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50 per cent paddy cultivation to come under Rajarajan 1000

L. Renganathan

Fast and swift:Modernised transplantation in progress at Vangal village near Karur.

KARUR: Farmers in Karur district have embraced the system of rice intensification (SRI) method, rechristened as Rajaran 1000. Officials hope to bring 50 per cent of the paddy cultivation under the Rajarajan 1000 system during the current season. The normal area covered under paddy in the district is 16,000 hectares.

Paddy is cultivated in samba and navarai seasons and samba crops account for close to 95 per cent of the paddy cultivated in Karur district. Paddy farmers in Karur were constrained by the costs incurred for seeds, agricultural inputs, pesticides, fertilisers and nutrients. . During 2008-09 around 2,800 hectares were brought under the SRI method while during the subsequent year it reached 6,000 hectares against a target of 6,800 hectares. Around 2,500 farmers were given agricultural assistance under the SRI method in 2008-09 and another 6,579 farmers benefited the next year.

This year, 8,000 hectares has been fixed as the target for paddy cultivation under Rajaran 1000 and over 3,033 hectares have been covered already. The balance 5,000 hectares will be covered in November when the transplanting would be at its peak, according to the Joint Director of Agriculture, S.Jagadeesan.

Block-wise coverage under the Rajarajan 1000 shows 2,000 hectares at Kulithalai, 783 hectares at Thogamalai, 110 hectares at Kadavur, 75 hectares at K.Paramathy, 30 hectares at Karur, 25 hectares at Krishnarayapuram and 10 hectares at Thanthoni have been brought under the scheme. The Integrated Cereal Development Programme (ICDP) and the National Agricultural Development Programme (NADP) have been dovetailed to benefit farmers under the Rajarajan 1000 scheme, under which cono weeders, markers and agricultural inputs are being distributed.

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New horticulture office in Ariyalur

Staff Reporter

ARIYALUR: The new Office of the Deputy Director of Horticulture has started functioning in Ariyalur district with effect from 1st November, 2010, as per the directions of the State government.

According to a press release, V.Soundararajan has assumed charge as the Deputy Director of Horticulture. Farmers can contact the officer either directly or by dialling 04329 – 205269 or 9047150333, to know about details of government schemes, technical support, and subsidy-linked schemes. Assistant Directors stationed at the under mentioned zones can also be contacted through the following phone numbers: Tirumanur

(04329-220311), Senthurai (9486311707), Jayankondam (9442949688 or 04331 – 283620), T.Pazhur (9442306103) and Andimadam (9976520410).

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Turmeric price to decline: TNAU

Staff Reporter

Farmers urged to make their selling/storage decisions based on forecast

Forecast based on monthly price of turmeric in Erode Regulated Market for last 15 years

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COIMBATORE: The Domestic and Export Market Intelligence Cell (DEMIC) of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University says the price of turmeric will see a downward trend from December.

The DEMIC has added that the trend will continue in the months to come. Farmers are urged to make their selling/storage decisions based on this forecast. The prediction has been made based on the monthly price of turmeric that has prevailed in the Erode Regulated Market for the last 15 years. It has also taken into account a normal monsoon and the absence of loss of crop damage owing to flood or disease. Turmeric price in Tamil Nadu and other parts of India has recorded a steep increase for the last 18 months. From Rs.5,200 a quintal in April 2009, it touched the Rs.14,000-a-quintal-mark in October 2010. The high price has made farmers take up turmeric cultivation in larger areas. Regular turmeric growers have also increased the area under cultivation. Since turmeric was sown in January, the stocks are expected to enter the market in the second week of December. Nearly five to 5.5 lakh bags are estimated to be under storage.

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Samba farmers hopeful of reaping rich harvest

G.Srinivasan

Medium to sharp showers speed up nursery transplantation

THANJAVUR: Transplantation of nurseries of ‘samba' crop has been brisk in all villages in Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts, thanks to medium to sharp showers experienced in the delta region. Agriculture Department officials and farmers are confident of registering an appreciable yield from the ‘samba' this season. Thanjavur district has so far realised 680 mm of rain against the average annual realisation of 1,140 mm. For the eight days ending November 8, Tiruvarur district has recorded sharp showers of 56.22 mm against the normal rainfall of 350.54mm for the whole month.

Against the target of 1.05 lakh hectares, an extent of 82,916 hectares had been brought under cultivation so far where transplantation has been completed, according to P.Loganathan, Joint Director of Agriculture.

He said that in addition to the ‘samba' area, 10,492 hectares had been covered so far under ‘Thaladi' where ‘Kuruvai' had been harvested, indicating that 33,000 hectares was yet to be covered under the crop - 23,000 hectares in the targeted area and the balance 10,000 hectares in Thaladi.

He advised farmers to ensure expeditious transplantation of ‘samba' seedlings, taking due advantage of the onset of the monsoons.

Samba transplantation has been completed almost in all the areas except Budalur, Sethubavachathiram and Pattukottai areas.

In Tiruvarur district, both samba and thaladi transplantation has been completed on 1.39 lakh hectares against the target of 1.44 lakh hectares. M. Chandrasekaran, District

Collector said the district has realised 16 per cent of normal monthly showers.

Expressing the hope that the onset of the monsoon would further brighten the prospects, the Collector said that it would facilitate district administration to achieve the target of 1.44 lakh hectares in 'samba' and 'thaladi' this season.

Meanwhile, there is an improvement in the inflow into Mettur dam. It received 56,000 cusecs on Monday. The level stood at 88.07ft.The storage was 50.473 tmc ft.

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SMS-based crop advisory soon for farmers

Staff Reporter

Tirupur: To give an impetus to agriculture activities, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is all set to introduce an SMS-based crop advisory and information service to the farmers in the district shortly.

"As part of the service, updates on weather, price of inputs and data pertaining to commodity pricing will be sent on a daily basis to the farmers' mobile phones in the local language free-of-cost," NABARD Assistant General Manager G. Santhanam told The Hindu.

Increasing mobile telephony penetration in rural areas of the district would be complimentary for the NABARD to ensure success of the project.

NABARD plans to extend the services to members of two select-farmer's clubs formed under its ambit and then subsequently expand the coverage to other farmers clubs across the district in a phased manner.

"We will use the services of Reuters Market Light (RML), a mobile phone-based service segment of the Reuters, to provide the information to the farmers," Mr. Santhanam said.

Viability

This proposed extension service was expected to increase the production and viability of farming, especially the rain-fed cultivation, multi-fold.

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Village-level panels to assess crop loss

Correspondent

Decision emerges from DRC meeting chaired by in-charge Minister

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The committee will submit its report in 10 days, says Gade Venkat Reddy

Paddy in 12,948 hectares of 1.24 lakh hectares damaged in the district

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VIZIANAGARAM: A committee with sarpanch, a farmer, a model farmer, village revenue officer and village secretary would be set up at the panchayat level to evaluate the crop damage on account of rain and pest menace for extending compensation to farmers.

The decision was taken at the district review committee meeting chaired by in-charge Minister G. Venkata Reddy on Monday.

The committee would submit report in 10 days. Any farmer felt omitted in the survey can appeal to the Assistant Director (Agriculture) or the RDO within five days. Preliminary reports put the damage to paddy at 12,948 hectares out of 1.24lakh hectares in the district.

Minister for Panchayat Raj Botcha Satyanarayana, who replied to members' queries, reviewed damages to crops, irrigation tanks, medical and health, sanitation and sand auction, said that 689 villages were affected by rain. With the consent of in-charge Minister, he announced 20 kg of rice and five litres of kerosene to 328 families whose houses were either damaged fully or partially besides Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 4,000 for fully and partially damaged houses respectively.

He also announced the same quantity of rice and kerosene to fishermen families who were unable to earn bread due to rain. Farmers covered under crop insurance scheme would get Rs. 4,500 per ha for paddy as compensation. On lifting discoloured rice, he said a meeting with Chief Minister on November 3, the FCI Chairman had formally agreed to lift the stock.

Loan melas

In rabi, he said the target fixed for extending crop loans at Rs. 200 crores and this would be achieved by organising loan melas in the next two months.

With regard to damaged R&B and panchayat raj roads, the officials concerned informed the in-charge Minister that Rs. 8 crores was needed for temporary repairs to R&B roads and Rs. 12 lakhs for PR roads.

The Minister promised to release the amount in a week. A sum of Rs. 46 crores and Rs. 6 crores respectively are required for permanent repairs.

Some 20 irrigation tanks breached and Rs. 11.25 lakhs required for plugging the breaches. Sujaya Krishna Ranga Rao, Bobbili MLA complained bills of Water User Associations were pending and hence they were not ready to take up repairs. SE (Irrigation) D. Venkateswarulu informed the Minister that Rs. 3crores for executing repairs to medium and minor irrigation projects had been pending since 2008.

Sanitation drive

Mr. Satyanarayana asked officials concerned to launch sanitation drive in all villages from Tuesday under the National Health Mission and 13 {+t} {+h} Finance Grants in order to control outbreak of epidemics.

Medical camps

Additional District Medical and Health Officer S. Chandra Reddy said medical camps were being conducted regularly in tribal areas and also in students' hostels.

On sand auction, he asked Collector M. Veerabrahmaiah to take severe action, including imprisonment, against those who had been illegally quarrying and transporting sand from riverbed until a decision at the State level was taken.

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Announce procurement price, farmers urge sugar factories

Special Correspondent

Two factories began crushing operations a week ago Farmers allege that labourers appointed by the factories are demanding bribes

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GULBARGA: Sugarcane growers in Gulbarga district are in a fix, with two sugar factories in the district having started crushing operations a week ago before announcing prices for the sugarcane procured.

Shankar Subain, a sugarcane grower, said here on Monday that Renuka Sugar Factory at Ghattarga in Afzalpur taluk has started collecting sugarcane from farmers for crushing, but the factory authorities are yet to announce the price.

“We are forced to give our sugarcane to the factory without knowing the price as we do not have any alternative. Any delay in harvest will mean reduction in the sugar recovery percentage, resulting in reduced returns,” Mr. Subain said.

Same situation

The same was the situation at the private sugar factory in Bhusnur village in Aland taluk in the district. The price for sugarcane for the current year has not been announced and harvesting is going on in full swing.

Afzalpur Taluk Raitha Horata Samiti president Suryakant Nakedar said that a delegation of the farmers from Afzalpur and Aland taluk had met Deputy Commissioner R. Vishal and submitted a memorandum seeking intervention of the district administration to force both the factories to announce the price for sugarcane procured.

Mr. Nakedar said that the menace of the labour force commissioned by the two private factories to harvest sugarcane has to be put to an end. These labourers allegedly demanded a bribe of at least Rs. 5,000 an acre.

He said that this menace had been brought to the notice of the management of the sugar factories, but no action has been initiated to set things right. “We have requested the Deputy Commissioner to intervene and protect the interests of the farmers,” he said.

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Rs.2,500 sought as sugarcane advisory price

HYDERABAD: The AP Sugarcane Farmers' Association has demanded holding of a joint meeting of sugarcane farmers' organisations and managements of sugar factories before crushing season and announcement of Rs.2,500 as the advisory price a tonne with 8.5 per cent recovery.

In a representation to Chief Minister K. Rosaiah, it also demanded payment of Rs.260 as subsidy for seed, cutting/transport charges and last season's dues to farmers.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES
Tue, Nov 09, 2010 | Updated 05.54AM IST
9 Nov, 2010, 05.46AM IST, Arun Iyer,ET Bureau

Unseasonal rains to hit Karnataka coffee output

BANGALORE: Unseasonal rains are expected to hit Karnataka's coffee output. The state, India's largest coffee producer, has witnessed a spell of torrential rains which have hit Chikmagalur, Hassan and Kodagu districts — the coffee growing belts .

The rains, thanks to cyclonic storm Jal, lead to dropping of the ripe berries due to colder nights. Typically, the night temperature should be around 20 degree centigrade but over the last few days it has been around 16-18 degree centigrade.

"We are expecting a 20% drop in Arabica and a 10% shortfall in the Robusta crop," said B Subramani, president of Kodagu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society. "The clear picture can only emerge if rains stop fully. We just had a break in rains but are worried that it could start raining again."

Kodagu produces nearly half of the state's coffee output and is a major producer of Robusta. As per Coffee Board estimates, the state is slated to produce around 2.19 lakh tonne. Torrential rains have also led to dropping in Robusta plantations in Kerala's Wayanad district. "We have not been able to assess the damage yet but there are some," said Prashant Rajesh, president of Wayanad Coffee Growers Association . HT Mohan Kumar, a planter based in Hassan district, said that some of the areas in the distict have received as much as three inches of rains over the last 5-7 days.

Another disturbing fact is that a vast majority of the coffee plantations has no insurance although the Agriculture Insurance Company(AIC) has now extended cover for unseasonal rains. "Planters have resisted the idea of buying adequate cover though our company has now designed a product to specifically cover such eventualities," a senior official of AIC told ET.

Sources in the Karnataka agriculture department said that there have been reports of damage to the maize and ragi crops while sugar mills in Mandya district face problems of nonavailability of adequate baggase for boilers. “Some baggase stocks meant for the boilers have been rendered useless as they are damp. Cane harvesting has been hit due to rains and the Diwali holidays,” a source said.

“Close to about 1,325 hectares under ragi and about 525 hectares under maize have been destroyed. Initial reports indicate much of the damage in Chikmagalur district. Maize acreage had witnessed significant rise across the state over the last few years on the back of higher prices,” an official with the agriculture department said.

According to Vikas Agarwal, Bangalore-based corn dealer, Karnataka could be headed for another bumper kharif maize crop but the quality would suffer due to the unseasonal rains. “The moisture content in maize should ideally be around 14% but it has risen to about 16% to 17% and created new worries. The crop has been damaged in Davangere and other districts,” he added.

8 Nov, 2010, 06.19PM IST,PTI

Sugar prices rise on strong demand

MUMBAI: Sugar prices maintained its buoyancy at the Vashi Wholesale market here on persistent demand from stockists and bulk traders.

"Sugar prices may rise further as there is strong demand from Northern and Eastern states in view of festive season along with rising trend in international markets, traders said.

Medium sugar quality (M-30) hardened by Rs 30/33 per quintal to Rs 2,844-2,911 from Thursday's closing level of Rs 2,811-2,881.

Small sugar quality (S-30) also rose by Rs 11-30 per quintal to Rs 2,801-2,851, as compared with Rs 2,771-2,840 in the previous session.

The following are today's closing rates per quintal, with the previous rates in brackets:

Small sugar (S-30) quality Rs 2,801-2,851 (Rs 2,771-2,840) and medium sugar (M-30) quality Rs 2,844-2,911 (Rs 2,811-2,881).

9 Nov, 2010, 05.44AM IST, Man Mohan Rai,ET Bureau

UP cane farmers wait for miller's price

LUCKNOW: With mills in Uttar Pradesh yet to begin crushing, farmer leaders have decided to hold their agitation and wait till mills open and declare the price at which they will buy cane. Millers, on the other hand, are of the firm view that they cannot operate feasibly at the state government mandated SAP of 205/quintal and there is no way they can afford to pay an incentive over it, as demanded by the farmers.

Large number of farmers led by Rakesh Tikait of Bhartiya Kisan Union held a demonstration at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Monday. They demanded both the central and state governments to revisit the minimum support prices of various commodities and foodgrain in view of soaring food inflation.

Mr Tikait said that they would hold another meeting on November 13-14 during which they will firm up the strategy. He said that the millers have not yet started crushing in UP and they are waiting to see what prices they would pay. He said that farmers will not settle for anything less than 290/quintal for selling their cane and if the millers refuse, they will divert their produce to jaggery units and kholus. Besides sugar, the millers also make a profit on by-products and co-generation power units and they can easily pay a higher price, he said.

Mr Tikait added that the farmers are united on the issue this time and they would do a repeat of last year’s when the farmers refused to sell cane to the millers. He also demanded that there should be a long-term ban on import of sugar. If sugar imports are allowed, they will seize the consignment and burn it and not allow the mills to process it.

Secretary general of UP Sugar Mills Association Shyam Lal Gupta said that the millers have decided to start crushing only around November 20 as the recovery of sugar from cane is currently very low. He said the SAP decided by the state is very high and if they begin crushing immediately they would be doubly hit as the recovery is very low.

Mr Gupta said that recovery is expected to improve after a week or two and the millers have thus decided to begin crushing around November third week. Currently , only two sugar units have started crushing in UP.

Business Standard

Tuesday, Nov 09, 2010

Sugar exports needed to cash in on global prices

Kunal Bose / November 09, 2010, 0:58 IST

What a pulsating journey it has been for sugar since the beginning of 2010! The world saw raw sugar prices climbing to 30-year high of 30.4 cents a pound in February when Indian production was estimated at a dangerously low level of about 15 million tonnes and Brazil was contending with a harvest-disrupting weather. Money managed positions then, too, contributed to the market frenzy.

But come May, to use an apt analogy from the London-based Daily Telegraph of a diabetic lapsing from hyper-excitability to acute lethargy, sugar prices fell by half with reports of better production pouring in, particularly from India. (Mercifully, our country ended the sugar season in September with an estimated production of 18.9 million tonnes, giving Food Minister Sharad Pawar the elbow room to push for far-reaching reforms that the sugar sector needs for growth and sustainable good working.)

In a roller coaster ride, raws March delivery contracts on the New York Intercontinental Exchange are now a whisker away from the February peak, while white sugar in London is traded at over $720 a tonne. The price surge, explains an analyst with London-based trading house Czarnikow, is because the initial projection of a world surplus of 2.5 million tonnes in

2010-11 is now "heading into a deficit". Deficit for two consecutive years have brought world sugar stocks at the lowest level in the last two decades.

Spike in world sugar prices has naturally made Indian producers restive to get the nod to start exporting the commodity under open general licence (OGL). Unfavourable weather-related developments have created grounds for more imports among others by Pakistan, China, and Indonesia during 2010-11, while exports by Thailand and Australia will fall for the same reason. All this, coupled with the dryness in the centre south of Brazil (accounting for over 90 per cent of the country's cane output) and the consistent loading problems in the country's six main ports, will explain the rise in sugar prices.

Due to favourable weather in all the cane-growing centres and extraordinarily high prices fetched by the crop last season, we are to harvest a bountiful crop this time. This confidence and the season's opening sugar stocks of six million tonnes helped New Delhi to take a positive stand on re-export of the commodity imported during 2004-08 under advance authorisation scheme. What is, however, particularly inspiring for sugar mills is that Pawar, who earlier braved all opposition to allow cotton exports in order to help farmers get good rewards, appears to be positively disposed to export of the sweetener under OGL.

Capitalising on high prices in the world market will, no doubt, be one of the key considerations for India to start exports quickly. Last year's high cane prices – some mills in Uttar Pradesh paid as much as Rs 300 a quintal – fired reward expectation of growers. Moreover, UP is an ever obliging state. But let us not forget that for a number of months during 2009-10, sugar sold at disconcertingly high rates, with retail prices touching Rs 50 a kg. That enabled mills to procure cane at exorbitant costs. Sugar is a cyclical industry. After two years of low production, India is now headed for a strong recovery in cane and, consequently, sugar output.

Based on the September-end reports by sugar commissioners, the government says 2010-11 cane production from an area of 5.06 million hectares will be 346 million tonnes. Haven't we seen the country producing 26.36 million tonnes of sugar in 2007-08, when the cane crop was marginally higher at 348 million tonnes? "So, we will have enough raw material to make up to 26.5 million tonnes of sugar this season, though at the industry level, we are talking about 25.5 to 26 million tonnes. We have empirical evidences that in a bumper crop year, cane drawal percentage of sugar mills improve," says O P Dhanuka, a former president of Indian Sugar Mills

Association. If the higher production estimate is taken, then with this season's opening stocks, the country will have an availability of 32.5 million tonnes. The caveat here is that there is no finality either about the cane supply or the percentage recovery of sugar from cane, as we go forward. Weather keeps on changing leaving its impact on the crop, as we found last season to our relief.

How much should India be exporting when supply is this comfortable? There is a great hunger for Indian sugar this season and our millers' restiveness to sell in the world market is to earn enough from exports to compensate for low price realisation at home and also be able to meet growers' expectation, so that their interest in the crop is sustained. We made record exports of nearly five million tonnes in 2007-08 and still had end-season stocks of 10.5 million tonnes. The government's food security perception will finally bear upon exports this time. But any export rush on our part may lead to some correction in world sugar prices. In fact the world trade community is waiting for New Delhi's decision on exports.

UP sugar mills to challenge state cane price

Bloomberg / New Delhi November 09, 2010, 0:57 IST

Sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh plan to move court to challenge the price of cane set by the provincial government for the 2010-2011 season, an official from a producers' group said in New Delhi.

Mills in Uttar Pradesh, India's biggest sugar cane-growing state, will approach the Allahabad High Court in two days, said the official, on condition of anonymity

Crushing of sugar cane in the state that's home to more than 100 mills might begin after November 20, as the court may decide on a price by then, the official from the Uttar Pradesh Sugar Mills Association said.

The Uttar Pradesh government last week increased prices mills must pay growers for cane to as much as Rs 210 a quintal, up from Rs 170 last year, a level deemed high by producers as domestic output is forecast to exceed demand for the first time in three years.

Producers in Uttar Pradesh pay a so-called state-advised price. The rate, aimed at shielding four million cane farmers, is usually higher than the floor rate set by the federal government.

“At current domestic sugar prices, it may not be feasible to pay the cane price fixed by Uttar Pradesh,” Abinash Verma, director general of the Indian Sugar Mills Association, said on November 2. “If prices stay at current levels, it is difficult for mills to pay the state-advised price for cane.”

Growers will withhold supplies if mills don’t pay at least Rs 280, Rakesh Tikait, national spokesman of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, a farmers’ group, said on November 2.

Factories paid an average Rs 285-290 last year to secure cane amid a shortfall in production.

Palm oil prices to rise on supply curbs: Mistry

Bs Reporter / Mumbai November 09, 2010, 0:50 IST

Sector veteran Mistry correctly predicted in March that palm oil would exceed 3,000 ringgit after June.

Supply worries, stoked by floods in major growing areas, may keep crude palm oil (CPO) prices high through the rest of the season this year, said Dorab Mistry, director of Godrej International, a respected name in the sector.

Speaking at a conference in China on Sunday, he had forecast the key vegetable oil to surpass 3,300 ringgit per tonne in the next few weeks. The commodity, however, breached this benchmark earlier than Mistry’s expectations, to record a jump of more than four per cent early Monday on the Bursa Malaysia derivatives exchange.

Crude palm oil for delivery in January 2011 recorded a rise of 2.6 per cent at 3,273 ringgit ($1,060) after hitting a 26-month high at 3,348 ringgit, a level not seen since July 18, 2008.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude palm oil contracts for near-month (November) delivery rose 1.26 per cent to Rs 484 per 10 kg, on firm support from global markets. The move was also fuelled by increased demand in the spot market.

Mistry estimated the world production of palm oil in calendar year 2010 would expand little, about 300,000 tonnes. Production growth would be negative in Malaysia and mildly positive in Indonesia. The biological cycle is likely to turn upwards from April 2011 and that should be the beginning of strong growth in production.

Malaysian CPO production is estimated at 17.2 million tonnes for 2010, slightly less than in 2009. The production shortfall is primarily due to the El Nino weather effect. Rainfall in terms of volume and distribution is critical for the oil palm and a big disturbance like an El Nino can be disruptive.

“However, I am afraid that level will not be sufficient to ration demand. The period of greatest tightness will be between February and May 2011 and we may require even higher prices in December and January to prepare the world for that tightness,” Mistry said.

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Back **Sugar exports won't hurt**

It would make immense commercial sense to undertake sugar exports in the coming months and derive the benefit of high international prices.

With cane acreage and output rebounding in the 2010-11 season, prospects of a big expansion in sugar production are bright. The latest estimate of sugar production stands at 25 million tonnes for the new season that has just commenced compared with last year's 18.5 mt. No wonder, the Minister for Food and Agriculture is keen to lift the embargo on sugar exports as soon as the festival season ends, which also coincides with the beginning of the crushing season. As luck would have it, the global sugar market favours producers, with prices hitting a 30-year high on the bourses. In addition to strong fundamentals that support high sugar prices, further quantitative easing in the US and the prospect of continued low interest rate regime have been supportive. Globally, sugar prices are expected to stay at elevated levels until the demand-supply fundamentals turn more consumer-friendly.

Today, the world desperately needs Indian sugar to fill-in the supply shortfall and moderate prices, unlike on many previous occasions when sugar merely added to the already sizeable global supplies. It would make immense commercial sense for India to undertake sugar exports in the coming months and derive the benefit of high international prices, something it never could do in the past. It may also make sense to enter into forward contracts (at lower prices) for imports some time in the second half of next year, should the situation warrant. Together with an estimated opening stock of about 4 million t, the total sugar availability during the following months is likely to be at least 5 mt in excess of the consumption requirement estimated at about 24 mt. In addition to meeting extant export obligation (estimated at about 800,000 tonnes), export of about two million tonnes is unlikely to unduly squeeze domestic availability. However, it is important to take a call on exports without delay. Simultaneously, the industry should be forced to clear cane arrears so that growers stay committed to retaining the acreage at about 5 million hectare for the next season. Meanwhile, it is critical that the controversy surrounding the ethanol blending programme is brought to an end soon. While the industry is reported to have committed for supplies of about 600 million litres of ethanol, a committee under the Planning Commission has suggested that the quantum be pruned to 400-500 million litres for the current year. It is unclear if the expert panel enjoys the mandate to stipulate quantity, in addition to fixing prices. Mills apprehend that the balance quantity may have to be marketed to industrial users at steeply lower prices. The stand-off threatens a delay in cane crushing in Uttar Pradesh.

All these indicate how muddled the thinking within the government is. Sugarcane is now perceived not only as food but also as fuel. With so much happening in the sugar sector, the talk of decontrol seems to have evaporated into thin air. It is necessary for the policymakers, growers' representatives, industrial consumers and mills to look at the sugar sector holistically and come up with positions that advance growth and equity.

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Back Potato crashes as Bengal offloads stock in market

Shobha Roy

Kolkata, Nov. 8

Potato prices crashed by about Rs 100/quintal following release of stocks held by the West Bengal Government in the market.

The wholesale price of the Jyoti variety hovered around Rs 300/quintal on Monday, according to Mr Patit Paban De, Past-President, West Bengal Cold Storage Association.

The price of the tuber was hovering at around Rs 600-700 a quintal a fortnight ago due to a demand-supply mismatch following the delay in offloading of government stocks in the market, Mr De told Business Line. “Now with the government releasing stocks in the market, prices have gradually come down and dropped by about Rs 100/quintal from last week,” he said.

The West Bengal Government had procured 9.75 lakh tonnes of potatoes through the consumer co-operatives under the West Bengal State Consumers Cooperative Federation (Confed) during this year. “The Government has so far released about three lakh tonnes in the market and is likely to release the remaining six lakh tonnes by the end of this month or by early next month. This will cause prices to crash further,” he pointed out.

Direct selling

The Government had earlier identified tendering process for offloading the potatoes into the market. However, it later decided to opt for direct selling of potatoes by various agencies to potato traders and cold storages across the State at a predetermined price.

The State Government, Mr De said, has asked the agencies such as Confed and Benfed to sell directly to potato traders and cold storages at a bond price (excluding all expenses) of Rs 400/quintal.

The prices are likely to fall another Rs 100/quintal post-November 15, once large quantity of stocks held by the Government is released and with the fall in demand for Bengal potatoes from other States. “Harvesting of potatoes in other northern and north-eastern States usually start by the mid- November and this will lead to a fall in demand for Bengal potatoes in these States, thereby causing the prices to fall further,” he said.

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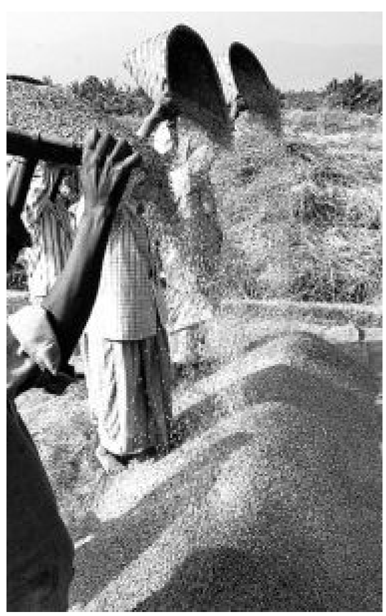
Back There is a future in farming

STHANU R. NAIR



Dissemination ofsuccess stories can help enhance skills.

The fact that the agriculture sector in India has not experienced any significant growth during the post-economic reforms period is well established. For the revival of the sector, policymakers have suggested, among others, improvements in the crop yield and promotion of crop diversification. However, the progress in these areas has been slow.

In an emerging and growing economy like India, there will be an elevated domestic demand for high-value food products such as pulses, fruits, vegetables, edible oils, dairy products, processed foods, and livestock products. Catering to the high-value farm segment has been viewed as one of the pathways out of agrarian distress. Studies suggest that the demand for such food items has recorded high growth in India during the post-economic reforms period. But the annual growth rates of area, production and yield of high-value agriculture products has declined during the same period.

Foodgrains still constitute over 60 per cent of the gross cropped area in India. India's production of high-value food commodities is one of the lowest in the world. For example, according to World Development Report, 2008, among the countries where the proportion of workforce engaged in agriculture was high, fruits and vegetables production was 118 kg per capita in India during 2003-05 against 390 for China, 217 for the Philippines, 178 for Thailand, 162 for Vietnam, and 516 for Turkey.

SOCIAL LEARNING

One possible way to hasten crop diversification and increase the crop yield is to promote “social learning”. India seems to have overlooked this crucial aspect while charting a revival path for the agricultural sector. ‘Social learning' is the process of learning from the experiences of successful farmers in social networks. Individual farmers may be influenced by and learn about the successful farm practices from their neighbours' experiences.

Evidence across the world, including India, suggests that social learning may be important for the diffusion of new agricultural technology. In India, social learning played a crucial role in the widespread adoption of high-yielding varieties (HYV) of wheat and rice during Green Revolution. What we require today is more such farm information dissemination initiatives. Instead, the public discourse on agriculture has been dominated by scary stories of farm distress and suicides. In a way, this approach may be responsible for our negative attitude towards agriculture. The popular impression today is that all is not well in the Indian agriculture, due to which many do not want to continue in agriculture or take it up as a profession.

How far is this impression true? Don't we have sufficient farm success stories in the Indian context which, by way of adequate publicity, can be used to induce farmers to stay in agriculture and change their farm practices, and also to attract fresh talent in the farm sector? If you expect an affirmative answer to this question, you are mistaken.

SUCCESS STORIES

There are many enterprising people who have been charting their own growth trajectories in the farm sector by combining their entrepreneurial skills, labour, vision, hands-on approach with their core competence in technology, marketing and scientific inputs. Significantly, they include both individual entrepreneurs and small and marginal farmers. For instance, Malvinder Singh Bhinder, who owns Agro-Dutch Industries Limited (www.agro-dutch.com), is the world's largest mushroom producer. Jagjit Singh Kapoor is the owner of Kashmir Apiaries (www.kashmirhoney.com), which is India's biggest honey producer-exporter.

The world's largest producer and exporter of cut roses Karuturi Global Ltd (www.karuturi.com) is owned by Ramakrishna Karuturi. Suguna Poultry Farm (www.sugunapoultry.com), India's leading integrator of poultry products is established by Soundarajan. Jang Bahadur owns Sangha Group (www.sanghaseeds.com), which is the largest producer of seed and table potatoes in Asia.

Similarly, there are many other success stories among small and marginal farmers. An excellent official source of information about such farmers is the coffee-table book titled Harvest of Hope brought out early this year by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation (DAC), Government of India. This publication documents the achievements of 101 enterprising small and marginal farmers from all parts of India, who by sheer hard work and enterprise have transformed their lives.

TALENT RECOGNITION

One important factor behind these successes was diversification towards high value agriculture goods and the ability to unite and bring the best out of individual farmers. Most of these farmers or entrepreneurs struggled against the common difficulties facing the farm sector. Yet, when it comes to turning agriculture into a viable livelihood option or business opportunity, only the initiatives by big corporates hog the limelight in this country.

Contributions by individual farmers are not given their due. A majority of Indian farmers would be able to relate to their successes and draw lessons on how to enhance their farming skills.

The need of the hour is to disseminate these individual-driven successes in the farming community alongside the corporate-led ones, thereby spearheading agrarian revival by emulation. In this process, successful farmers shall play the role of ‘change agents'.

As a positive development, early this year, DAC organised a farmers' congregation in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, to felicitate 101 small and marginal farmers who fought against odds to make a difference and to mark the release of Harvest of Hope. What better way to boost the morale of the farming community than this? In a country where talent from all walks of life except the farming community gets recognised, this is a welcome move.

Speaking at a farmers' congregation, the Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, is reported to have described the successful farmers as “the unsung heroes (and heroines) of Indian agriculture”. Let us strive for more such heroes and heroines by emulation.

(The author is Assistant Professor (Economics Area), Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode. The views are personal.)

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Back **Cultivating trust in agents**

M.R. SUBRAMANI

Erode — a vibrant town in Tamil Nadu — sometimes could be mistaken for a town in Punjab or Haryana. The town, headquarters of Erode district, owes its prosperity mainly to agriculture. It has one thing common with Punjab and Haryana — a private system of financing farmers.

This financial system is similar to the ‘arthiyas' or commission agents system in North India. But the functioning of the financiers in this southern town has subtle differences from the North Indian system.

Turmeric markets

Nothing illustrates the differences better than the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yards. There are three markets in Erode where turmeric is sold. One is the regulated market run by the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee under the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Department. The second is run by a cooperative body. The third is this turmeric merchants sales yard, which accounts for over 40 per cent of the daily trade in the golden spice.

In the regulated market, the farmers bring their produce and sell it. The income for the market comes from the 1 per cent levy the buyer has to foot to procure his needs. Besides, farmers have the facility to keep their unsold produce in the market for 15 days without any payment.

In the cooperative market, the farmer has to foot 1 per cent of the amount he gets selling his produce. The cooperative body running the terminal also charges the buyer another 1 per cent.

The private market charges the farmer between 1 and 3 per cent, depending on the quantity of his produce. The cooperative and private markets then deposit what is collected as 1 per cent levy either from the buyer or farmer with the regulated market.

Why does the merchants association sales yard witness higher turnover? This is because merchants of the association have the first right of refusal over the produce of farmers, whom they fund till their crop is harvested.

How the system evolved

The system was born decades ago when either the cooperative or private merchants urged farmers to grow turmeric. The cooperative's role was limited to just asking them to plant turmeric. The private merchants, on the other hand, funded the growers. Besides, they also took care of the growers' needs until harvest.

Even after harvest, it is the farmer who decided the timing of the sale of his produce. But he has to sell his turmeric through the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard only. This has resulted in mutual trust, despite a few usual disputes, and the system has gained acceptance.

After the produce is sold, the merchant or the financier takes back his money with interest besides 1 or 2 per cent commission for helping to sell turmeric. The interest ranges between 24 per cent and 36 per cent a year.

Finance for the growers extends to the personal needs and even jewel purchases. “There are times when a farmer buying gold jewels could be short of money. He then calls us and we give the money at the place where he buys the jewels. We recover it after he sells his produce,” says Mr K.V. Ravishankar, President of the merchants association.

The difference between the ‘arthiyas' and the Erode finance system is that the former acts as a commission agent at the terminal markets or mandis. But in the case of the latter, a private market has been set up to sell the farmers' produce to help recover the dues.

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Back **Rain hampers rabi sowing in Karnataka**

Coverage down in 12 districts, says State Agriculture dept.

Anil Urs

Hubli, Nov. 8

Karnataka's rabi coverage is down by 24.89 per cent. Sowing on 8.90 lakh hectares has been completed, against the usual coverage of 11.85 lakh hectares, as on October 18.

These are early days for rabi cultivation. Sowing is negligible in 12 districts, below-normal in eight districts, normal in five and above-normal in five districts, said an official of the Karnataka department of agriculture.

"The continuing rains are hampering rabi land preparation, nursery-bed preparation and transplant operations," he added.

Cereals coverage is 4.05 lakh hectares, as against normal coverage of 4.86 lakh hectares. Total rabi target is 16.59 lakh hectares. The coverage under jowar and wheat is less than the coverage of last year, while maize, ragi and minor millets' acreages are more than that of last year.

Pulses coverage is 3.37 lakh hectares, as against normal coverage of 2.80 lakh hectare covered last year. Total rabi target is 10.74 lakh hectares. Bengal gram coverage is 3.01 lakh hectares (normal 2.27 lakh hectare). Horse gram coverage is 0.33 lakh hectare (normal 0.49 lakh hectare).

Oilseeds coverage is 0.70 lakh hectares; normal coverage is 3.01 lakh hectares. Total rabi target is 5.27 lakh hectares. Sunflower coverage is 0.55 lakh hectare (normal coverage 2.76 lakh hectare), and safflower 0.11 lakh hectare (0.17 lakh hectare).

Cash crops coverage is 0.78 lakh hectare; normal coverage is 1.18 lakh hectares. Total rabi target is 1.85 lakh hectares. Cotton coverage is 0.67 lakh hectare. Normal coverage is 1.02 lakh hectares. Sugarcane coverage is 0.08 lakh hectare (normal coverage 0.16 lakh hectares).

As for the horticulture crops in districts growing potato, onion, tomato and chilli crop predominantly, sowing, inter-cultivation, land preparation, nursery-bed preparation and transplanting operations are under progress.

However, sowing operations have started in some of the important districts. Already sown crops are reported to be in vegetative stage.

Potato has been sown on 302 hectares (rabi target 7,632 hectares); onion on 724 hectares (21,409 hectares); tomato on 1,185 hectares (15,213 hectares) and chilli on 1,047 hectares (14,376 hectares).

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Back **Cardamom rises on demand, limited supply**

G K Nair

Kochi, Nov. 8

Cardamom prices gained on good demand amid limited supply, at auctions held last week.

North Indian buyers were active as it appeared that they seem to have exhausted their stocks during the Diwali sales.

Depleted inventory compelled them to re-enter the market and cover for the winter season, wedding, Christmas and New Year demand.

Prices improved by Rs 30-40 a kg during the week.

However, auctions were held only for three days — from Monday to Wednesday — as the market was closed from Thursday to Sunday for Diwali, sources said. Total arrivals at the auctions last week stood at 102 tonnes, and the entire quantity was sold .

The peak harvesting period of the season are the second and third round of picking. Currently, third round of picking is on and is expected to be over by mid-November, growers said.

The individual auction average price, which fell to below Rs 800 a kg the previous week, recovered and crossed Rs 860 a kg last week. Arrivals at the Sunday auction conducted by KCPMC stood at 52 tonnes, and the entire quantity was sold.

The individual auction average was Rs 841.60 a kg, Mr P. C. Punnoose, General Manager, told Business Line.

The market, he said, is unlikely to decline in the coming days, as there will be good demand for the festival and marriage season in North India.

As prices fell in the last few weeks on bearish reports, growers held back their produce and resorted to a regulated release. This exercise pushed up prices, traders said.

The total output in the country continues to remain almost stagnant at around 10,000 tonnes a year, at a time when there has been a significant growth in demand for obvious reasons, and such a phenomenon could keep the market buoyant in the coming days, as there is no other place to source the material to meet the demand, trade sources said.

The lone source, Guatemala, is likely to re-enter the market with its produce from the replanted estates only next year.

Meanwhile, the revised estimate of the Kerala Agriculture University (KAU) Market Intelligence Centre indicated an all-India production of 9,500 tonnes, of which 7,125 tonnes would be from Kerala, during the current season. It implies that at an average sale of 24-25 tonnes a day, it will last till May 2010. Any daily sale above this rate will exhaust the stock before February 2011, leading to a more volatile price scenario than during the last season, due to supply-demand mismatch, according to Dr K. Satheesh Babu, Professor and CCPI, KAU's Agricultural Market Intelligence Centre.

Total arrivals from August 1 to November 3 stood at 3,133 tonnes. Of this, 3,098 tonnes were sold. Arrivals and sales in the same period during the previous season were 3,175 tonnes and 3,110 tonnes, respectively.

Weighted average price as on November 3 was Rs 1,057.77 a kg, up from Rs 681.69 a kg on the same day, last year.

Prices for graded varieties in rupees/kg on Monday were: AGEB 960- 970; AGB 850-860; AGS 830-840; AGS1-800-810. Prices in the open local market at Bodinayakannur in rupees/kg were: AGEB 945-945; AGB 830-840; AGS 815-830; AGS 1 780-795. Bulk was fetching Rs 600-990 a kg.

Due to favourable weather conditions in the growing areas, the late crop may be better, sources said.

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Back **Branded edible oils price hiked Rs 2/kg; global market bullish**

Amit Mitra

Hyderabad Nov. 8

Edible oil prices are set to further increase in the next few days with incremental supply unable to match incremental demand.Indian edible oil producers who have hiked prices of products in the last few weeks are planning to inject another round of price increase this week, in tandem with the steady climb in global prices.

Mr Dorab Mistry of Godrej International on Sunday told a meet on oils and oilseeds in Guangzhou, China that prices of vegetable oils were set for further rise on bullish sentiments.

“We hiked prices of our products by Rs 2 a kg last week. We feel we may have to further increase the prices by Rs 1.50 to Rs 2 a kg in the next three to four days,” Mr Angshu Mallick, Chief Operating Officer of Adani Wilmar, India's leading edible oil player, told Business Line.

The Rs 6,000-crore Adani Wilmar, a joint venture between the $6-billion Adani Group and $23-billion Wilmar International of Singapore, has the largest portfolio of brands in the domestic edible oil industry, such as Fortune, Raag, Fryola and Jubilee Masterchef.

Edible oil prices have risen by an average of $100 a tonne and palm oil by $150 a tonne in the last seven to eight days.

Although the domestic crop has been good this year, Indian edible oil manufacturers have been compelled to nudge up prices due to tight global demand-supply trends. India, at present, imports nearly nine million tonnes of edible oils, about 60 per cent of the total requirement of 15 million tonnes. In fact, imports have more than doubled in the last four years from 4.4 million tonnes in 2005-06.Mr Mallick said imported edible oil prices increased from Rs 40-45 a kg to Rs 50-Rs 55 a kg in the last six months. “We see the rices touching Rs 60 a kg in the next couple of weeks,” he added.Mr Dorab Mistry said that “We must begin to give up too many thoughts of any meaningful decline in vegetable oil prices during 2011.”

Mr Mistry said that palm oil futures could reach 3,300 ringgits ($1,072) a tonne in the next few weeks, while for soybean oil a level of between $1,200 and $1,250 per tonne f.o.b Argentila is to be expected.The rapid transition from El Nino to La Nina in 2010, which caused several severe imbalances in world climate, bruised oil-palm yields in Indonesia and Malaysia, the major producers of the oil globally.

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Back **Demand boosts rally in rice**

Karnal, Nov. 8

With some buying in the market, prices of aromatic rice witnessed a rally, while the non-basmati varieties also witnessed an uptrend. Prices of aromatic rice rose by Rs 100-150 a quintal, whereas the non-basmati varieties rose by Rs 40-60 a quintal.

Mr Amit Kumar, Proprietor, Hanuman Rice Trading Company, told Business Line that after the festival season, rice market witnessed good trading on Monday.

On Monday, prices of Pusa-1121 steam (new) ruled around Rs 5,150 a quintal against Rs 5,000 quoted last weekend, while the old variety ruled at Rs 5,200-5,250 and Pusa-1121 sela (new) ruled between Rs 4,100 and Rs 4,150, whereas the old variety was around Rs 4,300. Pusa-1121 raw (new) ruled around Rs 5,100, while the old variety quoted at Rs 5,200. Pusa (sela) quoted between Rs 3,150 and Rs 3,250 and Pusa (raw) at Rs 4,100-4,150. Basmati sela ruled at Rs 6,000-6,150, while basmati raw around Rs 7,100.

Prices of PR (old) ruled between Rs 2,000 and Rs 2,210, while the PR (new) ruled between Rs 1,950 and Rs 2,020 a quintal. Sharbati sela (old) ruled between Rs 2,500 and Rs 2,725; Sharbati steam (new) at Rs 2,600-2,800; Permal sela (new) at Rs 2,000-2,170 a quintal.

Brokens such as Tibar ruled around Rs 3,510, Dubar at Rs 2,500 and Mongra around Rs 1,790-1,820.

PR-13 ruled between Rs 980 and Rs 1,000. Grade-A variety ruled between Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,100. RS-10 was at Rs 1,350-1,400; Sharbati between Rs 1,300 and Rs 1,500; Sugandha-999 at Rs 1,600-1,650. Pusa-1121 quoted at Rs 1,800-2,300. About 10,000 bags of pure basmati rice arrived and quoted at Rs 2,500-2,700.

Date:09/11/2010 URL: http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/09/stories/2010110951741900.htm

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Back **Turmeric declines on poor demand**

Our Correspondent

Erode, Nov. 8

The turmeric markets here saw poor arrivals. Spot price decreased by Rs 100 a quintal as the futures market witnessed a fall.

Prices are on a downward trend as most turmeric farmers are still in a festive mood, said sources.Turmeric arrivals will pick up only from Wednesday.

“Due to poor demand from north Indian States, the price of turmeric has decreased by Rs 100 to Rs 150 a quintal. Further because of heavy rain and cyclone in Andhra Pradesh, vehicular traffic has been stopped. So lorries carrying the produce could not get through,” said R.V. Ravi, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

In the Erode Turmeric Merchants Sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 11,500 to Rs 14,269 a quintal, the root variety was sold at Rs 11,000 to Rs 14,219 per quintal. Out of 540 bags that arrived, 310 were sold.

In the Regulated Market, the finger variety was sold at Rs 13,705-14,259 a quintal, the root variety at Rs 13,699-14,189 a quintal. “Till this weekend, there may be poor sales and the price will decrease further,” Mr Ravi said.

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http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/09/stories/2010110951731900.htm

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Back **Festival hangover hits soyabean trade**

Our Correspondent

Indore, Nov. 8

Local mandis, which opened on Monday after four days, witnessed subdued trading with the hangover of Diwali festivities still gripping the market.In the wake of Diwali and Bhai Dooj festival, arrival of soyabean were lower in State mandis on Monday with barely 1.75 lakh bags arriving.In Indore, arrivals of soyabean were recorded at 5,000 bags and it was quoted Rs 30 higher in the spot at Rs 2,145-2,151 a quintal.With increase in demand, plant deliveries of soyabean perked up by about Rs 30 to Rs 2,210-2,240 a quintal.

Bullishness in soyabean was witnessed notwithstanding the decline in soya futures where November contract on the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange quoted Rs 10 lower at Rs 2,255 a quintal.Soya oil witnessed a positive trend on strong global cues.On the spot, soya refined quoted at Rs 515-Rs 525 for 10 kg, up Rs 3, while soya solvent was quoted Rs 3 up at Rs 495-Rs 500 for 10 kg.On the National Board of Trade, soya oil closed at Rs 563.

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Back **AP to reschedule crop loans in rain-ravaged mandals** Hyderabad, Nov. 8

Faced with widespread loss to the farm sector due to the recent rains, the Andhra Pradesh Government has decided to reschedule crop loans, facilitate new loans for sowing during Rabi season and offer additional seed subsidy to farmers in the badly impacted mandals of the State.This decision follows a meeting at State Secretariat where several Cabinet colleagues interacted with the Chief Minister, Mr K. Rosaiah, to take stock of the latest flood situation and necessary follow-up measures.Addressing a press conference, the Agriculture Minister, Mr N. Raghuveera Reddy, said more than 2.84 lakh hectares of paddy fields have been affected due to the recent rains.This will not only impact the farmers financially but also hamper their ability to repay loans.

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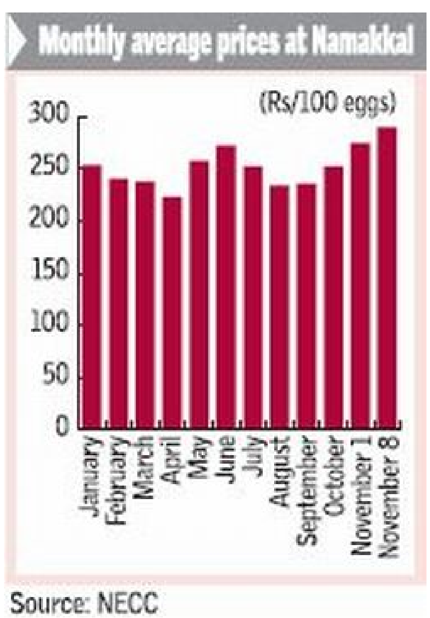
Back **Domestic demand spurs egg prices to record high**

Drop in production, incessant rain behind surge.



Chennai, Nov. 8

Egg prices touched a record high of Rs 2.90 a piece on Monday on sudden spurt in demand due to cold weather and continuous rain in parts of the country. The price had touched a high of Rs 2.88 in November last year. Part of the price hike is attributed to the five per cent drop in production and shortage of vegetables due to incessant rains that have increased the demand for eggs.

A poultry owner in Namakkal, hub of egg trade, said that for the first time the price had not dropped despite healthy production. "The price of eggs on earlier occasions had fallen due to excess production. The current price tag, we hope, will remain stable for quite some time now," he said.

"Egg prices in Delhi and Kolkata are ruling at Rs 3 and Rs 3.21 a piece respectively. Whatever eggs are produced in the North, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra are consumed in northern States. This has created a vacuum in Kerala and Puducherry. Demand from these States will be met by production in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka," an official of the Coimbatore-based Suguna Poultry Farms Ltd said.

Rain has led to vegetable shortage and price of egg is gaining since it is seen as the only balanced diet at a lower price, he said. Prices could soon hit Rs 3 or Rs 3.10, the official said.

The country's layer bird population, or chickens bred to lay eggs, has increased 30 per cent in the past decade. It has been stagnant in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and North India. There has been growth only in Tamil Nadu, but that too is fast saturating. Industry sources told Business Line that the chick placement in the farms is on the rise and a 15 per cent rise is expected in the north's layer population. The Suguna Poultry official said that currently the chick placement is 1.15 crore birds (at all-India level).

Dr P. Selvaraj, Chairman, NECC's Namakkal zone, said farmers have started placing layer chicks (which will start laying eggs after 24 weeks) during the austere months so that they can build up inventories.

"The improved market sentiment for table eggs has led to resumption in the new bird placements in the Namakkal region. We expect an average 25-lakh new chicks to be taken in every month by the farms, some fout lakh chicks more than what it used to be in the previous year," Dr Selvaraj said.

BROILER RATES DOWN

Meanwhile, Palladam-based Broiler Co-ordination Committee (BCC) has slashed the rates of cull birds by Rs 5/kg to Rs 50. NECC's layer rates (for birds of 1.3 kg) have been pruned to Rs 40 from Rs 42 a kg last week. Namakkal and Palladam prices are the benchmarks for eggs and chicken respectively in the country.

Though it is unclear whether the country will retain its place in global egg export arena, table egg producers in Namakkal right now are basking in high offtake on the home turf and improved farm gate price for the eggs.

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Back **Amla for health**

— P.V. Sivakumar

Mineral-rich drink:A vendor sells gooseberry (Emblica officinalis), or “amla,” juice near the HITEC City in Hyderabad. Containing iron, pectin, calcium, vitamin A and C, and folic acid, the juice sells at Rs 300 a bottle and is a hit among software professionals in Cyberabad.

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Back **Spot rubber prices down on correction**

Aravindan

Kottayam, Nov. 8

Physical rubber market entered into a corrective phase on Monday. Prices fell following sharp declines in the domestic futures and the market remained under pressure during closing hours on selling from dealers and traders.

The volumes were better compared with preceding sessions. Sheet rubber declined to Rs 200 (204) a kg after hitting an intra-day high of Rs 206 a kg during the mid session.

The grade improved to Rs 202 (200) a kg both at Kottayam and Kochi according to Rubber Board. The present situation has badly affected all segments in the rubber sector as a whole, said Mr George Waly, President, Indian Rubber Dealers Federation.

There are reports that there is a stock of 2.75 lakh tonnes of rubber in the country. But it does not reach the selling point.

Now since the tapping has resumed in plantations, there ought to be around 50,000 tonnes of rubber readily available with the growers for sale, but surprisingly enough it also does not arrive at the marketing centres. It is a very dangerous trend, he said.

In futures, the November series surrendered to Rs 200 (207.74), December to Rs 202 (209.96), January to Rs 203.17 (211.42) and February to Rs 205.50 (213.28) a kg for RSS 4 on the National Multi Commodity Exchange. The November futures for RSS 3 slipped to ¥355 (Rs 194.19) from ¥355.5 during the day session but remained inactive in the night session on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange.The grade (spot) improved marginally to Rs

187.21 (186.56) a kg at Bangkok.Spot rates were (Rs/kg): RSS-4: 200 (204); RSS-5: 193 (196); ungraded: 190 (192); ISNR 20: 196 (198) and latex 60 per cent: 130 (130).

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Back **Tea import bill falls 12.79%**

P.S. Sundar Coonoor, Nov. 8

India's tea import bill in the first eight months of calendar 2010 has fallen 12.79 per cent over the corresponding period of last calendar, reveals an analysis of the latest information available with the Tea Board and the importers.The bill has declined despite an increase in the price of imported tea because of lower volume imported.Between January and August, India paid an average price of Rs 88.87 a kg for the tea it imported – Rs 5.37 more than the corresponding period of last year.But the volume imported dropped to 12.96 million kg (mkg) – 2.86 mkg lower than last year.

Consequently, India's import bill declined to Rs 115.22 crore from Rs 132.12 crore. This reduction of Rs 16.9 crore marks a decline of 12.79 per cent. In dollar terms, India paid $1.93 a kg – 23 cents lower than last year – resulting in the overall bill to fall by $1.87 million to $25.06 million.In the financial year analysis, between April and August, India imported 7.94 mkg – 3.07 mkg less paying Rs 96.54 a kg – Rs 12.8 more. Consequently, the overall bill declined by Rs 15.57 crore to Rs 76.64 crore.In dollar terms, during this period, India paid $2.1 a kg – 38 cents more resulting in a drop in the overall bill by $2.28 million to $16.67 million.

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Back **Demand lifts pepper futures**

G.K. Nair Kochi, Nov. 8

Pepper futures shot up on Monday on strong buying support from exporters amid limited availability. All the contracts went up as leading Indian exporters covered good quantities of exchange delivered pepper which in turn pushed up both the futures and the spot market prices, market sources told Business Line.

All the other origins are also understood to be firm as supply is said to be a tight in the world market, due to good demand for the winter, Christmas and the New Year. Coverage for the season has to be done this month and hence exporters were covering actively, they said. Domestic demand also started picking up after the Diwali holidays, which also aided the price rise.

November contract on the NCDEX went up by Rs 454 to close (last traded price (LTP) at Rs 21,850 a quintal. December and January contracts increased by Rs 534 and Rs 569 a quintal respectively to close (LTP) at Rs 22,275 and Rs 22,490.

Total turnover increased by 13,507 tonnes to 19,819 tonnes. Total open interest went up by 855 tonnes indicating good additional purchases to 19,819 tonnes. November open interest dropped by 494 tonnes to 6,998 tonnes while that of December shot up by 1,188 tonnes showing good switching over and additional purchases and January moved up by 40 tonnes to 408 tonnes.

Spot prices increased by Rs 400 to close at Rs 21,400 (MG 1) and Rs 20,900 (un-garbled) a quintal on strong buying support. Availability in the spot market was tight as there were no sellers even after the price crossed Rs 210 a kg and that indicates nothing but a shrinkage in availability, they said.Indian parity in the international market was at $5,150-$5,200 a tonne. The trend in other origins was not available as the overseas market players are attending the IPC's 38th Session in Kochi from today.

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http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/2010/11/09/stories/2010110951492100.htm

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Back **Rubber Board training from Nov 22**

Kottayam, Nov 8

The Rubber Board is organising a five-day training in manufacture of latex based rubber products at the Rubber Training Institute, Kottayam from November 22 to 26 . The course content includes production of rubber band, gloves, rubber thread and balloons. The training fee is Rs 1,200. The payment may be made by money order or demand draft in favour of the Director (Training), Rubber Board, payable at Kottayam. The application on white paper along with fee may be forwarded to the Director (Training), Rubber Training Institute, Rubber Board PO, Kottayam -9, Kerala. For details contact: 0481 2351313.

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Tue,09 Nov 2010

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather

Cloudy

Tuesday, Nov 9

Max Min

25.1° | 20.8°

Rain: 36 mm in 24hrs	Sunrise: 6:04
Humidity: 75%	Sunset: 17:40
Wind: Normal	Barometer: 1006.0

Tomorrow's Forecast

Rainy

Wednesday, Nov 10

Max Min

26° | 22°

Extended Forecast for a week

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Nov 11	**Nov 12**	**Nov 13**	**Nov 14**	**Nov 15**
29° | 26°	30° | 25°	29° | 24°	29° | 23°	29° | 24°
Rainy	Rainy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy