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FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

Scientific support for pond construction helps fresh water fish

The farmer earned a net profit of more than Rs. 50,000 in three months



Good catch: Kumar V Naidu holding the fishes in his farm.

“Whatever be the crop, whether grown in a small area or in a large landholding, the bottom line should be a good price for farmers,” says Dr. D.Seenappa, Chief Scientific Officer, Inland fisheries division, main research station, University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Hebbal, Bangalore. After all, any agricultural enterprise should aim at income generation for the farmer.

Significant role

The role of proper technical expertise assumes significance in guiding a farmer as manpower shortage, shrinking lands, high input costs, and lack of proper marketing

avenues plague agriculture today.

“Mere technical innovations far removed from the social life structure of the farmers can never hope to succeed. Both scientific experts and the farmers must work hand in hand.

“For our country to become secure in food production, our focus should be on farmers and not merely on scientists and their inventions,” says Dr. Seenappa.

Mr. Kumar V Naidu, of Holebyranahalli village in Bhadravathi taluk, owns 10 acres, adjacent to the Bhadra river canal.

Mainly engaged in traditional paddy cultivation, the farmer today is well known in the region as a leading fresh water fish grower.

A training program organized by the Inland fisheries department some years back on freshwater prawn farming motivated the farmer to construct two earthen ponds (each one acre) in the field to start rearing fishes.

Scientists provided the technical support in the pond construction and benefit schemes were offered by the Department of Fisheries.

The one acre earthen pond remained dry for a week and later 100 kg of agriculture lime sprinkled all over the pond bottom, and left undisturbed for two days and later filled with water.

Cowdung slurry

About, one tonne of cow dung slurry broadcast all over the pond water to facilitate algal growth, and fingerlings released into the pond after a week.

Initially, for five days, the fingerlings' food consisted of two gram of groundnut cake powder, and later a mixture of rice bran and groundnut cake powder fed twice

daily. Addition of manure once in 15-20 days helped in good algal growth.

Regular monitoring

The technical team regularly monitored the water quality, growth and health of stocked fish seed once in 10 days and the farmer advised accordingly for the input management by the project team.

“During the demonstration our team taught the farmer all aspects related to improved fish seed harvesting and handling such as seed grading based on size and seed packing using oxygen,” explains Dr. Seenappa.

The farmer says:

“I used about 50,000 of fingerlings of catla, rohu and grass carp varieties as my own stocking in a natural tank and the rest sold (catla, rohu at Rs 1.0 per fingerling and grass carp at Rs.1.50) to other farmers. and spent Rs. 1,10,0000 towards buying fish seeds, manure, fertilizer, feed and labour and earned a net profit of Rs. 58,550 in three months.

“Influenced by the success of Mr. Kumar other farmers in the area are also evincing keen interest in this fish growing project.

Impact

“The impact of the demonstration led to establishment of two new fish seed production units in the region,” explains Dr. K. Manjappa, Professor, Zonal Agricultural Research Station.

For more details readers can contact Mr. Kumar. V. Naidu, Holebyranahalli, Badravathi (Taluk), Shimoga (District), mobile: 09480011958 and Dr. Seenappa, at email: drdseenappa@yahoo.co.in, mobile: 09845244458.

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Treatment for seed and soil borne diseases

Seed may get infested during any time of seed to seed cycle. Seeds are sometimes planted under unfavourable soil conditions such as cold and damp soils, or extremely dry soils.

Such unfavourable soil conditions may be favourable to the growth and development of certain fungi spores enabling them to attack and damage the seeds.

Some pathogens after infection grow systemically along with the seedlings without destroying the host completely and cause damage during flowering period.

Mechanical injury

Seeds suffer mechanical injury during combining and threshing operations, or from being dropped from excessive heights. These break the seed coat and paves way for fungi to enter the seed and kill it.

Seed infested during processing, storage in contaminated containers or warehouses is another route of seed quality deterioration. Major seed diseases such as damping off, blights, blasts, bunts, smuts, leaf spots, wilts and molds can be controlled by seed treatment.

Seed disinfection refers to the eradication of fungal spores that have become established within the seed coat, or more deep-seated tissues. For effective control, the fungicidal treatment must actually penetrate the seed in order to kill the

fungus that is present.

Chemicals used

For seed borne fungal diseases Thiram or Captan at 2.0 to 3.0gm/kg of seeds is most suitable. Alternatively Beylatox/Bavistin 1.5gm/kg of seed can also be used. These will take care of damping-off, blight, foot rot, collar rot, root rot anthracnose and leaf spots.

For smut, ergot and bunts use Vitavax 1.5gm to 2.5gm/kg or Mancozeb 2.5gm/kg seed based on seed size or use Tilt 0.1 per cent.

Use 5 per cent and 20 per cent salt solution for removal of bunt & ergot infested seed respectively from healthy lot.

For downy mildew Metalxyl 3.0gm/kg or Ridomil 3gm/kg or Apron 6gm/kg of seed is best. For vegetable seeds Captan/Thiram 3.0gm /kg seed is ideal, in case of bacterial diseases soak the seeds in Streptomycin 100ppm solution for 30 minutes. Soaking seeds in hot water 52 {+0}C for 10 to 30 minutes is also advised for seed borne diseases.

Mallikarjun Kenganal, A.S. Byadgi & V.I. Benag

Department of Plant Pathology, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad

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Organics in soil aid "mineral breathing"



Oxygen-free environments contain microbes sometimes described as "mineral-breathing" as they breathe in iron oxides and other minerals. This respiration may be accelerated by solid organic compounds in the soil.

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FARM QUERY

Training programme

Is there any place in Chennai where I can get training in bonsai growing, landscaping and food processing techniques?

M. Rosy Sebastian, Chennai

You can contact the Professor and Head, Urban Horticulture Development Centre (UHDC) under the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, new no. P:44/ old no. P:37, 6 {+t} {+h} avenue, (Behind K. 4 police station), Anna Nagar, Chennai: 600040, Phone: 044 -2626 3484 for your details on several training programmes.

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'Food inflation to ease to 4-5 pct by Nov'

Agencies Posted online: Wed May 26 2010, 13:36 hrs



New Delhi : Planning Commission Member Abhijit Sen said food inflation is expected to decline to 4 to 5 per cent by November from the current over 16 per cent after the arrival of Kharif (summer) crops.

Sen also noted that farm sector growth would be revised upwards to 0.2 per cent in 2009-10 from the earlier estimate of minus 0.2 per cent.

"Prices have started falling from March after good Rabi arrival. For some commodities like onion and potatoes, the fall is very sharp. But overall prices are very high. After Kharif season, prices will start coming down," Sen said.

"It's quite possible food inflation will come down to 4-5 per cent by November this year," he added.

Experts had predicted a drop in food inflation with the arrival of Rabi crops in April. However, food inflation has continued to rise and surged to 16.49 per cent for the week ended May 8, mainly due to high prices of vegetables and fruits.

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had also exuded confidence that overall inflation would come down to 5-6 per cent by December.

On farm sector growth, Sen said growth is likely to be 0.2 per cent in 2009-10 due to upward revision in production in third advance estimate.

"In 2010-11, the farm sector growth is likely to be 5-6 per cent if met department forecast on monsoon comes true," he added.

In the third advance estimates released recently by the Agriculture Ministry, foodgrains production has been revised upwards to 218.19 million tonnes from 216.85 million tonnes quoted in the second advance estimate released in February.

Wheat production is projected at a record 80.98 million tonnes in 2009-10.

THE HINDU Business Line

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Gujarat racing ahead in floriculture, horticulture

Virendra Pandit ,Gandhinagar, May 26

Gujarat's business acumen and entrepreneurial zest is passé; the State's leap-frogging with 11 per cent agricultural growth, praised by the Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) last year, is old hat too.

What is new is this: Gujarat may now export more 'kesar', the famous mango variety of the State, to West Asia than Maharashtra sells alphonso; the State has entered Goa market with cashew nut; and an Ahmedabad-based part-time floriculturist sells Dutch roses worth Rs 3 lakh a month in the city itself!

Clearly, the semi-arid State is witnessing a revolution in floriculture and horticulture.

Water management

“Laments that scarce rains damage prospects of good crop are meaningless in Gujarat which has mastered the art of water management with 1,33,732 check dams and 2,49,537 farm ponds constructed or deepened in the State over the last one decade,” a senior government official told Business Line here.

Apart from water management, the Gujarat farmers have taken up drip irrigation in a big way. With the State-promoted Gujarat Green Revolution Company (GGRC) earmarking investment of Rs 1,500 crore over a period of five years, the area under drip irrigation has increased from 30,000 hectares in 2004-05 to two lakh hectare in 2009-10.

“In fact, around 100 villages in Gujarat are now solely dependent on sprinklers for their farming activity,” the official said.

While nearly 105 lakh hectares of land has so far been brought under cultivation of agriculture, the last six years have seen the area under horticulture increase from 9.69 lakh hectare to 12.68 lakh hectare in the State.

In 2009-10, the State produced 152.74 lakh tonnes of horticulture produce, including banana, papaya, mango, guava and tomato.

Kesar mangoes

The idea of a Junagarh farmer, Batuksinh, to cultivate the kesar variety of mango caught on in Valsad in the 1990s and this has replaced all other rivals in the State now.

Kesar cultivation started in 2005 even in Kutch, the driest district of Gujarat. Now, the border district is poised to export around 90,000 tonnes, as against 25,564 tonnes last year, of the King of Fruits to West Asia this year, with 7,800 hectares of arid land brought under cultivation there.

After Kaprada (Valsad), the tribal district of the Dangs has commenced cultivation of cashew nuts and has found market even in Goa, home to cashew nut. The area under cashew nut has now doubled from 4,127 hectare in 2009-10.

Floriculture

Floriculture, too, has emerged as a new farming business in Gujarat, with area under cultivation almost doubling to 12,534 hectare in 2009-10, compared to 6,956 hectare in 2004-05.

The State, which is actively promoting cultivation of rose, marigold, mogra and lily, produced 95,185 tonnes of flowers in 2009-10. The State now has 165 green-houses for floriculture that defy the vagaries of Nature impacting floriculture.

The area under spices has increased from 3.58 lakh hectare to 4.96 lakh hectare, with a lion's share of cumin (3.11 lakh ha).

Mr Mahendra Patel, an electronics goods dealer at Ahmedabad, developed a fancy for cultivating Dutch roses when he came across an Israeli Web site. Inspired, he toured flower producing areas of Maharashtra and Karnataka and started cultivating Dutch roses in two acres of his 18-acre farm at Kashindra village near here in August 2009.

He also received a government grant of Rs 13 lakh per acre and is now earning Rs 3 lakh a month by selling his produce in the city. Next, he is planning to market Dutch roses in Delhi, Jaipur and Bangalore too, the official said.

Since 2004-05, the area under cultivation of fruits has phenomenally increased by 10 times, from 2.72 lakh hectare to 21.71 lakh hectare with mango (1.21 lakh ha), banana (61,919 ha) and citrus (37,076 ha) leading the pack. Similarly, the area under vegetables has increased from 3.31 lakh hectare to 4.06 lakh hectare, with potato and onion constituting a quarter of this area.

Business Standard

Thursday, May 27, 2010

Tata Tea creates three global 'power brands'

Viveat Susan Pinto / Mumbai May 27, 2010, 0:52 IST



They may fight a pitched battle around the world for your tea cup, but when it comes to branding, Tata Tea is taking a page out of Hindustan Unilever's (HUL's) marketing manual. So, just like HUL of the 90s, Tata Tea too has come up with its own 'power brands', which will get a global push.

And, there are three of them, which will be taken to developed markets like the US, Canada and Europe, and the emerging ones of Africa and the CIS countries under the Tata Global Beverages banner, the erstwhile Tata Tea. These include Tetley, Good Earth and Himalayan. Tea Pix will continue as an exclusive offering for the select set, world over.

Interestingly, all three brands were acquired over the last decade and they have not been in-house successes. What's more? Flagship Tata Tea is yet to make the global cut and will continue as a regional brand for the time being.

“Tata Tea and Eight O’Clock Coffee are managed as regional brands right now. But, they can certainly make it to the list in the future,” Percy Siganporia, deputy chief executive officer, Tata Global Beverages, told Business Standard.

Surprising, feel brand consultants. “Brand Tata has the potential to be leveraged,” says Harish Bijoor, chief executive officer, Harish Bijoor Consults. “I don’t think the company can afford to keep Tata Tea out of their global portfolio. Recall for brand Tata is high. The company should take advantage of it.”

Santosh Desai, chief executive officer of Future Brands, goes a step forward. “This is about the company playing it safe, using international brands internationally. As far as Himalayan goes, it’s a bold move of including it into the list.”

The global brand push reflects the organisational shift the company is going through. Sitting in London, John Nicholas, the innovation and brands manager, will be responsible for them. He is part of the newly-constituted five member global executive office, the apex decision making body, of the company. The other members are CEO Peter Unsworth, Deputy CEO Percy Siganporia, CFO L Krishna Kumar, and human resources head Nalin Miglani.

The branding aspect should not be seen in isolation, say analysts who cover Tata Tea. It also signifies that tea, coffee and water are their principal verticals. “At the end of the day, it’s about understanding which brands in the portfolio can have a potential global acceptance...Coffee is still a weak link, compared to tea,” says an FMCG analyst from a foreign brokerage firm. “You still don’t have a global coffee power brand yet.”


“The future will be in value-added products. We have the cash, so we will look at acquisitions in markets such as Russia and the West Asia,” CFO L Krishna Kumar told Business Standard. “That’s where Himalayan has a big role to play... We will invest heavily around that brand.”

They need to. Himalayan closed last financial year with a net loss of Rs 14.10 crore. If the company wants to wipe out the losses, chinks in the armour have to be plugged, such as tapping the institutional segment, which the company is looking to do.

The new 50:50 joint venture with Pepsi, in a sense, will take the effort forward. Tata Tea officials say they have identified four main categories — vitamin water, energy drinks, iced tea and sports drinks — where the JV will play. All of these are in the bottled water segment.

By the end of this year, Tata Global Beverages is set to come out with a road map for the future, including doubling turnover from Rs 5,782 crore. But, will this global branding initiative work, when HUL itself has aborted that strategy? One may argue for every HUL, there is a Cadbury and a Britannia, companies who have made a success story out of power branding. The Tatas, too, are getting ready with their heady brew.

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 Thu, 27 May 2010

Weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Clear

Thursday, May 27

Max Min

40.8° | 29.7°

Rain: Trace

Sunrise: 05:41

Humidity: 75%

Sunset: 18:30

Wind: Normal

Barometer: 1003.0

Tomorrow's Forecast








Partly Cloudy

Friday, May 28

Max Min

38° | 29°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday May 29	Sunday May 30	Monday May 31	Tuesday Jun 1	Wednesday Jun 2
				
38° 29° Partly Cloudy	37° 29° Sunny	37° 29° Sunny	37° 29° Sunny	37° 29° Sunny