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'Increase cotton production'

COIMBATORE: Cotton production in the U.S., one of the major cotton producers, has slumped from 30.7 million bales to 15.6 million bales because the area has been converted for producing biofuel crops, mainly corn. Hence, India has a bright chance for increasing revenue through cotton exports, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University P. Murugesu Boopathi said here recently.

Speaking at a two-day annual research meet on cotton at the university, he said India produced 290 lakh bales amounting to 16 per cent of the global production, thereby emerging the second largest producer of cotton, next to China.

“Indian textile industry with 3,040 spinning mills, four million handlooms, 1.7 million power looms, and thousands of garment units, provide employment to 35 million people. In Tamil Nadu, there are 1,900 spinning mills. At present, 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the cotton area is rainfed. Scientists should therefore concentrate on breeding high yielding varieties suited for rainfed cotton,” the Vice-Chancellor said.

Pointing out that special schemes like Intensive Cotton Production Programme and introduction of hybrids had resulted in increase in acreage, production, and productivity, in cotton, Mr. Boopathi said a further jump in output was witnessed after the introduction of Bt cotton in 2002.

He added that cotton farmers were at a disadvantage with private firms producing Bt hybrids since the Bt hybrid seeds could not be re-used. He urged the scientists to incorporate Bt gene in popular cotton varieties in the State, such as MCU and SVPR

series. By this, cotton farmers could use their own seeds and in the process save on seed cost.

Director of Research M. Paramathma said the area under Bt cotton in India had gone up to 75 per cent of the total cotton area. "Bt cotton usage has become a major component of Integrated Pest Management, which has resulted in significant reduction in use of insecticide – to the tune of 40 per cent to 60 per cent.

Therefore, new parental lines and their Bt conversions need to be identified. Organic cotton production is also gaining momentum with 0.75 lakh tonnes being produced in India, which amounts to half the world's production," he said.

He also called for focus on precision farming and Integrated Nutrient Management for boosting organic cotton production. Ways to tackle mealy bug infestation was also stressed.

Director of Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies N. Ajjan said that at the global level, India held the first place in cotton area with 34 per cent, second place in production with 23 per cent, and fifth place in productivity.

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NABARD launches 'Lead Crop Scheme'

Tirupur: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will promote sustainable agriculture practices at village-level under a new scheme named 'Lead Crop Scheme' this fiscal to increase productivity of lead crops and thereby achieve four percent sustained agriculture growth in the State.

NABARD sources here told The Hindu that the project would be implemented in phases in coordination with the Project Facilitating Agencies (PFA) such as

agriculture universities, non- governmental organisations involved in farm sector and Krishi Vigyan Kendras.

“The main objective of the scheme is to enhance the productivity of the lead crops of the respective villages to be covered through progressive farming practices resulting in increased income for farmers,” the sources said.

In the Kongu region, the scheme would be implemented in a cluster of five villages to be selected from among those hamlets which lie along the border of Tirupur and Coimbatore districts.

The lead crops to be promoted in this region would be maize, sericulture, red gram and fodder with Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) as the PFA.

Similarly, the Lead Crop Scheme would be simultaneously implemented in cluster of five villages each in Krishnagiri, Villupuram, Ramanathapuram and Tanjavur districts during the preliminary phase.

The PFAs for Villupuram and Ramanathapuram districts would be NGOs whereas the PFAs for Krishnagiri and Tanjavur districts would be TNAU.

Official sources said that NABARD would allocate a grant of Rs 50 lakh to every cluster of five villages covered, which, in turn, would be utilized to train farmers, set up farmers' clubs and for transfer of technologies from laboratory to the field.

For effective monitoring of the Lead Crop Scheme, cluster-level committees would be constituted comprising representatives of farmers, PFAs and NABARD.

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Free training in goat farming

COIMBATORE: The Veterinary University Training and Research Centre here will offer a free intensive training programme in goat farming on May 18 and 19 to farmers and entrepreneurs.

According to a release, the programme will benefit farmers and entrepreneurs involved in livestock farming and also those of poor and landless labourers.

Goat farming management has changed because of shrinkage of pasture lands, ban on grazing in forest areas and shortage of labour for range rearing of goats.

The existing marketing of live goats and goat meat is not profitable for the producers as it has too many intermediaries.

Hence, the training is expected to be profitable for goat farmers.

Those interested can contact the centre at Kalappati Pirivu, Saravanampatti P.O.; or call 0422-2669965, for details and registration.

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Carrot seed variety launched

Coimbatore: Avanta India, a global crop protection, chemicals and seed company (a United Phosphorous Group Subsidiary), has launched a carrot seed, GS-176 for farmers.

UPL has produced 800 products to benefit the farmers. Tests and research has shown that in comparison with the normal carrot seeds, "a GS-176 carrot seed offers a maximum yield.

The bright orange, low cracking carrots cultivated with the GS-176 seeds are rich in nutrients, vitamins A, B and C as well as calcium pectate.

This reduces wastage and ultimately brings down the cost of cultivation giving good profit margins to the farmers.

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Farmers to get Rs. 170 crore as crop loans in Erode

ERODE: Farmers in the district will be extended crop loans to the tune of Rs. 170 crore through the primary agricultural co-operative credit societies in this fiscal, Erode District Central Co-operative Bank Special Officer P. Loganathan has said.

Participating at a free eye-screening camp conducted by the bank at Kolathupalayam near Kodumudi recently, he said that the government had fixed an interest rate of seven per cent for the crop loans disbursed through the co-operative institutions.

Full interest waiver would be given for the farmers who repay their loans on or before the due date.

Mr. Loganathan called upon the farmers to take advantage of the opportunity and repay the loans promptly to avail the interest waiver announced by the government.

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Coconut maintenance grant given to farmers

RAMANATHAPURAM: Collector T.N. Hariharan gave away coconut maintenance grant to the coconut growers to boost coconut farming at a function held here recently.

He said a sum of Rs.1.35 lakh was distributed to 9 beneficiaries.

Each received Rs.17,500 per hectare.

Parameters

The beneficiaries were selected based on those excelling in the application of modern coconut farming method including drip irrigation, fertilizer management, integrated crop protection measures.

The farmers were from Kattayanvalasai, Nambiyavalasai, Thinakulam, Vannankundu, Paththiratharavai and Regunathapuram of Thiruppullani block.

N. Saththiyamoorthy, Joint Director of Agriculture, K. Sakthimohan, Deputy Director, Z. Kamaludeen, Assistant Director of Agriculture were present on the occasion.

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“Take up cultivation of crops in time”



irrigation project:S.S. Palanimanickam, Union Minister of State for Finance, inaugurating the construction of a grade wall across the Kudamurutti on Monday

THANJAVUR: Tamil Nadu Government has taken up various irrigation projects in Thanjavur district for the benefit of farmers, said S. S. Palanimanickam, Union Minister of State for Finance, here on Monday.

Inaugurating the construction of a grade wall across the Kodamuruti river for ensuring assured supply of water to Serumakkanallur and Chakkarapalli canals where still level has become higher than the bed level of the Kodamuruty river at Ayyampettai in Papanasam taluk, the minister said that renovation of Grand Anicut canal, Vadavar extension scheme and Kollidam river schemes were examples for the importance given by Government for irrigation development in Thanjavur district.

Now the construction of a grade wall across the Kodamuruti is taken up at a cost of

Rs. 4.02 crores. The fund is provided by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). When implemented, the two canals (Serumakkanallur and Chakkarapalli) will get assured water supply and nearly 1,847 acres of ayacut will benefit. Six villages (Serumakkanallur, Sarabojirajapuram, Chakkarapalli, Soolamangalam Endam Sethi, Vazhuthur and Regunathapuram) will get full benefit from the project. The minister asked the Public Works Department engineers to finish the project in time so that the farmers could get the benefit this year itself.

M.S.Shanmugham, Collector, appealed to the farmers to take up cultivation of crops in time and set a crop pattern. This would help in crop management. This year four lakh tonnes of paddy had been procured in the district. Desilting of canals had been taken up in the district at a cost of Rs. four crores during this summer and work was going on.

T. Ravikumar, Assistant General Manager, NABARD, said the bank had created Rural Infrastructure Development Fund with an allotment Rs. 12,000 crores in 1995-96 for taking up rural development projects. The fund was increased to Rs. 1,22,218 crores. For Tamil Nadu alone, a sum of Rs. 1,000 crores had been allotted for the year 2009-10. To achieve 10 per cent of economic growth in the eleventh year plan period, investment to the tune of 7 to eight per cent should be done in infrastructure development. Infrastructure development is very much necessary for economic development, Ravikumar said. Moorthy, Chief Engineer, PWD, Asokan, Executive Engineer, Cauvery division, PWD and others participated in the meeting.

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Leopard, two elephants found dead in Nilgiris

Udhagamandalam: A leopard and two elephants were found dead in different parts

of the Nilgiris on Tuesday.

According to forest officials the carcass of a male leopard aged 4 to 5 years in a decomposed state was found inside a private tea estate at Ganganagar near Kodhumudi. Nails from three of its legs were missing. The carcass of a female elephant aged two years was found near Siriyur in the Sigur Range and that of another female elephant, aged 25 years, at Gundattipatti in the same range.

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At 39.3 degrees Celsius, city records hottest day this yr

Karthika Gopalakrishnan , TNN, May 12, 2010, 03.36am IST

CHENNAI: Did you feel it? Tuesday was the hottest day this summer, with the mercury touching 39.3 degrees Celsius at Meenambakkam and 37 degrees Celsius at Nungambakkam. Fret because it can only get worse, with the weatherman saying that the temperature could go up by a few more degrees next week.

And he has his reasons. "The sea breeze, which usually sets in by 11.30am, started blowing on Tuesday only around 1pm," said regional meteorological centre director YEA Raj.

Though the sea breeze generally reaches Meenambakkam an hour after the Nungambakkam observatory records it, it did not reach there even at 3.30pm. When the sea breeze sets in earlier in the day, it prevents a rise in temperature by two to three degrees," he added. Sea breeze normally advances up to 30-40km inland and then retreats.

If the mercury has not shot up beyond the 40 degree mark, it was because of the south-westerly winds in the morning.

In 300 yrs, Earth will be too hot for humans

AFP, May 12, 2010, 12.37am IST

SYDNEY: Climate change could make much of the world too hot for human habitation within just three centuries, research released on Tuesday showed.

Scientists from Australia's University of New South Wales and Purdue University in the United States found that rising temperatures in some places could mean humans would be unable to adapt or survive.

"It would begin to occur with global-mean warming of about 7°C, calling the habitability of some regions into question," the researchers said in a paper.

"With 11-12°C warming, such regions would spread to encompass the majority of the human population as currently distributed," they said.

Researcher Steven Sherwood said there was no chance of the earth heating up to seven degrees this century, but there was a serious risk that the continued burning of fossil fuels could create the problem by 2300. "There's something like a 50/50 chance of that over the long term," he said.

The study — which examined climate change over a longer period than most other research — looked at the "heat stress" produced by combining the impact of rising temperatures and increased humidity.

Sherwood said climate change research had been "short-sighted" not to probe the long-term consequences of the impact of greenhouse gases blamed for global warming.

"It needs to be looked at," he said. "There's not much we can do about climate change over the next two decades but there's still a lot we can do about the longer term changes."

In a commentary on the paper, published in the US-based Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Australian National University academics said climate change would not stop in 2100.

"And under realistic scenarios out to 2300, we may be faced with temperature increases of 12°C or even more," Tony McMichael said.



Wed, 12 May 2010

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Wednesday, May 12

Max Min

38.8° | 28.7°

Rain: 00mm in 24hrs Sunrise: 05:45

Humidity: 51% Sunset: 18:26

Wind: Normal Barometer: 1008.1mb

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Thursday, May 13

Max Min

38° | 28°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
May 14	May 15	May 16	May 17	May 18
38° 29°	38° 28°	38° 28°	37° 28°	37° 28°
Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Partly Cloudy