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Rice production to go up in Tirupur district

R. Vimal Kumar

Plan to popularise System of Rice Intensification techniques

— File Photo: M. Govarthan

To boost yield: A major thrust is to be given to popularising System of Rice Intensification in Tirupur District

Tirupur: Rice production is set to increase in the district this fiscal as the Department of Agriculture plans to popularise System of Rice Intensification (SRI) techniques more among paddy farmers by setting up 460 demonstration plots spread across the district.

These illustration plots, each of one hectare in size and to come up on select farmers' holdings, will be laid at a total outlay of Rs.13.8 lakh allocated under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana of the Central Government.

Assistant Director of Agriculture Mohammed Kalimullah Sherif told The Hindu that the project cost would be utilised to subsidise the capital for seeds, fertilizers, de-weeding equipment and also the expenditure on the nursery required to raise the seedlings.

The demonstration plots would be utilised to explain to the farmers in the respective localities how the SRI methodology increases production and raises the productivity of land, labour, water and capital.

“Adoption of the SRI technique that avoids the practice of both keeping the fields flooded as well as planting the seedlings in a clump followed in the conventional method, is expected to increase the yield by about 15 percent since more tillers can be obtained from every plant owing to a typical plating pattern chosen,” Mr Sherif pointed out.

Benefits

Under the SRI mode, paddy seedlings raised in nurseries would be transplanted to the field in square grid patterns while they were very young.

“Adequate space provided between each plant to encourage greater root and canopy growth will ensure that more than 100 tillers can be obtained from every plant vis-à-vis 30 tillers harvested using the traditional method,” Mr. Sherif pointed out.

Economical advantage

Because the plant populations were greatly reduced for a unit area with the introduction of SRI, farmers could save about 75 percent on the seed costs.

Likewise, water usage could be reduced by 40 percent when compared to the traditional cultivation technologies. This would be an advantage for the farmer at a time when the water scarcity had become a constraint for agricultural growth.

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SRI picks up steam in Perambalur, Ariyalur

Special Correspondent

ARIYALUR: The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) technique is gaining popularity in 'kuruvai' cultivation in Perambalur and Ariyalur districts, S. Sivakumar, Joint Director of Agriculture (in-charge) said here on Saturday.

Mr. Sivakumar said it had been planned to bring 1,000 hectares under kuruvai cultivation - 600 hectares in Ariyalur and 400 in Perambalur district. But, nearly 1,903 hectares had been brought under 'kuruvai'. As for the SRI technique, he said a target of 600 hectares was planned in the ‘kuruvai' crop. So far, 652 hectares - 480 in Ariyalur and 172 in Perambalur districts - have been brought under cultivation. He also said the sugarcane growers were also responsive to the precision cultivation technique.

He said under the Seed Village concept, additional storage godowns are being constructed at seven Agricultural Extension Centres, each in Veppanthattai, Veppur, Ariyalur, Sendurai, Tirumanur, Andimadam and T.Pazhur. Earlier, S. Kosala Raman, Commissioner for Agriculture, inspected the godown at Andimadam. He inspected the blackgram seeds of ‘Vamban 3' variety being raised at Kavarapalayam village.

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‘Procure coconut from farmers'

At present, TANFED directly buys copra from farmersNeed to address farm labour shortage stressed

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COIMBATORE: The Coconut Cultivators' Association has urged the State Government to procure coconut and not copra from farmers to revive coconut cultivation in the State.

A letter written by the ‘Then-India Thennai Sagupadiyalargal Sandam' urges Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi to direct primary agriculture cooperative societies to buy coconut at Rs. 12,000 a tonne, convert it into copra and sell the same to Tamil Nadu Cooperative Marketing Federation (TANFED).

At present TANFED directly buys copra from farmers and sells the same to National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED).

The letter cites the Kerala model in this regard to underscore its demand and says such a system, if implemented in Tamil Nadu, will help farmers receive immediate payment.

It will also be of great benefit to those coconut farmers who do not have drying yard to convert coconut into copra.

The letter also asks the Chief Minister to write to the Central Government to make necessary changes in the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Programme so as to address the issue of farm labour shortage.

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Haryana may produce more basmati rice this year

CHANDIGARH: Even though the recent floods ravaged freshly transplanted paddy in thousands of hectares in Haryana, an official spokesman of the State Government claimed on Sunday that 7,000 additional hectares had been brought under paddy cultivation.

‘Blessing in disguise'

He disclosed that the “blessing in disguise was that during re-transplantation, Basmati had replaced coarse varieties of paddy as a substitute in the flood-hit districts".

Haryana might produce more basmati rice this year, bringing farmers more money, he further added.

Up to July 29, paddy had been sown in 10.57 lakh hectares as against 10.5 lakh hectares during the corresponding period last year. “The State is well on the road to achieving, if not exceeding, both the coverage and production targets which have been pegged at 11.5 lakh hectares and 56.07 lakh metric tonnes in 2010-11," he further said.

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'Agriculture Act protects interests of farmers'

Misconceptions can be cleared, says former minister

— Photo: M . Srinath

allaying concerns:Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, former Union Minister with

THANJAVUR: The Tamil Nadu Agricultural Council Act 2009 aimed at protecting farmers and not destroying their livelihood, said Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, former Union Minister here on Sunday.

Inaugurating a seminar on the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Council Act organised by the Centre for Cauvery Delta Development Studies (CCDDS), Mrs.Jagadeesan said there were some misconceptions about the Act among some farmers.

These doubts could be cleared by seminars and through frank discussion among farmers. Changes can be suggested to the Act and the government is willing to amend the Act for the betterment, Mrs.Jagadeesan pointed out .

Farmers are an exploited lot and they need guidance by experts. There were misconceptions about the green revolution too. Even Tamil Nadu remained a deficit state with respect to food grains in 1971. Later it developed into a state of self-sufficiency and now a state of surplus.

While many farmers have taken up organic farming in the state, marketing their produce remained a problem. They were not getting the price their produce deserved. After a lot of efforts, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University is now giving certification to organic farming produce, she observed.

S.Neelakantan, former chairman, Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS), said certain terminology in the Act, such as agricultural practitioner, has stirred up a controversy.

K.S.Subbaiah, former Vice-president, SPIC Ltd, said there was nothing wrong in using chemical fertilisers, but they should not be used in excess. The Act aimed at bringing in regulation and it was welcome. Amendments are needed to give clarity to the Act.

S.Pushpavanam, Secretary, Consumer Protection Council, Tamil Nadu, said the Act was most welcome as it tried to set standards in agriculture education and agriculture practices.Regulation was necessary. Mr.Pushpavanam said the act was not against the organic farming or traditional agriculture. It was timely because corporate agriculture is going to come in a large way. V.Rajagopalan, former vice-chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, presided over the function. S.Ranganathan, Chairman of CCDDS, welcomed the gathering. G.Chidambaram of CCDDS spoke about the purpose of the seminar. S.Kosalaraman, Commissioner of Agriculture, Tamil Nadu, participated.

DECCAN Chronicle On The Web

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Sugar price drops to Rs 28 a kg

Aug 09 2010

Chennai, Aug. 8: August has turned out to be a sweet month with the sugar price dipping to its lowest in six months in Chennai. High quality sugar, sold at Rs 42 per kg during January this year, is now available at Rs 28 a kg in the retail shops.

Apart from homemakers, sweet shop owners also heave a sigh of relief as the price has slipped an all-time low this month.

Trader Pranavan said that the sale of sugar in ration shops hit the open market traders.

“As sugar is included in the list of essential products, it is available in PDS shops. Not just BPL families, even upmarket families buy sugar from ration shops. So, we have been forced to cut down on the price,” he said.

A senior civil supplies official said that the ban imposed by the Union ministry on sugar export and release of sugar to mills had a great impact on the sugar price.

“The price has gradually come down to Rs 28. Consumers have been told to inform us if they are charged more than the MRP. Raids were conducted in many stores,” the civil supplies official added.

Source URL:
http://www.deccanchronicle.com/chennai/sugar-price-drops-rs-28-kg-163

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Glut to cut turmeric rally, prices may drop next year

9 Aug 2010, 0052 hrs IST,ET Bureau

HYDERABAD: If the signals from traders and analysts are anything to go by, turmeric may lose its sheen next season. The commodity, which sported the
moniker ‘yellow gold’ this season due to high prices, may witness about 30-50% fall in value by end of January next year.

“This year, turmeric production in the country was about 43 lakh bags while next year we expect it to go up to 75-80 lakh bags. This high quantity in production output can act as a dampener. We expect turmeric prices to drop to `7,500-8,000 per quintal by mid-February next year,” said Purnam Sengupta, turmeric trader from Nizamabad. Spices Board data shows the area under the crop has gone up by 21.5% in Andhra Pradesh and 19% in Karnataka this year and the two states account for over 50% of production. In 2009, turmeric was cultivated in 1.2 lakh hectares of land in the country, of which AP accounts for about 63,000 hectare.

“Turmeric prices for the next season are expected to drift lower towards `11,000 per quintal compared to `14,000 per quintal this season. This expectation of a drop in prices is based on the possible rise in acreage that is under turmeric cultivation. Over the last few years, farmers have been able to get good prices as demand remained firm even as supply dwindled on scanty rains and the unavailability of labour. The situation has changed and the rainfall also has improved,” said Anand James, chief analyst, Geojit Comtrade.

Bearish price projections are also on account of a decline in exports. According to Spices Board figures, exports fell 11% to 14,600 tonne in the April-June period this year as against same period last year. India is the world’s biggest producer of this spice and it mainly caters to the Middle-East. “However, even as the total quantity exported has dwindled, in value terms, we have exported near two folds in April-June when compared to last year due to high prices. It also points to the fact that export markets have remained vibrant even at high prices. So we do not expect any sharp drops in prices. Besides, domestic consumption is also increasing,” said James.

Ravindra Modi, a turmeric trader, is expecting the prices to climb down next year. “We expect prices to be in the ranges of `8,500-9,000 per quintal next season. Considering that the carry forward stock from this year to next year is not much, prices may not take a nosedive. Besides, a fall in prices can also contribute to volumes and high export orders. This year, we exported about 5 lakh bags and next season this may go up, working to the advantage of farmers and traders," he said.

Basant Vaid, senior research analyst, Bonanza Commodity Brokers, said export demand from Europe and Japan were expected to pick up next season leading to prices remaining at `16,000 next season.

"I have increased the acreage under cultivation of turmeric from 2,750 acres to 3,525 acres this year. Considering that the input cost per acre is about 1.25 lakh, we can realise profit at `10,000 per quintal of turmeric. We can get produce about 25 quintals of turmeric from one acre," said Bhumi Reddy, a farmer from Nizamabad.

Turmeric for delivery in October dropped by `280 to `13,500 per quintal and fell by `146 to `13,978 for delivery in August. In Nizamabad spot market, prices fell `233 to `14,852 on Friday. "Sluggish export demand and better-than-expected rains in key growing areas have led to expectations of good yield and this has triggered the fall in turmeric prices at futures trade," said Nalini Rao, Angel Broking.

Milk co-ops need agile bosses

9 Aug 2010, 0057 hrs IST,Shyamal Gupta,

Dairy cooperatives have a lot to do with India emerging as the world's leading milk producer. However, most of the cooperative federations are not
professionally managed today. In fact, many of them outside Gujarat are now run like 'regular' parastatals, invariably headed by career bureaucrats. The alternative does not lie in changing the organisational design and the operating system which will undermine the role of cooperatives.

Success in the dairy industry shall continue to be in the ability to build a robust procurement network which gives raw material cost advantage along with an assurance of regular supply. Large MNCs have failed in the dairy sector on this account. 'Aarth shakti' (money power) has not got translated into 'lok shakti' (people power). Moga (Nestle) and Etwah (Levers) have remained laboratory cases while Anand (Amul) has got replicated. A strong backward integration in the form of cattlefeed supply, vaccination availability, breed improvement programmes and profit-sharing with farmers are some of the things that none of the private sector companies have been able to replicate and amplify. Farmgate price paid for milk in India is the highest in the world largely due to a strong cooperative presence.

The failure of integrated dairy experiments like ‘Aarey’ has not deterred a non-milk co-operative to branch out in the same direction recently. Also JVs and foreign collaboration have become order of the day. Lately, India is under pressure to open up its market in dairy produce, especially cheese, from Europe. The EU is keen to get any market-opening abroad in a bid to compensate for the troubles facing milk farmers at home. A few years ago, there was a sudden interest in advising India how to manage the dairy sector when it was emerging as the world’s leading milk producer. No doubt, the advice came from a Netherland-based entity. The US dairy industry is itching for an access to India and the US government is examining legal alternatives towards this.

In Europe, when the entire milk requirement for production of cheese and value-added products are satisfied and “profit is maximised”, the remainder is processed into butter and SMP (skimmed milk Powder), often referred to as “residual production”. This is distinct from the patterns of production followed in India where priority is given to production and distribution of liquid milk for masses. In India, SMP is important for curbing excess supply due to strong seasonal fluctuation of milk and reconstituting the same during milk shortages. The recent incident of protestors vandalising the tankers of imported milk only demonstrates the lack of understanding by the political class of machinations of the large milk-producing nations.

It is even more surprising that when a minister promotes private sector dairy in his constituency instead of a cooperative dairy, these protestors don’t even raise an eyebrow. Perhaps it is time that India demonstrates that if it can produce 112 MT of milk (09-10) compared to only 10.40 MT in 1961, it also knows what is the best way to manage a growing dairy industry. For this, Indians need to move from ‘me’ to ‘we’ mentality. The dairy and milk managers are yet to demonstrate the leadership quality, passion and logic in negotiations, political acumen and stubbornness that ‘the father of white revolution’ Dr Verghese Kurien had demonstrated.

Once confronted about the market share by an arrogant New Zealand high commissioner, Dr

Kurien had fittingly replied, “If all of us Indians decide to get together and spit on your country, your country will get drowned in our spit.” Unfortunately, the current breed of milk leaders are more concerned in protecting their own turf by creation of “services” to ensure that they remain at the helm of affairs.

(The author is the chief business officer of NCMSL. The views expressed are his own and not those of his organisation)

Further rise in edible oil prices on persistent demand

8 Aug 2010, 0035 hrs IST,PTI

MUMBAI: Groundnut oil prices moved up further at the oils and oilseeds market here today due to persistent buying from retailers amidst poor
arrivals from producing belts.

Refined palmolein improved further owing to renewed buying interest coupled with higher Malaysian advices.
Linseed oil shot up on good inquiries from the paint industry.Castorseed futures also recovered on fresh export orders.
Castorseeds bold and its oil eased due to lack of enquiries from shippers and soap industry.

In the edible oils segment, groundnut oil gained by Rs 5 per 10 kg to Rs 865 from the yesterday's closing level of Rs 860 and refined palmolein hardened by Rs 8 per 10 kg to Rs 468 as against Rs 460 previously.

Turning to the non-edible oils section, linseed oil rose by Rs 10 per 10 kg to Rs 570 from Rs 560 yesterday.

Castorseeds bold moved down by Rs 5 per 100 kg to Rs 3,720 as against Rs 3,725 and castoroil commercial softened to Rs 774 from Rs 775 per 10 kg previously.

Moving to the futures section, castorseed for October contract delivery resumed higher at Rs 3,737 and moved in a range of Rs 3,740 and Rs 3,726 before ending at Rs 3,734 from Rs 3,726, showing a modest gain of Rs 8 per tonne.

Tea outlook remains bullish

9 Aug 2010, 0059 hrs IST,Sutanuka Ghosal,ET Bureau

The outlook for tea is quite bullish with the commodity setting new records in price in the domestic as well as export markets. Prices of north
Indian tea, which consists of 75% of the country's tea production of 980 million kg, are on the rise. The auction prices of tea in Kol-kata is higher by about `23 per kg across all categories — CTC, orthodox and Darjeeling. The average price of tea has shot up to ` 151.72 per kg as compared to `128.53 per kg in the same period previous year. The crop shortfall in June in upper Assam has pushed up prices at auctions. The auction price at Siliguri auction centre last week was up by `4 kg. The price at Guwahati auction centre has shot up by `8 per kg.

Production shortfall

While during May 2010 north India (Assam and West Bengal) witnessed 3 million kg decline in crop against the corresponding period last year, June has seen the maximum loss in crop in both Assam and West Bengal. As per tea statistics released by Tea Board, tea produc-tion during June has declined by 13 million kg in Assam and 2 million kg in West Bengal, resulting in an overall decline of 15 million kg in north India. Tea estates in Assam have also reported that production in July has also been adversely impacted due to continuing heavy rains and the slow recovery of estates from the severe helopeltis pest attack seen during the May-June period. The total crop produced by tea estates of north India during the January-June period is 212 million kg compared to 222 million kg in the corresponding period of 2009. However, the south Indian production is up by 15 million kg to 127 million kg in the same period.

Arrivals normal

Arrivals at the north Indian auction centres are at par with that of last year. However, since the orthodox tea production has gone up this year, arrivals of orthodox tea at the Kolkata auction is up by 2.4 million kg. Total quantity sold through the Kolkata auction is 70 million kg in the January-June period this year compared to 64 million kg in the same period last year. Guwahati sold 55 million kg in the same period as against 58 million kg last year. Domestic consumption is growing at a rate of 3-3.5% annually. Therefore, the demand for tea will remain high.

Exports to remain bright

Indian tea exports have registered an increase of 9 million kg during the January-June period vis-a-vis last year. While the exports from north India have declined by 2 million kg, unit price realisation has seen an increase of `7 per kg. Exports from south India have increased by 12 million kg but with lower unit price realisation. Overall, during January to June 2010, total exports from India have registered 84 million kg with a forex earning of `1,036 crore as against 75 million kg last year.

Business Standard

Monday, Aug 09, 2010

Red chilli rises on fresh buying

PressTrust of India / New Delhi August 7, 2010, 16:47 IST

Red chilli prices today rose by Rs 100 per quintal in the wholesale market here on fresh buying support from retailers and stockists amid tight stocks.

Fall in supplies from producing belts also supported the rise in prices. Red chilli prices surged by Rs 100 to settle at Rs 4,900-9,000 per quintal.

Traders said the rise in red chilli prices was attributed to good demand from retailers and stockists following fall in supplies from producing belts, mainly pushed up chilli prices on the wholesale kirana market here.

Following are today's quotations (per quintal):

Ajwain 14,000-19,000, black pepper common 20,500-20,700, betelnut (kg) 85-105, cardamom brown-Jhundiwali (kg) 775-780 and cardamom brown-Kanchicut (kg) 850-950

Cardamom small (kg): Chitridar 1,200-1,330, cardamom (colour robin) 1,350-1,365, cardamom bold 1,370-1,380, cardamom extra (bold) 1,560-1,580 and cloves (kg) 320-400

Chirounji (new) (kg) Rs 410-450 Dry mango(raipur) Rs 6,000-8,500 Dhania Rs 3,400-8,500 Dry ginger Rs 22,000-25,500 Kalaunji Rs 10,000-11,800 Mace-Red (kg) Rs 1200-1350

Mace-Yellow (kg) Rs 1550-1650 Methiseed Rs 3,200-4,200 Makhana (per kg) Rs 120-160 Nutmeg Rs 525-560 Poppyseed (KG Turkey) Rs 200 Poppyseed (KG MP-RAJ) Rs 200-250 Poppyseed (KG Kashmiri) Rs 180 Red chillies Rs 4,900-9,000

Soya bari pariwar (20 kg) Rs 350-400 Saffron (kg) Irani Rs 1,20,000-1,30,000 Saffron (kg) Kashmiri Rs 1,55,000-1,70,000 Soanf-bold Rs 9,500-15,000 Turmeric Rs 16,000-19,200 Tamarind Rs 2,250-2,600 Tamarind without seed Rs 3,800-5,500

Tea (kg) Rs 60-175 Watermelon kernel (Kg) Rs 235 Jeera common Rs 13,800-14,100 Jeera best Rs 15,000-15,500

Kishmish rises on fresh buying

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 7, 2010, 16:46 IST

Kishmish prices rose up to Rs 700 per 40 kg in the national Capital today mostly on fresh buying by retailers and stockists ahead of festive season.

Tight supplies from growing regions also supported the upside in prices. Kishmish Indian yellow and green prices surged up to Rs 700 to conclude at Rs 3,900-4,200 and Rs 5,300-6,800 per 40 kg bag.

Marketmen said increased buying by retailers and stockists ahead of festive season against tight supplies from growing regions mainly pushed up kishmish prices on the wholesale dry fruit market here.

Following are today's quotations in Rs per 40 kg:

Almond (California) new Rs 10,500 Almond (gurbandi-new) Rs 4,600-4,700 almond (girdhi) Rs 2,300-2,400 and Abjosh Afghani Rs 7,000-16,000

Almond kernel in per kg (California) Rs 360-365, almond kernel (gurbandi-new) (kg) Rs 300-375. Chilgoza raw-new (1 kg) Rs 500 Chilgoza (roasted) (1 kg) Rs 825-875 Cashew kernel 1 kg (no 180) Rs 520-525 Cashew kernel (no 210) Rs 470-475

Cashew kernel (no 240) Rs 420-435 Cashew kernel (no 320) Rs 385-395 Cashew kernel broken 2 pieces Rs 320-325 Cashew kernel broken 4 pieces Rs 250-290 Cashew kernel broken 8 pieces Rs 220-250 Copra (qtl) Rs 5,600-5,700

Coconut powder (25 kg) Rs 1,750-1,850 Dry dates red (qtl) Rs 2,900-7,000 Fig Rs 6,000-14,000 Kishmish Kandhari local Rs 7,000-7,500 Kishmish Kandhari special Rs 12,000-20,000 Kishmish Indian yellow Rs 3,900-4,200 Kishmish Indian green Rs 5,300-6,800

Pistachio Irani Rs 750-900 Pistachio Hairati Rs 1,100-1,150 Pistachio Peshawari Rs 1,400-1,450 Pistachio Dodi (roasted) 520-600 Walnut Rs 110-170 Walnut kernel (1kg) Rs 300-500

Sugar closes steady in thin trade

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 7, 2010, 16:53 IST

Wholesale sugar prices today remained steady in the national Capital on alternate small bouts of trading.

Marketmen said adequate stocks position against sporadic demand mainly kept sugar prices unchanged.

Following are today's rates in Rs per quintal:

Sugar ready M-30 2,800-2,900 and S-30 2,790-2,890
Mill delivery M-30 2,700-2,800 and S-30 2,690-2790

Sugar mill gate prices (excluding duty): Kinonni 2,770, Asmoli 2,780, Mawana 2,700, Titabi 2,700, Thanabhavan 2,680, Budhana 2,670 and Dorala 2,700

Further rise in edible oil prices on persistent demand

Press Trust of India / Mumbai August 7, 2010, 16:49 IST

Groundnut oil prices moved up further at the oils and oilseeds market here today due to persistent buying from retailers amidst poor arrivals from producing belts."

Refined palmolein improved further owing to renewed buying interest coupled with higher Malaysian advices.

Linseed oil shot up on good inquiries from the paint industry.Castorseed futures also recovered on fresh export orders. Castorseeds bold and its oil eased due to lack of enquiries from shippers and soap industry.

In the edible oils segment, groundnut oil gained by Rs 5 per 10 kg to Rs 865 from the yesterday's closing level of Rs 860 and refined palmolein hardened by Rs 8 per 10 kg to Rs 468 as against Rs 460 previously.

Turning to the non-edible oils section, linseed oil rose by Rs 10 per 10 kg to Rs 570 from Rs 560 yesterday.

Castorseeds bold moved down by Rs 5 per 100 kg to Rs 3,720 as against Rs 3,725 and castoroil commercial softened to Rs 774 from Rs 775 per 10 kg previously.

Moving to the futures section, castorseed for October contract delivery resumed higher at Rs 3,737 and moved in a range of Rs 3,740 and Rs 3,726 before ending at Rs 3,734 from Rs 3,726, showing a modest gain of Rs 8 per tonne.

Sooji remains higher as demand rises

Press Trust of India / New Delhi August 07, 2010, 15:53 IST

Wholesale prices of refined wheat flour (sooji) today rose by Rs 10 per 50 kg on the grains market here on increased buying by stockists.

Sooji added Rs 10 to Rs 880-900 per 50 kg.

Traders said increased buying by stockists in view of festive season mainly strengthened sooji prices.

Following are today's quotations in Rs per quintal:

Wheat MP (deshi) 1,700-1,800, wheat dara (for mills) 1,225-1,230 chakki atta (delivery) 1,230-1,235, atta Rajdhani (10 kg) 175, Shakti bhog (10 kg) 175, Roller flour mill 650-670 (50 kg)

Maida 770-800 (50 kilos) and Sooji 880-900 (50 kg) Basmati rice (Lal Quila) 9,300, Shri Lal Mahal 9,300, Super basmati rice 9,000, Basmati common 5,500-5,600

rice Pusa-(1121) 4,400-4,900, Permal raw 1,850-1,900, Permal wand 1,925-2,075, Sela 2,150-2,200 and Rice IR-8- 1,675-1,700, Bajra 990-1000

Jowar yellow 1,400-1,500, white 2,450-2,500, Maize 1060-1070, Barley (UP) 1,090-1,110 and Rajasthan 1,080-1,090.

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Farmers, experts call for changes in Agri Council Act

Objective should be to streamline professional practice.

R. Balaji

Thanjavur, Aug. 8

The Tamil Nadu State Agricultural Council Act 2009 should be amended to clearly express its objective to streamline the professional practice of agricultural graduates and not limit flow of traditional knowledge among farmers, feel agriculturists and experts.

They made the suggestion at a seminar organised by the Centre for Cauvery Delta Development Studies to debate farmers concerns regarding the law.

Over 15 farmers' representatives from across the State, academicians and State Government representatives, including the former Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ms Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, participated in the event.

The Act is to “provide for the regulation of agricultural practice in the State of Tamil Nadu.” It provides for the registration of agricultural practitioners in the State and to establish the Tamil Nadu State Agricultural Council. Though it was passed in the Assembly the State Government did not frame the rules or notify the Act following objections raised by farmers. The worry was that the law would restrict traditional practices, including organic farming.

Addressing the seminar Ms Jagadeesan said that the objective was to create a council for professional agricultural graduates along the lines of medical council and bar council. This is to streamline and make accountable those profiting from offering services in the agricultural field while ensuring quality to benefit farmers. The suggestions from the farming community would be considered by the Government and the law amended to allay their fears, she said.

Open mind

Ms S. Ranganathan, Chairman, CCDDS, said that seminar had been organised with an open mind to get the views of the stakeholders and address the concerns.

Prof G. Chidambaram, Member Planning Commission and Managing Trustee, CCDDS, said that feedback from farmers across the State was being collected through a questionnaire to assess awareness and support for the law.

Mr S. Kosalaraman, Tamil Nadu Agriculture Commissioner, said that the Government was aware of the farmers' concern of being limited by the law. Particularly in the context of the definition of ‘agricultural practitioner' which farmers feel could cover them and Section 29 that related to allowing only registered agricultural practitioners being allowed to offer agricultural services. But these can be corrected, he said.

Penal provisions

Mr G. Sither, an organic farmer and nature cure promoter, and Mr V. Dhanapalan, General Secretary, Cauvery Farmers Welfare Association, expressed concern that the law would penalise farmers who share information based on experience and traditional practices. The law should clearly spell out that the farmers are not covered under its penal provisions.

Prof S. Janakarajan of the Madras Institute of Development Studies, emphasised that the Act is focussed on quality assurance of agricultural consultancy and services. Services relating to soil health, seed quality, water, and chemical inputs were rooted in science and required qualified practitioners. Traditional knowledge spread would not be affected.

Dr E. Vadivel, Project Officer, e-Extension Centre, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, said the law is aimed at regulating agriculture professionals who provide commercial services to farmers.

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Water shortage hits jute farmers in south Bengal

Kolkata, Aug. 8

Nilmoni Das is busy sharpening his sickle, preparing to harvest jute plants near Ratanpur in Hooghly district of West Bengal.

This year, he has grown jute on one-and-a-half acres - hoping to recover the loss incurred in potato farming a few months ago.

The weather, however, spoilt all his chances of coming out of monetary crisis.

Scant rainfall and delayed monsoon in the southern parts of West Bengal have resulted in wilted crops in the field.

“Though the initial growth of the plants was good, lack of adequate supply of water led them to dry up much before the harvesting period”, Nilmoni laments.

“Canals have dried up; buying water from shallow pump is expensive and, so, where will we do the retting process?” he asks.

Inflation impact

Inflation has made an impact too.

Farm labourers are asking for increased wages due to the sky-rocketing of prices of essential commodities and fuel.

“Harvesting of partially dried up jute plants has become difficult and time-consuming.

“I have to bear higher expenses for comparatively low quality jute this year. But, could I still get a decent price?” says distressed Nilmoni and goes back to work.

A similar gloomy picture prevails in the interior areas of the districts of Hooghly, Howrah and parts of Bardhaman district of the State.

Dejected farmers are busy harvesting the crop, preparing for retting and drying the raw jutes.

Most of the jute crops are lying in the field, which are yet to be taken for retting.

Many of the farmers were agitated when questioned about the current situation since they feel that neither the Government nor the media is concerned about the small and marginal farmers.

Some farmers at Chanpdanga in Hooghly district complained about the delay in release of water by Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) to the irrigation canals.

Luckily, for the farmers in the northern districts of the State, heavy rains at the beginning of the monsoon in the region are expected to help them reap bumper yield.

— Text and photos by A. Roy Chowdhury

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‘Govt holding in Kribhco not to fall below 26%'

Harish Damodaran

New Delhi, Aug. 8

The stand-off between the Centre and Krishak Bharati Cooperative Ltd (Kribhco) over the dilution of Government equity in the cash-rich fertiliser company is apparently over.

Kribhco, it is learnt, has assured the Department of Fertilisers that the Centre's holding in it will not be brought down below 26 per cent. The Centre, currently has a 48.35 per cent stake in the country's second largest urea seller after Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd (Iffco).

Since 2000-01, the Centre's share in Kribhco's equity has fallen from 67.73 per cent to 48.35 per cent. Much of this has been by way of the co-operative redeeming the shares held by the Centre in it, according to the provisions of the Multi State Cooperative

Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002 (MSCS).

Unlike in normal public sector undertakings (PSU), the Centre has not been particularly keen to divest its stake in co-operatives. The reason for this is simple: Under Section 35 (2) of the MSCS Act, the redemption of shares in co-operatives can only be done at face value. That means the Centre does not stand to make big money of the kind it would by offloading equity at a premium in PSUs.

Kribhco had, in December 2002, obtained the Central Registrar of Cooperatives' approval for amending its bylaws to enable repatriation of governmental equity to the extent of subscription of shares by its member-co-operatives.

Following this, it began returning the Centre's shares similar to what Iffco had earlier done: Between April 1, 2002 and June 30, 2004, the Centre's holding in the latter fell from 69.10 per cent to zero.

But while the divestment process in Iffco happened smoothly, in Kribhco's case, the Centre, on December 6, 2006, issued an order directing it to “cease forthwith” any attempt to repatriate government equity “without the specific written and prior approval of the Department of Fertilisers”.

Kribhco, in turn, challenged the order, which was quashed by the Delhi High Court on September 17, 2008, on grounds of non-compliance with the MSCS Act. The Centre has since not filed any special leave petition against the High Court's decision, even though it is yet to deposit cheques worth Rs 116.79 crore sent by Kribhco from 2005.

“The Department of Fertilisers has received an opinion from the Law Ministry that no useful purpose will be served by appealing against the ruling. It has been decided now to deposit the pending cheques in Government account after revalidation from Kribhco,” sources told Business Line. Kribhco, on its part, has offered to give an undertaking through a board resolution not to dilute the Centre's equity in it to less than 26 per cent. Further, any such dilution in future shall take place only through increase in subscription of shares by member-cooperatives and not repatriation of government equity.

“The compromise formula hammered out by the two parties at a meeting last month also proposed granting of State Trading Enterprise status to Kribhco and allocation of projects involving revival of sick fertiliser units on a nomination basis as is being extended to PSUs," the sources added.

For the year ended March 31, Kribhco reported a profit after tax of Rs 228.17 crore on net sales of Rs 2,597.07 crore.

During 2009-10, Kribhco sold 38.47 lakh tonnes (lt) of urea, next only to Iffco's 63.35 lt.

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Bearish sentiments pull down pepper

G K Nair Kochi, Aug. 8

The pepper market witnessed high volatility last week with the bull and bear operators exhibiting their money power and in that exercise the bears had the upper handand the market dropped.

The futures fell at the weekend close and yet remained out-priced in the international market, market sources told Business Line.

All other origins reduced their prices to around $4,000 tonnes while the Indian parity remained at around $4,400 a tonne and was not competitive. At the same time, one thing has become clear that the projected and estimated figures released about the availability in other origins often turned out to misleading.

Pushing up the prices by projecting low crops and carry over stocks and then selling below the known prices of others has become a tactic, they alleged. Since India is the only producer having futures trading in pepper and its prices are open to the world everyday.

Closely monitoring the exchange prices and accordingly undercutting and selling in the overseas markets appears to have become a common practice and in that process Indian exporters often miss the ship.

Vietnam, which had exported 1,34,264 tonnes of pepper in 2009 and had been making a propaganda that its availability in 2010 was less due to thin carry over stock and a decline in output, reportedly exported more quantity during Jan-May 2010 than what was shipped out in the same period the previous year.

"Up to May 2010, total export from Vietnam was 59,430 mt, which is higher by 11 per cent compared to 53,594 mt exported during the same period last year", the International Pepper Community (IPC) report on Friday said.

The US, Germany and the United Arab Emirates were the main markets, importing 11 per cent, 10 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. Pakistan, India, Singapore and Egypt also imported substantially from Vietnam during the first five months of 2010 accounting for 5 per cent share by these each, it said.

Limited surplus

In fact, the exportable surplus in the country is very much limited and whatever quantity is being exported these days are the imported material after value addition, they claimed. But, what the growers apprehended was the entry of the material imported for value addition and re-export in the domestic market. If it is arrested by keeping a strict vigil by the authorities, "we will be able to get nearly remunerative prices", Mr Joshua Daniel a major pepper grower in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district told Business Line.

In fact, the huge demand in the domestic market is the Indian price at higher levels and the advantage of it is being enjoyed by origins which are raising their prices. Thus, in fact, Indian market manipulators and operators are holding an umbrella to others to sell at higher prices in the overseas markets, they said.

Availability in India is said to be tight as evident from the fact that there was no panic or selling pressure in the primary markets when the prices shot up and started falling. All the contracts on the NCDEX during the week fell on bearish sentiments created by the lower quotes from other origins. August, September and October contracts fell by Rs 494, Rs 509 and Rs 509 respectively to close at Rs19,200, Rs 19,413 and Rs 19,625 a quintal.

Total turn over fell by 44,364 tonnes to 1,19,918 tonnes. Total open interest dropped by

676 tonnes to 18,787 tonnes. The spot prices fell by Rs 400 to close at Rs 18,900 (ungarbled) and Rs19,400 (MG 1) a quintal in tandem with the downward trend in the futures market and not in fact due to any selling pressure. According to the International Pepper Community, there was a declining trend in black pepper market by all the producing countries except Sarawak last week. Local prices at most origins namely Brazil, India and Indonesia decreased by 4 per cent. In Vietnam and Sri Lanka the local prices dropped by 3 per cent, while in Sarawak the local price increased by 2 per cent and 1 per cent in f.o.b.

In Lampung, the harvest is underway and prices decreased further. Farmers are reluctant to sell their material at the current prices. They are willing to hold onto stock for some time, expecting better prices. F.o.b prices of Lampung black were relatively stable, with a marginal fall.

In Vietnam, local prices fluctuated at a narrow range, with a decreasing trend. F.o.b prices however, were reported stable.

WHITE PEPPER

Local prices of white pepper decreased in Bangka and Vietnam. In Sarawak, prices increased marginally in local as well as f.o.b.

Prices quoted at the weekend for black pepper of different origins in dollar per tonne c&f New York were MG 1asta – 4,500-4,600; Vietnam asta – prefer to work firm bids; Lampong 500GL – 3,700-3,750 (f.o.b); Lampong 550 GL – 3,850 (f.o.b); Lampong asta – 4,000 (f.o.b)- resellers will discount origin market; Sri Lanka 500 GL – 3,700 (f.o.b) ; Brazil B2 500GL – 3,900-3,950 (f.o.b) Aug/Sep; Brazil B1 560 GL – 4,050-4,100 (f.o.b) Aug/Sep and Brazil Asta – 4,150-4,200 (f.o.b) Aug/Sep.

Vietnam white pepper was quoted at $5,850 c&f while that of Muntok was at $5,825-5,850 a tonne c&f.

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Coonoor tea prices fall

P.S. Sundar Coonoor, Aug. 8

Prices slid Rs 3 a kg at Sale No: 31 of the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association on Friday. Still, teas worth Rs 2.74 crore remained unsold because 33 per cent of the 15.80 lakh kg on offer was withdrawn for want of buyers. About 39 per cent of leaf and 27 per cent of dust remained unsold.

In all, 75 marks of CTC teas from bought-leaf factories fetched Rs 100 and more. “Our Red Dust (RD) topped among all CTC leaf and dust teas fetching Rs 158 a kg. Our Broken Orange Pekoe Fanning (BOPF) topped leaf market fetching Rs 154. Totally, 12 of our grades got Rs 100 and more,” Mr Dinesh Raju, Managing Partner, Darmona Tea Industry, told Business Line.

Homedale Estate got Rs 148, Kannavarai Estate (Rs 144), Vigneshwar Estate (Rs 143), Deepika Supreme and Professor Rs 139 each, Shanthi Supreme (Rs 137) and Blue Mont Estate (Rs 135).

Among orthodox teas from corporate sector, Curzon got Rs 180, Thaishola and Coonoor Tea Rs 155 each, Kairbetta Rs 154, Havukal and Quinshola clonal Rs 146 each, Glendale Rs 142 and Sutton Rs 141. In all, 21 marks got Rs 100 and more.

“Orthodox leaf market was generally lower by Rs 2-3 a kg. High-priced CTC leaf eased Rs 3-5. Better medium sorts were withdrawn despite losing up to Rs 5. Plainers suffered withdrawal even after shedding Rs 2-3. Primary orthodox dusts lost Rs 10-20 and rest suffered withdrawal even after shedding up to Rs 3. CTC dust eased Rs 2-5,” an auctioneer said.

Quotations held by brokers indicated bids ranging Rs 33-36 a kg for plain leaf grades and Rs 80-118 for brighter liquoring sorts. They ranged Rs 32-36 for plain dusts and Rs 90-140 for brighter liquoring dusts.

On the export front, Pakistan bought in a wide range of Rs 38-59 a kg and the CIS Rs 40-80.

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Copra rises on demand from oil crushers

A file photo of copra being packed into gunnybags. —

Erode, Aug. 8

Copra prices have gone up a tad after demand for the product increased in the Avalpoondurai Regulated Market, as some oil crushers purchased it in bulk.The copra sale, held last Friday at the Regulated Market in Avalpoondurai, concluded around 10 p.m. There was hectic competition among oil crushers, with three to four buyers purchasing the product in huge quantities.

On Friday, the first quality product was sold at Rs 35.75-38.75 a kilogram, which was 15 paise higher than the previous week's price.

Similarly, the second quality product was sold at Rs 29.65-36.35 — no change in price compared with the previous week. Overall, sales has improved. On Friday, 2,511 quintals of the product were sold and on Monday, 809 quintals were sold. A total of 3,320 quintals were sold during the week. “We expected more than Rs 39 a kg, but due to the heavy arrivals, the rates went down. We are hopeful that till Onam the commodity will increase to Rs 40 a kg,” a farmer said.

According to an oil miller, “We require a large quantity of copra. So they expect the price to go up by Rs 1 a kg, during the week." On Friday, at the copra auction held at the Gobichettipalayam Cooperative Marketing society, 300 quintals were sold. Sources said the sale prices were normal.

Copra was sold at Rs 37.47 a kg on an average, which is a remunerative price for farmers, market authorities said.

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Flour millers await export opportunity as global wheat prices soar

Await export prospects:A file picture of a labourer arranging sacks of wheat flour inside a factory.

M.R. Subramani

Chennai, Aug. 8

Last week saw wheat prices in the global market run up to a two-year high as Russia, which is facing its worst drought in 50 years, banned the grain's exports. Between Wednesday and Friday, the prices ruled firm above $8 a bushel (over Rs 14,000 a tonne) on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT).

On Friday morning, prices touched a recent high of $8.41 a bushel (Rs 14,250 a tonne) before dropping seven per cent as other big exporters stepped in to fill the likely shortage due to the Russian ban.

Finally, the prices closed at $7.25 a bushel (Rs 12,225 a tonne) on CBOT for September contracts.

The rise in wheat prices has kindled the interests of Indian flour mills. But only just. That is because the door to flour exports seems open to them. Does the export opportunity really exist? Have there been any enquiries from buyers abroad?

“As of now, there has been no enquiry from buyers abroad,” said Mr M.K. Dattaraj, former president of the Roller Flour Mills Federation of India. “Exports of flour are feasible only if the prices rule constantly above $8 a bushel,” he said.

“Wheat prices have been surging in the last fortnight or so. We too have not come across any enquiry. May be, if the prices go above $8.5 a bushel, buyers abroad may show interest,” said Mr Anil Gupta, a miller in Mumbai.

“If prices rule firm, we have scope to export flour to West Asia, Indonesia and Malaysia. Bangladesh could be the first one to seek our flour,” said Mr Pramod Kumar of the Karnataka Flour Mills Association.

“West Asia and North Africa are our sure bets. Let's see how things pan out,” said Mr Gupta.

Export ban

The ban on wheat flour export was lifted in May last year with the Government permitting shipments of 6.5 lakh tonnes of wheat products.

Though wheat export ban too was lifted then, it was clamped again.

“We used to export to Vietnam too,” said Mr Dattaraj.

Flour exports could be routed to Vietnam or Indonesia or Malaysia through Singapore, said Mr Gupta. “Direct selling to Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia is not possible in the current circumstances,” he said.

But will Indian mills get buyers since they have been out of the market for over five years?

“The international market is price-sensitive. If someone is able to offer a product competitively, then buyers don't mind whether the seller has been in the market or not. We should be able to meet some demand at least,” said Mr Gupta.

Industry sources said that with wheat being available in West Bengal at Rs 1,130 a quintal, there were chances that flour mills in that region could start exporting to Bangladesh.

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Tea prices fall on higher arrivals at Kochi auction

Most tea grades were quoted lower than last week.

Our Bureau

Kochi, Aug. 8

Arrivals continued to remain high at the Kochi Tea Auction. There was 1.3 million kg of dust and 2,61,000 kg of leaf tea on offer at the auction.

Most tea grades were quoted lower than last week. Good liquoring CTC dust along with bolder grades remained steady, while prices of finer varieties moved up. As the prices did not rise up to expectations, there were several withdrawals from the market. AVT continued to be active on powdery grades.

Loose tea traders lent useful support. Tata Tea and Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation lent support to the market at the lower levels. Hindustan Unilever was selective while upcountry buyers remained subdued. Exporters entered only at lower levels. While high grown grades quoted lower at the orthodox auction, medium and primary grades remained steady.

Leaf Tea Auction

Lower demand resulted in high-grown orthodox leaf teas quoting lower. The drop was less for well made teas. Medium grades were barely steady to lower.

Exporters to Russia and other countries remained subdued. Well made clean black fannings and good liquoring broken CTC leaf grades remained firm. Poorer grades found hardly any buyers. Exporters and Tata Tea were active at the CTC leaf auction.

Top Prices

Pasuparai SFD fetched the top price at the dust auction at Rs 125 followed by Chinnar SFD and Manjolai SFD at Rs 118, while Pasuparai FD quoted Rs 117. At the leaf auction, Pascoe's Woodlands fetched the top price at Rs 260 followed by Glendale FP at Rs 202, Chamraj FP at Rs 197 and Chamraj OP at Rs 192.

hindustantimes

Mon,09 Aug 2010

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Cloudy	**Monday, Aug 9** Max Min 36.2° | 25.0°
Rain: 00 mm in 24hrs	Sunrise: 05:55
Humidity: 84%	Sunset: 18:33

Tomorrow's Forecast

Cloudy	**Tuesday, Aug 10** Max Min 35° | 27°

Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1005.0

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Aug 11	**Aug 12**	**Aug 13**	**Aug 14**	**Aug 15**
				
35° | 27°	34° | 28°	33° | 28°	33° | 27°	34° | 27°
Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy	Rainy