

## Increase milk procurement price: farmers

*They urge the government to control price of fodder*

KRISHNAGIRI: Members of Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam and Milk Producers Association urged the government to increase the procurement price of cow's milk by Rs. 5 a litre and buffalo's by Rs. 7. This price increase should be distributed to the farmers as subsidy.

The farmers took out a rally from Five Road Junction in Krishnagiri to Dharmapuri Milk Producers Federation (Aavin) and staged a demonstration. Later, they met Nainappan, General Manager of the Federation, and handed over a petition in this connection.

They also urged the government to control the price of fodder, as the price of a 50 kg bag had increased by Rs. 100. All the members of the milk societies should be distributed fodder at 75 per cent subsidy.

Payment for the milk procured by the federation was pending for about seven months.

This should be cleared on weekly basis, the farmers said.

The government should arrange free cattle insurance, vaccination and fertility injections to the cattle owned by the farmers, they demanded.

The milk federation should disburse the pending payment to the primary milk cooperative societies immediately and steps should be initiated to test the quality of milk at the primary societies.

The farmers wanted the government to reopen the closed primary milk societies and give salary and other benefits to the employees in addition to providing employment to them.

Hundreds of farmers participated in the rally and demonstration.

M.R. Chinnasamy, State president, K.M. Ramagoundar, State vice-president, Thamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam, presided.

## Chamber wants steps to boost agriculture in Union Budget

*"It should be loaded with efficacious schemes that would accelerate agricultural growth"*

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MADURAI: The Agro Food Chamber of Commerce and Industry has urged the Union Government to give a major thrust to the agricultural sector in the upcoming Budget.

Association president S. Rethinavelu said the budget should be loaded with efficacious schemes that would accelerate agricultural growth and attract younger generations to the sector.

Programmes for deploying latest scientific technology for increasing productivity and improving the quality of crops should be implemented. He called for mechanising agricultural operations and encouraging farmers to adopt the traditional natural manure farming.

Though the share of agriculture in gross domestic produce had declined to 18 per cent from 25 per cent, more than 60 per cent of the country's population was still dependent on it, Mr. Rethinavelu said.

While the manufacturing sector was estimated to have grown at 8.9 per cent, farm output had contracted by 0.2 per cent to settle down at 1.4 per cent. Agriculture must record a minimum annual growth of 4 per cent for the output to be commensurate with the population growth.

Food grain production had also declined by eight per cent and edible oil seeds 5 per cent, he said, adding that rice, wheat, and sugarcane production had also decelerated.

The lack of scientific post-harvest management and storage facilities were leading to wastage of produce.

The loss on this account alone was estimated to be in the tune of Rs.58,000 crore nation-wide and this was also contributing to the increasing inflation, said Mr. Rethinavelu.

## Mettur level

The level in the Mettur dam stood at 75.26 feet on Monday against its full level of 120 feet. The inflow was 833 cusecs and the discharge, 1,800 cusecs.

### **Farmers boycott uzhar sandhai**

Coimbatore: Farmers abstained from selling produce in the R.S. Puram uzhar sandhai on Monday in protest against the alleged "nepotism and favouritism" being shown to three persons and their high-handed behaviour.

The R.S. Puram Uzhar Sandhai is acclaimed to be the best sandhai in the district with more than 250 farmers participating and 60 tonnes of vegetables being sold on an average during the week days and 80 tonnes during the week-end.

Deserted look

The sandhai wore a deserted look and police personnel were posted as a matter of precaution to thwart trouble.

The agitated farmers, who later petitioned the Collector, said that the trio functioning in an autocratic style were in the habit of branding the genuine farmers as merchants in a bid to make the authorities deny space in the sandhai.

### **"Solution to water problem through use of isotopes"**

THANJAVUR: Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Trombay, is involved in solving the water problem in eight Himalayan sites using isotopes said K. Shivanna, Head, Isotope Hydrology Section, Isotope Application division, BARC, here on Monday.

Speaking at the national-level workshop on 'Geomatic based natural resources disaster mitigation and Managements' organised by the Department of Industries and Earth Sciences of Tamil University, Dr. Shivanna said that four of the eight sites were in Uttarkhand, two in Himachal Pradesh, one in Mizoram and one in Jammu and Kashmir. The project had been entrusted to BARC following its successful salvation of water problem in some Himalayan areas using isotopes. After the water recharging techniques were conducted in these places, nearly 19 water springs were actually yielding nine times more quantity of water than they were doing in the past.

BARC had been involved in using advanced isotope techniques in water resource development and water management. This technique was of much use and quick in solving water problems than conventional methods. "We can identify the source and origin of pollutants of water also using isotopes," Dr. Shivanna said. M. Rajendran, Vice-Chancellor, Tamil University, called for living close with nature to avoid disasters. P. Raja, Deputy General Manager (Geology), Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, R. Baskaran, Professor and Head, Department of Industries and Earth Sciences and G. Deivanayagam, Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Tamil University, also spoke.

## South India tea contest at Coonoor



**The Executive Director, Tea Board, R.D. Nazeem (centre), displaying some of the entries at a tea competition in Coonoor on Monday. –**

Udhagamandalam: The sixth edition of The Golden Leaf India Awards-Southern Tea Competition organised jointly by the Tea Board and the United Planters Association of Southern India evoked a good response at Coonoor on Monday.

Marketing exercise

Describing it as a major marketing exercise the Executive Director, Tea Board, R.D. Nazeem, told *The Hindu* that factories from the Nilgiris, Wynaad, Anamalais, Munnar, Karnataka and Travancore are vying for honours.

He claimed that the competition was the only one of its kind in the world. The award winning teas were featured in Tea Board exhibitions organised in South Africa, the U.S. and Russia.

The South Indian tea is no longer treated as a mere filler for Assam and Kenyan teas, he added.

The convener, organising committee, N. Dharmaraj, said that the total number of entries in 41 categories was 196.

The jury were: Gautam Bhalla, Kiran Desai, Milind Shah, A. Noor Mohamed, Susheel Marcus, W.C. Thomas, Tushar Mukherjee and Vijay Shankar.

The format and protocol for the competition was exhaustively detailed in order to ensure total transparency.

The process of selecting the best teas from various agro-climatic regions is based on a multi layer screening process using a scoring system that capture the various quality attributes of tea in an objective manner. The evaluation is based on a scoring methodology which assigns scores on a scale of 0 to 10 for the various quality attributes such as dry leaf appearance, infused or spent leaf appearance, liquor attributes such as colour, aroma, briskness and strength.

The teas which got through in the first level of screening will also be screened for pesticide residue parameters and heavy metals.

The final tasting session will be held at Dubai on March 9 and the winners will be announced on March 10 coinciding with the 3rd Global Dubai Tea Forum scheduled to be held on March 9 and 10.

## hindustantimes

### Watchdog to regulate nano technology soon

New Delhi, February 23, 2010

Last Updated: 00:47 IST(23/2/2010)



Spurred in part by the debate over Bt brinjal, and in part by the controversy raised abroad by certain products based on nanotechnology, the government is planning to set up a regulatory board in March that will examine all new nanotechnology devices before they are commercially marketed.

“The reason we’ve had problems with Bt brinjal is that we don’t have a strong regulatory body,” C. R. N. Rao, scientific adviser to the prime minister, told *HT*. “Nanotechnology is being used for medicine and health. We must be sure it is used safely.”

“The regulatory board will have experts from all different fields, including medicine and agriculture,” he added.

Nano technology, the study of materials on a sub-microscopic scale, is one of the hottest trends in global science.

The Indian government has already allocated a special Rs 1,000 crore fund for nanotech research. Nano particles are more than 1,000 times smaller than a human hair.

They have huge potential in medicine, agriculture and lifestyle products.

Indian scientists are working on nanosilver-covered clothes that will never need to be washed, artificial muscles made from textile nanofibres, and ultra-tiny nanotubes that could deliver medicines internally.

But nano-based products have also created controversy. When Samsung released a “Nano Silver” washing machine in the US, environmental groups claimed that the silver-laced wastewater could damage the earth.

The US’ Environmental Protection Agency temporarily banned the machine, and is in the midst of drafting regulations specifically for nanotechnology.

A version of that machine, Samsung’s Nano Silver washer, is available in India. There are no curbs on its purchase and use.

Regulation will present its own set of challenges.

“We don’t have standards for judging what makes a product dangerous,” said T. N. Rao, director of the Centre for Nanomaterials at ARCI, a Hyderabad-based lab. “On what basis will they regulate?”



## **Rs 18cr to check water shortage in Godavari**

February 23rd, 2010

Rajahmundry , Feb. 22: The rural water supply authorities have prepared an action plan worth Rs 18.16 crore to overcome the expected shortage of drinking water supply during the summer in both East and West Godavari districts.

This will involve transportation of water through tankers to remote villages, augmentation and extension of existing protected water schemes, digging new borewells and carrying out repair works to defunct borewells in West Godavari.

The authorities have already identified 146 villages or habitations where water shortage is expected to occur during summer, especially when canals are closed for 45 days for regular maintenance works.

The authorities are also drafting plans to draw water from private borewells in certain areas. There are nearly 480 summer storage tanks in the district and water-level in these tanks ranges between 40 per cent to 80 per cent at present. As there is already shortage of water in the Godavari river and other water sources and water is being

released for the second crop for irrigation in turns, to areas based on a local gazette order, the RWS authorities maintain that they are filling up summer storage tanks whenever water is released.

The West Godavari rural water supply superintending engineer, Mr P. Babu Rao said, "We are taking up a special drive to inspect hand pumps and carry out repair works. For each mandal we are allocating Rs 2 lakh for the purpose."

In East Godavari, the authorities prepared an action plan worth Rs 7.16 crore to ensure water supply in about 127 villages. There are 1,163 water schemes existing in addition to 22 comprehensive protected water schemes and 9,010 hand pumps in the district.

The officials maintain that most of the tanks are filled upto 80 per cent and rule out any crisis during the closure of canals in summer.



*Bt brinjal: PM steps in after Pawar SOS*

Tags : Bt brinjal, Jairam Ramesh, Manmohan Singh, Sharad Pawar, GM food Posted: Tuesday , Feb 23, 2010 at 0446 hrs New Delhi:



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has stepped in to make it clear that Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh will not have the last word on the introduction of Bt Brinjal or any GM (genetically modified) food.

This comes after a strong note from Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar to the Prime Minister last week suggesting that ad hoc decisions on GM foods — a clear reference to the moratorium on Bt Brinjal — would "set the clock back", demoralise Indian scientists and jeopardies R&D crucial to food security.

Last week, the PM decided to define his government's approach to the introduction of genetically modified (GM) foods after his Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) echoed Pawar's push for frontline technology in agriculture.

Singh called a meeting of Pawar, Ramesh and Science & Technology Minister Prithviraj Chavan.

Sources said the recommendations of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee and the Review Committee of Genetic Manipulation on the safety of transgenic crops would now be considered by this new team — the PM, Agriculture, S&T and Environment & Forests Ministers — rather than be left to Environment & Forests to decide unilaterally, as happened this time.

### ***Reining in food price top priority: Prez***

**Posted: Monday , Feb 22, 2010 at 1106 hrs New Delhi:**



The government ranked insulating the common man from inflation as its top priority, though cautioning that rise in food prices was inevitable given the shortfall in farm production and global crisis.

In her address to both the houses of Parliament, President Pratibha Patil said the economy will grow by 7.5 per cent this fiscal and over eight per cent in the next, but was silent on the government's stance on withdrawal of stimulus measures that has triggered a debate in the face of economic revival.

Only last week, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council sought partial withdrawal of stimulus measures and return to fiscal consolidation - a view echoed by Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia.

"While we were able to avert any threat to our food security, there has been an unhappy pressure on prices of foodgrains and food products...