

Date:03/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/03/stories/2010040362000600.htm>

“Farmers should adopt subsurface drip irrigation”

Farmers could save water up to 50 per cent in this method



CHECKING OUT: K. Vairavan, second from right, Dean, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai, having a look at sugarcane under sub-surface drip irrigation at Irrigation Technology Model Farm of Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute in Tiruchi.

TIRUCHI: Farmers should adopt subsurface drip irrigation in sugarcane crop for saving water and achieve higher yield, said K. Vairavan, Dean, Agricultural College and Research Institute of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Madurai, here on Thursday.

Speaking at a function after taking a look at the performance of sugarcane crop under subsurface drip irrigation at the irrigation technology model farm at Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute (ADAC and RI) of the TNAU at Navalur Kuttapattu here, Dr. Vairavan said by adopting the drip irrigation technology in sugarcane, the farmers could save water up to 50 per cent and achieve higher yield of 60 tonnes per acre. No hindrance. Dr. Vairavan said under subsurface drip irrigation the drop laterals and buried under the

ground initially to a depth of 30 cm. In the later period during earthing up operation the laterals are buried to higher depth which helps in the operation of machineries inside the field without any hindrance.

G. Kathiresan, Dean, ADAC and RI, said that under subsurface drip irrigation with a spacing of six feet between laterals and with a work space of five feet between plant row, power tiller can be easily operated for intercultural operations.

The burying of driplines avoid rodent damage and the buried driplines can be used for the subsequent ratoons crop for three to four years without disturbing the driplines.

In the model farm sugarcane variety CO Si (SG) 6 is performing well under SDI with higher plant population and higher tillering, Dr. Kathiresan said.

S. Somasundaram, Assistant Professor (Agronomy), ADAC and RI, explained the fertigation schedule followed in the farm for subsurface drip irrigation sugarcane with water soluble fertilizers, viz. potassium nitrate, MAP (mono ammonium phosphate) for once in every two days.

S. Avudaitai, Associate Professor (Agronomy) and Heads of various departments of the ADAC and RI, were present.

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Eco camp held for students

At the Forest Research Centre in Mukkombu



FOR A GREEN COVER: School students having a look at the exhibits at Forest Research Centre in Mukkombu near Tiruchi.

TIRUCHI: An eco camp was organised jointly by the National Green Corps of Lalgudi Educational District; Department of Environment, District Educational Administration; VOICE Trust and ROSED Society at the Forest Research Centre in Mukkombu near here recently. About 45 students and 30 teacher coordinators took part.

The District Forest Officer, D. Mani, spoke about the dangers to environment owing to climate changes. Global warming could be mitigated by afforestation on a large scale, he said while listing out the steps that could be taken to reduce green house gas emissions.

Mr. Mani distributed certificates to school students who emerged winners in competitions besides distributing saplings to them. The Deputy Conservator of Forest, Forest Research Centre, Mukkombu S. Gurusamy called upon the students and teachers to plant saplings in their respective schools and villages to enhance forest cover.

The students and teachers went around the Forest Research Centre during which they were explained about various experiments that were being carried out for preservation of different tree species. The Voice Trust, project director, A. Gregory welcomed the gathering, a press release said.

Date:03/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/03/stories/2010040351030200.htm>

“Demand for seafood increasing internationally”

Tuticorin: The demand for seafood, which has rich proteins, is rapidly increasing in the international market and other food products cannot compete with, according to M. Sakthivel, president, Aquaculture Foundation of India.

He was speaking at a national workshop on ‘Advanced packaging technologies for cobia fish products to augment domestic and international markets,’ at Fisheries College of Research and Institute here on Tuesday.

The importing countries with advanced technologies were much concerned about quality packaging.

The concept of packing the seafood was aimed at delivering quality goods for the quality-conscious people. Since the packing of seafood was visually attractive, the consumers were lured to purchase such commodities, he said.

Utmost importance should also be accorded to quality fish products.

To maintain quality, the post-harvest in hygienic preservation of fishery products should be adopted mandatorily. Failing to meet such standards and essential requirements, the export marketing value could incur a loss of Rs.500 crore a year.

“We are still lagging behind in the packaging of fish products to promote our export in the international market. Though we are credited with skilled manpower and quality fish products, the quality of packing is not up to the mark”, he said.

He suggested that the researchers of FCRI take a project on live fish transport packaging.

The consumers were eager to consume ready-to-cook fish.

India was the best in the world in terms of exporting shrimps to the European countries, Japan, the United States but unfortunately our country's name could not be established, owing to poor packing.

V.K. Venkataramani, Director, Research and Extension, Fisheries, M. J. Prince Jeyaseelan, Head, Aquaculture Department, N. Felix, Consortium Principal Investigator, P. Velautham, faculty member, and R. Jeya Shakila, organising secretary, took part.

Date:03/04/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/04/03/stories/2010040354070600.htm>

Seaweed cultivation helps in reducing impact of global warming: expert

Tuticorin: Seaweed cultivation reduces impact of global warming, as it has the ability to absorb carbon dioxide, according to M. Sakthivel, president, Aquaculture Foundation of India, Chennai.

Seaweeds containing 62 minerals and having medicinal values is a wonder plant of the sea.

Seaweed is presumably pervasive in the sea and it gives shelter to various species of fish and other marine living organisms.

Though the Indian Ocean is abundantly blessed with seaweed plants, the one-third of seaweed resources is available in India. There is also a wide prevalence of seaweed in the Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar.

Sea-farming activities are being carried out quite well in the Palk Bay since they have rich resources and natural conditions favourable to seaweed cultivation.

The Aquaculture Foundation of India was promoting the seaweed culture by assisting the stakeholders to get

bank loans, government subsidy, imparting free technology training and marketing, Dr. Sakthivel told The Hindu here on Friday.

“Since the bio-fertilizer extract from Kappaphycus seaweeds has growth-promoting hormones for plants, it is going to be a major source for bio-fertilizer production in India to facilitate organic agriculture. Bio fertilizers can be extracted from wet seaweed,” Dr. Sakthivel added.

One million tonnes of seaweed could be produced in a year and around 10, 000 families could earn their daily bread on an average.

About one thousand families are engaged in seaweed cultivation in the Palk Bay Island. Each family can earn a minimum of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1, 000 a day.

“As many as 1000 varieties of seaweed are in existence in India. Out of which, 300 varieties are in the Gulf of Mannar. Seaweed cultivation is gaining momentum in Muthiyapuram and the Hare Island in Tuticorin district and Colachel in Kanyakumari district. Thousand families between the coastal area of Mandapam and Rameshwaram have been involved in seaweed cultivation with 20, 000 rafts floating in the Palk Bay area,” he said. “Referring to the cost value of seaweed, one tonne of wet seaweed fetches a sum of Rs. 1, 750, while dry seaweed is valued at Rs. 14, 000,” he said.

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By Santwana Bhattacharya

03 Apr 2010 03:15:00 AM IST

Food Security Bill may not address hunger fully

NEW DELHI: The UPA-II's proposed showpiece legislation, the National Food Security Bill, is fast turning into a serious headache for the government with Congress president Sonia Gandhi's unofficial advisers and the Left parties rechristening the draft Bill as 'food insecurity' proposal.

In the backdrop of this tussle over the soul of the Bill, the Empowered Group of Ministers will meet on Monday to finetune the Bill focusing on clarifications raised by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee on the adjudication of the complaints.

He's already said to be having sleepless nights over how to implement a Bill with huge cost to the exchequer, given the current state of the agriculture economy.

The draft Bill was sent to the Law Ministry after the last March 18 e-GoM meeting, for clearance. It is expected to be the first Bill that the newly-constituted National Advisory Council headed by Sonia Gandhi would look into

with a fine comb.

What's giving the government jitters is the pressure that is building up within the Congress party that the Bill be revisited to incorporate some of the recommendations made by the Congress president in her letter to the Prime Minister last year. Joining the chorus of the Gandhi's NGO-style advisers, the Congress leaders are saying that restricting the grain allocation to 25 kg of rice or wheat to every family below poverty level will defeat the purpose of a food security legislation.

In any case, they say, Sonia Gandhi is in favour of improving the nutritional quality of food intake not just doling out of foodgrain.

"Besides, it's less than what the Supreme Court's food entitlement order recommended, which is Rs 35 kg per BPL family. It is less than what some states, including Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, give to their poor," a senior party leader pointed out, admitting that the government and the party president is not on the same page on this issue.

The Congress manifesto also promised Rs 35 kg for Rs 3 to BPL families.

The Food Ministry officials said that the BPL population would continue to get Rs 35 kg of rice/wheat through ration shops, but would be have legal right to demand a minimum of Rs 25 kg.

By Express News Service

03 Apr 2010 05:46:00 AM IST

Trip would boost phosphate import, says Alagiri

MADURAI: Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers M K Alagiri said that his trip to Australia and New Zealand would boost the import of phosphate to India.

In a press statement released here on Friday, Alagiri said that he had visited the phosphate mines in Mount Isa, which was 1,500km from Brisbane on behalf of the Indian Farmers Fertilizers' Co-operative, an Indo-Australian joint venture. Later in New Zealand, he visited several leading industries and invited them to set up their manufacturing units in India.

Krishnan, secretary, Union Ministry for Chemicals and Fertilisers, Pradeep Yadav, special secretary, and other delegates accompanied Alagiri during these trips.

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Insurance keeps farmers' spirits high after low yield

Express News Service Posted online: Saturday ,

Apr 03, 2010 at 0159 hrs

Ahmedabad : *Agriculture Insurance Company of India has passed the claim of about Rs 6 crore for tribal belt*

Farmers in the tribal belt of Gujarat are not a worried lot despite a low yield of their crop. The weather-based crop insurance (WBCI) scheme for the crop they had taken has, to some extent, reimbursed the cost of seeds and fertiliser.

The Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd (AICIL) has passed the claim of about Rs 6 crore. The premium paid by farmers for this was Rs 4 crore. Nearly 1.4 lakh farmers were covered under the Sunshine project in which they were asked to cultivate maize.

Neeta Buxa, project consultant, said: "Though the output has not been satisfactory, farmers are not unhappy about it. It is due to the insurance claim, which was passed by AICIL. Against the Rs 4-crore premium they paid, the farmers have got Rs 6.2 crore as claims."

The state Tribal department, for the first time, had covered these farmers under the WBCI. The farmers, mostly from the below poverty line, were covered in this project under the state government's Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (VKY). WBCI insures farmers against the probability of financial loss due to weather vagaries like rainfall, temperature and humidity. It is different from crop insurance as it is based on the fact that weather conditions affect crop production even when a cultivator has taken all the care to ensure good harvest.

Another set of farmers who took the benefit of WBCI was the ones supported by a consortium of NGOs led by Sajjata Sangh that works for raising productivity of natural resources leading to an increase of incomes among small and marginal farmers.

The consortium of NGOs had also registered hundreds of farmers in this scheme mainly in

Jamnagar, Kahmabha and Rajula of Amreli District. The number of farmers covered under the scheme was 1,377 and the premium paid by them was Rs 17,92,107. The claim money received by farmers because of low rainfall is Rs 17,98,000. This year, the consortium plans to cover 5,000 farmers under the weather based insurance product.

Eco panel gives nod to raise height of Narmada dam

Express News Service Posted online: Saturday , Apr 03, 2010 at 0155 hrs

Ahmedabad : *NCA sub-group has recommended to raise the height of the dam to 138.57 metres*

The environment sub-group of the Narmada Control Authority (NCA) has recommended to raise the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam from 121.92 metres to 138.57 metres, which is the dam's full reservoir level, by constructing 17-metre piers on the dam.

With piers support, radial gates will be constructed, which will help in the entry and exit of the water stored in the dam reservoir.

The NCA has two sub-groups. While the environment sub-group has recommended constructing piers, the rehabilitation resettlements sub-group is yet to give its nod for raising the dam's height.

The managing director of the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited (SSNNL), S Jagdeeshan, told The Indian Express that in a recent meeting, the sub-group expressed satisfaction over the work done by the Nigam in terms of the catchment area treatment, command area development and compensatory afforestation.

"Therefore, the sub-group has recommended the NCA to consider the state government's demand to raise the dam's height by constructing piers to support the radial gates. There could be 30 pillars or piers," he said.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) Pradeep Khanna, who was present in the meeting, said the SSNNL had met all the conditions as far as afforestation was concerned. "All details regarding afforestation and catchment area development were discussed during the meeting," said Khanna, adding that it was attended by Jagdeeshan and SSNNL Joint Managing Director (administration) K Srinivas, among others.

The whole process, involving construction work for 30 working months, will have to wait for a nod from the NCA's rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) committee before a final approval from the NCA.

All-party representation on Narmada issue yielded result, says Cong


An all-party delegation of MPs from Gujarat recently called on Congress president Sonia Gandhi, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh seeking clearance for completion of the remaining works at the Narmada dam site in Kevadia Colony.

Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee president Siddharth Patel told The Indian Express that a week ago Congress and BJP MPs from the state jointly represented the Narmada issue before the PM and the environment minister. He said the delegation urged them to get environment clearance for construction of piers and gates at the dam so that the height of the dam can be raised from 121.92 metre.

"The joint representation worked as the environment sub-committee cleared the Narmada case during Thursday meeting," said Patel. Patel said that since the environment sub-committee was to meet on April 1, all-party delegation from the state resolved to discuss with the PM the issue of completing the remaining works at the Narmada dam site in the larger interest of the state. All the MPs represented jointly as the matter is pending for the last couple of years.

He further said the GPCC had also submitted a separate memorandum over the issue to the Union Environment Ministry.

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 Sat, 03 Apr 2010

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Saturday, Apr 3

Max Min

38.3° | 28.2°

Tomorrow's Forecast



Sunny






Sunday, Apr 4

Max Min

33° | 28°

Rain: 00mm in24hrs Sunrise: 06:05
Humidity: 45% Sunset: 18:21
Wind: Normal Barometer: 1008.1mb

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Apr 5	Apr 6	Apr 7	Apr 8	Apr 9
				
36° 27°	36° 25°	36° 26°	36° 27°	36° 26°
Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Tstorm