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Duty sop on cotton yarn exports goes

'Heavy duty' on raw cotton exports planned

Move to contain prices

Steps to ensure 50 lakh bales of carry forward

NEW DELHI: The Centre has decided to suspend the duty concession of 7.5 per cent available to cotton yarn exporters under the Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) scheme, as part of a measure to moderate the price of the commodity in the domestic market.

At a meeting chaired by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday, it was also decided that a 'prohibitive duty' be imposed on the export of raw cotton and cotton yarn. An inter-Ministerial committee of officials would decide on the exact quantum of the levy.

"The panel is expected to come out with its recommendations shortly. It will have its first meeting on Friday itself. It could be in the form of a cess," said official sources.

The meeting, which was attended by Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, Textiles Minister Dayanidhi Maran and Commerce Minister Anand Sharma, also decided to introduce a mechanism for registration of cotton yarn exporters.

Further, it decided that steps be taken to ensure a carry forward of at least 50 lakh bales of raw cotton at the beginning of the next cotton season.

Mr. Maran had recently written a series of letters to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and finance, agriculture and commerce ministers urging immediate measures to control the price of cotton yarn, which had been rising steadily in recent months.

Job scope

Pointing out that the increasing price of cotton yarn was making garment and handloom exports uncompetitive in world markets, he had reportedly emphasised that it would not only make the textile industry unviable, but also had an adverse effect on the employment front. The textile industry is the second largest employer, next to agriculture.

Speaking to The Hindu, Apparel Export Promotion Council Senior Vice-Chairman Praveen Nayyar said the prices of cotton yarn and consequently fabrics had increased by as much as 50 per cent since November. For instance, the price of cotton voile fabric had gone up from Rs.22 to Rs.33 a metre, he said.

Global meltdown

Garment exports had already facing severe problems, following the global economic meltdown. As per the latest estimates, the sector was able to achieve exports worth only \$7.92 billion during April 2008-January 2009 as against \$8.81 billion during the same period in the previous year, a decline of 10.16 per cent.

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Mill workers' union demand

COIMBATORE: The Coimbatore District Mill Workers' Union (AITUC) has demanded measures by the Government and the Tamil Nadu Women Commission to ensure workers go to textile mills for work only during shift hours and are permitted to stay outside the mill premises.

The union's general secretary M. Arumugam has said in a release that the Government should implement the labour laws. The third-party certification programme proposed for women employment in textile units would only encourage mills to avoid the laws. Textile mills were employing women workers under schemes such as 'mangalya scheme' and 'sumangali scheme' and in several units the workers did not have a hygienic place to stay.

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Fish dressing centre to come up at fishing harbour

Tuticorin: A fish dressing centre (pre – processing centre) will come up at the fishing harbour in Tuticorin at an estimated cost of Rs. 2 crore.

With a view to maintain the quality of fish in hygienic conditions for domestic consumption, the unit would have all necessary facilities, sources said.

Since fish is one of the preferred food for domestic consumption, top priority has

been accorded to provide fish in ready-to-cook style.

The offal of the edible fish would be removed in order to facilitate the consumers to enjoy a gastronomic delight.

Ready-to-cook

As there was a huge demand for fish products such as sardine and mackerel, the establishment of ready-to-cook market would serve its purpose. It would be made operational for retail marketing in a cost effective manner, sources added.

Proposal sent

A proposal to this effect has been prepared and sent to the government.

The project is likely to be implemented by Fisheries Institute of Technology and Training.

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Successful transplantation technique goes unrecognised

The farmer is yet to be recognised by the government or scientists



Silent revolution: Sunda Ram of Rajasthan is still waiting for his long due recognition.

“From an outside perspective every village appears the same. Only when you spend time in villages, you realise and see a farmer's brilliance,” says Dr. Nitin Maurya, National Innovation Foundation, Ahmedabad. There is so much of local latent talent that remains unknown.

Today farmers complain of government negligence, but in terms of local inventions they are equal to any scientist's discovery.

New method

Mr. Sunda Ram, a farmer of the dry Sikar region in Rajasthan developed a new method of dryland farming.

Mr. Ram's unique method was based on his ancestors' practices recorded over 30 years, and developed over years of trial-and-error on dryland farming, according to him.

The hard fact for him is seedlings grow well if they survive a fortnight after planting in the soil.

The farmer attended a training course on dryland technology at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi.

Main factors

During the training, he identified two main factors responsible for moisture loss in crops and decided to conduct a systematic experiment to check the validity of his ideas.

Accordingly he divided his fields into three types: (i) ploughed (ii) unploughed (iii) without ploughing and weed control. "Evaporation is the main cause for moisture loss from upper soil layers (upto one foot) in both the types of soil (loamy and clay). Soil layers below one foot; retain high moisture content (sandy soil 60 per cent and loamy soil, 100 per cent).

Regular weed removal saves 40 per cent moisture loss in sandy and 25 per cent in the loamy soils.

Up to a depth of one foot in the soil, sufficient moisture availability for plant growth should be ensured through proper weed control," explains the farmer.

His advice to farmers:

"Fifteen days after the first spell of rains, plough the field deeply to allow rainwater to percolate into the soil and remove weeds.

Repeat ploughing

"If ploughing cannot be done, use a spade to dig the soil. Repeat ploughing or digging again 10 to 15 days before the last spell of rain.

“Dig pits of 15x15x45cm size at regular intervals in the fields, remove the polythene bag and plant the saplings into the pit. Water the plant immediately. Do not water after planting.”

Compared to the conventional methods followed by the forest department, “transplanting expenses are reduced by 50 to 70 per cent by my method,” claims Mr. Ram.

He regrets that his findings remain unrecognised by the Government.

“Not even a single institution, including the State forest department or NGOs, makes use of my method as yet,” he laments.

Mr. Ram wants to test this technique on mountain slopes, abandoned mining quarries, river banks, and clayey soils, so that he can modify it where needed.

No response

Though the farmer invited several scientific institutions and scientists to come forward and evaluate his findings, till date nobody has even visited him.

“Several letters to Government describing my findings and requesting their feedback and visits till date remain unacknowledged, unanswered,” he says sadly.

Mr. Sunda Ram's success in planting more than 50,000 trees creating a green cover in the dry lands spread all over Rajasthan.

“Several local innovators such as Mr. Ram are often denied recognition due to the mindset and bureuacracy in government and scientific communities.

Many of these local talents are the real field scientists who seldom get recognition for their efforts,” says Dr. Maurya.

For more information readers can contact Mr. Sunda Ram, Sikar district,

Rajasthan, mobile: 9414901764 and Dr. Nitin Maurya at email: nitinnif@gmail.com and info@nifindia.org, phone: 079-26732456 and 26732095.

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New products for disease management in sericulture

Asthra is a botanical formulation

In silkworm rearing and mulberry cultivation various diseases pose consistent threat and cause huge monetary loss to farmers.

Though various chemical formulations are available in the market to combat these diseases, cost effective, eco-friendly natural products with low residual toxicity to silkworm are always safer for silkworm rearing.

Three products

In this line, Central Sericultural Research & Training Institute, Mysore under the Central Silk Board developed and released three new products such as Chethak, Asthra and Amruth for the use of sericulture farmers.

Chethak is an effective botanical formulation to control mulberry root rot.

The formulation is to be applied with lime and bleaching powder in the ratio 1:1:0.5 (1 kg chethak, 1 kg slaked lime, 500 g bleaching powder), cooled for half an hour and applied to root zone of affected plants and nearby plants at 50 to 60 g/plant.

The treatment should be repeated 3 to 4 times in an year, which will totally control

the pathogen spread in the field. The cost of the product is Rs.200 per kg.

Asthra is a multi-spectrum cost effective botanical formulation for the disinfection of silkworm rearing sheds.

Product cost

The disinfectant should be dissolved in water (50 g in 100 lit. water), allowed for 2 hours and sprayed on walls , racks etc. The cost of the product is Rs.150 per 100 g packet.

Amruth is a oral medicine to kill the pathogens inside the silkworm during rearing. The formulation is dissolved in water at 20g in 1 litre of water.The solution should be sprayed on the leaves at 70 ml /kg and fed to silkworm during the second feeding of each III, IV and V instars. The cost of the product is Rs.100 per 150 g packet

**B.MOHAN, A.G.K. DANIEL
& R.BALAKRISHNA**

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Drought and tree growing

How does one water saplings (tree varieties) planted in drought prone regions?

Richard Nichells Nigeria

Mr. Premjibhai Patel, Rajkot, Gujarat, developed a technique for tree seedlings in severe water scarcity regions of Kutchh, Bhuj and Saurashtra . He made plastic pipes of seven inches diameter with a height of about 1-1.5 feet. Each pipe has two

holes on opposite sides at the top. A pit of around half a foot depth is dug and the pipe placed in it.

The seedling is planted beside the pipe and the pit is covered with soil. Then the pipe is filled with a mixture of sand, soil and gravel. A small stick or branch is inserted through the two holes and the pipe is taken out. Now when water is poured on the sand, it will directly reach the roots of the plant. By using this technique there is no loss of water and the rate of successful plantation can also be increased , claims the farmer. For details contact Premjibhai patel, Rajkot district, Gularat, mobile: 9426202340.

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Energy crops' residue removal affects soil



Crop residue removal of energy crops can adversely impact soil and environment with negative results for soil structure, reduce soil carbon sequestration, increase water erosion, reduce nutrient cycling and crop growth.

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Spray extends life of leaves, flowers greatly



Spraying low concentrations of a compound known as thidiazuron (TDZ) has significant, sometimes spectacular, effects in extending the life of potted plants' leaves and flowers. Greenhouse tests validated this finding.

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Weak link between fruit, vegetable and low cancer risk

The study included 142,605 men and 335,873 women

None of the earlier studies showed a strong link

Vegetable intake showed modest benefit in women

An analysis by Mount Sinai researchers of over eight years of dietary data from more than 400,000 people has found that the relationship between high consumption of fruits and vegetables and a reduced risk of cancer is not as strong as commonly thought.

The study is published online April 6, 2010 in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

It is widely believed that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can reduce the risk of cancer.

In 1990, the World Health Organization recommended eating five servings of fruits and vegetables a day to prevent cancer and other diseases.

No confirmation

However, although many studies have been conducted since then, none have been able to confirm an association between fruit and vegetable intake and cancer resistance.

Paolo Boffetta, MD, MPH, lead author of the study and Deputy Director of The Tisch Cancer Institute at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and colleagues analyzed data from the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC) study to assess relationships between cancer risk and intake of total fruits, total vegetables, and total fruits and vegetables combined.

The EPIC cohort, which is ongoing and coordinated by professor Elio Riboli at Imperial College in London, included 142,605 men and 335,873 women recruited between 1992 and 2000 from 10 Western European countries.

Diet, lifestyle studied

Detailed information on their dietary habits and lifestyle variables was obtained. After a median follow-up of 8.7 years, more than 30,000 of the study's participants were diagnosed with cancer.

Dr. Boffetta and colleagues found a small but significant inverse relationship between high intake of fruits and vegetables and overall cancer risk. In this population, an increase of 200 grams a day of fruits and vegetables resulted in a reduction of about 3 percent of cancer risk.

Vegetable consumption by itself also afforded a modest benefit but was restricted to women.

Heavy drinkers who ate many fruits and vegetables had a somewhat reduced risk, but only for cancers caused by smoking and alcohol.

The bottom line

“The bottom line here is that, yes, we did find a protective effect of fruit and vegetable intake against cancer, but it is a smaller connection than previously thought,” said Dr. Boffetta. “Any cancer protective effect of these foods is likely to be modest, at best.

“However, eating fruits and vegetables is beneficial for health in general and the results of this study do not justify changing current recommendations aiming at increasing intake of these foods,” said Dr. Boffetta in support of consumption of fruits and vegetables. — Our Bureau

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Grain of truth

By M.S. Swaminathan

Apr 08 2010

The wheat harvest has already started in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and other states in central India. And harvest will begin in another two to three weeks in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh which constitute the heartland of the Green Revolution. These are also the areas which supply both wheat and rice for the public distribution system (PDS). It is anticipated that wheat production this year will exceed 80 million tonnes.

It may be worthwhile to recall that wheat production in our country was about seven million tonnes in 1947. Indira Gandhi officially declared a wheat revolution in the country by releasing a special stamp in July 1968. Thus, the wheat revolution, which was later named the Green Revolution, is 42 years old. In spite of this we have not taken the trouble to develop modern grain storage facilities that are common in every farm in the US, Canada, Australia and other developed countries.

According to media reports, the grains purchased by the Food Corporation of India and other government agencies during April-June 2009 are suffering from poor storage. India has made very little investment in improved post-harvest technology, thus leading to a mismatch between production and post-harvest technologies.

It is a matter of shame that inspite of our agricultural progress, malnutrition is widespread in all parts of the country. The number of people going to bed hungry is nearly 250 million, more than the number of hungry in sub-Saharan Africa. Yet we are allowing grains produced by the sweat and labour of our farmers to rot. The term

“accountability” seems to have gone out of our administrative dictionary. How can we be silent onlookers to a situation where grain mountains and hungry millions co-exist? We should put pressure on the government to lose no further time in setting up modern grain storage facilities in various parts of the country. This is absolutely essential for implementing the provisions of the proposed Food Security Act. I have repeatedly called for building modern grain storages at 50 locations, each capable of storing one million tonnes of grain.

The proposed National Food Security Act should provide for a universal PDS, so that corruption is eliminated and all citizens get minimum essential nutrition. In addition to the universal PDS, there should be a differentiated entitlement on the part of the economically and physically handicapped, so that they can have access to food at low cost. Common but differentiated entitlements should be the pathway for ensuring food security for all. In addition to wheat or rice, provision should be made for the supply of local grains, including jowar, bajra, ragi etc. Special attention should be paid to overcome hidden hunger caused by the deficiency of micronutrients like iron, iodine, zinc, Vitamin A and Vitamin B12. For every nutritional malady, there is a horticultural remedy. By mainstreaming nutrition in the National Horticultural Mission, we can eliminate hidden hunger speedily. Salt fortified with iron and iodine will also help. A food-cum-fortification strategy can take us to a hidden hunger-free India.

Our problem is not lack of schemes, but lack of a governance mechanism that would help deliver the provisions of various schemes to the people in an effective, transparent and corruption-free manner. There is no use talking about a knowledge era when we do not provide the children of poor families the chance to achieve their innate genetic potential for physical and mental development. In a democratic society all citizens should have the opportunity to lead a healthy and productive life. Balanced diet, clean drinking water, proper sanitation and primary healthcare are essential for this. And the proposed Food Security Act can mark an important transition in our nutritional history, provided it is based on the concept of food security for all, rendered possible by common and differentiated entitlements.

Desirable programmes should also be financially affordable and administratively implementable. Otherwise they will either remain on paper or become avenues of corruption. It is high time that the review of outlay-outcome relationship of major flagship schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, Food Security Mission, Horticulture Mission, Mid-day Meal Scheme and Integrated Child Development Services is done in a transparent and honest manner. All these programmes involving a large outlay of funds, if implemented properly, could yield significant results. We should devote an entire year to streamline delivery systems and make projects subject to community oversight through gram sabhas. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana can help to bridge the gap between potential and actual yields and thereby make a substantial contribution to improving productivity and profitability of small farms. Unfortunately, most state governments are not using it.

We need a panchsheel (five principles) for agricultural renaissance. The five components will be: soil healthcare and issue of soil health cards; water harvesting and watershed management; dissemination of ecotechnologies; supply of credit and inputs along with insurance at the right time; and, above all, assured and remunerative marketing opportunities. If these five components of sustainable agricultural progress are attended to, small government programmes can become a mass movement led by farm women and men. This is what happened in the 1960s when we witnessed the Green Revolution. Green Revolution was not the product of one or two government projects, but a mass movement spearheaded by farm families, particularly from the Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh.

Unfortunately, today over 40 per cent of farmers would like to quit farming, if there is another opportunity. Therefore, talk of second green revolution will be an empty one without achieving the first requisite for such a revolution, namely farmers' enthusiasm and active participation.

Global experience shows that every nation should try to become self-reliant to the extent possible, with reference to their requirements of staple grains. Whenever India

enters the international market, prices go up. Also, commodities like pulses will not be available in the quantities we need. The future will not belong to nations which have guns, but to those which have grains. Food security is not only essential for human security, but also for national sovereignty. Let this decade become the decade of, and for, farmers.

- M.S. Swaminathan is the chairman of the National Commission on Farmers. He is considered to be the father of India's green revolution.

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Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Thursday, Apr 8

Max Min

35.4° | 26.8°

Rain: 00mm in24hrs Sunrise: 06:12

Humidity: 45% Sunset: 18:21

Wind: Normal Barometer: 1008.1mb

Tomorrow's Forecast



Cloudy

Friday, Apr 9

Max Min

35° | 27°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Apr 10

Apr 11

Apr 12

Apr 13

Apr 14



35° | 26°

37° | 26°

37° | 28°

37° | 27°

37° | 27°

Partly Cloudy

Partly Cloudy

Partly Cloudy

Sunny

Partly Cloudy