

“Agricultural Council Act will ensure deserving returns to farmers”

Staff Reporter



STATING THE FACTS:K. Meena, Vice-Chancellor, Bharathidasan University, handing over the first copy of a souvenir on Tamil Nadu Agricultural Council Act 2009 to N.K. Periyaswami, former Director, Seed Certification, in Tiruchi on Monday. E. Vadivelu, Professor, Extension Education, TNAU, and S. Ranganathan, chairman, CCDDS, are in the picture.

TIRUCHI: Tamil Nadu Agricultural Council Act 2009 will ensure deserving returns to farmers for their investment and toil, invigorate the pace of growth of agriculture to catch up with the progress of manufacturing and service sectors, and equip the sector to face global challenges.

While factoring in the need to increase productivity in shrinking farmlands to fulfil food requirements of the rising population, the Act envisages equal attention for the success of organic farming as well, according to the Centre for Cauvery Delta Development Studies (CCDDS), Thanjavur.

Titled 'From confrontation to consensus,' a souvenir on the Act that the CCDDS, affiliated to Bharathidasan University, brought out at a function here on Monday, allays the apprehensions of the State government about getting it enforced.

The souvenir, released by Vice-Chancellor K. Meena, is a compilation of the details of the Act and the presentations made by its proponents and critics at a seminar organised during August by the CCDDS, in the wake of criticism raised by certain entities representing agriculturists doing organic farming. Due to the criticism, the State government had decided to keep in abeyance the process of making the Tamil Nadu Agriculture Council Bill a law.

Criticism unfounded

The criticism was unfounded, felt speakers at the function. The Tamil Nadu Agricultural Council, akin to the various regulatory bodies like the Bar Council and the Medical Council, was meant to set standards in agriculture education and agriculture practices, the speakers, representing mainstream farmers' associations and the Tamil Nadu Senior Agro Technologists Forum (TANSAF), explained.

The Act will serve the purpose of guiding the agricultural sector rather than controlling it, CCDDS chairman S. Ranganathan said. Important suggestions have been listed in the souvenir as amendments to the Act.

In his presentation on 'Way forward,' G. Chidambaram, Managing Trustee, CCDDS, and Member, State Planning Commission, said the steady decline in agriculture caused by factors such as poor returns, ineffectiveness of government's strategies, and occupational shift of younger generation warranted serious attention of policymakers.

Receiving the first copy of the souvenir, N.K. Periyaswami, former Director of Seed Certification, said agriculturists who were worst hit by inflation in the last ten years deserved right returns for their investments. The Act would safeguard their progress.

Corporate farming inevitable

E. Vadivelu, Professor, Extension Education, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, said corporate farming was inevitable in the current scenario. The farming community, rather than allowing

investments into the sector by multi-national companies, must get their act together through cooperative ventures. Unfounded criticism of the Act must be rejected.

Urging the media not to be influenced by baseless propaganda by critics, particularly those with no connection to agriculture, the speakers sought dissemination of the Act to the public in the right perspective.

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Give importance to soil testing, Minister tells farmers

Staff Reporter

Photo: M. Periasamy



Informative: Minister for Highways and Ports M.P. Saminathan (second left) releasing a training manual at a seminar on soil testing at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore on Wednesday. Vice-Chancellor of TNAU P. Murugesha Boopathi (second right) is seen receiving the copy.

COIMBATORE: Farmers should give importance to soil testing before application of fertilizers and should shun the general disregard they have about soil health and its maintenance, Minister for Highways and Minor Ports M.P. Saminathan, said here on

Wednesday.

Speaking at the southern regional seminar-cum-training for soil testing personnel at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), he urged them to decide the cropping pattern based on soil test results. Only this would ensure increased returns in terms of profit, he assured them.

“Soil is depleted of organic manure because such manure is not easily available in the market. Hence, application of the same becomes difficult,” the Minister said.

He lamented that inorganic fertilizers were taking the place of organic ones. He called for doing away with the indiscriminate use of inorganic fertilizers by farmers. This use was leading to the reduction of earthworms living in the soil.

The Minister also cautioned the farmers against dependence on the recommendations of agri-input dealers for choice and application of fertilizers. “Farmers approach dealers who provide fertilizers on credit. Instead, they should use their discretion in choosing the right fertilizer for their crops,” he added.

Vice-Chancellor of TNAU P. Murugesu Boopathi said that the earlier system of one soil testing laboratory for each district was not sufficient to meet the needs of the 81 lakh farm holdings in the State.

“Such laboratories will only be able to test eight to 10 lakh soil samples a year. It will take nearly 10 years to cover all farm holdings,” Mr. Boopathi said.

Under the National Agricultural Development Project, mini soil testing laboratories had been initiated in the 385 blocks instead of districts at the cost of Rs. 6 lakh each.

The laboratories would be set up as part of the agri-clinics. This would ensure that 6,000 soil samples were analysed by mini laboratories in a year, the Vice-Chancellor added.

The university had submitted a proposal to the Commissioner of Agriculture to recommend that agri-clinics and mini soil laboratories provided fertilizer recommendations to farmers based on the Soil Test Crop Response mechanism and the Decision Support System for Integrated Fertilizer (DSSIFER).

The Minister released books and training manuals and also the updated version of the DSSIFER 2010 software.

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Agriculture propels engine of economic growth: Minister

Special Correspondent

Education and agriculture loans distributed by Canara Bank

Photo: M_Srinath



Fostering development S.S. Palanimanickam, Union Minister of State for Finance giving away the cheque to a student at a function organised by Canara Bank at Vallam on Wednesday. S. Raman, second from left, Chairman and Managing Director, Canara Bank, and M.S. Shanmugam, Collector, are in the Picture.

THANJAVUR: A double digit economic growth of the country can be achieved only when agriculture sector grows at four per cent, said S.S.Palani Manickam, Union Minister of State for Finance, here on Wednesday.

He was speaking at a function organised by the Canara Bank for distribution of education, agriculture loans and loans to women self help groups to the tune of Rs.3.69 crore to 416 persons at Vallam near here. The Minister appealed to the banks to extend more credit to agriculture sector. "We are talking about 10-11 per cent economic growth, which is possible only with the growth of agriculture," he said.

S. Raman, Chairman and Managing Director of the bank, said Canara Bank was the second largest bank next to Punjab National Bank in terms of business in the country with a transaction of Rs. 4,25,000 crore.

Education loan was introduced in the country by Canara Bank and so far, the bank has disbursed Rs. 3,500 crore as education loans. There are 600 branches in Tamil Nadu and the business transaction in the state is Rs. 45,000 crore. The bank is involved in inclusive banking and extending bank facility to individuals through the business correspondent scheme in villages.

M. Vijayaraj, Deputy General Manager, Tiruchi Circle, said the circle covered 11 districts and Karaikal region of the union territory.

M.S.Shanmugham, Collector, spoke. Earlier, the Minister inaugurated the new premises of the bank at Srinivasapuram in Thanjavur town . L.Rajalakshmi, Manager, Thanjavur Srinivasapuram Branch, was present .

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Need for sustainable structures stressed

Special Correspondent

CUDDALORE: "In the wake of several earthquakes and the tsunami, the floodgates have been opened for doing extensive research in the field of structural engineering. Therefore, it is time structural engineers proved their mettle in designing sustainable structures that can withstand natural disasters and suit the local conditions and requirements," said Devadas Manoharan, Vice-Chancellor of Anna University-Tiruchi.

He was delivering the valedictory address at the seventh 'Structural engineering convention—SEC-2010' organised by the Civil and Structural Engineering Department of Annamalai University at Chidambaram.Mr. Manoharan said that a series of earthquakes

had inflicted huge losses on human lives and property in the country. In dealing with such a situation, the focus should be on three aspects — before, during and after the disaster. But the authorities seemed to be too concerned with the aftermath. They spent on relief and rehabilitation measures but the first two aspects got either scant or no attention.

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Rain causes damage to horticulture and plantation crops in 13 villages

R. Vimal Kumar

Tirupur: The recent rain had damaged horticulture and plantation crops in 13 villages and agriculture crops in four villages in the district.

The crop damage assessment being carried out by the officials of agriculture and horticulture departments in these villages had estimated damages to an extent of 227.85 ha as on Wednesday evening.

Value

The value of damage is estimated around Rs one crore.

Of the 75.85 ha affected in the horticulture sector, 35.75 ha was under medicinal plants raised in the villages under Dharapuram and Mulanur blocks, 10.2 ha under chillies in Madathukulam and Kangeyam blocks, 1.5 ha under turmeric in Tirupur and Kangeyam blocks, 5.4 ha under tomato in Tirupur and Madathukulam blocks, 20 ha under coriander in Madathukulam block and remaining under beetroot in Udumalpet block. Regarding the damages on agriculture crops, the entire 152 ha affected was under paddy spread over Solmadevi, S.K. Pudur, Kanniyur and Karatholuvu villages.

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Centre allows export of 5-lakh tonnes sugar

Gargi Parsai

NEW DELHI: Union Food and Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said that the government will allow export of 5 lakh tonnes of sugar under Open General Licence by the end of this month after working out the modalities. All sugar mills would be allowed to take advantage of higher domestic sugar production and high global sugar prices.

Mr. Pawar also announced a hike in levy sugar price for the ongoing 2010-11 season (October-September) to Rs. 18.47 a kilogram from Rs. 17.57 last season. The government buys levy sugar from millers for sale in the Public Distribution System.

“With the prediction of good production and to take the advantage of good international prices, the government has already permitted exports against the pending ALS [Advance Licence Scheme] obligations,” Mr. Pawar said at the 76th annual general meeting of Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), but lamented that millers did not export even half of what was expected.

“In order to maximise our returns, the first tranche of export of around five lakh tonnes under the OGL will also be permitted,” he said, adding that exports will not impact domestic prices as only excessive production would be exported.

He also said that the quantity of export would be reviewed every month for the next three to four months and would be linked to production. “In the entire handling of the sugar sector, the interests of sugarcane growers and consumers will always be the overriding priority of my Ministry,” he added.

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Water logging: residents continue to suffer even after rain stops

Staff Reporter

Due to absence of storm water drains, chances of draining water is remote



Covered:Rainwater stagnating at Chidambara Nagar in Tuticorin on Wednesday.

Tuticorin: Even after a break in rainfall, water stagnation was causing a lot of problems for the residents of many low lying areas in the town. Though the rain had stopped, water logging was still prevalent.

Brunt

The residents of Chidambara Nagar, Kurunji Nagar, Threspuram and many other low lying areas were bearing the brunt of stagnating water even after rain stopped.

In spite of efforts being made by the Fire Service and Rescue Personnel to drain out stagnant water, there seemed to be no effective remedy for the stagnation problem.

Due to the absence of storm water drainages, chances of draining the water were remote. The residents had to face adverse effects of rainfall, as a result.

Measures needed

Appropriate measures need to be taken to sort out this long pending issue with adequate infrastructure for a long term significant solution, the public feel.

The residents of low lying areas were reeling under difficulties while commuting over the stagnant water.

Groundwater level

The ground water level had risen to a considerable extent nowadays.

Previously, the groundwater level that was at four feet bottom level had now risen and was at just one feet bottom level.

Since the water level on the surface had risen, water stagnation could not be expected to recede in the prevailing ground conditions, sources from TWAD Board said.

The Fire Service personnel were pressed into service and stagnant water was being drained out gradually with power engine motors, P. Jeyaraman, District Fire Officer, said.

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Accord priority to quality of tea, growers requested

Special Correspondent

Small tea growers celebrate International Tea Day

People urged to join hands to uplift small tea growers in the Nilgiris

Growers asked to ensure that they supply good quality tea leaves to factories

Photo: M.Sathyamoorthy



Accent on quality: Khadi Board Minister K.Ramachandran inaugurating the International Tea Day celebrations in Gudalur on Wednesday.

Udhagamandalam: With a call to protect farmers and preserve nature International Tea Day was celebrated under the aegis of the Federation of Small Tea Growers Associations (FESTA), Gudalur region, at Gudalur on Wednesday.

Inaugurating the celebrations, Khadi Board Minister K. Ramachandran said that everybody must join hands to uplift the small tea growers of the Nilgiris.

Highest priority should be accorded to the production of good quality tea, he said adding that quality consciousness should begin at tea gardens. The growers should ensure that they supply good quality leaves to factories.

It will lead to realisation of better prices.

Adverting to the efforts of the Tea Board and the United Planters Association of Southern India-KrishiVigyan Kendra, Mr. Ramachandran said that the Quality Improvement Programme launched by them ten years ago is yielding good results.

Out of a total production of 956 million kg, South India accounts for 250 million kg. In the Nilgiris, there were 65,000 small growers cultivating tea over 45,000 hectares.

The Executive Director, Tea Board, R. Ambalavanan, said there was a need for a synergy among all the stake holders.

People belonging to different sectors of the tea industry should be sensitive to each other's

problems, he said adding that all should be quality conscious. The Tea Board will open offices in Gudalur and Idukki to help small tea growers.

The president, FESTA, Gudalur region, T.J. Jacob presided over the function.

The president, Confederation of Small Tea Growers in India, Vijaya Gopal Charaborty, the vice-president, CISTA, Tadak Gab, and the head, UPASI-KVK P. Kumaravadivelu spoke.

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Panel for lower interest on farm loans

Gargi Parsai

Remove restrictions on movement of agriculture produce, says Prime Minister's panel

Proper policy framework for land lease, contract farming

NEW DELHI: A working group on agriculture constituted by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has suggested that the government provide farm loans to farmers at four per cent interest rate, raise the minimum support price (MSP) for farm produce to 50 per cent higher than the actual cost of cultivation and expand diesel subsidy scheme across the country.

The Working Group on Agriculture Production headed by Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda submitted its report to the Prime Minister here on Wednesday. Chief Ministers of Bihar, Punjab and West Bengal were members of the group.

The group made 150 suggestions which would be discussed in the next meeting of the Core Group of ministers and Chief Ministers to be chaired by the Prime Minister on December 28.

To focus attention on agriculture and for better coordination among various ministries, the group called for setting up a Scientific Advisory Council of Agriculture with the Prime Minister as the chair.

While asserting that the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission on four per cent interest on credit and higher MSP be implemented, the group called for support price for potato, onion and garlic.

Supporting encouragement to private sector, the group said that the market for agriculture produce must be freed of all restrictions on movement, trading, stocking, finance and exports. No monopoly, including that of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee or corporate licensees should be allowed.

Agriculture land ceiling for corporates should be fixed at 25 times the cap for individual farmers. There should be proper policy framework for land lease and contract farming. Indian companies should be encouraged for contract/lease farming in foreign countries.

The group asked the government to look at north-east for improving yields and production especially through expansion of area under boro (winter) rice.

While stressing on integrated development of farming systems including crops, horticulture and livestock to generate on-farm and off-farm employment, the group suggested that production of hybrid seeds and incentives to the private sector must be encouraged.

Irrigation was another area that the group focussed on with suggestions to promote micro irrigation and such techniques as a national priority.

Technology mission

It called for a Technology Mission on farm mechanisation and establishment of agri business centres by Self-help Groups.

The group suggested programmes for nutrient-based fertilisers and use of bio-fertilisers and said efforts should be made to encourage use of wind and solar power.

It wants all types of tools, implements, machinery and equipment used in the sector to be

allowed to be imported without any duty.

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Farmers demand waiver of loans

Bapatla: A large number of farmers whom Union Minister of State for Textiles Panabaka Lakshmi met at Pinniboyinavaripalem and Pandurangapuram villages in Bapatla mandal on Wednesday, demanded that crop loans be completely waived to help them mitigate losses inflicted by the recent spell of heavy rain. They would otherwise have no alternative to save themselves from the misery but for committing suicide.

Responding to their plea, Ms. Lakshmi said she would apprise the Central government of the serious blow rains have dealt to farmers who were already suffering for want of remunerative price and due to various other factors that made their lives miserable.

She would however do her best to get other steps taken by the State government.

Meanwhile, Bapatla Rice Millers' Association president B. Venkata Ratna Gupta and Congress leaders Ch. Narayana Reddy and J. Srinivasa Rao submitted a memorandum to the Union Minister seeking steps for lifting of curbs on exporting non-basmati rice to foreign countries to remove the glut in stocks piled up with farmers and in the warehouses of Food Corporation of India.

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Rabi prospects bright, say officials

Correspondent

VIZIANAGARAM: Even while final enumeration of crop damage due to heavy rain is going on, the district administration is gearing up to meet the rabi target.

Anticipating increase in crop area due to availability of bountiful water in minor irrigation tanks and reservoirs, the normal crop area of all crops is expected to go up from 70,100 hectares to 76,000 ha, including paddy from 2,546 ha to 6,000 ha, according to Agriculture sources. Already, sowing operations where water sources available in mandals like Gajapathinagaram, Mentada and Parvathipuram have begun. The crop area of major crops like maize is 7,612 ha, green gram 16,753 ha, black gram 13,383 ha, horse gram 16, 649 ha, groundnut 3,774 ha and sesamum 4, 260 ha. The sources said that the department would take every step to supply seed and fertilizers even if the crop area goes up. So far, 920 quintals of MTU-1001, MTU-1010 and JGL -1798 variety seed are available against the allotted 5, 000 quintals of paddy and it would be supplied, under National Food Security Mission, on subsidy of Rs. 5 per kg. Likewise, groundnut 1,100 quintals are available against allotment of 5,302quintals; maize 1, 400 quintals (5, 685 quintals). With regard to fertilizers, the sources said that though there was no demand for the present, the department made ready 2,620 tonnes of urea, 2,094 tonnes of DAP and 620 tonnes of complexes.

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Central team to assess crop damage

HYDERABAD: An eight-member Central team headed by R. R. Jha, joint secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, is arriving here on Friday on a two-day visit to assess the extent of damage caused to crops by the recent cyclones and rains. The team will divide into two groups for making field visits on Friday and Saturday before having a meeting with Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy.

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Recognition for farm initiatives

Award for Panniyur Krishi Vigyan Kendra



Farm extension: The Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Panniyur in Kannur

KANNUR: The Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) at Panniyur here has won the National Best KVK Award for 2009.

Panniyur KVK Head K. Abdul Kareem said here on Tuesday that the kendra was selected for the award from among 589 KVKs.

President Pratibha Patil would give away the award at a conference of KVKs at the Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture at Udaipur in Rajasthan on December 22. It consists of a memento, certificate and Rs.1 lakh.

Norms of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) stipulate that a KVK should have completed five years to be considered for the award.

The KVK here became functional in 2004 and is the youngest ever to bag the award, Dr. Kareem said.

The kendra had been actively involved in extension activities since inception. "Effective and friendly interventions of the KVK after scientific analyses produces results," Dr. Kareem said.

The Paddy Task Force, an initiative of the KVK to address the alarming decline in area under paddy cultivation, was the first ever mechanised labour force in the State, he said. It had been recommend for State-wide adoption.

The Compact Area Group Approach, an extension programme for combating endemic problems like coconut mite and bud rot disease, had been included in the organic farming policy of the State government.

The KVK also introduced and popularised 'rope culture of green shell mussel farming,' new varieties of black pepper, ginger, cashew, tapioca and some vegetables.

The first ever cashew apple processing unit in the State under the brand name TOMCO was also an initiative of the KVK, Dr. Kareem said.

The KVK had organised a Farmers' Science Congress. The State Bank of India-KVK loan scheme, KVK Mall to promote entrepreneurship among farmers, a Farmers' Science Museum and the Farmers' Clubs are some of the other initiatives of KVK.

A sub-surface dyke built by the KVK to alleviate water scarcity has now become one of the largest rainwater harvesting system in the region and a model demonstration unit.

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Pest attack adds to woes of tobacco growers

Staff Reporter

Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham seeks compensation of Rs. 10,000 per acre

— PHOTO: KOMMURI SRINIVAS



GRIM SITUATION:Farm labour at work in a tobacco field at Malavaram in S.N. Padu mandal of Prakasam district.

ONGOLE: After prolonged spells of rain, now rampant pest attacks are adding to the woes of tobacco growers who have been facing the fury of weather systems since the cyclonic storm Laila in May.

A team of 'field friends', constituted by Tobacco Board Chairman G. Kamala Vardhan Rao to help the growers on integrated pest management and good agronomic practices, have found 'leaf blight disease' in the areas where the farmers had grown the commercial crop early and suggested remedies, says Abdullah Hameed, Board Regional Manager here, while talking to The Hindu. "Brown spot disease and caterpillars' infestation are also seen in early plantations," he adds.

The farmers have been asked to spray Manco Zev or Diathane-M45 by mixing of 20 grams of the chemical in 10 litres of water to overcome 'leaf blight' disease and 'brown spot' disease.

They have been asked to spray five grams of Proclaim mixed in 10 litres of water to control caterpillars' menace.

Meanwhile, the board staff in 11 auction platforms in the district has taken up farmer-wise enumeration of losses incurred due to the recent rain.

A detailed report will be submitted to the board chairman to decide on measures to provide succour to the growers, according to him.

Emergency meet

Ahead of the emergency board meeting in New Delhi on December 22, the CPI(M)-affiliated Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham (APRS) in the district urged the board to provide compensation to tobacco growers at the rate of Rs. 10,000 per acre.

"The board, which is flush with funds, should provide Rs. 1 lakh per barn as interest-free loan to the growers and also arrange for return of the 15 per cent penalty collected from farmers for violating crop size last season," says APRS district secretary N. Ranga Rao.

It may be recalled here that the board has reduced the penalty from 15 per cent to 5 per

cent two years ago to extend a helping hand to distressed farmers.

The tobacco growers have been incurring losses again and again with the bad weather systems, including cyclonic storm 'Laila' and 'Jal' damaging the plantations this year.

Farmers have taken up cultivation of the principal commercial crop in the district in over 59,000 hectares so far as against 71,500 hectares permitted by the board.

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FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

Making light work of eradicating a serious pest in brinjal

M.J. PRABU

Priced at Rs. 500 a piece, two traps are sufficient for an acre



Simple technology: David Raja Beula, Assistant Director of Horticulture demonstrating the use of wireless trap to farmers.

“In spite of being popular as a poor man's vegetable, brinjal often gets affected by the shoot and fruit borer that are common pests affecting all brinjal growing areas in the

country and continue to pose a serious problem to the farmers,” says Mr. P. David Raja Beula, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Kadayam, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.

The larvae bore into the tender shoots and fruits, affecting plant growth and make the fruits unfit for marketing.

Farmers repeatedly spray several chemicals, or in case of organic methods use the required bio applications on the crop.

No permanent solution

“But complete control or eradication does not seem possible as the larvae hide in the shoots and fruits and escape the sprays. Naturally farmers tend to over-spray thinking that more spraying effectively controls the pest,” explains Mr. David.

Repeated spraying burns a big hole in the already poor farmers' pocket.

In addition to the financial cost incurred for buying the chemicals, excessive application creates a negative impact on the environment, in the harvested vegetables, and poses serious risk to consumers.

“Since my daily work involves interacting with farmers, a majority of them growing brinjal, I found myself facing a dead end, when brinjal growers repeatedly asked me to suggest a permanent solution to this pest problem as sprays were not found effective.

“During one of my usual field visits I happened to see the normal light traps in the fields for attracting and destroying the insect pests and thought of using the same technology for the brinjal problem.”

Modified

Accordingly, after a little modification Mr. David installed two wireless light traps as an experiment in a farmer's field and found that the pests (larvae) got attracted to the bright light and fell into the trap.

“I now needed to demonstrate this to farmers lacking previous experience of using a light

trap to kill the pest. We knew that convincing them in a single interaction would prove difficult. "I decided to first demonstrate this technology in a farmer's field and then make him talk to others," explains Mr. David.

Accordingly a farmer from a nearby village got the traps installed in his field. The farmer grew a local variety of brinjal called Ilavambadi (named after a village near Vellore, Tamil Nadu).

Pest collection

The collection of the pest, which started from three moths gradually (the moths fly into the field during night to lay its eggs on the plant) increased to 500 moths, reducing the pesticide spray from once in seven days to once in 15 days and finally once in 30 days.

"This reduced the cost of pesticide consumption from Rs 10, 000 per acre to Rs.7,000 per acre.

The wireless light trap costs only Rs. 500 per piece, and two traps are sufficient for an acre. The farmer is able to save Rs. 3, 000 on the cost of pesticide by this," he says.

After erecting the light traps the farmer harvested about 10 tonnes from an acre. The wireless light traps can also be used to control pest in other crops in our country, according to Mr. David.

For more details and personal visit readers can contact Mr. P. David Raja Beula, Assistant Director of Horticulture, Kadayam, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, email microeconomicsdavid@yahoo.co.in mobile 9486285704.

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FARM QUERY New micro sprinkler

Is there any farmer who has developed a new technology for irrigation?

E. John Thomas Dharwad

A farmer Mr. M. Avaran from Malappuram, Kerala developed a new micro sprinkler from commonly available micro tubes a kerosene lamp and an old razor blade. This sprinkler is capable of producing half circle jets of water and can be used for coconut, arecanut, banana, vanilla and all other crops . For details contact Mr. M. Avaran, Mannackkara House, Athavanad, Malappuram-676310, mobile: 09446840750.

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Management of yellow mosaic disease in legumes

Yellow mosaic diseases (YMD) are major constraints in cultivation and improving the productivity of grain legumes in India.

The disease causes yellow coloured spots scattered on young leaves followed by yellow mosaic pattern.

Later the spots gradually increase in size resulting in complete yellowing of leaves. The yellow leaves slowly dry and wither.

Infected plants bear few flowers and pods with some immature and deformed seeds thus, affecting yields, qualitatively and quantitatively.

Pods of infected plants are reduced in size and turn yellow in colour. In soybean characteristic symptom is conspicuous systemic bright yellow mottling of leaves.

Causal virus

The disease is caused by a virus called Mungbean yellow mosaic virus (MYMV) and principally transmitted by the whitefly.

The virus survives on the main hosts as well as other leguminous plants. Maximum spread of the disease occurs between 8-10 weeks after sowing (July-August).

Controlling the pest through application of insecticides can reduce the spread of the disease in field.

Growing resistant varieties is also helpful in reducing disease spread. Application of Metasystox (0.1 per cent) at two weeks interval after one month of sowing helps in reducing the white fly incidence.

Soil application of Phorate (10 per cent) at 10 kg. ha followed by three sprays of Dimethaote 0.1 per cent reduces the disease significantly and also enhances the yield.

Foliar sprays of Thiamethoxam 25 WG at 100 g/ha or methyl Dematon 25EC at 800 ml/ha or Ethofenprox 110EC at 1 lit/ha are also useful. Intercropping of safflower, sunflower and maize delays the onset and further development of the disease.

Cultural management

As the virus harbours in many leguminous weeds its transmission by vectors needs to be controlled. The crop must be sown timely. The spacing between the lines should be maintained at 30 to 40 cms. Only certified seeds should be used for sowing. In endemic areas, only tolerant and resistant varieties should be used. Weed plants should be rouged out at their inception.

MALLIKARJUN KENGANALBYADGI, A.S. & Benagi, V.I.

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Small tea growers up share in output

KOCHI | KOLKATA | COIMBATORE: The Indian Tea Association says factories run by small growers have increased their share in the country's tea production at a time when labour shortage and rising overhead costs hit production at large estates. The association said in a report last month that production at bought leaf factories increased by 12.3% between 1998 and 2007 as against a 0.9% drop in the output of large estates. Bought leaf factories are units that process tea but do not grow leaf. This sector has much lower cost of production which allows it to sell tea at cheaper rates.

Industry observers say a large number of established manufacturers are now approaching these factories for tea. "We do buy around 2 million kg of green leaf from the small growers," said Aditya Khaitan, managing director of McLeod Russel India Ltd. "However, we have set our quality parameters and we procure tea according to that standard."

Premium quality tea produced by small growers sells for over `100 a kg in Coonoor auctions, said Krishnakumar J Shah, an exporter. The tea association said Assam has registered the highest increase in bought leaf factory and cooperative production. Output by small growers here has risen from 21.43 million kg in 1998 to 102.93 million kg in 2007.

Small growers in the Nilgiri region in Tamil Nadu are contributing 90 million kg of tea from their 125 bought leaf factories, according to G Ramamurthy, a scientist with United Planters' Association of Southern India. The yield is high in this area as most of the land is converted vegetable land, he added. The Nilgiri region, comprising Gudalur, Ooty, Coonoor, Kotagiri and Kundah, has 80,000 small growers and 40,000 hectares of land under tea. The growers supply green leaves to bought leaf factories who manufacture black tea and sell it at the auctions. The region has seen a 4% increase in crop this year.

"The less intensive north-east monsoon has led to good crop growth," said S Ramu, president of Nilgiri Bought Leaf Tea Manufacturers Association. "Last year, the growers had suffered severe

damage due to floods.”

The Wayanad Agro Movement Tea Company in Kerala has over 400 small growers associated with it. An increase in production at bought tea leaf factories has helped the company achieve an average daily production of 2,000 kg of CTC tea. CTC refers to crush, tear and curl, a tea processing method.

16 Dec, 2010, 02.52AM IST, S Sujatha,ET Bureau

Egg exports drop by a third in 2010 as West Asia keeps door slammed

COIMBATORE: Egg exports have dropped by a third in the first eleven months of 2010 compared to the same period last year as the West Asia market remains closed due to non-tariff barriers and the high prices are deterring consumption in West Africa. Average exports have come down to 62.5 million eggs a month in 2010 compared to 90.3 million eggs a month in 2009. In the first eleven months of 2010, exports have come down to 687.9 million eggs compared to 952.4 million eggs during the period last year.

“The country has been made bird flu-free in June this year but the key markets in the West Asia — UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq — have not opened up yet,” said VKS Shivakumar, managing director, VKS Farms, the largest table egg exporter from India. His company holds a 70% market share in shipments. However, Dr AT Venugopal, a technical consultant for poultry farmers in India, said that even though the Indian government has declared the country as bird flu-free, it has to be approved by the Organisation of Animal Health (OIE). “At present, our status regarding the influenza has been closed,” he added.

He said the government should implement a notifiable avian influenza-free establishment (NAI) within highly pathogenic notifiable avian (HPNA) influenza-free compartment as per terrestrial animal health code of OIE 2008.

International trade is governed by WTO agreements and OIE is the guiding force for export-import risk analysis. “Export from NAI establishment within HPNA-free compartment is 100% safe and free from risk,” he added.

While it is perceived that import by West Asia has been banned due to health reasons, traders in India's poultry hub, Namakkal, say the Gulf countries are trying to promote their farmers by not lifting the ban on Indian eggs. Earlier, the country used to export 100 containers (each holds 4.75 lakh eggs) every month to the West Asia but at present it has dropped to negligible quantities. Only Bahrain and Oman have begun importing eggs after the last bird flu scare in India.

In West Africa, the high Indian egg prices have led to less consumption. A carton (each 360 eggs) from India is quoted at \$20 while eggs from domestic suppliers are cheaper by two dollars. "Nearly 50 containers used go to West Africa from India every month. Now it has almost stopped due to the high prevailing prices," said All India Poultry Products Exporters Association chairman and Ponni Poultry Farm managing director K Singaraj.

Business Standard

Thursday, Dec 16, 2010

India plans trials of gene-altered rubber

Bloomberg / December 16, 2010, 0:51 IST

India, the largest natural-rubber user after China, plans to begin field trials of a genetically-modified variety as it seeks to overcome a shortage forecast by the industry to surge fivefold over the next decade.

The state-run Rubber Board will secure approvals from the states of Kerala and Maharashtra before planting 0.4 hectares, James Jacob, director of the Rubber Research Institute of India, said by e-mail. The trials were cleared last month by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee, a panel set up by the environment ministry, he said.

Global carmakers led by Ford Motor Co. are building plants in Asia's second-fastest growing major economy where car sales are projected by the government to double to 3 million by 2015. Bridgestone Corp. and its Indian rivals are spending \$3 billion on new capacities to meet demand forecast by the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association to expand 10 per cent to 106 million tyres in the year to March 31.

"Every country in the world needs natural rubber, a vital and strategic industrial raw material like iron and coal," said Jacob. "Domestic requirement of rubber will increase as our GDP increases, and indications are that there will not be enough."

Gene-altered rubber trees will be resistant to drought and tapping panel dryness, and have the ability to produce higher yields even under adverse weather conditions, said Jacob.

Prices in Tokyo, Thailand and China have climbed to records this year after persistent rain in the producing nations lowered output. In India, prices surpassed Rs 200 a kg last month for the first time.

Govt allows 500,000 tn sugar exports, says Pawar

BS Reporter / New Delhi December 16, 2010, 0:48 IST

The government on Wednesday announced permitting 500,000 tonnes of sugar under the open general license (OGL) within the next 10 days. The announcement comes as sugar production in the current year is expected to be around 25.5 million tonne which is expected to leave the country with a surplus availability of around eight million tonnes during the year.

"There has been considerable demand from the industry as well as farmers to allow exports under OGL. We appreciate that any export in near future will get rich dividend considering the international prices", Food and Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said at the annual general meeting of the Indian Sugar Mills Association. Pawar added that the shipments will have no impact on domestic retail prices.



The minister also announced hike in levy sugar price for the ongoing sugar season at Rs 18.47 a kg as against Rs 17.57 a kg in the previous season. This will benefit millers who will have to bear lesser burden by meeting levy sugar obligations for the public distribution system. The government buys levy sugar from mills for supply to ration shops.

Government had earlier permitted sugar exports against the pending Advanced Authorisation Scheme (AAS) and Advance License Scheme (ALS) obligations, under which the mills are required to meet an equivalent export obligation for imports in the previous year.

The government had allowed the export of about 1.5 million tonnes of sugar through the ALS recently.

Pawar said that industry has applied only around half of the total exports permitted under this scheme.

“In order to further maximize our returns a first tranche of exports of around 500,000 tonnes under OGL will also be permitted”, Pawar said.

However, Pawar added that further orders of exports will depend on the level of production. “We will link our exports with production and the department will work out modalities within the next 10 days . We will ensure that the opportunity for availing the benefits of exports is accessible to all sugar mills”, pawar added.

Maharashtra parties battle for higher cane payments

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai December 16, 2010, 0:46 IST

Farmers' associations angry with first advance payments. Politics over the amount paid to sugarcane growers as the first advance for the season has taken centre stage in Maharashtra.



Various farmers' organisations affiliated to political parties have stepped up their agitation by resorting to road demonstrations and blockades, demanding Rs 2,200 a tonne.

On Tuesday, a group of protesters sat on a dharna in front of Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar's house in Baramati, while another group organised a sit-in near two sugar cooperative factories associated with state Cooperation Minister Harshvardhan Patil in Pune district.

The Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) staged a rasta roko in Vidarbha demanding Rs 2,200 a tonne as the first advance. The police had to move in to disperse the protesters.

Farmers organisations and MNS have argued that over 134 sugar mills that are participating in this year's crushing season are in a position to pay the Rs 2,200 a tonne fair remunerative price (FRP) and an additional amount based on domestic and global market conditions for sugar and its byproducts.

The Centre had announced an FRP of Rs 1,391.80 a tonne for 9.5 per cent recovery and an additional Rs 14.60 per percentage point of recovery above 9.5 per cent.

However, the mills have expressed inability to meet the demands saying they are financially not on a strong ground. In sugarcane-rich Kolhapur, Sangli and Satara, some mills have agreed to pay up to Rs 1,900 a tonne. They have assured cane growers that the final payment will be more than this.

Industry sources told Business Standard: "Maharashtra sugar mills are paying much more than the FRP. Last year, the average FRP was Rs 1,575 a tonne and the average price paid by mills was Rs 2,500 a tonne. Going by the same rule and considering the drop in sugar prices, mills are expected to pay at least Rs 500 a tonne more than the FRP. This will amount to Rs 2,200."

Industry sources said farmers' organisations launched a similar agitation in September in Pune district to demand a rise in prices of sugar and the minimum wages paid to harvesting and transportation labourers.

Hundreds of trucks were stranded as the organisation warned that the mills would not be allowed to sell below Rs 3,000 a quintal, or Rs 30 a kg, in the retail market. Sugar mills owned

by farmers themselves have been paying Rs 1,000 a tonne more than the statutory minimum price in the state.

Grapes turn sour in Maharashtra, loss at Rs 2,000 cr

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai December 16, 2010, 0:25 IST

Unseasonal rain this year, damaged 800,000 tonnes of grape crop in Maharashtra resulting in an estimated loss of Rs 2,000 crore.

The annual production from grape-growing regions like Nashik, Pune, Sangli, Sholapur, Ahmadnagar and Latur districts was expected to be 2.5 million tonnes. Grapes are grown on 2.5 lakh acre (10 tonnes per acre).

The estimate, however, excludes grapes grown for wineries on 10,000 acre that have also been impacted.

A state government official told Business Standard: "The agriculture and horticulture department is in the process of calculating the actual loss to the crop and the loss to grape growers due to untimely rains. The state government has already announced a Rs 1,000 crore compensation package for farmers who have been affected by the rains, including grape growers."

He, however, said the government may revise the compensation package once the final loss estimates were made.

Ashok Gaikwad, vice president of the Grape Growers Association of Maharashtra said 30 per cent of crop loss is going to affect domestic sales as well as exports. "This is the third successive year in which grape growers are facing a crisis. It was a hailstorm that had damaged the crop in 2008-09 followed by Fayan in 2009-10 and now the untimely rains have done immense damage to the grape crop."

"Farmers were initially happy due to good rainfall but the extended monsoon and the unseasonal rains have changed the entire scenario," he said. Gaikwad said grape growers were caught in a debt trap and their future is quite uncertain.

Sopan Kanchan, president of the All India Grape Growers Federation echoed Gaikwad's views. "Due to the extended and unseasonal rains in grape growing areas, farmers have used more pesticides and insecticides. This may result in more residue affecting the export, especially to Europe and other countries where standards are quite high." He said the state and central governments should come to the rescue of the grape growers in these trying times.

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Thursday, December 16, 2010

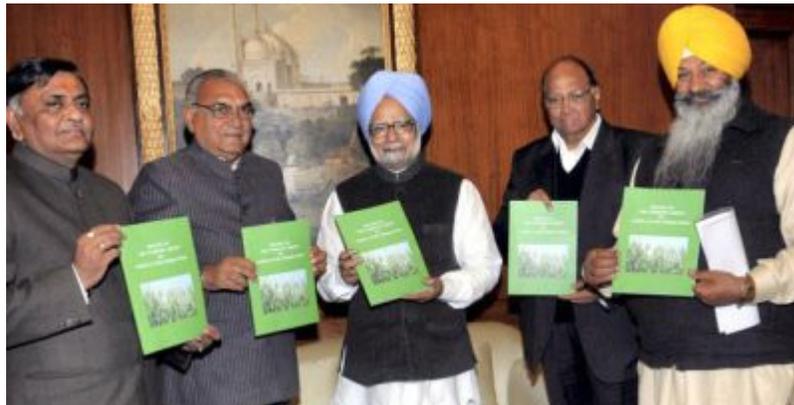
Date:16/12/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121653401800.htm>

Back 'Fix MSP for crops 50% over actual cultivation cost'

Working group's report suggests far-reaching changes.

PTI



The Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, with the Union Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, receives the report of Working Group on Agriculture Production from its Chairman, the Haryana Chief Minister, Bhopinder Singh Hooda (second from left), and members Punjab's Agriculture Minister, Mr Sucha Singh Langha (right), and Local Government Minister, Mr Manoranjan Kalia (left), in New Delhi on Wednesday. —

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Dec.15

The Centre should fix the minimum support price (MSP) for crops at levels that are 50 per cent more than their “actual cost of cultivation”, the Working Group on Agriculture Production under the Haryana Chief Minister, Mr Bhupinder Singh Hooda, has said.

If implemented, this recommendation by the Group — which also includes the Chief Ministers of Bihar, Punjab and West Bengal — can have far-reaching impact on farm incomes.

The MSP for paddy, for instance, is currently fixed at Rs 1,000 a quintal for common varieties and Rs 1,030 in the case of grade ‘A’ (fine and superfine) crop. As against this, the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) has estimated the all-India average ‘C-2’ cost for paddy in 2010-11 at Rs 742.43 a quintal.

The ‘C-2’ costs cover all paid-out expenses on fertilisers, pesticides, diesel, hired labour, etc, plus imputed (opportunity cost) values on family labour, land (rental income foregone) and capital (interest foregone on owned assets such as tractors and implements).

If farmers are to be paid 50 per cent over the ‘C-2’ cost, they would be entitled to an MSP of around Rs 1,115 a quintal on paddy. It would be even more if “actual” costs are to be taken into account, as the Group's report — submitted to the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, here on Wednesday — has suggested. The report has, in fact, even sought a “review” of the CACP's methodology for calculating cultivation costs, which, it feels, does not adequately reflect “actual” costs.

The same holds for wheat, where the MSP for the wheat crop currently being grown has been fixed at Rs 1,120 a quintal, whereas the average ‘C-2’ cost worked out by the CACP is Rs 826.29 a quintal. If farmers are to be given 50 per cent return over ‘C-2’, the revised MSP would be almost Rs 1,240 a quintal.

Oilseeds, pulses

The discrepancy is wider in the case of oilseeds and pulses. Thus, the ‘C-2’ cost for rapeseed-mustard is estimated at Rs 1,519.88 a quintal (against an MSP of only Rs

1,850), with these correspondingly being Rs 2,100.36 (Rs 2,300) for groundnut, Rs 1,287.66 (Rs 1,440) for soyabean, Rs 1,902.19 (Rs 2,100) for gram and Rs 2,421.82 (Rs 3,000) for arhar.

Even in cotton (kapas), the CACP has projected the average 'C-2' cost of the 2010-11 crop at Rs 2,128.59 a quintal, whereas the MSP is Rs 2,500-3,000 a quintal (depending on staple length and micronaire value). It is another matter, though, that farmers, this time, are realising over Rs 4,000 a quintal — translating into a near 100 per cent return — courtesy soaring global prices and a domestic production fall.

The Hooda Working Group has also called for farm loans to be extended at “not more than 4 per cent per annum interest”, besides providing subsidy on diesel used for irrigation on the lines of the scheme drawn by the Bihar Government.

In all, the Group has made more than 150 specific recommendations, which will be discussed at a meeting of the Core Group of Central Ministers and Chief Ministers, headed by Dr Singh, on December 28.

Date:16/12/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121654610102.htm>

Back Govt allows export of 5 lakh tonnes sugar

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Dec 15

The Centre has permitted export of five lakh tonnes (lt) of sugar under the open general licence (OGL).

The modalities, including how the quantity would be allocated among mills, will be worked out by the Department of Food and Public Distribution "within 10 days", the Union Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, said at the 76th annual general meeting of the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) here on Wednesday.

With global prices at \$710- 715 or Rs 32,000 a tonne freeon- board, mills would currently realise - depending on distance from the ports - Rs 29,500-30,500 a tonne from exports.

This is above the Rs 28,000-odd ex-factory realisation on domestic sales, making exports more profitable.

So far, the Centre has allowed only 15-odd mills to export. These pertain to their pending re-export obligations of around 11 lt against past imports of raw sugar under the advance licence (AL) scheme. The decision now to permit another five lt under OGL raises the issue of allocation among individual mills.

"Given the experience with regard to 2G spectrum, we are definitely not going to allot on a first-come-first-served basis. Instead, it may be better to distribute the five lt among all factories, pro-rated to their production last season. If any mill does not want to export, it can sell its entitlement to others," a Department official told Business Line.

To the ISMA Director- General, Mr Vivek Saraogi's request for allowing up to 20 lt exports under OGL, Mr Pawar said that mills should first discharge their AL commitments.

"I understand the industry has so far applied for only half of the total exports permitted under this window," he noted, adding that exports cannot take priority over domestic requirements and further shipments will be linked to production trends.

The Minister also announced a provisional all-India average price of Rs 1,847.05 a quintal for levy sugar supplied by mills in the 2010-11 season, as against the Rs 1,757 level for 2009-10.

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<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121651941700.htm>

Back Lukewarm trading keeps rice market lacklustre



Karnal, Dec. 15

The rice market continued to rule firm on account of low trading since Monday. Prices of aromatic and non-basmati rice ruled almost flat on Wednesday.

Mr Praveen Kumar, a rice trader, told Business Line that since trading was lukewarm, the market was lacklustre. The market had witnessed a drop of around Rs 100 in aromatic and of around Rs 50 in non-basmati varieties last weekend. Since then, the market ruled steady, he added. "It is hard to anticipate any move of the market at present," said Mr Kumar.

Prices of Pusa-1121 steam (new) ruled at around Rs 5,250 a quintal, while the old variety sold around Rs 5,300. Pusa-1121 sela (new) was at Rs 4,150-Rs 4,200, whereas the old variety at Rs 4,300-Rs 4,350. Pusa-1121 raw (new) ruled between Rs 5,050 and Rs 5,150, while the old variety quoted around Rs 5,250. Pusa (sela) ruled at Rs 3,200-Rs 3,250 and Pusa (raw) at around Rs 4,200.

Basmati sela quoted at Rs 6,000-Rs 6,100, while basmati raw was around Rs 7,000-Rs 7,100.

Brokens such as Tibar was at Rs 3,100-Rs 3,200, Dubar at Rs 2,300 and Mongra around Rs 2,000-Rs 2,100.

Prices of Permal sela ruled at Rs 2,000-Rs 2,200, while Permal steam ruled between Rs around Rs 2,200 a quintal. Sharbati sela sold around Rs 2,700-Rs 2,780 and Sharbati steam at Rs 3,000 a quintal.

Paddy trading

Around 5,000 bags of PR-13 arrived, sold between Rs 915 and Rs 930. Grade-A variety arrived in 5,000 bags and quoted between Rs 1,025 and Rs 1,050.

About 1,500 bags of Sharbati ruled between Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,570. Sugandha-999 arrived in about 5,000 bags, and quoted at Rs 1,600-Rs 1,630.

Around 2,500 bags of Pusa (duplicate basmati) quoted at Rs 2,000-Rs 2,200. Around 5,000 bags of Pusa-1121 ruled at Rs 2,000-Rs 2,440.

About 5,000 bags of pure basmati quoted at Rs 2,200-Rs 2,720. The stock was lifted by the millers.

Date:16/12/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121653481800.htm>

Back Govt clears Rs 350-cr plan for farm sector to fight climate change

Our Bureau

New Delhi, Dec. 15

The Government on Wednesday approved a Rs 350-crore scheme to assess the impact of climate change on the agriculture sector and evolve cost-effective adaptation and mitigation strategies.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the new scheme – National Initiative on Climate Resilient Agriculture – to be implemented in current plan, an official release said.

The Government plans to spend a total of Rs 350 crore on creating research infrastructure, capacity building and on-farm demonstration of climate resilient technologies. The Government expects to spend Rs 200 crore this fiscal on strengthening research infrastructure at key institutes of Indian Council for Agricultural Research and the rest in 2011-12.

Long-term approach

About a lakh farmers will be directly benefited through on-farm demonstration, while the long-term strategic research will evolve climate coping technologies that will be used by millions of farmers in the country.

The scheme would assess vulnerability of agro-climatic regions in detail and its impact on

different crops, livestock and fishery sectors. It will initiate research on adaptation and mitigation at seven major institutes of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and demonstrate available climate resilient practices on farmers' fields in 100 most vulnerable districts of 27 States in the country.

During 2011-12, long-term strategic research programmes would be initiated on crop-improvement to heat and drought stress, management of natural resources for adaptation and mitigation, it said. The scheme would also focus on innovative livestock management practices to minimise heat stress on animals.

“The scheme would help in identification of at least 15-20 heat/drought-tolerant promising cultivars of different crops by the end of the current Plan period. The outputs are expected to provide adequate resilience to small and marginal farmers and reduce production losses at least by 25-30 per cent,” the release said.

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<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121652791900.htm>

Back Allow export of par-boiled rice, relax norms for rice levy: Minister

Visakhapatnam, Dec 15

The Union Minister of State for Human Resources Development, Ms D. Purandeswari, has made an appeal to the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, to go to the rescue of farmers in Andhra Pradesh, hit hard by five successive natural calamities this year by getting the norms for rice procurement relaxed and by allowing export of par-boiled rice from the State.

Rain havoc

She made the plea to the Prime Minister in a letter, the copy of which was released to the press here on Wednesday. The Minister, who represents the Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha constituency, said in the letter that the recent cyclonic rains had destroyed the harvested paddy in the fields in several coastal districts and other parts of the State.

“It is estimated that paddy on 28 lakh acres was badly affected and not only was there discoloration but germination. In 2004, in a similar situation, FCI gave 10 per cent relaxation and the State Government 24 per cent.

The paddy was bought by the millers and the rice was then procured by FCI.

Relief plea

In the present situation, if FCI extends similar relief, and the export of par-boiled rice is allowed, there will be some reprieve for the farmers,” she pleaded with the Prime Minister.

She said at least 15-20 lakh tonnes of discoloured paddy should be converted into boiled rice and exported.

She said there was not much demand for boiled rice in AP or other States except Kerala but there was a good demand for such rice in Bangladesh and African countries.

She said Bangladesh needed at least a million tonnes of par-boiled rice from Andhra Pradesh.

She said rakes should be provided to export boiled rice to Bangladesh. Export of boiled rice would prompt rice millers to buy paddy from farmers, she pleaded.

Date:16/12/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121653011900.htm>

Back Pepper futures fall on bear pressure

G.K. Nair

Kochi, Dec. 15

Pepper futures fell on Wednesday on the continued “tug of war” in the market between the bull and bear operators, according to market sources.

According to them, the December stock validity, which would expire on January 5, is only

300 tonnes while the arrival of the new crop continued to remain delayed.

On the other hand, the crop this year is also reportedly less.

In fact, some primary market dealers, who were offering high range pepper at Rs 210 a kg, started quoting farm grade pepper held by them for some years at Rs 207 a kg and that in turn activated the bear operators to pull the market down, market sources told Business Line.

Overseas market

In the overseas markets also, availability is said to be tight, at present, and, hence, the prices of other origins for asta grade continued to hover at around \$5,000 a tonne, the sources said. One report said Indonesia had L asta for \$5,000 a tonnes (f.o.b.) while another said \$4,850-4,950 a tonne (f.o.b).

Since Indian parity is at around \$4,975 –5,075 a tonne (c&f), “we are in line with them and, hence, some orders can be expected from overseas buyers this week as they will be on Christmas and New Year holidays”, they said.

In fact, there was not much selling pressure on the spot market. Buyers also stayed away from the declining market.

Stock liquidation

Meanwhile, stockists in Delhi, who cater to seven States in the North, have started liquidating their stocks of pepper bought earlier from Karnataka and thus the domestic demand from these States are met by them.

This phenomenon also aided the futures market fall, they said.

Fresh demand from them will now emerge once the stocks are exhausted and by that time, probably the new crop in Kerala might arrive at the markets, trade sources.

December contract on NCDEX fell by Rs 239 to close at Rs 21,567 a quintal.

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<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121651971700.htm>

[Back](#) **Global cues cool edible oils**

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Dec.15

Prices of soya oil, palmolein and cotton refined oil declined by Rs 3, Rs 4 and Rs 6 on poor local demand in the edible oil market, taking cues from weak Malaysian markets. Groundnut oil rose by Rs 5 in line with firm reports from Saurashtra.

In the Rajkot market, groundnut oil increased by Rs 15 for a tin on fresh buying support from brand makers. At local level, absence of fresh demand and regular supply from refineries kept volume thin. The sentiment was weak on poor retail demand and cold weather, traders said.

Crude palm oil futures on Malaysia's derivatives exchange fell on Wednesday, succumbing to broad-based selling as investors continued to take money off the table following the previous day's rally to the market's highest levels in more than two years. Malaysian crude palm oil January and February futures declined. Taking cues from Malaysia, Indore NBOT soya futures also came down on profitbooking. Soyabean arrivals in Indore were about 2.50 lakh bags, said sources.

In Saurashtra, cold weather conditions kept arrivals of seeds at low level. Brand makers were buyers of good quality groundnut oil for seasonal consumption demand. At Rajkot, groundnut oil prices were up at Rs 1,155 a tin and Rs 745 for 10 kg.

In the Mumbai market, absence of fresh retail demand and resellers' lower price sale offer kept volume nominal. Hardly 300/350 tonnes of oil was traded in the market.

Malaysia's crude palm oil January contracts closed higher at MYR 3,683 (3,720) and February at 3,669 (3,680) MYR. Indore NBOT soya oil January futures ended at Rs 597.70 (Rs 602.80).

Mumbai commodity exchange spot rate (Rs/10 kg): Groundnut oil 770 (765), Soya refined oil 577 (580), Sunflower exp. ref. 660 (660), Sunflower ref. 715 (720), Rapeseed ref. oil 615 (615), Rapeseed expeller ref. 585 (585), Cotton ref. oil 568 (572) and Palmolein 560 (566).

Date:16/12/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121651991700.htm>

Back Chana gains despite slack enquiries

Our Correspondent

Indore, Dec. 15

Riding on positive futures, chana gained marginally on the spot market, notwithstanding slack demand in the physical market. On the spot market, chana quoted Rs 10 higher at Rs 2,370-2,380 a quintal. Chana futures traded higher on buying interest.

On the NCDEX, chana December contract closed Rs 10 higher at Rs 2,497 a quintal. On the spot, rising trend in chana will continue in the next 15 days because of increased demand during Christmas and Makar Sankranti. According to a chana trader, Mr Sanjay Bansal, keeping in view increased demand in chana prices may gain Rs 50-100 by the end of this month. Moreover, prices may be influenced by the NCDEX contracts ending December 20.

Chickpea rules firm

Dollar (kabuli) chana or chickpea ruled firm at Rs 4,300-Rs 4,500 a quintal on slack demand in both the physical and export markets. Future of dollar chana, however, appears positive and prices may rule high in the coming months because of the bleak prospect of the crop. According to a whole-sale dollar chana trader, Mr Deepak Agrawal, as of now because of damage to the crop on account of unseasonal rains last month, the production in Madhya Pradesh is unlikely to go beyond 3 lakh tonnes against 4.50 lakh tonnes last year.

Because of damage to the crop, farmers sowed dollar chana a second time and looking at its condition, it appears that 30 per cent of crop has suffered damage. A final picture in this regard will emerge only after January 15 when the crop will get bigger. Mr Agrawal said keeping in view delay in sowing, the new crop of dollar chana is likely to come by February 25 against the scheduled period of February 5-7.

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<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121651951700.htm>

Back Limited buying emerges in turmeric

Our Correspondent

Erode, Dec. 15

Turmeric prices declined on Wednesday as buying by bulk buyers was limited.

“The traders in Erode have received some orders on Wednesday and the bulk buyers purchased limited stocks to cater to the orders, but still there was no heavy demand from North India,” said Mr R.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants' Association.

He said some local bulk buyers had received orders from Bihar and Madhya Pradesh traders for the ‘Chennampatty variety’ of turmeric that will arrive in the market in the middle of January.

“Fresh Chennampatty crop (eight months crop) will arrive in the market in mid-January. The particular variety would be purchased by merchants in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and neighbouring areas.

“The particular variety has low curcumin content; the prices will be around Rs 1,000 lower than other varieties. The variety will be in the market for one month and then other varieties will arrive.”

Sale price

On Wednesday, in the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard, the finger

variety was sold at Rs 9,501-16,059 a quintal, and the root variety at Rs 9,000-15,859. Out of arrival 1,176 bags that arrived, 349 were sold.

In the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 15,327-16,316, and the root variety at Rs 15,558-16,393; the entire arrival of 155 bags were sold.

In Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, finger variety was sold at Rs 15,889-16,274, and root variety at Rs 15,939-16,199. All 449 bags that arrived were sold.

Date:16/12/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121651981700.htm>

Back Lower arrivals perk up castorseed



Our Correspondent

Rajkot, Dec. 15

Castorseed spot and futures price increased on Wednesday on fresh buying and lower arrivals in major producing areas. Moreover, some export trading is also seen in the market. On the Rajkot Commodity Exchange (RCX), castorseed December contract increased by Rs 2 to Rs 3,938 a quintal and March contract gained by Rs 33 to Rs 3,469.

On the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), castor December futures increased Rs 28.50 to Rs 4,065 with an open interest of 1,960 lots. January futures went

up by Rs 77 to Rs 3,811 with an open interest of 8,800 lots.

According to traders, price is gaining due to lower arrival and strong local demand. Moreover, exporters are also entering the market slowly.

A Rajkot-based RCX trader, Mr Harilal Chaganlal, said: "Since 2-3 days arrivals have increased but compared with last year, it is lower. Demand from mills in spot market pulled up the market and this scenario will continue for the next two weeks."

Castor arrivals in Gujarat are about 12,000-15,000 bags of 55 kg, priced at Rs 745-800/ 20 kg. About 500 bags castor arrived in Saurashtra and the price was Rs 750-771. Spot price on RCX was Rs 3,890, a rise of Rs 50 compared with the previous day's closing of Rs 3,840/100 kg.

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Back Sugar drops further on poor demand

Our Correspondent

Mumbai, Dec. 15

Sugar prices at spot and naka delivery declined further by Rs 15-20 on the Vashi wholesale market on Wednesday.

Mill tender rates, in absence of fresh demand and cold weather condition, fell by another Rs 25-30 a quintal. The sentiment was weak.

With the increase in petrol price, freight rates were quoted higher by Rs 2-5 a bag at producing centres.

Mills got a good response to their tender offer on Tuesday evening. Freight rates were steady at higher level, said traders.

Mr Jagdish Rawal, a wholesale trader, said local market arrivals and dispatches were at

usual levels. Retailer's fresh demand was not as expected and upcountry limited buying put pressure at mill level.

On Tuesday evening, 12-14 mills came forward with tender offers and managed to sell 75,000-80,000 bags in the range of Rs 2,760-2,810 for S-grade and Rs 2,810-2,840 a quintal for M-grade. Resellers' pressure for lifting goods from mill for December 15 maturity eased sharply.

In naka delivery S-sugar was traded at Rs 2,860-Rs 2,910 and M-grade at Rs 2,910-Rs 2,950 a quintal. The volume was thin on poor demand. Arrival in the market was 48-50 truckloads (100 kg each) and dispatches to local traders were 46-47 truckloads.

According to Bombay Sugar Merchants Association, spot sugar rates were: S-grade: Rs 2,910-2,951 (Rs 2,920-2,961) and M-grade: Rs 2,936-3,011 (Rs 2,951-Rs 3,041).

Date:16/12/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121653451800.htm>

Back Rain-hit tobacco

K.K. Mustafah



Prices down:A farm worker tends to tobacco plant at Kognoli, on the Maharashtra-Karnataka border. Tobacco prices have fallen by Rs 30 a kg compared with last year's as erratic rains and unfavourable weather have affected quality. Processed tobacco leaves are mainly sent to Tamil Nadu for use in the beedi industry.

Date:16/12/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121653491800.htm>

Back Spot rubber prices mixed

Aravindan

Kottayam, Dec. 15

Spot rubber witnessed a mixed trend on Wednesday. A moderate recovery in domestic futures and supply concerns kept the market firm and active during the day.

Sellers continued to stay away as international prices were much higher but sheet rubber failed to improve on buyer resistance. There were no fresh enquiries from the tyre sector and traders appeared to be hopeful for an improvement in arrivals as rains subsided once again, giving way to the peak production season.

Sheet rubber was flat at Rs 200 a kg, according to traders. The grade closed unchanged at Rs 199.50 a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi as reported by the Rubber Board. The December series recovered to Rs 201.90 (199.92), January to Rs 205.20 (203.98), February to Rs 208.45 (207.15) and March to Rs 211.50 (210.44) per kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 slipped at its December futures to ¥387.0 (Rs 209.25) from ¥387.7 a kg during the day session and then to ¥383.2 (Rs 207.25) in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.

RSS 3 (spot) moved down to Rs. 211.82 (212.63) a kg at Bangkok. Spot rubber (Rs/kg) follow: RSS-4: Rs 200 (200), RSS-5: Rs 191.50 (191), ungraded: 188 (187), ISNR 20: Rs 193 (193) and latex 60 per cent: Rs 129 (128).

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<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121653501800.htm>

Back Cotton prices to remain firm: Fitch

Mumbai, Dec. 15

The capping of cotton exports at 5.5 million bales to be shipped by mid-December has hit the textile sector, particularly due to sharp rise in international cotton prices.

“The capping has not helped the domestic textile sector much in the backdrop of soaring international cotton prices, which has encouraged speculation by traders and creation of artificial scarcity in the domestic market. The Indian government is expected to take a call shortly on allowing further exports of cotton,” said Fitch Ratings.

Fitch believes that cotton prices are expected to remain firm in the current cotton season, well above the previous season, due to the huge international demand-supply gap and untimely rains in major cotton producing states in India.

“Continued sharp rise in cotton prices globally is likely to hurt operating margins of Indian textile manufacturers, as prices percolate down the value chain, and are ultimately reflected in high prices of textile and clothing products,” it said.

Unusual rise

Cotton prices have risen unusually since August 2010, and as at end-November 2010, prices were at Rs 108-118 a kg (up 60-70 per cent y-o-y) across common varieties of cotton. In a bid to soften cotton and cotton yarn prices and ensure adequate availability of yarn in the domestic market, the Union Government has capped cotton yarn exports to 720 million kg to be shipped by mid-January 2011.

“This initiative is intended to aid the garment industry by reducing input prices. However, yarn spinners will suffer as their selling prices are likely to fall. Yarn exporters also fear losing export customers to their global counterparts,” Fitch said.

While cotton prices have increased 30-35 per cent across common varieties between

August and October, yarn prices have gone up by only 15 to 20 per cent. This indicates a partial pass-on of price hikes, although the input price hikes may be passed on fully with some time lag, said the rating agency.

“Fabric prices have also gone up, although end-product prices have not increased in tandem. Should cotton prices continue to remain firm, garment companies are likely to also hike end-product prices,” said Fitch. However, in the already committed fixed-price contracts, garment exporters might have to suffer on account of rising input prices as well as the appreciating rupee, it added.

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<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/12/16/stories/2010121653431800.htm>

Back FCI, NSPOT sign MoU for wheat sale in AP

Hyderabad, Dec.15

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) and NCDEX Spot Exchange (NSPOT) have signed an MoU to sell wheat under the Open Market Sales Scheme (OMSS) in Andhra Pradesh. NSPOT will provide the platform to FCI for bulk sale of wheat under the scheme. This would reduce the turnaround time for the flour millers in AP and they would also be able to see the stock position through the platform. This agreement would allow both FCI and NSPOT to manage their funds effectively, a press release said.

Mandi modernisation

The OMSS scheme will be using limited features of e-auction as the prices are fixed by the Government of India and there is limited participation by flour millers of Andhra Pradesh. “The electronic market places offered by NSPOT provide an opportunity to PSUs dealing in various agri-commodities to graduate to electronic trading and thus enhance their efficiencies. The commodities sale from PSUs will help establish vibrant pan-India spot markets,” said Mr Rajesh Sinha, Head of NSPOT. NSPOT has already started the membership process for the flour millers according to FCI guidelines. It also recently launched SMS-based trading that would benefit the flour millers registered with FCI in Andhra Pradesh.

As on November 30, 2010, NSPOT has traded more than 50,000 tonnes of foodgrains, mainly oilseeds and pulses on its trading platform, making it the leading spot exchange for trading food crops in India. It is working closely with PSUs and also with various State governments, including the Rajasthan State Government, for its Mandi Modernisation Project, the release added.

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Weather

Chennai - INDIA

<p>Today's Weather</p>  <p>Cloudy</p> <p>Rain: 8.0 mm in 24hrs Humidity: 94% Wind: Normal</p>	<p>Thursday, Dec 16</p> <p>Max Min 27° 22.9°</p> <p>Sunrise: 6:22 Sunset: 17:44 Barometer: 1009.0</p>	<p>Tomorrow's Forecast</p>  <p>Rainy</p> <p>Friday, Dec 17</p> <p>Max Min 30° 23°</p>
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Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Dec 18	Sunday Dec 19	Monday Dec 20	Tuesday Dec 21	Wednesday Dec 22
				
25° 23° Cloudy	24° 22° Rainy	25° 21° Rainy	27° 22° Rainy	26° 24° Rainy