/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/16/stories/2010041661710300.htm>

Revised rates for fertilizers come into effect

TIRUCHI: The revised retail prices of fertilizers as per the new fertilizer policy of the Union government has come into effect from April 1, Collector T. Soundiah has said.

In a press release, Mr. Soundiah said the price of fertilizers has been fixed on the basis of their nutrient content. However, under the subsidy scheme, the maximum retail price for urea would continue to be fixed by the government.

The retail price of urea would be uniform throughout Tamil Nadu though the prices of the other fertilizers would be fixed by the respective manufacturers.

The price of urea, per 50 kg bag, for stocks dated before March 31, 2010 would be Rs.251.16, while the current price will be Rs.276.12. The prices of various other fertilizers of different companies have also been notified.

The district had a stock of about 5,487 tonnes of urea, 522 tonnes of super phosphate, 9356 tonnes of potash, 627 tonnes of DAP and 5,515 tonnes of other complex fertilizers.

The existing stocks could be sold only as per the previous government fixed rates and only stocks (of fertilizers other than urea) obtained after April 1, 2010 could be sold as per the rates fixed by the respective companies, Mr. Soundiah said.

Quality control officers of the Agriculture Department have already inspected the fertilizer retail outlets and checked the stocks and the retail rates.

“Verify rates”

Farmers have been advised to verify the rates and in case of doubts contact the Joint Director of Agriculture, Tiruchi, the Assistant Director of Agriculture (Quality Control) or the Assistant Directors of Agriculture in the respective blocks.

Date:16/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/16/stories/2010041661990300.htm>

Free soil and water testing camp in Musiri

Camp aims at enhancing productivity of paddy, chillies, sugarcane



Know it:Farmers observing the results of soil test at Musiri near Tiruchi.

TIRUCHI: Excessive use of chemical fertilizers over the years has been causing damage to the soil and ground water resources in and around Musiri.

With a view to sensitising the farmers to the importance of restoring the texture of the soil and consequent conservation of ground water table, the Indian Farmers' Fertilizers Co-operatives (IFFCO) has taken up a free soil and water testing camp at 15 select villages in the periphery of Musiri town.

150 samples

The camp has been conducted at Kolakudi, Soorampatti and Appanallur villages so far in the past three days and, at the rate of 50 samples a village, the scientists attached to the IFFCO's Mobile Soil Testing laboratory, have collected 150 samples of soil and water from the farmers' fields and wells.

B. Krishnan, Area Manager, IFFCO, said that in almost all the fields, deficiency of nitrogen and phosphorous had been identified while the potash deficiency was found to be medium to high.

Samples would be collected from sodic soil, alkaline soil and acid soil. S. John Basha, Field Manager, said that 'soil health cards' would be distributed to each farmer at the valediction of the camp on April 28. The camp aimed at enhancing productivity of paddy, chillies and sugarcane in the area, he added.

© Copyright 2000 - 2009 The Hindu

DECCAN
Chronicle *On The Web*

Published on Deccan Chronicle (<http://www.deccanchronicle.com>)

Inflation touches 9.9% in March

Apr 16 2010

April 15: The overall inflation settled at 9.90 per cent in March. However, analysts were expecting it to cross 10 per cent, but prices of food and manufactured products eased. This is the highest inflation figure since October 2008. Inflation was at 9.89 per cent in February.

The finance minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, said on Thursday that inflationary pressures will stay till June.

"Of course, the apprehension was that it may reach the double digit figure. So it has moderated to some extent but you will have to see that till the month of June, this pressure will continue," said Mr Mukherjee.

The finance minister was of the view that inflation will cool down after the rabi crops harvesting is complete and clearer indications of a good monsoon are available.

The food inflation for the week ending April 3 eased to 17.22 per cent as compared to 17.70 per cent in the previous week.

“As far as headline inflation is concerned, it has reached its peak or is close to its peak. But what will concern RBI is that while the overall inflation figure may not rise, manufacturing inflation will rise fast. This indicates demand side pressure,” said Mr A. Prasanna, economist at ICICI Securities Primary Dealership.

He said RBI is likely to increase interest rate by 50 basis points in its policy review in April.

“It is important for them (RBI) to signal concerns to address inflationary trends. I do expect some tightening in Tuesday’s monetary policy,” said the Prime Minister’s Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) member, Mr Suman K. Bery.

He said that inflation is essentially a supply driven phenomenon. “It is certainly the case that the commodity prices world-wide are rising. Oil is rising,” said Mr Bery.

Ficci, secretary general, Dr Amit Mitra said the last two months’ inflation figures show that prices are stabilising. “Even if they are not slowing down, there is a softening tendency. Despite a fuel price hike, the inflation has not increased in March. Despite a fuel price hike, the inflation has not increased in March. Inflation for food articles and manufactured products has come down,” added Dr Mitra.

Source URL:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/business/inflation-touches-99-march-504>

Funds to tackle water scarcity in 10 districts

16 Apr 2010 03:53:00 AM IST

CHENNAI: The State government on Thursday earmarked Rs 18 crore to 10 districts which are facing drinking water scarcity to undertake measures for providing water on a war-footing. Making a 'suo motu' statement in the Assembly, Deputy Chief Minister M K Stalin said a decision to this effect was taken at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister M Karunanidhi.

Virudhunagar, Dharmapuri, Salem, Krishnagiri, Vellore, Dindigul, Namakkal and Tiruvannamalai would get Rs 2 crore each, while Tiruvallur and Villupuram would get Rs 1 crore each from the Disaster Management Fund. Assistance would also be provided to other districts according to their requirement. The funds were to be used for digging wells, cleaning existing wells, repairing motor pumpsets and supplying drinking water in lorries, Stalin said.

Dindigul first to interlink 25 waterbodies

15 Apr 2010 03:56:00 AM IST

DINDIGUL: Dindigul has become the first district in the State to interlink 25 rural tanks, ponds and other waterbodies through a 17.5 km supply channel at Methapatti in R Kombai village panchayat of Gujiliamparai Panchayat Union.

This pocket is one among the drought-hit areas in the district and the scheme is being implemented at R Kombai, Vadugambadi, Uliyakottai and Mallapuram panchayats.

There are 13 tanks in R Kombai, seven in Vadugambadi, two in Uliyakottai and three in Mallapuram panchayats.

A team comprising engineers and experts was formed by the district collector to inspect this 17.5 km stretch of the main gully connecting 25 waterbodies.

First, the team studied the channel by using the documents and records created during

the British era. These maps were copied and superimposed on the satellite images of that pocket that was created with the help of an open source software programme. Later, the satellite image was superimposed on the map available with the Revenue Department and the missing links were identified.

Manual survey was then carried out and the plan to interlink the entire stretch was chalked out and the District Rural Development Authority under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is now carrying out the work. After restoration of the missing links, these 25 tanks would be able to store over 2,440 cubic feet of water.

As the surplus water would fill the tanks one by one, the water table is expected to increase substantially.

It would also recharge 500 borewells and 700 open wells and convert 1,750 hectares of barren lands into cultivable lands.

District Collector M Vallalar told Express that this project would require 1.44 lakh man-days and was estimated to cost Rs 1.44 crore.

After completion of this project, the same would be extended to all 14 blocks of the district.

© Copyright 2008 ExpressBuzz



Inflation nears 10%, food inflation at 17.22%

Agencies Posted online: Thursday , Apr 15, 2010 at 1141 hrs

New Delhi : The wholesale price inflation rose at a slower-than-expected pace in March following an easing in manufacturing inflation, although a rate hike by the central bank at its policy review next week remains a near certainty.

India's wholesale price index rose 9.90 per cent in March from a year earlier, below a median forecast for a 10.39 per cent rise in a Agencies poll, and slightly higher than the previous month's annual rise of 9.89 per cent. The figure was still the highest since October 2008.

At its January policy review, the central bank raised its WPI inflation projection for end-March 2010 to 8.5 per cent from its earlier 6.5 per cent with an upside bias.

Manufacturing inflation eased to 7.13 per cent in March from 7.4 per cent in the previous month.

Fuel inflation, however, quickened to 12.71 per cent in the same month from 10.2 per cent in February following a hike in domestic fuel prices and an upswing in world crude prices.

With the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) policy focus increasingly shifting towards containing inflation, investors are betting on at least a 25 basis point rate hike on April 20. That would follow the RBI's surprise 25 basis point hike on March 19.

"The headline WPI number is slightly lower than expected, remains below the 10 per cent and has peaked now. High base effect will start to drag the headline inflation rate lower from next month onwards," said Gaurav Kapur, senior economist at Royal Bank of Scotland in Mumbai.

"The WPI inflation rate may not fall below 7-7.5 per cent over the first half of the current fiscal year. This data, however, will not change the course of monetary policy normalisation," he added.

The Reserve Bank of India had cited increased capacity utilisation as one of the principal factors driving up inflation and analysts expect the central bank to try to cool demand until companies boost their output potential.

The latest Agencies poll shows analysts expect rates to go up by further 100 basis points between now and the end of the year.

RISING POLITICAL PRESSURE

Rising inflation has put the Congress-led ruling coalition on the back foot, forcing it to defer key economic reforms including market-determined fuel prices as it gears up to take on an emboldened opposition in parliament.

The main opposition parties have said they would seek a special vote on the budget for the financial year that began on April 1, demanding a rollback in petroleum and fertiliser price hikes. If the government loses the vote, it will have to resign.

The parties have also called for country-wide strikes to protest against rising prices.

India food price index up 17.22 pct y/y - govt

India's food price index rose 17.22 per cent in the 12 months to April 3, while the fuel index was up 12.43 per cent, government data showed on Thursday.

The rise in the food price index was slightly lower than an annual rise of 17.70 per cent in the previous week.

The primary articles index was up 13.88 per cent on the year on April 3.

Only 16,000 quintal sugar lifted against auctioned stock of 1.2 lakh quintal

Raakhi Jagga Posted online: Friday , Apr 16, 2010 at 0311 hrs

Ludhiana : The much hyped auction of 1.2 lakh quintals of sugar which was held in the month of February turned out to be a damp squib as only 16,000 quintals were lifted by bidders. Thursday was the last date to deposit the money.

The total stock was auctioned for around Rs 33 crore of which the government received around Rs 4.65 crore.

The entire sugar stock is lying in Seera village.

The department had got Rs 2.16 crore as security deposit from the bidders. On an average, each bidder had deposited Rs 1 lakh. Hence, the amount will be forfeited for those who did not turn up to claim their stock.

It needs to be mentioned that the auctioned stock was seized by the District Food and Civil Supplies department in September last year from companies found hoarding sugar.

After fighting a legal battle, the stock was finally auctioned in February. The court had later announced a ban to lift the stock which was also lifted recently.

Deputy Commissioners Rahul Tiwari had asked the dealers who participated in the auction to deposit the remaining amount and avail the stock by April 15.

K R Singla, district food and civil supplies controller (West), confirmed that money has been deposited for about 16,000 quintals.

Sources said around five dealers were delayed due to some reason and if their amount is added, the figure will add up to 20,000 quintals.

Tiwari said, "We will be giving a few more days to the dealers to deposit the money so that the stock can be lifted. If some stock is still left, we will forfeit the security deposit of the bidders and the remaining stock will be re-auctioned."