

THE HINDU

Online edition of India's National Newspaper

Thursday, November 25, 2010

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112562370600.htm>

Agricultural inputs distributed

Staff Reporter

—Photo:B.Velankanni Raj



Assistance: Collector C.Munianathan distributing tractors and farm machinery to beneficiaries at the Collectorate in Nagapattinam on Monday.

NAGAPATTINAM: Agricultural inputs worth Rs.22.86 lakh were distributed under the aegis of Department of Agricultural Engineering at the Collectorate on Monday.

Agricultural tools such as tractors, transplanters, and sprayers provided with government subsidy were distributed by Collector C.Munianathan.

Three persons received tractors, each at a cost of Rs.14.17 lakh with a government subsidy of Rs.45,000. Transplanters, at a cost of Rs.4.60 lakh each with a government subsidy of Rs.1.10 lakh were handed over two persons.

Further, harvesters at a cost of Rs.3.78 lakh with a government subsidy of Rs.91,000; seeding trays at a cost of Rs.28,000 and a subsidy of Rs.13,460; and hand sprayers at a cost of Rs.3,300 with a subsidy of Rs.825 were handed over to various beneficiaries.

V.Rajendran, District Revenue Officer; A.Venugopal, executive engineer, Agricultural Engineering Department, were among those present.

Published: November 25, 2010 12:45 IST | Updated: November 25, 2010 14:28 IST
KOCHI, November 25, 2010

Swaminathan compliments Kerala for ban on Endosulfan



The Hindu M. S. Swaminathan, renowned agriculture scientist, delivering the inaugural address at the sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning in Kochi on Thursday.
Photo: Vipin Chandran

Renowned agriculture scientist M. S. Swaminathan has complimented the Kerala government for its decision to ban the use of Endosulfan across the State.

Speaking on the sidelines of the sixth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning here on Thursday, Dr. Swaminathan said that he has been advocating a ban on the use of the pesticide in Kerala for long time.

Praising the Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar on his decision to offer Rs. 100 crore as assistance for rehabilitating the families affected by the use of Endosulfan, Dr.

Swaminathan said that the Minister had also pointed out that it is for the State governments to decide (on banning the pesticide) according to the risks and benefits of Endosulfan. "There are a large number of risks. That is why even the United States has banned it," he said.

Pointing out that the Union government did not want to impose an all-India ban without consulting other States where Endosulfan is used in large quantities, Dr. Swaminathan recommended the adoption of the 'precautionary principle' in this case, as it involved the health of men, women, and children. "It's always better to go on the safer side. That is my philosophy particularly when it involves the health of the people," he said.

Stating that Endosulfan is an effective pesticide, Dr. Swaminathan said that he would not compromise on the human health, as every life is precious. "That is why we should adopt the precautionary principle," he said.

Referring to Mr. Pawar's suggestion for introducing organic pesticides in Kerala, Dr. Swaminathan said that he had learnt from media reports that the Minister had suggested the use of botanical and biological pesticides here. "You can use other forms like neem, which are much safer," he said.

Explaining that there is no need for any new commission to study the health impact of the use of Endosulfan, Dr. Swaminathan asked the other States to analyse the risks and benefits of the pesticide. "But the bottomline of the policy should be the health of the men, women, and children," he said.

Asked whether the ban on Endosulfan in Kerala alone would achieve the expected results, Dr. Swaminathan said that it is feasible. "Kerala farmers are literate people. But I think there is consensus in Kerala (against the use of the pesticide)," he said.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112555780300.htm>

Training programme for cotton farmers held

Special Correspondent

SALEM: A capacity building programme for farmers on production of better cotton was organised at Veeraganur in Talavasal block in association with the Department of Agriculture and Super Spinning Mills, Coimbatore recently.

A press release from Joint Director of Agriculture G. Udayakumar says that the objective of the programme was to reduce the use of plant protection chemicals thereby reducing the corresponding expenditure and pollution besides creating awareness on safety among farmers and cattle.

They were told to follow the minimum production criteria with integrated pest management to reduce the harmful impact of crop protection practices, efficient usage of water both under irrigated and rain-fed conditions.

Conserving natural habitats, preserving the quality of cotton fibre and promoting labour welfare were few other things that farmers were made to know.

The participants were split into various small groups to share their experiences and the feed-backs were also analysed. Bio-fertilisers and contamination kits were also distributed to the better cotton growing farmers free of cost. The need for eco-friendly pesticides and production of contamination-free cotton fibre was also stressed.

A team of Agriculture officers, including Lakshmanan, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Talavasal Block and officials from the mills took part in the programme in which 600 farmers took part.

Date:25/11/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112562690600.htm>

Mushroom cultivation workshop

Staff Reporter

TIRUCHI: A three-day workshop on 'mushroom cultivation and value added products' commenced at the Department of Biotechnology, Bharathidasan University, on Wednesday, with funding from the Tamil Nadu Science and Technology Council.

The Council has funded the programme under the aegis of Dissemination of Innovative Technology. According to the programme organiser T.Thirunalasundari, the beneficiaries constitute members of women self help groups.

Handbook released

The Vice-Chancellor K.Meena inaugurated the workshop and released a handbook.

The Department Head A..Ganapathy presided over.

Demonstration

The resource persons constituting Muthukrishnan, Professor of Dhanalakshmi Srinivasan College and Karpagapandi, Scientist – Food Technology, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Sirugamani demonstrated the techniques of mushroom cultivation and value addition.

Date:25/11/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112556910600.htm>

'Paddy in more than 16,000 hectares hit'

Correspondent

VIZIANAGARAM: The damage to paddy on account of cyclone in early first week of this month and on November 12 and 13 has been assessed and was put at 16,696 hectares

(approximately), including the recent damage to the crop in 10 villages of Gantiyada mandal. A total of 75,879 farmers were badly affected, according to sources in Agriculture Department.

The total crop area of paddy raised during this kharif was 1.24 lakh hectares. Among other crops, cotton in 299.26 ha, maize in 23.658 ha, sugarcane in 8.69 ha and ragi in 12.5 ha was damaged affecting 1,189 more farmers.

That apart, damage to paddy due to pests was also reported and unconfirmed reports put it at around 10,000 ha. However, the sources maintain that the harvest this kharif was good and the crop damage due to rains was not more than 12 per cent. The damage was severe in Vizianagaram division particularly in mandals like Vepada (1996.71 ha), Gantiyada (1740 ha), L.Kota (1590.62 ha), Jami (1301.67 ha) and Gurla (1040.24ha).

The sources said that the government would pay Rs. 4,500 per hectare for paddy, sugarcane, cotton and groundnut and Rs. 3,750 per hectare for maize and pulses as compensation. Some Rs.8crores would be required in this regard, the sources added. Meanwhile, harvesting of paddy in the unaffected mandals has picked up.

Date:25/11/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112556020300.htm>

Paddy procurement may fail to touch target

Staff Reporter

Harvesting hit as polders remain flooded

Procurement target for 'virippu' season was 20,000 tonnes

Sowing for 'Puncha' season also affected

KOTTAYAM: The extended monsoon has dealt a heavy blow to the paddy sector in the district, which falls mainly under the Upper Kuttanad area. According to Supplyco authorities, they are expecting a 25 per cent fall in paddy production during the 'virippu' season and the loss may

extend to the coming 'puncha' season as well since the seedlings too have suffered heavy damages.

According to Baburaj, Paddy Field Officer, the paddy procurement for the 'virippu' season may fail to achieve the targeted figure of 20,000 tonnes. "Ever since the harvesting season began in September, we are experiencing rain. A more realistic target would be 15,000 tonnes for the season," he said. This means a loss of 25 per cent.

The combined harvesters, which were pressed into service, could not function properly in the rain as the paddy grains fail to separate from the hay during operation. "In most cases, up to 30 per cent loss was registered on account of this," Mr Baburaj said. Moreover, on account of inundation, the harvesters could not be used in many places, mostly interior paddy fields.

The average paddy production during a normal situation being 30,000 tonnes, a 25 per cent loss, at a conservative valuation, would amount to Rs.9.75 crore at the current procuring price of Rs.13 a kg.

Making the situation more complex, the heavy rain has led to bund breaches in many places where sowing for the coming 'puncha' season had taken place. This includes the more than 485 hectares (1200 acre) J Block at Thiruvarpu 'Onpathinaayiram kayal' where the newly sown saplings have been destroyed. In many cases, farmers had soaked seeds as a preparation for the coming 'puncha' season and on account of the continuing inundation these have also been rendered useless.

The paddy in the 186 ha (460 acre) Menonkari polder in Aymanam panchayat is almost lost due to inundation. More than 250 farmers are affected. According to authorities, cultivation in 511 ha has lost and the loss is put at Rs.3 crore.

The surging waters have breached the bunds of the more than 14 ha (35 acre) Paalaachal-Kaarikkuzhi polder and the more than 10 ha (25 acre) Parayanadi polder in Kurichy grama panchayat. The freshly sown seedlings have been destroyed.

Date:25/11/2010 URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112560250300.htm>

Malabar Agro Fest begins today

Staff Reporter

Kozhikode: The Malabar Agro Fest-2010, jointly organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Corporation of Kerala, will begin at Swapna Nagari here on Thursday. Minister for Agriculture Mullakkara Ratnakaran will inaugurate the four-day fete.

The programme will give an opportunity for farmers to familiarise with the latest technologies in the field of agriculture. Stalls will be set up for displaying modern farm equipment, fertilizers and hybrid seeds.

Mayor A.K. Premajam will preside over the inaugural function. Research Director of Kerala Agriculture University T.R. Gopalakrishnan will deliver the keynote address.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2010/11/25/stories/2010112552421300.htm>

FARM QUERIES

Need vermicompost

Is there any place near Chennai where I can buy vermicompost in large quantities ?

S. Jagadeesan

Chennai

You can contact Thandalam Yogakshema trust, Thandalam village (on the Arakonam-Kuminipettai road in Vellore district, about 3 kms from Arakonam town), phone: 044- 24340448 and mobile:94445-40054 for your requirements.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2010/11/25/stories/2010112552421301.htm>

FARM QUERIES

Red ants

Can red ants be used to control pests?

I. Shakeel Ahmed

Orissa

Red ants are good predators of tea mosquitoes invading cashew plantations. A farmer Mr. N. Vasan in Kannur district, Kerala says that these insects give cent per cent results in controlling pests. The ant colonies are brought from other trees by tying the cashew tree with the connecting tree with a jute or plastic rope and a piece of meat, fish or sweet must be tied at the other end for the ants to cross over. For more details Mr. Vasan can be called on 09847-871575.

Date:25/11/2010 **URL:**

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2010/11/25/stories/2010112552791500.htm>

National farmers' innovative showcases new inventions

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has taken the lead in recognizing farmers' innovations.

A National farm innovators meet was organised recently at JSS Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Suttur, Mysore District, Karnataka.

About 200 farm innovators (innovative farmers) representing 25 states viz., Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tripura, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Haryana, Nagaland, Bihar, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Gujarat participated in the meet.

Book on innovators

A publication entitled "Farm Innovators 2010" published by the Division of Agricultural Extension, ICAR, New Delhi was also released.

Each farmer was allotted 5 minutes to explain his/her innovation or modification of existing technology/practice with power point presentation. Farmers explained their brief bio-data, name of innovation, description of innovation and practical utility of innovation.

Some of the farmers showed their innovations with video shows as supporting document.

Questions and answers were allowed immediately after farmers' presentations in each session for discussion. Each session was concluded with Chairman and Co-chairman's remarks.

Models and specimens

Farmers displayed their innovations with suitable write-up as well as models and specimens.

For more details and copy of the publication contact Dr.S. Prabhu Kumar, Zonal Project Directorate, Zone VIII, Indian Council of Agricultural Research , MRS, H.A.Farm post, Hebbal, Bangalore- 560 024, Email: prabhukumar@gmail.com, phone: 080-23510616 and 080-23410614 Extn.30, fax: 080-23410615.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/seta/2010/11/25/stories/2010112552781500.htm>

FARMER'S NOTEBOOK

Can privatizing agriculture solve marketing problems?

M.J. PRABU

'Experts must learn from Mumbai dhabawallahs on supply management'

Photo: D. Gopalakrishnan



No magic solution: From fixing prices to renting godowns everything is under government control.

“Contrary to popular opinion, the real crisis in Indian agriculture does not stem from poor farming practices, but because of a deficient marketing, supply and distribution chain in the country,” says Mr. Venkat Subramanian, Founder, eFarm solutions, Chennai.

eFarm is a farm-to-home supply chain platform for procuring and delivering farm based produce to consumers . It basically attempts to link farmers, intermediaries, logistics providers, distributors and small time retailers.

Mr. Venkat believes that privatizing Indian agriculture could solve much of the existing marketing problems.

Who controls ?

“Who runs agriculture today?” he asks, “from fixing prices to renting godowns everything comes under government control. The first green revolution took care to increase yield through research.

“The current crisis is on management/planning and marketing that are 'business issues'. But strangely the answers to these problems all these years are being proposed by agriculture scientists. And the gaps are glaring. Bring in professionals,” he says.

A lot of confusion exists between central and state policies on crop produce. “Why do we need a Supreme Court intervention to distribute food to the hungry poor, when intellectuals are harping on achieving food security? In my opinion private entrepreneurs can do a better job in solving the marketing problem than the present government officials,” is his argument.

Most people don't seem to know the full range of issues impacting agriculture, often caught in media hype around farmer suicides.

“Contrary to general opinion a farmer is not poor,” he stresses. “The land he owns (say even 2 acres) may be worth between Rs. 30 lakh to Rs. 3 crore, depending on the distance from main city. Though crop income may be meagre, asset value is not,” he contends.

Nothing comes free

A two-acre farmer can finance himself and doesn't really need aid. “In fact serious farmers shy away from schemes, as it is nothing short of begging from corrupt officials, leaving a lot of ‘pseudo farmers’ demanding everything for free. Nothing comes free – the tax payers pay for everything,” says Mr. Venkat.

“Even after several years, our farmers still send their produce to the city in outdated methods. They use bags, sacks, bundles to define their produce and consumers deal in ‘kg’, units and grams to purchase. Different products are defined in different weight ranges, for example onions in 50 kg bags, potatoes in 44 kg, tomatoes in 15 kg crates, carrot in 80 kg. Why this difference?” he asks.

Most farmers don't use a weighing machine to measure their produce while selling it to traders. They get cheated mostly in just weight reading itself.

According to him, what our farmers need today is small collection units in every 3-4 villages. A simple covered shelter, weighing machines, crates, small truck for local pickups run by the farmers' group or rural youth to handle value added services such as sorting/grading/processing/transport, and who would earn a better income.

Recognize middlemen

“Interconnect the collection centres with simple technology tools, to gather data and connect to buyers. Enhance the existing unorganized supply chain — recognize the role of middlemen and help them evolve.

“In agriculture, there are hundreds of middlemen right from the vegetable seller, to truckers, wholesalers, agents etc. It is impossible and impractical to just 'bypass' hundreds of people. By supporting them with bank loans (to setup godowns, trucks, and processing units) we can make them add value to the chain,” he says.

Most of the existing 'solutions' according to him are products of some urban organizations who are never involved with the farmer in the solution process.

“This leads to worsening of the crisis. If you are trying to help a farmer, ask the farmer himself, rather than policy makers , who don't know the ground situation,” he says.

“Why can't our agriculture experts learn from the World's best example of an efficient supply chain system — Mumbai dhabawallahs, run by illiterate, middle aged people dealing in perishable 'food' business,” he asks.

No instant solution

For agriculture to become profitable there are no 'instant food' solutions. The approach needs better planning and co-ordination across different agencies, seems to be Mr. Venkat's conviction.

But questions have also been raised on the role of the middlemen in agriculture and how a cartel can hold poor farmers to ransom.

Government officials argue that it is because of the fear of middlemen that they have to sustain procurement through the season - especially of food grains.

No government wants to leave farmers at the mercy of the middlemen. It cuts both ways.

For more details contact Mr. Venkat Subramanian at email: venky@matchboxsolutions.in and efarm.venky@gmail.com, mobile: 98847 61354, phone:044- 43577236(off) and 24450613 (res).

Heavy rain spells trouble for farmers

Call to implement areca nut package Labour shortage, low yield hit farmers

Kasaragod: Farmers here have urged the State government to urgently implement the areca nut package as announced in the previous budget, since torrential rains had caused widespread damage to crops in the district

Areca nut cultivators are unable to dry the nuts. Excess water has affected the quality of the nuts, some of which even sprouted, areca nut farmer M. Ranjith Nambiar says. In the peak monsoon season of July and August the crop loss reported was 60 per cent as farmers could not spray pesticides to check 'Mahali' disease, leading to premature fall of areca nuts from the tree. The misery of farmers, already reeling under acute shortage of labourers, was compounded further by sharp fall in crops. Equally worried are the rubber growers in the hilly hamlets. Incessant rain has prevented them from extracting sap at a time when the produce is fetching record prices in the market. Paddy farmers too are unable to harvest due to heavy rains, which will also have a damaging impact on mango and cashew yield.

Published: November 24, 2010 19:45 IST | Updated: November 24, 2010 21:14 IST Germany, November 24, 2010

German court approves GM crop restrictions

Germany's top court on Wednesday approved some of the world's most rigorous restrictions on genetically modified crops, ruling they were in accordance with the country's constitution.

One of Germany's 16 states, Saxony-Anhalt, had challenged a federal law that obliges a farmer to pay damages if bees and wild insects carry pollen from a GM crop to a neighbour's non-GM crop.

Many Germans are deeply suspicious of GM crops, where the DNA of plants is modified in the laboratory to help plants to resist pests.

Some opponents have denounced the produce as "Frankenstein food." The federal constitutional court in Karlsruhe rejected complaints that a public register of the fields where GM crops grow was a breach of privacy. Farmers say the register helps militant anti-GM campaigners to destroy crops by trampling or contaminating them.

But the court approved legislation which Chancellor Angela Merkel has insisted is a fair compromise between the anti-GM activists and the big mechanized farms that are eager to improve crop yields with new-style pest-resistant strains.

"Given that the state of knowledge about the long-term consequences of deploying genetic modification is not fully researched, the legislative arm has an especial duty of care," the court judgement said.

Farmers must publicly disclose what seed they used. The court also approved a no-fault-liability rule which obliges a farmer to compensate his neighbours for any loss in market value of their crops if the natural and GM variants become mixed.

GM farmers will have to pay the damages even if there was no obvious fault with their agricultural technique.

Saxony-Anhalt state is part of eastern Germany, where commercial farming with very large fields and advanced technology dominates. In the rest of Germany, farming is mainly on family-run smallholdings, which tend to show less interest in GM seed.

Published: November 24, 2010 21:34 IST | Updated: November 24, 2010 21:49 IST

Washington, November 24, 2010

Indian farmers give Harvard lecture



While high-level agricultural cooperation between India and the United States has focused on bringing advanced technologies to India, the flow of knowledge is sometimes reversed at the grassroots level and in academic circles.

This week two Indian farmers from Jalgaon district in the state of Maharashtra travelled to Boston, where they told a rapt audience at Harvard University's prestigious Business School about how they had used drip irrigation to dramatically increase their farm yields.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Hemchandra Patil (40) and Rajendra Patil (50) said that at the invitation of Harvard Business School they had travelled to the U.S. to explain how, over ten years, a unique system of drip irrigation farming techniques had helped them expand their farm holdings from between two and 12 acres to nearly 40 acres.

A partner to the Patils in this success story was one of the early pioneers of drip irrigation in India – a company called Jain Irrigation Systems. Dilip Kulkarni, President of the agro foods division at Jain Irrigation, said to *The Hindu* that while drip irrigation had been relatively rare in India prior to 1985, the company's founder, Bhavarlal Jain, played a key role in adapting drip irrigation techniques used in large-scale farms in the U.S. to the small farming conditions found commonly in India.

The key technology adaptations involved entailed modification of the drip irrigation system to suit the low-water-pressure conditions in India and also recalibration of the equipment to distribute water across smaller farm holdings.

Mr. Hemchandra Patil said that the efficient use of water that drip irrigation implied had helped him increase his earnings per acre, for example for onion cultivation, from around 10,000 rupees to 40,000 rupees or more.

He added that Jain Irrigation Systems had been instrumental in this process, not only by giving him access to the drip irrigation equipment but also by holding regular technical seminars, usually conducted by an agronomist, on appropriate cultivation methods. The Jain Hi-Tech Agricultural Institute at Jalgaon was the forum for these training seminars, he said.

In response to a question on why drip irrigation was not more popular and the less efficient technique of flood irrigation was widespread, for example, in states like Tamil Nadu, Mr. Kulkarni said that there were several reasons for this.

First, he explained, many farmers held the “wrong idea [that] more water means more paddy.” This was especially prevalent in South Indian states where rice, a crop that is relatively intensive in its use of water, is widely cultivated.

Further, Mr. Kulkarni noted, the cost of drip irrigation could sometimes be prohibitive, especially for small farmers, as it averaged about 25,000 rupees per acre.

However combined with a 50 per cent subsidy from the state government, Jain Irrigation had also evolved a system of providing the drip irrigation system upfront to the farmer and helping the farmer obtain a bank loan for the remainder through a tripartite agreement involving the farmer, the bank and Jain Irrigation itself.

The success of the system, which has also focussed on contract farming and market-access solutions, has not gone unnoticed.

Even before the farmers' Harvard presentation the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation recognised the transformative potential of the system in giving it the IFC's Inclusive Business Leadership Award, a rare honour.

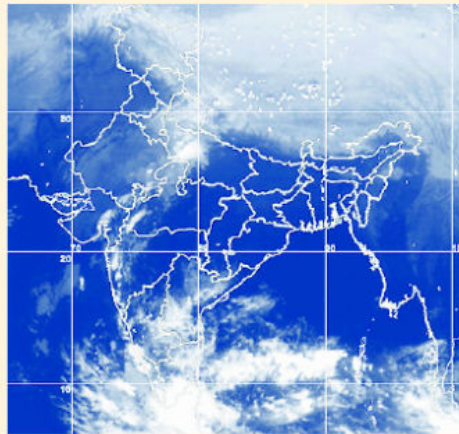
WEATHER

ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	32	21	0	217
Arogyavaram	29	19	0	—
Bapatla	31	22	0	332
Calingapatnam	30	23	0	612
Gannavaram	32	23	0	320
Hyderabad AP	32	20	0	102
Kakinada	32	25	1	704
Khammam	32	21	0	209
Kavali	32	24	0	749
Kumool	32	21	0	92
Mahabubnagar	34	20	0	60
Machilipatnam	31	24	0	670
Nandyal	31	21	0	151
Narasapur	33	24	0	458
Nellore	32	25	0	759
Nizamabad	33	21	0	117
Ongole	33	23	0	392
Ramagundam	33	21	0	147
Tirupathi AP	31	22	tr	435
Tuni	33	24	tr	511
Vizag AP	30	24	tr	634
Vizag	30	25	tr	750

KARNATAKA

Agumbe	27	16	84	733
Bangalore AP	27	19	tr	247
Bangalore	28	19	0	285
Belgaum AP	29	19	1	179
Bellary	33	20	0	217
Bijapur	31	20	10	165
Chitradurga	29	19	0	425
Chickmagalur	26	19	4	386
Chintamani	27	17	0	233
Gadag	29	21	5	250
Gulbarga	31	19	0	139
Honavar	32	22	0	531
Kanwar	32	23	5	703



INSAT PICTURE AT 11-30 hrs.
Observations recorded at 8-30 a.m. on Nov. 24.

Madikeri	22	17	3	444
Mangalore AP	30	22	9	748
Mysore	27	20	1	322
Mandya	27	18	1	267
Panambur	32	23	3	634
Raichur	32	18	0	42
Shirali	30	23	2	389

KERALA

Alappuzha	31	24	2	762
Kannur	33	23	1	728
Kochi AP	31	24	1	1058

Kottayam	31	23	4	951
Kozhikode	32	24	1	701
Punalur	30	22	23	1094
Thiruvanantha-puram AP	31	23	3	617
Thiruvanantha-puram City	31	23	3	611
Vellanikkara	31	23	0	942

TAMIL NADU

Adiramapattinam	32	23	17	362
Coimbatore AP	29	22	5	370

Coonoor	19	14	1	664
Cuddalore	29	23	33	561
Chennai AP	31	24	6	404
Chennai	30	24	4	455
Dharmapuri	28	22	1	469
Kanyakumari	32	22	11	283
Karaikal	30	24	23	329
Kodaikanal	17	12	1	661
Madurai AP	31	24	3	584
Nagapattinam	31	24	15	299
Palayamkottai	31	23	36	200
Pamban	30	25	5	405
Parangipettai	30	27	19	349
Puduchery	30	23	31	668
Salem	29	23	tr	423
Thanjavur	29	23	14	329
Tiruchi AP	30	24	6	282
Tiruttani	33	23	0	464
Tondi	30	23	15	507
Tuticorin	31	23	13	178
Ooty	19	11	0	—
Valparai	27	19	9	685
Vedaranyam	—	24	7	—
Vellore	32	23	0	334

LAKSHADWEEP

Amini Divi	32	24	0	294
Minicoy	30	25	2	249
Kavarathi	32	25	1	180

OTHER STATIONS

Kolkata (Alipore)	29	18	0	89
Mumbai	30	23	17	176
New Delhi	23	16	tr	31

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since October 01, 2010.

N-E monsoon active over T.N.

CHENNAI: Northeast monsoon has been vigorous over south interior Karnataka and active over Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Rainfall occurred at most places over coastal Karnataka, at many places over Kerala, South interior Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and at a few places over north interior Karnataka. Isolated rainfall occurred over Coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Mainly dry weather prevailed over Rayalaseema and Lakshadweep. Dry weather prevailed over Telangana.

The following stations recorded heavy rainfall in centimetres.

Kanjirapalli (Kottayam dt) 9, Agumbe 8 and Amabasamudharam (Tirunelveli dt) and Maniyatchi (Tuticorin dt) 7 each.

The other chief amounts of rainfall recorded in Centimetres are:

Kuknoor (Koppal dt), Davanagere, Thyagarathi (Shimoga dt), Nilambur (Malappuram dt.), Munnar (Idukki dt.), Ramanathapuram, Papanasam and Sivagiri (both Tirunelveli dt) 5 each.

Forecast (Valid until Friday Morning): Rain or thundershowers would occur at many places over Tamil Nadu, Puduchery, Kerala and coastal Karnataka and at a few places over coastal Andhra Pradesh, interior Karnataka and Lakshadweep. Isolated rain or thundershowers may occur over Telangana and Rayalaseema.

© Copyright 2000 - 2009 The Hindu

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Thu, Nov 25, 2010 | Updated 09.03AM IST

25 Nov, 2010, 02.53AM IST, ET Bureau

Renuka Sugars reaping benefits of contrarian move

The country's largest sugar company, Shree Renuka Sugars (SRSL), seems to have started reaping the benefits of its contrarian move to acquire two overseas sugar companies when sugar prices were close to their peaks. However, it needs to be seen whether the company will truly emerge as an outlier among domestic sugar firms all of whom are in losses as the commodity price cycle has turned unfavourable since January this year.

A lot will depend on its ability to navigate through poor price scenario amidst rising raw material cost in the domestic market and the operations in Brazil that accounts for a little less than half of its total revenues. There are concerns that there will be lower-than-expected sugarcane production in Brazil, the world's largest producer of sugar, which can affect volume growth for the overseas subsidiaries of SRSL. But, the Brazilian units could yet generate better realisation, as international prices recently hit a 30-year high before moderating over the past few weeks after the Chinese government released sugar reserves to cool down inflation. A similar prospect has built up in India where local sugarcane production is projected to be below the previous consensus estimates. Domestic sugar prices are still down by a fifth over the year-ago period, but there has been a gradual 9% price rise since August.

But SRSL is already showing signs of outperforming the rest of the sugar pack. The company's scrip has risen 43% since July compared with just 19% return clocked by 10-stock benchmark ET Sugar Index. This is partly due to positive numbers for the quarter and the year ended September 30. SRSL has almost doubled its revenues to .Rs 7,854 crore and it consolidated net profit increased nearly three fold to .Rs 715 crore for the financial year ended September 30, largely due to contribution from the Brazilian arms. It has fared better than its domestic peers, all of whom have either swung into losses or have seen profits crumbling with year-on-year decline in prices. SRSL also saw margins improve significantly with consolidation of numbers of its Brazilian units that enjoy better profitability compared with Indian sugar-makers, who have to deal with a heavily regulated local market.

Sugar prices could remain volatile, although some global research houses have projected

further rise in international prices. The impact on SRSL's financials may differ from other local firms. While the company's topline performance should continue to grow for at least two quarters due to the consolidation of numbers of its overseas firms, the growth of net profit will depend on sugar prices and how the company manages its debt pile.

24 Nov, 2010, 02.59PM IST,REUTERS

Oilseeds, soyoil rise tracking global markets

MUMBAI: Indian oilseeds and soyoil futures rose on Wednesday afternoon on a weak rupee, a rise in overseas markets and on an improvement in spot demand due to rising meal exports, analysts said.

Gains were limited by hopes area under rapeseed will rise in 2010/11 as rains have been abundant in the growing areas, analysts said.

At 1:29 p.m., Malaysian palm oil futures were up 2.83 percent at 3,203 ringgits per tonne, while U.S. soy futures were up 0.48 percent at \$12.45 a bushel, after rising 1.4 percent in the previous session.

"Overseas markets bolstered sentiments. Soymeal exports are also rising significantly," said Badruddin Khan, senior research analyst at Angel Commodities Broking.

The country's oilmeal exports in October rose 61 percent from a year earlier, its fourth straight monthly gain, due to higher demand from traditional buyers in Japan and China, data from a trade body showed.

December soybean futures contract on India's National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) was 0.55 percent higher at 2,277.5 rupees per 100 kg.

December soyoil rose 0.95 percent to 573.2 rupees per 10 kg, while rapeseed for December delivery edged up 0.26 percent to 570.2 rupees per 20 kg.

A weak rupee makes edible oil imports expensive and at the same time raises realization from soymeal exports.

Business Standard

Thursday, Nov 25, 2010

Wheat sowing to perk up to last year's record

NewsWire18 / New Delhi November 25, 2010, 0:35 IST

Undeterred by the slow start to wheat sowing this rabi season, the government is confident that total acreage under the staple crop will touch last year's record 28.5 million hectares, as the pace of plantings will accelerate from this week.



Agriculture Commissioner Gurbachan Singh is unruffled by the lag in wheat sowing in many key growing regions. In an interview, he dismissed concerns in some quarters, as "early days to worry about".

"I'm sure we will be able to cover 28.5 million hectares... There is time till late December to complete wheat sowing," Singh said.

Farm ministry data shows wheat acreage was lagging about 30 per cent from a year ago at 7.08 million hectares until last week. Sowing has been lacklustre despite good monsoon rain that had made the government confident of India reaping a record 82 million tonnes harvest this year. Singh said while a clearer picture on output would emerge only after sowing was complete, the current weather conditions bode well for the crop.

Wheat plantings so far in the current season that started October are lower in all states, barring Punjab. Singh said in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where total wheat acreage is down 86 per cent and 72 per cent, respectively, the decline could be due to delayed reporting with state officials busy with local and state assembly polls.

Another reason for the lag is the delayed harvest of sugarcane and paddy, he said.

Sugarcane harvest has been delayed in Uttar Pradesh this year by nearly a month due to a tussle between farmers and sugar mills over cane prices.

Paddy harvest has been delayed in most of north India, as farmers had opted for basmati and other late-sown rice varieties in the kharif season due to erratic rains at the start of the Jun-Sep monsoon season.

Basmati and other late-sown rice types can be harvested only after mid-November, while the early varieties are ready for harvest around mid-October.

Farmers in northern India—the wheat bowl of the country—usually adopt cane-wheat or rice-wheat cropping cycles.

Singh said with harvest of paddy and cane now underway, wheat sowing should pick up from this week.

The delay in wheat sowing, however, can cost the country dear. If sown after end November, wheat gets a smaller gestation period and becomes prone to heat stress during Mar-Apr. In 2004-05 and 2009-10, late-sown wheat had shrivelled due to high temperatures in Mar-Apr, leading to a 3-4 million tonnes fall in output.

Singh did not hazard any guess on wheat output prospects. “We will have a fairer idea on production by the first week of December,” he said.

The commissioner said he expects wheat plantings to increase sharply this week as the temperature has now become favourable.

“Farmers usually start wheat sowing when the maximum temperature drops to around 24-25 degrees Celsius. It was very hot early this month. Temperature has dropped only now. It is good for sowing... I’m sure we will see a sharp rise in wheat acreage from this week,” he said.

Singh said sowing of other rabi crops too should pick up now. The government, which had pegged kharif food grain output at 114.6 million tonnes, expects a good rabi crop and is hoping that total food grain production this year would top the 2008-09 (July-June) record of 234.5 million tonnes.

Singh said rabi crop prospects were bright, as the government has ensured adequate supply of seeds and fertilisers and the weather was conducive.

“The rabi situation should be very good, looking at the water reservoir levels, winter rains and the ongoing weather.”

He said heavy rains that had lashed Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra early this month would raise the reservoir and soil moisture levels, and boost the output of rabi crops.

Rain has, however, inflicted damage to kharif maize, cotton and paddy crops that were ready for harvest in the three states. Singh said the damage to kharif crops in the three states is limited and would not dent the overall production of these crops. He said India’s total cotton output in the current crop year that commenced July, in fact could be higher than the government’s initial estimate of 32.5 million bales, despite the damage to the Andhra Pradesh crop.

Unseasonal rain damages kharif crop in maharashtra

Sanjay Jog / Mumbai November 25, 2010, 0:33 IST

Rice, maize, cotton, soybean and onion crops hit.

Standing kharif crops spread over a million hectares have been severely damaged due to the ongoing unseasonal rain in Maharashtra.

According to estimates by the commissionerate of agriculture, rice, maize, cotton, soybean and onion crops have been hit.

Of the million hectares, crops on a fifth have been 50 per cent damaged, leading to a demand from opposition parties and others for declaration of a 'wet drought' and hefty compensation to farmers.

Around 13.35 mn ha are covered by the kharif crop. State chief minister Prithviraj Chavan and revenue minister Balasaheb Thorat told Business Standard: "Divisional commissioners and district collectors have been told to assess the ground situation and submit all details." The government is expected to announce a package during the state legislature's winter session, commencing from December 1 in Nagpur.

Acting agriculture commissioner Pandurang Watharkar said 19 districts had been hit. The damage was severe in Akola, Amravati, Nagpur, Bhandara, Gondia, Gadchiroli, Nashik, Nagpur, Sangli and the Konkan region. "Paddy on 130,000 ha has been damaged."

THE HINDU Business Line

Business Daily from THE HINDU group of publications

Thursday, November 25, 2010

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112552511900.htm>

Back Weather-based cover for 9 crops in Karnataka

4 insurance cos to implement the scheme.

The weather-based scheme aims at providing insurance to the cultivator against adverse weather such as deficit and excessive rainfall, frost, heat (temperature) and relative humidity, which affect the crops.

Nagesh Prabhu

Bangalore, Nov. 24

The weather-based crop insurance scheme will be implemented in the ongoing rabi season for nine crops in 15 districts in the State.

The State Government has notified the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) for 19 rabi crops and five summer season crops in 27 districts. The Agriculture Department has targeted to bring about 34 lakh hectares under various crops during the rabi and summer seasons, according to officials of the State Agriculture Department.

The crops covered under the weather-based insurance scheme are jowar (irrigation and rainfed), wheat (irrigation and wheat), groundnut (irrigation and rainfed), potato (irrigation), grapes and mango.

The scheme would cover crops in Bangalore Rural, Bagalkote, Belgaum, Bellary, Bidar, Bijapur, Chitradurga, Chickballapur, Davangere, Dharwad, Haveri, Kolar, Koppal, Raichur, and Yadgir districts.

Four insurance companies – Agricultural Insurance Company of India Ltd (AIC), ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company, HDFC Ergo General Insurance Company, and Cholamandalam M S General Insurance Company – would participate in the implementation of the scheme.

AIC would cover Bagalkote, Belgaum, Bidar, Davangere, Dharwad, Haveri, and Kolar districts while ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company would cover Bijapur, Chitradurga, Chickballapur, Koppal and Yadgir districts.

HDFC Ergo General Insurance Company would implement the scheme in Bangalore Rural and Raichur districts while Cholamandalam M S General Insurance Company, would participate in Bellary district, the officials said.

The weather-based scheme aims at providing insurance to the cultivator against adverse weather such as deficit and excessive rainfall, frost, heat (temperature) and relative

humidity, which affect the crops.

Farmers who obtained crop loans must compulsorily participate in the weather based insurance scheme and have to pay a premium by submitting an application to the nearest bank branch before December 31, 2010.

Farmers who have not obtained crop loans can get the weather-based insurance or NAIS. However, they can avail themselves of the benefits of the scheme by paying the premium before November 30. The premium ranges from 2.5 per cent to 3.5 per cent of the sum insured for crops. Farmers can also avail themselves of the details of the scheme from a network of 745 Raita Samparka Kendras.

NAIS would cover for 19 rabi crops and five summer season crops in all districts except Gulbarga, Shimoga, and Tumkur. The scheme is compulsory for farmers who borrow crop loans. For rabi crops, farmers have to submit their applications along with the premium to the nearest bank before December 31.

Officials said March 31, 2011, is the last date for paying the premium for farmers who borrowed loans for summer crops and February 28, 2011, is the last date for non-borrowers of crop loans.

In the case of damage of crops due to natural calamities such as rains, floods, landslides and thunderstorms, the farmers have to give in writing the extent of the damage to the crop, area, and the reason for the crop damage to the nearest bank or Agricultural Insurance Company of India Ltd, Bangalore, officials said.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112551211800.htm>

Back Mixed trend in rubber

Aravindan

Kottayam, Nov. 24

Spot rubber showed a mixed trend on Wednesday. Most of the traders were hesitant to enhance their commitments in an uncertain market possibly observing a slip in the international rates. Hence the gains were minimal though the domestic futures recovered on NMCE. The transactions were dull.

Sheet rubber improved to Rs 199.50 (199.00) a kg according to Dealers. The grade weakened further to Rs 199.50 (200.50) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi according to Rubber Board.

Futures gain

The December series bounced back to Rs 202 (199.01), January to Rs 205.24 (202.30), February to Rs 207.44 (204.79) and March to Rs 210.50 (208.16) a kg for RSS 4 on National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE).

The November futures for RSS 3 expired at ¥354.9 (Rs 194.95) while the December futures declined to ¥356.3 (Rs 195.70) from ¥368.5 during the day session and then recovered partially to ¥356.9 (Rs 196.05) a kg in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM). The grade (spot) moved down Rs 199.50 (201.30) a kg at Bangkok.

Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 199.50 (199); RSS-5: 187.50 (187.50); ungraded: 183.50 (183.50); ISNR 20: 192.50 (193) and latex 60 per cent: 130 (130).

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112552371900.htm>

Back Pepper futures move up on good buying support

G.K. Nair

Kochi, Nov. 24

Pepper futures which fell on Tuesday “merely on the Korean crisis,” corrected on Wednesday, and the prices of all contracts moved up after usual high volatility.

The market opened at the lowest price of the day and then touched the highest later to fall sharply and to recover, and ended above the previous close, market sources said, adding “this kind of volatility is not a good sign.”

Meanwhile, leading exporters mopped up good quantity of 500 GL pepper at prices ranging from Rs 207 and Rs 210 depending upon quality and area of production with the hope that they could sell it overseas at competitive prices once Vietnam 500 GL supply dried up, market sources told Business Line.

This buying spree, coupled with weakening of the rupee against the dollar, pushed up both the spot and the futures prices, they said.

December contract on the NCDEX closed at Rs 22,214 up by Rs 264 a quintal while January and February went up by Rs 258 and Rs 205, respectively, to close at Rs 22,421 and Rs 22,639 a quintal.

Total turnover dropped by 624 tonnes to 10,783 tonnes. Total open interest increased by 385 tonnes to 13,858 tonnes indicating good additional purchases.

December open interest increased by 130 tonnes to 10,959 while that of January and February moved up by 249 tonnes and two tonnes, respectively, to 2,224 tonnes and 292 tonnes.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112551191800.htm>

Back Coonoor tea volume rises 3 lakh kg

P.S. Sundar

Coonoor, Nov. 24

A volume of 12.41 lakh kg will be offered for Sale No: 47 of the auctions of Coonoor Tea Trade Association to be conducted tomorrow and Friday, reveals an analysis of the listing by brokers.

It is the highest volume of the last seven weeks barring Sale No: 44 held on November 3 when 12.79 lakh kg was offered. It is as much as 3.03 lakh kg more than the year's lowest volume offered last week and 54,000 kg more than the offer this time last year.

Of the 12.41 lakh kg on offer, 8.62 lakh kg belongs to the leaf grades and 3.79 lakh kg belongs to the dust grades. As much as 11.60 lakh kg belongs to CTC variety and only 0.81 lakh kg, orthodox variety. The proportion of orthodox teas continues to be low in both the leaf and dust grades. In the leaf counter, only 0.43 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 8.19 lakh kg, CTC. Among the dusts, only 0.38 lakh kg belongs to orthodox while 3.41 lakh kg, CTC.

In the 12.41 lakh kg, fresh tea accounts for 10.46 lakh kg. As much as 1.95 lakh kg comprises teas remaining unsold in previous auctions. Despite shedding prices by Rs 3 a kg, about 15-25 per cent of the volume offered had remained unsold in recent weeks for want of buyers due to inadequate promotion.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112552541900.htm>

Back Apex panel to monitor Sikkim organic farming

Karma Samten Yangzom

Gangtok, Nov. 24

An apex committee headed by the Chief Minister, Mr Pawan Chamling, has been constituted to oversee the implementation of organic farming programmes in Sikkim.

The other members of the committee are the Agriculture Minister, the Rural Development Minister, the Chief Secretary, the Development Commissioner, the Finance Secretary and the Agriculture Secretary.

The committee has been designated as the policy-making body giving overall direction and guidance to the State-level steering committee and the executive body of the Sikkim Organic Mission for effective implementation of organic farming programmes, an official release said.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112550861700.htm>

Back Subdued demand pulls down chana



Our Correspondent

Indore, Nov. 24

Chana declined by Rs 10-20 at Rs 2,380-Rs 2,390 a quintal on subdued demand. Earlier in the morning, chana was quoted at Rs 2,400 a quintal as the demand had slightly improved with weather becoming clear after two days of rainfall. However, by the evening, chana saw a slight decline in demand at higher rate leading to fall in prices.

According to a chana trader Mr Sanjay Bansal, with carryover stock of chana fast depleting, its prices may witness a rise of Rs 50 in the coming days. Presently, the stock of chana in the State has been estimated at 4.50 lakh. Chana futures at the National Commodities and Derivative Exchange closed Rs 7 higher with its December contract closing at Rs 2,504 a quintal. On the other hand, Dollar (kabuli) chana or chickpea prices perked by Rs 100 on improved domestic and export demand. In the spot, dollar chana quoted at Rs 4,500-Rs 4,750 a quintal, while its container quality (42-44 count) quoted at Rs 5,200 a quintal. Arrival of dollar chana in mandi was recorded at 1,500 bags on Wednesday.

Among other pulse seeds, tur which had been ruling high for the past few days, witnessed a decline on sluggish demand. In the spot, prices quoted Rs 25 down at Rs 3,675 a quintal. Prices of remaining pulse seeds by and large remained steady. Moong quoted at Rs 3,500-Rs 4,200 a quintal, urad at Rs 3,600-Rs 3,800 a quintal, while masoor quoted at Rs 3,050 a quintal.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112550871700.htm>

[Back](#) Sugar rules firm on high mill prices



Mumbai, Nov. 24

Sugar prices continue to rule steady on Wednesday on high prices at mill level, less than expected production of sugar till now, heavy rains in Gujarat and Maharashtra curbing cane activities at farm level and month-end poor demand.

Spot prices were quoted higher by Rs 5-10 for 100 kg at the Vashi market. Undertone of the market was firm, said traders. Mr Jagdish Rawal of B. Bhogilal and Co said market witnessed some selling of resellers for their outstanding purchases. S-grade was down by Rs 10 at naka delivery in line with the same decline in resale D/O rates.

But in the evening, market recovered again. Most of the traders are not expecting higher free sale quota for December 10 as most of the mills still has to start crushing.

In Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, half of the mills are yet to start crushing. Heavy rain in the last three days has delayed cane cutting activities in the State. Month-end usual lower consumption demand of retailers and speculative selling is also weighing the market sentiment. Mills are optimistic about the sugar exports permission and continue to offer tender at higher rates. This gives moral support to naka and spot level also. On Wednesday, about 11 mills came with the tender offer and got poor response as most of the trade took place as resale. In resale D/O total about 50,000-55,000 bags was sold in the range of Rs 2,800-2,820 for S-grade and M-grade Rs 2,850-2,890 (excise paid) to State/local traders. According to the Bombay Sugar Merchants Association, spot sugar

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112550841700.htm>

Back Turmeric shoots up Rs 400



Erode, Nov. 24

Spot turmeric sold above Rs 15,000 a quintal in all the four sales centres in Erode on Wednesday.

“There is absolutely no stock at other turmeric sales centres in India, except Erode. So the bulk buying traders, who are having enough orders are approaching the Erode market and are buying the product. Because of such buying practice, the price of the commodity has increased by Rs 400 a quintal within a day at Erode,” said Mr R.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association, on Wednesday.

Stocks

He said turmeric stock in sales centres in North India and also in Andhra Pradesh is absolutely nil. “The turmeric farmers were immensely happy over the sales and also the good attractive price fetched for the crop on Wednesday,” Mr Ravishankar said.

In the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association Sales yard on Wednesday, the finger variety was sold at Rs 9,501-15,389 a quintal and root variety, Rs 9,000-15,289 a quintal. The price increased by Rs 430 a quintal, when compared to Monday's price. Out of the 2,386 bags that arrived, 893 were sold.

In the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety fetched Rs 14,789-15,559 a quintal and root variety, Rs 14,569-15,369 a quintal. Out of the 339 bags, 284 were sold. The price increased by Rs 300 a quintal on Wednesday.

In the Erode Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 14,929-

15,529 a quintal and the root variety, Rs 15,061-15,449 a quintal. The price of the commodity showed an increase of Rs 410 a quintal. Out of the 1,131 bags, 1,030 were sold in bulk.

In the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety fetched Rs 14,933-15,389 a quintal, root variety, Rs 15,029-15,289 a quintal. Out of the 1,940 bags kept for sale, 1,916 were sold . The prices increased around Rs 300 a quintal.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112551151800.htm>

Back Maharashtra may not have enough hands to harvest cane crop this time



Kripa Raman Mumbai, Nov. 24

This season Maharashtra expects its largest sugarcane crop — at 80 million tonnes — but the sugar industry fears that part of the crop may not be harvested because of unseasonal rains and a shortage of labour.

“We usually get 9 lakh labourers during the crushing season (generally stretching over six months starting October-November), but this year we will be getting only 7.5 lakh labourers,” said Mr P. Naiknavare, Managing Director of the Maharashtra State Federation of Co-operative Sugar Factories. In a year this number will shrink to about 5 lakh, he said.

For the first time, the State will be seeing the use of harvesting machines, he said. “We have got 100 harvesting machines, but they are like a drop in the ocean.”

But many of the sugarcane farms are very small and the owners cannot afford mechanisation, said Mr Vinay Joshi, Executive Director at Godavari Biorefineries, a private sugar manufacturing company. According to him, a large part of the crop may remain unharvested this season.

Crushing season

The crushing season for 2010-2011 officially began on October 1, but there has been little harvesting done because of the unseasonal rains, said Mr Naiknavare. The rains will adversely affect the quality of the crop too. "And the rains have not abated even though we are in the latter half of November," he said. The bumper production of 80 million tonnes of sugarcane would have seen sugar production from the State at 9 million tonnes, said Mr Naiknavare.

Labour charges for sugar harvesting this season have been raised to Rs 137 per tonne per labourer, from Rs 117 a year ago, he said. Even with this raise it looks like there will be a dearth of harvesting hands. Many of the labourers' sons and daughters who are educated do not want to do such work, he said. Cane cutting labourers mostly come from the districts of Beed and Osmanabad in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, which has been the pattern for the last 60 years, he said. Sugarcane harvesting is a very specialised job and one needs labourers with specialised skills, he said.

Dignity problem

In other sugar producing states the pattern is a little different, said Mr Naiknavare. There the farmers and their families pitch in to harvest their own crop. In Maharashtra, where sugar industry is closely linked with political activity, many farmers think it below their dignity to have their families harvest their own crop, he added.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112551131800.htm>

[Back](#) Poultry industry takes to IT, biotechnology



Hi-tech machinery:Broiler breeding equipment from Big Dutchman on display at the opening of “Poultry India - 2010” in Hyderabad on Wednesday . —

K.V. Kurmanath

Hyderabad, Nov.24

The poultry industry in India, considered to be a business that belonged to the old economy, has begun to use tools offered by information technology and biotechnology. Though it is not a completely new phenomenon, the industry now boasts of a material analyser that could analyse moisture, protein, fibre and fat content in a few seconds.

In fact, it is IT and biotechnology products and solutions that attracted one's attention at the fourth edition of Poultry India – 2010, an annual event organised by the Indian Poultry Equipment Manufacturers Association (IPEMA) here. The three-day event was inaugurated here on Wednesday.

Mr Vasu Chithiravelu, Technical Sales Manager of Biomin Singapore Pte Ltd, said the company launched a product called ‘PoultryStar me’ that helped poultry firms to get rid of anti-biotics while they reared the birds.

“The European Union has banned import of poultry products with residues of anti-biotics. This could hamper exports from India. Realising the problem, some Indian companies have begun to use probiotic strains isolated from healthy chicken,” he said.

The Mysore-based Zeus Biotech Ltd showcased, what it claimed, the first feed-specific enzyme for feed manufacturers. “Usually, they use industrial grade enzymes. But we have

developed feed-specific enzyme. This can be used in poultry, piggery and aqua sectors to the specific requirements,” Mr Jose Jinesh, Director (Marketing and Exports), said.

The company, which registered a turnover of Rs 12 crore in 2009-10, exported its products to 10 countries. “The enzyme helps in development of feed that would have better acceptance by the birds and animals,” he said.

There are two software solutions for making the job of feed mixing easier. Apart from the multinational Bestimixsoftware solution, a Hyderabad-based company Logic Soft Solutions displayed ‘Eco-Mix’ software which provided a tool that could compare formulae with standard feed types.

Mr P Balachandran, Joint Managing Director of the Coimbatore-based Infotrend Software Technologies, said small and mid-sized poultry firms were beginning to see the benefits of enterprise resource planning (ERP) software.

“We have five installations. It helps them connect with their dealers and keep their inventory and accounts under control,” he said.

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112551181800.htm>

Back Higher coffee replanting subsidy mooted to boost mechanisation

Encouraging growers to undertake ‘clean replanting’.



A. Srinivas

Bangalore, Nov. 24

The Coffee Board may request bodies such as Rainforest Alliance – an international NGO that certifies coffee produce for environmental attributes such as biodiversity and tree cover – to alter their tree cover norms for India.

This could facilitate smoother implementation of replanting, or rearrangement of plants, in order to promote mechanised operations, Board officials said. The role of certifying agencies that look into environment and labour practices in India's plantation sector has been on the rise.

The Board may also seek a higher allocation from the Twelfth Plan towards replanting subsidy, so that growers are encouraged to undertake 'clean replanting' to facilitate mechanisation, officials said.

While Board officials made it clear that India's undulating terrain and small farms can allow only for hand-held equipment for weeding and harvesting operations, even that may require more spacing between rows and more spacing of plants within a row.

“This form of mechanisation will augment labour productivity, but will not displace labour,” they said. The Coffee Board as well as some large growers are conducting experiments in hedgerow and controlled hedgerow planting.

This may entail limited cutting of trees – those which can be felled according to Forest Department guidelines. Hence, certifying agencies such as Rainforest Alliance, which have, in fact, acknowledged that India's tree cover is more diverse than most coffee-growing countries, are expected to take an understanding view of the situation, Coffee Board officials said.

Replanting has not proceeded satisfactorily because the current subsidy does not compensate for output loss in plantations with a mixed age group of bushes, officials said. This holds true particularly for arabica, when considerable replanting was undertaken in

the wake of the white stem borer attack between 2002 and 2004.

At present, 5 per cent of the plants are replaced every year, which leaves about 30-40 per cent of the bushes in a plantation in prime bearing stage. "The subsidy should be enough to compensate the loss of output from high-yielding plants, or else replanting cannot proceed apace," they said.

Coffee Board officials said that there was a trade-off between tree cover and yield. "Sun-grown coffee gives higher yield but is prone to pest attacks. Besides, India has to grow coffee under shade, on account of the dry months and high temperatures. However, a situation of partial shade and irrigation is an option," they said.

Limitations

Mr Sahadev Balakrishna, Chairman, Karnataka Planters' Association, said: "Going forward, we have to mechanise. But large harvesting machines, such as the ones used in Brazil, would be hampered by our terrain and shade pattern. Therefore, hand-held harvesters are an important option."

Perhaps, less than 5 per cent of the planters are spacing the plants for machines to move around. However, if contour planting is on the cards, re-spacing might become necessary, growers said.

Mr Anil Bhandari, Member, Coffee Board, said: "While the need for replanting per se is indisputable, wholesale reorientation of the estate merely to allow machinery to move around may not be a feasible option, given India's terrain.

"Rather, we should focus on plant architecture, so that it becomes amenable to the use of simple, hand-held equipment, thereby raising labour productivity manifold. Technology is a must for critical operations, such as spraying of pesticide, application of fertiliser and harvesting."

Date:25/11/2010 URL:

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/25/stories/2010112550851700.htm>

Back Steady trend in rice on thin trading



Our Correspondent

Karnal, Nov. 24

After witnessing a drop in the aromatic rice varieties and a steady trend in non-basmati at the beginning of this week, the rice market saw a steady trend with prices maintaining their previous levels.

Mr Amit Kumar, proprietor of Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told Business Line that because of thin trading the rice market witnessed a steady trend. It's unlikely to see any major alteration in the prices this week, he said.

Prices of Pusa-1121 steam (new) ruled between Rs 5,100 and Rs 5,150 a quintal, while the old variety ruled at Rs 5,200-5,250. Pusa-1121 sela (new) ruled at Rs 4,100-4,150, whereas the old variety was at Rs 4,200-4,250.

Pusa-1121 raw (new) ruled at Rs 5,100-5,130, while the old variety quoted at Rs 5,200. Pusa (sela) ruled at Rs 3,200-3,250 and Pusa (raw) at Rs 4,100-4,125.

Basmati sela ruled at Rs 6,100, while basmati raw was at Rs 7,050-7,080. Prices of non-basmati varieties continued to rule firm. Prices of PR-14 ruled between Rs 2,050 and Rs 2,150, while PR ruled between Rs 1,850 and Rs 1,950 a quintal. Sharbati sela (old) ruled between Rs 2,500 and Rs 2,700 and Sharbati steam (new) at Rs 2,600-2,800 a quintal.

Brokens such as Tibar ruled at around Rs 3,100, Dubar at Rs 2,200 and Mongra Rs 1,800.

Around 5,000 bags of PR-13 arrived, and ruled between Rs 920 and Rs 950. Grade-A

variety arrived in 40,000 bags and ruled between Rs 1,010 and Rs 1,050.

About 5,000 bags of Sharbati also arrived and ruled between Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,540.

Sugandha-999 arrived in about 5,000 bags, and quoted at Rs 1,600-1,700.

Around 5,000 bags of Pusa (duplicate basmati) arrived and quoted at Rs 2,000-2,280.

Around 12,000 bags of Pusa-1121 quoted at Rs 2,000-2,470. About 10,000 bags of pure basmati rice quoted at Rs 2,000-2,820.


© Copyright 2000 - 2009 The Hindu Business Line



Weather

Chennai - INDIA


Today's Weather



Thursday, Nov 25
Max Min
25.6° | 24.2°

Rain: 06 mm in 24hrs Sunrise: 6:11
Humidity: 75% Sunset: 17:39
Wind: Normal Barometer: 1010.0

Tomorrow's Forecast



Friday, Nov 26
Max Min
30° | 24°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Nov 27	Nov 28	Nov 29	Nov 30	Dec 1



27° | 24°

Rainy



26° | 25°

Rainy



28° | 25°

Rainy



27° | 25°

Cloudy



27° | 25°

Cloudy