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TNAU faculty honoured for meritorious service

Best college award went to Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, Kumulur

For effort:Faculty members of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University who won the Best Researcher Awards at the 40th Foundation Day of the university in Coimbatore. (right) Faculty members who won the Best Teacher Awards. —

COIMBATORE: To mark the occasion of the 40 {+t} {+h} Foundation Day of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, 467 staff who had completed 25 years of unblemished service were honoured. They consisted of 214 teaching staff, 164 administrative staff, and 19 labourers.

In addition, 18 awards were given away to the best researcher, teacher, extension worker, team researcher, college, research station, and Krishi Vigyan Kendra.

The best college award went to Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, Kumulur. The best research station award was bagged by the Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute, Aduthurai. The Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Needamangalam was adjudged the best among others. The best researcher award went to seven faculty members: P. Jayamani, K.S. Subramanian, K. Ramamoorthy, R. Thamizh Vendan, C. Vijayalakshmi, K. Annadurai, and R.K. Kaleeswari.

The best teacher award was bagged by four faculty members: C. Swaminathan, P. Balasubramaniam, N. Maragatham, and G.J. Janavi.

The best extension worker award went to three faculty members: T. Senthilkumar, S. Vijayabaskaran, and K. Sujatha.The best research team award went to the team consisting of R. Umarani, C. Vanitha, and K. Parameswari.

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TNAU graduates excel in civil services

AMUTHA KANNAN

Seven graduates of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and its constituent colleges have made it to the civil services.

M. Kanagavalli, Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, Tiruchi, and V. Ramesh, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Killikulam, will join the Indian Administrative Service.

P. Manickaraj, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore, and K.S. Ilayaraja, Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute, Tiruchi, will join the Indian Police Service.K. Roshan Kumar and V.S. Aravind from Agricultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore, and T. Dhayanathan from Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai, will join the Indian Revenue Service.

Appreciating the achievement of the candidates, P. Murugesa Boopathi, Vice-Chancellor of the university, said the Directorate of Students' Welfare of the university conducted regular coaching for those aspiring to appear for the civil services examinations. The Language Laboratory of the university also trained students in communication skills.The university was also proud of the fact that six of its graduates had been selected for the Indian Forestry Service.

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TNAU, Canada varsity tie-up? Jun 05 2010

Chennai, June 4: A delegation led by minister for advanced education, employment and labour of Canada's Saskatchewan province Rob Norris on Friday held discussions with Tamil Nadu agriculture minister Veerapandi S. Arumugam at the Secretariat.

According to Mr Arumugam, a Saskatchewan university and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University will soon sign an MoU to enhance the productivity in pulses and lentils besides the Canadians offering technical know-how in water management techniques.

Terming the meeting fruitful, Mr Arumugam said there was scope to improve productivity in cultivation of pulses in Tamil Nadu and Canadian help would improve the situation in Tamil Nadu. "With the state facing a shortage of water for irrigation, Canadian expertise is welcome," he said.

Tamil Nadu has been depending on other countries for pulses to cater to its sambar-loving citizens. It had imported Canadian yellow lentils last year. The Canadian delegation insisted there was a tremendous scope for collaboration between their province and Tamil Nadu. TNAU will ink the MoU after getting clearance from chief minister M. Karunanidhi, Mr Arumugam said.Agriculture secretary K. Nandha Kishore, commissioner Kosalaraman, horticulture department director B Chandra Mohan and among others present.

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Business Standard

Saturday, Jun 05, 2010

Starch rises on firm maize prices

Kalpesh Damor / Mumbai/ Ahmedabad June 05, 2010, 0:48 IST

The over 10 per cent rise in maize prices in the domestic market has increased starch prices by Rs 50 per 50 kg in the last two weeks. Maize is a key raw material for manufacturing starch.

"Starch prices have increased to Rs 950 per 50 kg from Rs 900 within a fortnight," said Vishal Majithia, managing director of Mumbai-based Sahyadri Starch.

According to industry players, the season for maize procurement is over and the new crop will be sown only after the arrival of monsoon in the country. However, there is good demand for maize in local markets as the 2009-10 crop yield was lower than the previous year.

Maize is grown in both kharif and rabi seasons. According to data provided by industry players, kharif maize output is estimated at 12.5 million tonnes for 2009-10 as compared to 14 million tonnes in the previous year.

The rabi season output is estimated at 4.68 million tonnes as against 5.60 million tonnes in the previous year. Overall, maize production in 2009-10 is likely to be 17.28 per cent lower, or 3.41 million tonnes less, at 16.32 million tonnes, from 19.73 million tonnes in 2008-09.

"The maize season has come to an end and new crop arrivals have dried up. This has increased prices around seven per cent," said Gautam Chowdhary, managing director, Santosh Starch Ltd. In Maharashtra, the crop’s price has risen by Rs 100 a quintal to Rs 1,000-1,050, while in Gujarat, the rate is Rs 1,030-1,035 a quintal.

Moreover, sowing for the ensuing kharif season will start only after the arrival of monsoon in the country. "A clear picture regarding maize acreage and production will emerge only after June," said a trader.

In this backdrop, marketmen see a further rise in starch prices. "Further increase is likely, say by another Rs 50 per 50 kg," Majithia said.

However, there are others who believe the price rise will be limited to Rs 10-20 per 50 kg, as many industrial maize consumers like starch producers already have the required stocks.

Pawar hints at 20-25% duty on white sugar imports

Press Trust of India / New Delhi June 4, 2010, 18:13 IST

With sugar prices returning to a comfortable level, Food and Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar today indicated slapping up to 25 per cent duty on refined sugar imports to protect the domestic industry. "The idea is we need to discourage sugar imports," Pawar said.

He said that the certain sections of the industry have suggested 60 per cent duty on white (refined) sugar, while others favour 40 per cent.

"In my view, we need not put 60 per cent to stop imports in a big way. 20-25 per cent is sufficient. Let's see how prices move in the global market before we take any decision," Pawar said.

Retail sugar prices peaked at nearly Rs 50 a kg in January, but prices have since fallen 30 per cent to around Rs 35 per kg. The minister said the landed cost of imported white sugar without duties works out to Rs 26 per kg at the current global prices. The landed cost was about Rs 40 a kg in January.

Also, with higher output in 2009-10 (October-September), the industry has been demanding imposition of import duty on refined sugar to check against a crash in prices.

Duty-free imports of both raw and refined sugar have been allowed since February last year.

Prior to that the levy on imports was 60 per cent. The empowered group of ministers, headed by Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, is likely to consider the food ministry's proposal for import duty on June 10, sources said.

Earlier this week, Pawar had said the government would take a decision in this regard in a week or so. India is the world's second-largest producer and biggest consumer of sugar.

The production is estimated to rise to 18.5 million tonnes in 2009-10 against 14.7 million tonnes in the previous year. The annual domestic demand is 23 million tonnes, and the gap is being met through imports.

The country imported over six million tonnes of raw and refined sugar since February 2009.

The production outlook for 2010-11 is also encouraging. Both the industry and government expect the production to outstrip demand. There is also a possibility that India would export, though in a limited quantity.

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Sugar hits 9-month low on subdued trade

Mills see succour in Govt mulling Customs duty.

“No fresh import contracts are being signed. What is coming into the country are consignments for which contracts were signed long ago.”

M.R. Subramani

Chennai, June 4

Sugar prices on Friday dropped to a nine-month low but mills, especially in the co-operative sector, hope that it will recover next week.

On Friday, medium grade (M-30) dropped to Rs 2,740 a quintal on the Vashi wholesale market, a level not seen before August 9 last. Small grade (S-30) dropped to Rs 2,700.

At the level of the mills, prices crashed to Rs 2,500 a quintal.

“The current prices are against the fundamentals. We expect fundamentals to support sugar from next week onwards for a couple of reasons, including the Government considering imposition of Customs duty on sugar imports,” said Mr Prakash Naiknavare, Managing Director of the Maharashtra State Co-operative Sugar Factories Federation.

Free sale quota

A lower free sale quota for sugar this month and a proposal to remove the stock limit for bulk users of the commodity would also provide support, he said.

The Centre has fixed a free sale quota of 12.8 lakh tonnes (lt) this month, which is 1.22 lt lower than the quota fixed during the same period a year ago, Mr Naiknavare said.

Trade sources, however, said it was still higher than the market's anticipation of 11.50 lt.

“Last June, the overall sugar sale quota, including for distribution through ration shops, imports and conversion of raw sugar to white, was 19.90 lt. This month, it is 19.08 lt,” a source said.

Last year, the UPA Government had fixed a higher quota during April and May at 22.91 lt and 22.89 lt mainly to tame surging inflation as the country headed for elections.

“The current prices are resulting in sugar mills making cash loss. The cost of producing sugar, including cane price, administration charges and other overheads, is Rs 2,700 a quintal. That leads to a net cash loss of Rs 200 a quintal,” said Mr Naiknavare.

Govt measures

Prices had touched a high of Rs 40 a kg in January but since then sugar has been on the downswing following a slew of measures implemented by the Centre.

First, it brought in stock limit for bulk users. They were not allowed to stock more than 15 days of their needs and this was further cut to 10 days.

Before this, the Government banned futures trading. Further, it allowed duty-free import of white and raw sugar to control the prices.

Higher than anticipated production in India and Brazil also contributed to the bearish trend. In India, the production was initially estimated at around 150 lt. It has since been raised to over 180 lt. The production is likely to be higher next year too, though actual planting figures are not available.

With the prices crashing, the Centre is now toying the idea of imposing Customs duty on imports. The Food and Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, told the Press Trust of India that the Cabinet will consider his Ministry's proposal for Customs duty on June 10. Mr Pawar said a 20-25 per cent duty would be a safe bet.

“All these should lift sugar prices by at least Rs 100 a quintal,” said Mr Naiknavare. “But we cannot think of high prices of Rs 35-37 we saw earlier this year,” he said.

Trade sources said the move to impose Customs duty would not make much of an impact.

“The point to note is that no fresh import contracts are being signed. What is coming into the country are consignments for which contracts were signed long ago,” said a trade source.

“There is total bearishness in the market and the trade is subdued. It will take quite an effort to shake up the market,” the source said.

Currently, the landed price of white sugar is $575 cost, insurance and freight. This translated to Rs 26,850 a tonne at today's rupee value. Charges for clearing and transportation would result in the total import costs going up to Rs 29,000.

Domestic sugar, at the same time, is ruling Rs 2,000 a tonne lower.

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Ramanasree launches sunflower oil; mulls IPO

Our Bureau

Hyderabad June 4

South-based logistics player Ramanasree Group on Wednesday entered the FMCG sector by launching a branded refined sunflower oil in Andhra Pradesh.

The company aims at garnering a market share of 15 per cent this fiscal in the State.

Ramanasree Group will introduce the brand in Varshi, Karnataka, in two months and subsequently in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

FMCG

An unlisted company, Ramanasree intends to increase its portfolio of offerings in the FMCG sector by launching products such as branded coconut oil and atta later this fiscal.

"To part-finance our expansion plans in the FMCG sector, we plan to tap the capital market with an IPO some time this financial year," Mr O.V. Ramana, Chairman of the group, told presspersons here.

The company, which has been engaged in delivering logistics, supply chain management and warehousing solutions to FMCG companies, will for the time being outsource its supplies of Varshi oil from a local manufacturer with a string of stipulations regarding the quality and process.

Units

“Later as we establish our brand in the market, we will plan setting up our own manufacturing facility,” he said.

The company is promoting the brand as one that is enriched with vitamins A, D and E, apart from dimethyl polysiloxane in the advanced refining process to ensure that minimum oil is absorbed.

“We will be marketing from the perspective of health and affordability. Our products are priced lower than the other branded products in this category,” Mr Ramana added.

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Pepper futures slip slightly after volatility

G.K. Nair

Kochi, June 4

Pepper futures continued to witness high volatility but eventually recovered from a sharp fall during the course of trading and closed marginally down from the previous close.

Increase in open interest indicated additional purchases and that sends out the message that the bulls have entered the market. According to market sources, bull operators based in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Gwalior, Indore, Nagpur and Jhalgaon were quoted as saying that the market might move up on the weekend.

Bulls inside

The recovery of the market later in the evening is an indication of it, they claimed.

Ready-farm grade pepper was not available and, as a result, primary market dealers were showing interest in buying exchange delivered pepper for supplying to exporters, market sources told Business Line. June contract on the NCDEX declined by Rs 32 to close at Rs 15,580 a quintal. July slipped by Rs 24 to close at Rs 15,850 a quintal while August remained unchanged.

Turnover fell by about 50 per cent to 10,368 tonnes. Open interest increased by 436 tonnes. June open interest declined by 243 tonnes. July's shot up by 643 tonnes and that of August moved up by 43 tonnes. Spot prices remained unchanged at previous levels of Rs 15,000 (ungarbled) and Rs 15,500 (MG 1) a quintal as there were not much activities in the spot market.

Sellers stayed away.

Cooperative societies in Kerala, probably on the advice of national level cooperatives, were said to be buying Idukki pepper at Rs 15,200–Rs 15,300 a quintal while in the plains they were buying at Rs 14,700–Rs 15,000 a quintal, trading sources said.

Indian parity remained competitive in the international market. But, availability of physical pepper in the spot market might force exporters to cover exchange delivered pepper which might require re-processing involving an additional cost of at least Rs 3 a kg, market sources claimed. A slip in the futures, coupled with weakening of the rupee against the dollar today, has brought down the Indian parity to $3,550 a tonne (c&f) Europe and $3,650 a tonne (c&f) USA. At this rate some business was said to be underway.

Indonesia has already reduced its price by $50 a tonne. But, there are certain pockets in the overseas market that are ready to pay a premium of $50 to $100 for MG 1, they claimed. An overseas report from Vietnam indicated on Friday steady prices as off-take was slow.

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Tea output rises 9% in April

C.J. Punnathara

Kochi, June 4

Tea production increased 9 per cent to 68.24 million kg (mkg) in April, up from 62.59 mkg during the corresponding month a year ago. Much of the increase was in North India, while plantations in the South fell marginally.

But for the last week of April, rainfall was sparse over the tea-growing regions in the South. While the shortfall in April production was anticipated, the impact of late rainfall in April is likely to manifest only in the May crop, sources in the United Planters Association of Southern India said. May also received average to above average rainfall and production prospects are favourable.

Bulk of the growth in north Indian plantations came from Assam which recorded an eight mkg growth. The growth in the West Bengal plantations was also nominal.

Production during January-April was up 12 per cent at 162.30 mkg (144.47 mkg). The growth was on account of robust production reported from southern plantations in the first quarter. The overall growth reported from the South stood at 10 million kg.

Prices fall

Tea prices had gravitated lower throughout this year due to production surge reported not only from the South, but also from other producing countries in South-East Asia and Africa. The surge is likely to dissipate unless favourable weather persists across producing regions of Asia, South-East Asia and Africa, sources in the planters' association said.

Tea exports increased 12 per cent to 12.76 mkg in April.

Unit price realisation fell close to 13 per cent to Rs 118 a kg (Rs 133 a kg). But the growth in volume ensured that the total value realisations from tea exports did not register any significant fall.The volume of exports during January-April period registered 20 per cent growth to 59.97 million kg (49.82 million kg).

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Kharif area under pulses, cotton up; oilseeds down

Our Bureau

New Delhi, June 4

If early sowing trends are any indication, farmers have more or less chosen to bring in more area under pulses and cotton this time, while opting out of oilseeds.

According to the Agriculture Ministry's latest kharif sowing update, a total area of 0.954 lakh hectares (lh) have so far been planted under pulses, which is 18.8 per cent more than last year's coverage of 0.803 lh at this point of time.

Likewise with cotton, where 11.233 lh have already been sown, a 6 per cent increase over last year's corresponding area of 10.601 lh. In both pulses and cotton, the price outlook is currently favourable to farmers, with domestic production shortfall in the former's case and export demand for the latter being the main drivers.

It is just the other way round in oilseeds, where a flood of imports in combination with bearish global edible oil price trends is putting pressure on crop prices.

As a result, farmers are less inclined to plant oilseeds.

So far, only 0.837 lh have been planted under various kharif oilseeds, which is over 34 per cent below the progressive area of 1.27 lh achieved at this time last year.

Early trends

A clearer picture will emerge in the coming weeks, as sowing activity picks up.

The one crop where the picture is clearer, with a large part of planting already complete, is sugarcane. Till now, growers have brought in 42.85 lh under sugarcane for the 2010-11 crushing season. Sugarcane area has gone up from 19.77 lh to 20.41 lh in Uttar Pradesh, from 1.21 lh to 3.03 lh in Bihar, from 2.45 lh to 2.83 lh in Karnataka, while trailing in Maharashtra (6.86 lh versus 7.36 lh) and Tamil Nadu (2.75 lh versus 3.01 lh).

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Carlyle takes 20% in Tirumala Milk for Rs 100 cr

Our Bureau

Hyderabad, June 4

The Carlyle Group has announced an investment of Rs 100 crore ($22 million) to pick up a 20 per cent stake, in the Andhra Pradesh-based dairy firm, Tirumala Milk.

“We are going to use the funds for our expansion to Maharashtra, Goa and West

Bengal. The funds will be used for expanding its procurement network and processing capacity and for the manufacture of new value added products," Mr Brahma Naidu, Managing Director of Tirumala Milk, told Business Line.

"After we consolidate the expansion plan, we will go in for a public issue. It may happen in 2011-12," he added.

The company, with operations in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, plans to increase the production capacity to 15 lakh litres a day, by 2012-13, from the present nine lakh litres a day.

The investor, Carlyle Asia Growth Partners IV (CAGP IV), is a $1.04-billion fund. "Carlyle has already made five investments in India from the previous fund, Carlyle Asia Growth Partners III (CAGP III)," Mr Wayne Tsou, Managing Director and Head of Carlyle Asia Growth Capital (CAGP) group, said here, in a press release.

National player

"The association with Carlyle will help us evolve into a national player. It will add to our financial strength, and enhance operations by bringing in international best practices and new dairy technologies," he said.

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Back **Wheat for poor**

This refers to "Rotten wheat for the poor" (Business Line, May 28). As per the Government policy, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) along with State agencies procure wheat, rice (paddy) and coarse grains such as maize, jowar and bajra at the minimum support price.

Only 'fair average quality' and higher quality food-grains are procured from farmers for which specifications are laid down by the Government every season. Such food grains are then transported across the country and stored scientifically in covered as well as CAP (Covered and Plinth) storage facilities. To maintain its quality, both prophylactic (preventive) and curative treatment is routinely undertaken at all storage points. All stocks in FCI godowns must conform to FAO specifications.

Such food-grains are then issued by the FCI to agencies of the State Governments under various welfare schemes, including Targeted Public Distribution Schemes (TPDS).

The quality of food-grain is jointly inspected and the same is issued only when accepted by the State government agencies after the sample conforms to the quality standard.

Through this process, the FCI has issued 120.16 lakh million tonnes (MT) of wheat and 186.04 lakh MT of rice in 2008-09. Similarly in 2009-10, FCI issued 172.99 lakh MT of wheat and 198.07 lakh MT of rice to various State Government agencies as per their allocation. In addition to this, the State governments issue wheat and rice under the decentralised procurement scheme and are responsible for maintenance of quality of wheat and rice procured and distributed by them.

V. K. Malhotra,AGM(PR),Food Corpn of India,New Delhi

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hindustantimes

Sat,05 Jun 2010

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Clear

Saturday, Jun 5

Max Min

40.1° | 29.7°

Rain: Trace	Sunrise: 05:41
Humidity: 80%	Sunset: 18:32
Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1007.0

Tomorrow's Forecast

Partly Cloudy

Sunday, Jun 6

Max Min

38° | 29°

Extended Forecast for a week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Jun 7	**Jun 8**	**Jun 9**	**Jun 10**	**Jun 11**
				
37° | 29°	38° | 30°	38° | 29°	38° | 30°	38° | 28°
Tstorm	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy