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<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/22/stories/2010042250440200.htm>

Free training in dairy farming at VUTRC

COIMBATORE: The Veterinary University Training and Research Centre (VUTRC), Coimbatore, of the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, will organise a free on-campus training in dairy farming on April 27 and 28.

According to a release, the training will comprise lectures and video lectures on selection of dairy animals, housing, breeding, feeding and disease management of dairy cows. Interested farmers and entrepreneurs can contact the centre on 0422-2669965 for registration; or visit VUTRC at 63, Kalapatti Pirivu, Saravanampatty, Coimbatore – 641035.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/22/stories/2010042251660500.htm>

“Use biotechnology to improve crops”

COIMBATORE: With the population growing rapidly, and agricultural land shrinking, it will be a challenge to ensure food security. Therefore, application of biotechnology for improving crop plants has become one of the major options to meet the requirements of the growing population, P. Murugesu Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), said here recently.

Inaugurating the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Agricultural Biotechnology at the university, he said plant molecular biology and its applications to agricultural

biotechnology could help researchers exploit the genetic potential of crops for increasing yield.

“Technologies such as transgenic crop, genomics, marker assisted plant breeding, etc., can help achieve improvements in both quality and quantity in a sustainable manner. TNAU is implementing more than 20 biotech research projects, which are funded by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India. They include isolation of agronomically important genes, development of transgenic plants with pest and disease resistance and enhanced yield and quality, and crop improvement through marker-aided selection,” the Vice-Chancellor said.

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Strong wind uproots standing crops; farmers incur huge loss

Akkaraipatti, Athoor, Ponnaiyapuram, Paraipatti, Mallayapuram are affected

Shanmuga Nadhi dam area received the highest rainfall in Theni district on Tuesday night

Water level remained at 30.64 feet in Vaigai dam with a minor inflow of eight cusecs

DINDIGUL: Standing crops, mostly banana, coconut and chillies in several acres in Athoor block were completely damaged owing to the sudden blow of strong wind on Tuesday night.

Akkaraipatti, Athoor, Ponnaiyapuram and Paraipatti and Mallyapuram in this block were the worst affected.

Over 20 electric posts at Chithayankottai and Mallyapuram village were also uprooted.

Farmers in this belt had been cultivating different varieties of banana - Rasthali and Poovan, country banana and Robusta – in a large scale. Besides, chillies and coconut were also predominantly grown in these villages.

Perennial crops in several farms on Athoor-Mallyapuram Road bordering Athoor Dam were destroyed.

Banana growers had started collecting raw banana and banana fruits from the fallen trees.

These crops were one-year-old, said farmers.

“We will incur huge loss as banana crops that were at the harvesting stage were uprooted owing to the sudden gale,” said P. Thangaraj, a farmer who had raised hybrid variety of banana in five-acres.

He estimated that the loss would be around Rs.5 lakh. “I get fruits worth Rs.200 from every tree.

After harvesting, the tree will be sold for at least Rs.125 for marriage functions. Some crops were at tender stage.

Buyers will reject such banana,” he added. Majority of farmers had obtained loan from banks to raise these crops.

Some of the thatched and zinc-roofed houses in Nilakottai collapsed.

Theni

Shanmuga Nadhi dam area had received the highest rainfall in the district last night. Minor showers were recorded in several parts of the district on Wednesday evening.

There was marginal increase in the Periyar dam level. Water level stood at 109.38 feet. Inflow into the dam and the discharge were nil.

Water level remained at 30.64 feet in Vaigai dam with a minor inflow of eight cusecs. Discharge from the dam was 41 cusecs to meet the drinking water supply to Madurai City.

Rainfall recorded at various places on Wednesday morning in mm: Periyar 19, Thekkadi 25.4, Goodalur 6.5, Uthamapalayam 5, Veerapandi 8 and Shanmuganadhi 53 mm.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/22/stories/2010042251290300.htm>

Mass cultivation of bamboo suggested

For bioremediation of polluted soil and prevention of global warming

VELLORE: Mass cultivation of bamboo and `malai vembu' (a variety of neem grown in the hills) could be taken up in Vellore district for bio-remediation of polluted soil, prevention of pollution from tannery and sewage effluents and to prevent global warming, according to G. Kumaravelu, full time member of the State Planning Commission and a retired Indian Forest Service officer.

Speaking at a meeting with Vellore Collector C. Rajendran, Conservator of Forests A.V. Venkatachalam, Vellore District Forest Officer T.V. Manjunatha, District Revenue Officer A. Saravanavelraj and other officials of the Forest Department at the Collectorate here on Wednesday, Dr. Kumaravelu said that a sum of Rs.10 crore has been allotted for the Environment Protection and Clean Energy Development Fund.

The development fund has been created by the Tamil Nadu government to implement schemes aimed at environmental protection and prevention of global warming.

The Planning Commission member said that the Forest Department has identified four species of bamboo for cultivation under the scheme.

He suggested that the sewage water from Vellore Corporation could be treated and utilised to irrigate 10 acres of bamboo that could be cultivated for the purpose of scientific disposal of the sewage. Each municipality, having a population of one lakh, discharges one crore litres of sewage water every day at the rate of 100 litres per head.

Dr. Kumaravelu said that each of the 140 municipalities in Tamil Nadu could take up cultivation of bamboo trees around it, and utilise the treated sewage for irrigating the same.

Since the roots and tubers of the bamboo have the capacity to treat the effluents, they could be used for pollution control, he said. It was possible to get a yield of 10 tonnes of bamboo per acre and a revenue of Rs.25,000 to Rs.30,000 per acre per year four years after commencement of cultivation, at the rate of Rs.2500 to Rs.3000 per tonne. Vermi-compost could also be produced from bamboo. If bamboo was cultivated on five lakh acres of agricultural land, out of the 145 lakh acres in the State, we could get 100 lakh tonnes of vermi-compost every year. The women's self-help groups could be entrusted with the task of cultivating bamboo on one acre of land each. If the scheme was implemented throughout Tamil Nadu, it was possible to harvest 100 lakh tonnes of bamboo every year after four years. It was possible to market the bamboo since the

Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Limited (TNPL) alone used 10 lakh tonnes of wood-based raw materials every year, he said.

The Planning Commission member said that 'malai vembu' could also be cultivated in Vellore district, and this would go to feed plywood industries that could be started in the district.

There were only 682 wood-based industries in Vellore district, as against 5154 in Virudhunagar district and 1319 in Tuticorin district. All the wood-based industries could start co-generation units to produce electricity to meet the energy shortage on account of factors such as absence of rainfall and shortage of coal. He suggested cultivation of sandalwood along the banks of Palar River as well as in the forests as they would yield rich resources.

Later talking to newsmen, Dr. Kumaravelu said that it was possible to produce one MW of power per hour by cultivating bamboo on 300 acres, each acre yielding 20 tonnes per year. Twenty bamboo species were tried in tannery effluent affected lands in Ambur, Vaniyambadi and Dindigul and in the land polluted by the dyeing industries in Tirupur, and were found successful.

A species called 'bamboo vulgaris' is suited for production of fabrics and carry bags. Technology is available for the production of corrugated sheets (for roofs) from bamboo.

The Tamil Nadu government could earn revenue of Rs.2750 crores per annum by levying a carbon tax of Rs.50 per tonne of coal produced, he said.

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Green houses damaged in heavy rain

Cut-rose cultivation suffers heavy loss; trees uprooted near Shoolagiri; cell phone tower falls



Rescue work:A shop, opposite to the Avadanapatti lake, near Krishnagiri which was damaged in the rain on Wednesday.

KRISHNAGIRI: Over three green houses cultivating cut-roses were destroyed in heavy rain in the district on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The rain accompanied by strong wind also resulted in uprooting of trees near Shoolagiri and damaging of tiled roofs of a few houses near KRP Dam in Krishnagiri. Heavy rain also lashed Krishnagiri, Denkanikottai and Anchetti.

Four two-wheelers parked near a school at Athimugam village were damaged when a tree fell on it.

Cut-rose cultivation is undertaken in and around Shoolagiri and Hosur area. Three green houses belonging to Munikrishhan, Manju and Sundaresh in Mukkalapalli village were damaged in the storm.

The rain also caused damages to coriander plants.

The loss was estimated around to be around Rs. 20 lakh, farmers said.

Heavy rain also occurred at Berigai, Kalingavaram, Maruthandapalli, Gamonthotti on Tuesday.

Thaly registered a maximum rainfall of 22 mm, Denkanikottai 13 mm, Shoolagiri 12 mm, Anchetti and Krishnagiri KRP Dam areas 7 mm each, official sources here said. Earlier on Monday, a sharp shower brought respite for the people who were experiencing soaring heat for the past fortnight.

A cell-phone tower was damaged in Dharmapuri on Monday. Last week, parts of Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri district experienced hailstorm, as a result of which over 25 huts were damaged near Hogenakkal in Dharmapuri district.

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Management of aphids in coriander

Coriander, popularly known as ' Dhania,' is an important condiment. It is grown in kitchen gardens as well as in vast land areas for herbage and seed purposes.

This plant is frequently attacked by two species of aphids such as *Brevicoryne corianderi* and *Hyadaphis corianderi*. The nymphs and adults of these aphids suck plant sap from the leaves and tender shoots.

Honey dew

Leaves get twisted and the vitality of the plant is affected. The honey dew excreted by these insects gives out a glistening appearance of the canopy which in turn gets covered with dark coating by the development of black mould.

The affected plants yield less. Severe infestation in early stages results in death of plants.

The aphids multiply throughout the year, are yellowish green in colour, measuring to 1 to 2 mm in size. About 50 nymphs are laid by the adult female. Young ones take 8-12 days to mature. The entire lifecycle is completed in 14 to 21 days during summer and six weeks in winter.

Management practices

— Cultivate resistant varieties of coriander and avoid late sowing and adopt early flowering types.

— Clip off the infested plant parts bearing aphid colonies and destroy them.

— Dust the canopy with cowdung ash early in the morning.

— Spray foliage with 2 per cent neem oil suspension. Apply fungal pathogen, *Beauveria bassiana* under humid condition.

— Spraying of methyl-dementon 0.05 per cent or carbaryl 0.1 per cent will be highly effective.

— Avoid use of toxic pesticides on coriander grown under kitchen garden.

— Harvest the plants at least seven days after the application of insecticides.

J. Jayaraj& D.S. Rajavel Agricultural College and Research Institute Madurai

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FARM QUERIES

Intercrops in plantain

Can I plant watermelon as an intercrop in my banana (cavandish variety) plantation in two acres? I have planted the banana suckers during the last week of January.

V. Jaganathan

Tamil Nadu

It is not the correct season for planting watermelons as an intercrop. You may plant vegetable crops such as pumpkin, bittergourd and ridge gourd as intercrops.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2010/04/22/stories/2010042253161601.htm>

FARM QUERIES

Farmer's cytosome

What is the procedure for making farmer's cytosome?

Vinod Urs

Bhopal

Coconut milk from about 10 coconuts should be taken. Equal quantity of buttermilk must be mixed with the coconut milk and kept inside a container for about a week . This solution is called as farmer's cytosome. About one litre of this cytosome should be

mixed with 10 litres of water and sprayed over the crops. An acre requires about 10 sprays. It acts as a growth promoter, improves flower, fruit and vegetable development.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2010/04/22/stories/2010042253121600.htm>

FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

A tilting cart offers relief to animals and workers in the field

The innovation is in response to a long-felt need among farmers



Warm response: Amrutbhai Agrawat, Gujarat farmer, with his tilting bullock cart.

The basic design of the bullock cart (camel cart in some parts of North India) remains the same, with just some small variations in size, structure, and materials.

A part of the cart load rests on the animals pulling the cart, leading to severe abrasions, and in some cases peel off of the skin. Another difficulty is negotiating sharp bends on narrow passages.

Main use

Mr. Mahesh Patel, Chief Innovation Manager, Gujarat Grassroots Innovations Augmentation Network (GIAN) says:

“Farmers mainly use the cart to transport harvested produce, cow dung, manure and compost to the fields.

The job of manually transferring the compost from the cart to the field is usually done by women under the scorching sun.

Though there are several farmers in the region using the cart, it took one Mr. Amrutbhai Agrawat to think out of the hat, and reinvent a tilting cart model.”

Hydraulic system

The tilting cart with a hydraulic system for tilting the trolley behind makes the job easier both for the animals' pulling it, and the people working in the field.

According to this design, the cart is mounted on a metal frame and four wheels. A rotating device, a hydraulic jack, and an oil tank complete the design. The initial stages of experimenting with the new model ended in failure.

The oil tank burst, because of the outlet being clogged, and the idea itself got temporarily shelved. “Many people in the village on seeing the unfinished cart gathering dust, started ridiculing my idea, labelling it unfeasible,” says Mr. Agrawat.

A sudden flash in the mind one day while walking through the fields made the farmer think of using a horizontal gear as a lifting device.

He decided to experiment and found it effective in lifting the cart but not in lowering it.

Vertical gears

Not losing heart, he decided to try out vertical gears. At first he mounted two gears and found them successful.

He then increased the number of gears to eight, and found them working successfully and named the new cart Aaruni.

According to the farmer, Aaruni saves about Rs. 90 for working on 0.16 hectares, and is three times more efficient compared to conventional models.

“Existing models with two wheels pull a load of only 400kg, but after the introduction of four wheels the same cart can now pull a load of 500 kg,” explains Mr. Agrawat.

Cost factor

The farmer spent about Rs. 32,000 manufacturing the cart, but later scaled it down to Rs. 27,500. The average cart made from local wood costs Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000.

The cart was displayed at a farmers' fair and about 400 farmers expressed a desire to purchase it.

However, Mr. Agrawat doesn't seem to be in a hurry to increase production. “I want farmers to fully get convinced, try it and then decide on purchasing it,” he says.

Long felt need

“Agrawat's innovation is in response to a long-felt need among farmers. Inherent advantage seems to be the forte of grassroots innovators since they live and work among their community and not in far away closed research labs.

“They are fully aware of their problems, limitations and needs and their community better than anyone else,” says Mr. Mahesh.

For more information readers can contact Mr. Amrutbhai Agrawat, Junagadh, Gujarat, mobile: 9925932307 and Mr. Mahesh Patel, Chief Innovation Manager,

mahesh@gian.org and gian@gian.org, website:www.gian.org, phones : 079-26760398 and 26769686.

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Arid regions drier, high rainfall regions wetter



A stronger water cycle due to global warming means arid regions have become drier and high rainfall regions wetter as atmospheric temperature increases.

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Cane price leads to bitter war of words in House

Apr 22 2010

April 21: The minimum support price for sugarcane led to charges and counter-charges in the Assembly on Wednesday, with agriculture minister Veerapandi S. Arumugam denying the Opposition's allegation that the price had been hiked over and above the rate fixed by the Central government during the previous AIADMK regime.

The minister crossed swords with Opposition AIA-DMK whip K.A. Sengottaiyan who moved a privilege motion against him for misinforming the House on the issue. Sticking to his earlier stand, the minister said support prices for sugarcane farmers had not been increased beyond those fixed by the Centre during 2001-2005. From 1996 to 2001, during DMK rule, the farmers were given a State Advised Price along with a ceiling fixed by the Centre, he said.

After coming to power in 2001, the AIADMK convened a Cabinet meeting and withheld the State Advised Price, Mr Arumugam said, alleging that it did not consider it appropriate to implement the Supreme Court ruling of May 5, 2004, asking the states to add recommended prices to the rate fixed by the Centre for cane growers.

"Only on September 21, 2005, during the fag end of the AIADMK regime, it decided to fix a price of Rs 1,014 per tonne (above the rate fixed by the Centre) with an eye on the May 2006 Assembly elections," Mr Arumugam charged.

After hearing both sides, Speaker R. Avudaiappan said he would ascertain the merit of the case and announce his decision later.

Source URL:

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/chennai/cane-price-leads-bitter-war-words-house-224>

The taste of summer

KOCHI: The first-ever Kochi Mango Show and Banana Festival will be held at the Ernakulam Marine Drive Helipad Ground from April 24 to May 2.

The exhibition will be open to the public every day from 9.30 am to 9 pm. District Collector M Beena and Ernakulam Range IG B Sandhya will jointly inaugurate the mango show at 9.30 am on Saturday. The mango festival will be held from April 24 to 28.

The Banana Festival, to be held from April 29 to May 2, will be inaugurated by M M Mustafa, director, National Research Centre for Banana, at 9.30 am on April 29.

The mango show will feature over 120 types of mangoes from Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The festival will feature a variety of tasty dishes like mango payasam, pulp, pickle, halva, squash and jam.

Besides government enterprises like the State Horticulture Mission and the VFPCCK, mango farmers will also take part in the festival. Exhibition and sale of a variety of mango saplings are also being planned.

The banana festival will feature over 68 varieties of bananas. Organisations like the National Research Centre For Banana, Trichy, Kerala Agriculture University, Banana Research Station, Kannaara, State Horticulture Mission and VFPCCK along with the banana farmers from various places will take part in the exhibition.

Tasty food items made out of banana like pazhapradhaman, upperi, sharkaravaratti, vazhapindi pickle, banana halwa, wine, fig and jam will be on sale. Clothes and chappals made of 'vazhanaaru' will be available at the exhibition.

Tissue-cultured plantain saplings from various states will be exhibited. Scientifically ripened mangoes and a wide variety of mango saplings will be on sale. More than 20

products made from banana by-products will be available at the stalls of NRCB Trichy, KAU Mannuthy.

There will be a workshop on tissue culture of banana from 10 am to 4 pm on April 29. The workshop will be jointly conducted by NRCB Trichy, KAU Mannuthy, Jiffy Sri Lanka and SHM Kerala.

Organisations and individuals interested in participating in the workshop should register with the Ernakulam District Agri- Hortisociety Office before April 27 either by phone or in person. For details, contact 0484-2362738 or 94471 88443.

kochi@expressbuzz.com

By V NarayanaMurthi

22 Apr 2010 03:52:00 AM IST

'Cultivate bamboo to reclaim polluted lands'

VELLORE: A proposal to reclaim the tannery polluted lands of the Vellore district using the process of bio-remediation through bamboo cultivation is being advocated by the fulltime member of the State Planning Commission Dr G Kumaravelu.

A retired IFS officer who has served in Vellore earlier, Kumaravelu was here to discuss with the district administration some of the environmentally sound, economically viable ideas to reclaim the vast stretch of polluted lands, which at the same time could help reap good returns for the farmers as part of the 'Carbon Farming' initiative besides meeting the local energy demands.

According to him four special varieties of thorn-free bamboos can be grown by the farmers whose lands have been heavily polluted by the tannery chemicals. Besides reclaiming the soil from the chemical load, the bamboo can fetch at least four times more income than the conventional coconut cultivation with five times less input consumption.

Small bio-gasified electricity power generation units (24 tons of bamboo can generate one MW power) can be started by the farmers by forming SHGs across the district.

Activated carbon, a byproduct from the power unit, if applied can regenerate and reclaim the soil as part of the carbon-farming initiative being promoted by many of the western countries.

The other ideas include planting of palm trees on the barren hills of the district, plantation of varieties of trees in the tanks, sandal wood farming as a captive plantation (50 hectare plots in 10 to 20 locations) which can generate good income besides a cascading effect for natural replication of the species in the western ghats and briquetting of forest exotic plant residues as alternate cooking fuels.

By Express News Service

21 Apr 2010 04:35:00 AM IST

Ban export of cotton, demands Opposition

CHENNAI: Spiralling price of yarn on Tuesday made an impact on the State Assembly with the entire opposition urging the government to take immediate steps to bring down the prices and the main opposition party AIADMK staging a walk-out over the issue. Minister for Handlooms and Textiles K K S S R Ramachandran told the Assembly that the rise in yarn price was a global phenomena due to deficit production of cotton by important countries like China and Egypt.

He said the State government was taking all steps to bring down the price and it had no powers to control the yarn price as it is vested with the Centre.

Replying to a discussion on the issue, Ramachandran referred to a recent letter written by Chief Minister M Karunanidhi to the Centre requesting a total ban on the exports of cotton, besides a ban on online trading for these commodities.

Pointing out that cotton mills were facing a crisis for a long time and yarn prices have been increasing for the last two years, the Minister said Tamil Nadu accounted for 50 per cent of the total spinning mills in the country and they required 95 lakh bales of cotton each year as against the production of five lakh bales. Due to this, the State was forced to buy cotton from other States and was also importing it.

The main reason for nearly 30 per cent jump in yarn prices was due to fall in the global

production of cotton. The mill owners have assured that yarn would be supplied at lower prices if they could get cotton at lower prices, the Minister conveyed the House.

S M Velusamy (AIADMK) said next to agriculture, weaving was the major industry in the State. But due to the rise in yarn prices, weavers were put to great hardship and a section of them in Pallipalayam, Karur, Palladam, Tiruchengode, Erode and Andipatti were on the brink of closing down their units.

This would also lead to unemployment problem.

He also said raw cotton was being exported to India's competitors like China, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

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Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Thursday, Apr 22

Max Min

37.5° | 29.2°

Rain: 00mm in24hrs Sunrise: 05:53

Humidity: 34% Sunset: 18:22

Wind: Normal Barometer: 1008.1mb

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Friday, Apr 23

Max Min

37° | 29°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Apr 24

Sunday

Apr 25

Monday

Apr 26

Tuesday

Apr 27

Wednesday

Apr 28



37° | 29°
Partly Cloudy



37° | 28°
Sunny



36° | 28°
Sunny



35° | 28°
Tstorm



36° | 28°
Tstorm