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## Benefits of value additions to maize discussed

*By-products useful for drug, textile industries: Expert*



**Added advantages:V. Subramaniam (left), Chief Scientist, Agriculture Research Station, Kovilpatti, explaining benefits of maize to farmers in Tuticorin on Thursday**

Tuticorin: With the objective of creating awareness among farmers and entrepreneurs about various value additions to maize products, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) organised a product development workshop (Maize), here on Thursday.

V. Subramaniam, Chief Scientist, Agriculture Research Station, Kovilpatti, in his keynote address, highlighted the benefits of major by-products derived from maize.

The by-products from maize would be useful for drug, textile and packaging industries.

“Maize is one of the prominent dry land crops in the district. It has a coverage area of about 11, 000 ha here,” he added.

R. Arangannal, General Manager, District Industries Centre, said, "as maize is an important raw material for poultry feed industries and other food processing industries, there is always a demand for it throughout the year."

Though substantial quantity of maize is being produced in the district, there is no value addition to it here. "Since the entrepreneurs are willing to step up investments with the assistance of implementing agencies, the product has to acquire its status of value addition. Large quantity of maize is being procured by the commission agents and transported to far off processing units," he observed.

Exhibits of highlighting trans -protection measures on maize cultivation, practices to enhance maize cultivation, food and non-food products along with industrial by-products were on display at the venue. Dr. Subramanian, also interacted with the farmers about the benefits of maize cultivation.

M.R. Natarajan, District Development Manager, NABARD and coordinator of the programme was present.

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## **Despite good stocks, no export of wheat: Pawar**

NEW DELHI: Despite comfortable wheat stocks and lack of adequate storage space, the Centre does not propose to allow export of wheat. Instead, it will extend duty-free import of wheat till March 31, step up efforts to enhance storage capacity and release more quantities for Above Poverty Line people under the Targeted Public Distribution System.

With the National Food Security Bill that assures 25 kg of wheat or rice a month to Below Poverty Line people on the anvil, the government would rather hold on to stocks than risk depletion and pay compensation to families, as is being envisaged in the Bill. The Bill will be put on the government website in 10 days, Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said.

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## **Sick tea garden reopens in Dooars**

KOLKATA: Another sick tea garden in Jalpaiguri in Dooars called Bamandanga and Tondoo has reopened

with the Ambootia Tea Group, one of the largest producers of Darjeeling tea, taking over the garden.

Earlier, this was one of the gardens in which case, the Tea Board had invoked Section 16 (E) of the Tea Act for taking over the garden and handing it over to a new owner. The garden was owned by Sajjan Agarwal. This garden has a licensed area of 310 hectares for tea cultivation and had outstanding financial liabilities of about Rs. 2 crore which included provident fund liabilities. It owed its banker, United Bank of India, over Rs. 16 crore.

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## **FCRI staff searanch lobster larvae**

*In a bid to conserve spiny lobster resources in the Gulf of Mannar region*



**Eco-friendly:Jawahar Paulraj, Associate Professor, searanching the lobster larvae in Tuticorin sea on Thursday.**

Tuticorin: Fisheries College and Research Institute (FCRI) a constituent of Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, Chennai, has sea ranched two lakh larvae of *Panulirus homarus*, a scalloped spiny lobster at Tuticorin coast on Thursday.

The ranching was carried out by the staff of the Department of Fisheries Biology and Capture Fisheries to conserve spiny lobster resources in the Gulf of Mannar region.

The lobsters were reared in marine bio-laboratory here by P. Jawahar, Associate Professor.

A female berried lobster weighing about 350 gm, bred in a fiber-reinforced plastic tank of 1,000 litre capacity and the larvae called phyllosoma, produced were grown to a length of 3 mm. before it was sea ranched.

V.K. Venkataramani, Director of Research and Extension (Fisheries), FCRI, said the study on lobster in this region, during the last three years, exhibited a declining trend in the wild condition of the variety.

He indicated that due to sea ranching of the lobster larvae, the lobster stock would be enhanced in the region.

He advised the fishermen to put back egg-bearing lobsters, which were being caught in the nets, into the sea to augment the lobster production.

Need

To protect these precious resources, the coral islands and lobster settling grounds near Tharuvaikulam, a coastal hamlet, should be protected, he added. Further, he stated that the capturing of juvenile lobsters and egg-bearing lobsters should be stopped.

M. Venkatasamy, Dean (in-charge), indicated that the institute was carrying out studies on fishery resources in the region and efforts were being made to conserve the dwindling resources.

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## **Hall modernised to promote standards of fish handling**

Tuticorin: With a view to promote hygienic standards of handling and preserving fishery products, improvement works to the tune of Rs. 41.9 lakh were taken up at the auction hall of the fish landing centre in the fishing harbour here recently.

The modernised auction hall was inaugurated by the Assistant Director of Fisheries (Marine), A. Antony Xavier. M. Baby, Assistant Director, MPEDA, C. Ravindran, State Coordinator, MPEDA, and P. Jebakumar Ranjan, Assistant Executive Engineer, Fishing Harbour Subdivision, Tuticorin were present.

The works were taken up by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) in association

with Fisheries Department to promote hygienic preservation of fishery products.

The hall was furnished with granite flooring along with more lighting facilities to facilitate the need of the fishermen at auction point.

Foot-dip arrangements were also made at the entrance of the hall, where in the fishermen would cleanse their foot before entering the hall.

Safe counters were also available to safeguard money. Previously the auctioneers were seen keeping money in open while busy at work, but now they need not put themselves to such difficulties.

Furthermore the hall, which is meant for packing fish, would be strengthened with the necessary infrastructure.

The tube ice plant would come up at a place adjacent to the auction hall. Referring to the plant, the sources added that it would be of optimum use for the fishermen.

The quality of crushed ice would not suit the conditions conducive for the preservation of fish.

It would melt fast and the preservation would not be on a par with hygienic standards as expected.

Since the importing countries stress on the need for meeting hygienic standards in the preservation of fish, steps were being taken for vital development measures and modernisation of plant facilities to ensure quality control standards.

The sale of fish goes up to Rs. 1 crore on an average per day, with as many as 260 mechanised boats at the fishing harbour in particular. Since the catch fetches a huge sum of money, the fishermen should accord utmost care by adopting the standards of hygienic fish handling at the landing centres also.

A huge crowd is being witnessed at the fishing harbour between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. regularly with hectic activities of selling.

The fishermen return from sea with their catch to the auction hall during that time. The hawkers and fish mongers are seen thronging the area.

Besides, more than fifty per cent of the fish catch is being sold for domestic consumption.

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## Agriculture gets lion's share in ACP for Nilgiris

*Collector launches Annual Credit Plan for 2010-11*



**Achievements:**The Nilgiris Collector, Archana Patnaik, releasing the ACP for the Nilgiris on Thursday.

Udhagamandalam: The Annual Credit Plan (ACP) for 2010-11 for the Nilgiris district was released by the Nilgiris Collector, Archana Patnaik, here on Thursday. The Assistant General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), V. Suresh received the first copy.

Addressing the gathering, Ms. Patnaik said that the ACP target set for various banks was Rs. 737 crore as against Rs. 635 crore for 2009 -10. The lion's share of Rs. 440.98 crore has been allocated for agriculture and allied activities. While Rs. 143.62 crore will flow to the SSI sector other priority sectors will get Rs. 152.40 crore.

She added that the plan has been prepared after taking into account the projections made by NABARD in the Potential Linked Credit Plans (PLPs) for 2010-11 and discussions held with various banks and line departments of the state government.

Priorities of the Central and State governments and the achievements of various banks vis a vis the ACP for the current year have also been taken into consideration.

On account of the position they occupy in the district and their present activities the State Bank of India has

been set a target of 22 per cent of the ACP and Canara Bank 18 per cent.

She hoped that the banks and the departments will not leave any stone unturned in achieving the targets.

The Lead District Manager, T. Palaniswami was among those present.

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## **Govt to raise APL foodgrain price to rein in subsidy bill**

Rajeev Deshpande & Mahendra Singh, TNN, Mar 19, 2010, 04.37am IST

NEW DELHI: In a second major initiative to prune subsidies after partially shifting to a nutrient-based scheme for non-urea fertiliser mixes, the government is set to make another determined stab at reducing its bloated subsidy bill by raising prices of APL foodgrain.

The Cabinet on Friday is set to take up a proposal to increase the central issue price for foodgrain under targeted public distribution system (TPDS) for the non-BPL category. This would be a significant, if politically fraught, step to rein in the food subsidy bill that in 2009-10 has soared to Rs 56,000 crore.

The pressure of such large subsidies on the government's finances is telling, all the more so as it has to fund politically big ticket initiatives like Right to Education and the national Food Security Act. Though revenues have been rising, they are yet to gain the bouyancy that was evident in the first half of UPA-1 when the government went in for ambitious 'aam admi' schemes.

The proposal before the Cabinet seeks to hike central issue price for wheat from Rs 610 a quintal to Rs 1,100 and raise CIP for "grade A" rice from Rs 830 a quintal to Rs 1,537. Besides clipping the subsidy bill somewhat, government hopes to contain large-scale diversion of cheap foodgrain to the open market due to the significant price differential. How the proposal will be received by the Cabinet remains to be seen.

APL, or above poverty line, category foodgrain is often not claimed, except when retail prices go up or if there is a shortage. During UPA-1's tenure, Left governments in West Bengal and Kerala persistently demanded allocation of APL be raised while the Centre insisted that average yearly consumption patterns would decide how APL foodgrain would be supplied.

As with fertiliser subsidy, the politically-sensitive BPL is being left untouched. The BPL category will also be affected by the Food Security Act whenever it is finalised which will cater to roughly 6.52 crore households in this "vulnerable" slab.

While re-jigging of fertiliser subsidy saw urea being left out for now, government has zeroed in on the APL category.



## Mother Dairy raises milk prices

**Express News Service** Posted online: Friday , Mar 19, 2010 at 0125 hrs

**New Delhi** : Mother Dairy milk packets would cost up to Rs 2 more per litre from March 20, the region's largest milk supplier announced on Thursday. Mother Dairy said the price change will be effective in the National Capital Region from Sunday.

"There has been an increase in milk procurement prices, which is significantly more than the increase in consumer prices. We are, therefore, compelled to increase prices of all milk variants," a Mother Dairy Fruit and Vegetable spokesperson said in a statement.

According to the revised prices, 1-litre packets of full-cream milk will cost Rs 30 per litre, against the existing price of Rs 28. Toned milk will be sold at Rs 23 per litre against existing

Rs 22 per litre. Prices of bulk vended milk, double-toned milk and skimmed milk will remain unchanged, it was announced. Mother Dairy had increased prices of milk by up to Rs 2 per litre in the NCR in October last year.