

Creating rural entrepreneurs

At KVAFSU, farmers are trained in animal rearing, post-harvest preservation and processing technologies



Renuka Prasad

Teaching, research and extension are on the agenda of every farm university. But the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University is trying to break the mould by introducing another important component to it – entrepreneurship development among farmers.

C. Renuka Prasad, who took over as the Vice-Chancellor recently, said the university would share advanced technology with farmers and tie up with private corporations to promote industries based on farm and animal produce.

The first project is to help farmers breed better quality sheep and goats. The varsity has tied up with the Nimbkar Agriculture Research Institute in Maharashtra to help distribute high-yielding and disease-resistant varieties of sheep and goats.

“Sheep and goat rearing is one of the most remunerative farming practices. It calls for small, short-term investments. There is an assured market for sheep and goat meat and wool and rearing them is hassle-free. We want to improve the farmers’ economic condition by training them in breeding exotic breeds like African Dorper sheep and Boer goats that are better than local breeds like Dakhani,” he said.

Dorper sheep, a hybrid between Dorset Horn and Blackhead Persian breeds, are self-shredders. They don’t need to be sheared. Their wool comes off naturally every year and farmers can pick it up and sell it. Each sheep weighs 70 kg, twice or thrice the body weight of an average Indian breed.

A twinning gene has been inserted in Dorper and Boer goats and they yield two kids at every delivery. This will also help farmers, Dr. Prasad said. The university has already started supplying sheep to farmers in Bangalore and Kolar. Farmers’ groups are being formed in Bidar, Bangalore and other districts. They will be trained in the maintenance of these exotic varieties and encouraged to breed goats and sell their young ones. An embryo transplant centre is being set up in Bangalore to focus on breed development. It will have facilities for semen freezing, artificial insemination, and neonatal care.

The second project is to transfer low-cost milk product-making techniques to farmers and training them. This will address two problems – adding value to extra milk and selling it, and the protein deficiency among the rural population.

“Now, farmers are unable to sell all the milk they produce as the companies have reduced their procurement. We will teach farm women to make these value-added products at home. They can either sell them in their neighbourhood or feed their children,” he said.

The third project is to distribute quality varieties of pigs. “Our centres in Bangalore are already distributing pigs. In the next phase, we are planning to develop better breeds of pigs by crossing local breeds with exotic ones.” The fourth is the Mudhol hound project. The Canine Research and Information Centre in Mudhol, Bagalkot, has already started breeding these dogs and

distributing the pups to farmers in surrounding villages. “We are also setting up a laboratory that will determine the genetic qualities of the hound and create a road map for its breed improvement.”

Yet another project helps farmers grow decorative fish varieties. Training in breeding and market intelligence is provided through micro units of breeders.

Teaching

The university will improve the teaching-learning process by two methods. First is by providing students with hands-on training in processes such as animal rearing, post-harvest preservation and processing technologies of animal produce, interacting with farmers and research. Students will be involved in all these process in phases. They will work in animal, bird and fish farms of the university as part of their internship, and in food processing centres. The university’s efforts at creating middle-level managers in animal produce-based industries by starting diploma courses have paid off. There is a huge demand for such professionals. New courses like wildlife science have begun attracting students from western countries. We already have students from Malaysia, Iran, Iraq, African countries, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan on our campuses, he said.

New courses such as hygienic meat processing are being started for students and personnel of slaughter houses. Two model abattoirs are being set up in Bangalore and Bidar. The university has seven colleges. Three more are being set up in Puttur, Athani and Gadag.

Faculty and student exchange programmes are being planned with farm universities in Minnesota and Purdue in the U.S. Teachers are also being trained at the National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) in Hyderabad.

Extension

The university has set up farmers’ training centres in its Bidar, Mangalore and Bangalore campuses. Farmers referred by agencies like Karnataka Milk Federation, and poultry and fish breeding agencies or industries are trained in these centres. The seven livestock research and information centres across the State are also training farmers.

Research

The university's research is broadly divided into two categories: livestock improvement and disease prevention. One of the most popular poultry breeds in the country, Giri Raja, is a contribution of the university's scientists. "We are now working on improving buffalo, fish, sheep, Deoni cows and bullocks varieties," Mr. Prasad said.

The second important contribution of the university is the development of vaccines for animals, birds and even fish. Oral vaccines have been developed for captive bred and inland fish. The Bangalore-based Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals, which is part of the university, has also perfected vaccines for buffaloes, pigs, dogs, and other pet animals.

The most important benefit of the varsity colleges has been the treatment of animals, birds and fish at hospitals on campus. Expert doctors treat lakhs of animals in the colleges in Bangalore, Bidar, Mangalore, Shimoga and Hassan every year.

"This remains our primary area of service to the people of the State. The university serves as the tertiary healthcare centre for animals. All treatment is free and that has strengthened the confidence farmers have in us," Dr. Prasad said.

'Don't use river water for irrigation'

In the wake of serious drinking water scarcity in several villages, S.S. Pattanashetty, Deputy Commissioner and the district Magistrate, has instructed farmers not to draw water from Tungabhadra river for irrigation purposes as water had been let into the river from Bhadra reservoir only for drinking purposes.

In a press statement issued here on Sunday, Mr. Pattanashetty said that villages located along the river in Honnali, Harihar and Harapanahalli taluks were facing acute shortage of drinking water. Even cattle were deprived of water in these villages. Under these circumstances, it had come to the notice of the district administration that many farmers were drawing water from the river, in spite of repeated appeals not to draw water for irrigation purposes.

There were also reports that some people were using the river water to manufacture bricks, he said and warned that stern action would be taken against those drawing water for agricultural purposes or for manufacturing bricks.

A special team, consisting of the officials of the departments of Irrigation and Revenue and the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom), had been formed, which would visit the villages situated along the river and remove pumpsets installed to draw water from the river, he said.

The Bescom had been instructed to stop supplying power to irrigation pumpsets installed along the river, he said and appealed to farmers to cooperate with the district administration and help it provide drinking water to people and cattle in all villages.

He has asked the people to inform the district administration, the police, the Bescom, or the Irrigation Department, if anyone was drawing water from the river for irrigation purposes.

More efforts sought to raise farm productivity

From 2000 to 2011, the State has registered a negative growth rate in agriculture sector. To ensure four per cent average growth in coming years, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has called for redoubling the efforts in agriculture sector to augment farm productivity.

A State Focus Paper on Tamil Nadu prepared by Nabard states that there was increase in the size of fallow land from 7.59 lakh hectares in 2005-06 to 11.17 lakh hectares in 2009-10. In the last decade alone, population grew by 15 per cent, while net sown area reduced by 46,000 hectare and food production by three per cent. An investment of Rs.40,000 crore was anticipated towards development of agricultural infrastructure across the State.

While addressing a State-level credit seminar, Nabard Chief General Manager Lalitha Venkatesan said: "We have to redouble our efforts to achieve an average growth of four per cent. For this, several measures have to be initiated to address the productivity gap and knowledge gap, so as to enhance agricultural productivity and facilitate raise in farmers' income. The core focus would be to create an economy with an accelerated growth that is sustainable as well as inclusive." Pointing out that accelerated urbanisation, migration, unequal rains and

labour shortage had taken their toll on cultivable area, she said the State could not afford to allow its fertile lands to become fallow. There was an urgent need to arrest saline intrusion into agricultural lands. Measures such as recharge shafts and salinity ingress prevention structures have to be undertaken on the lines of Gujarat.

While stating that indiscriminate use of inorganic fertiliser resulted in the soils becoming less productive, she asked the farmers to go in for application of green leaf manure and in situ ploughing of green manure to ensure better organic matter content in the soil that would lead to higher degrees of microbial activity and water retention.

The Focus Paper suggested creation of awareness among the farmers for undertaking land development activities, as investment in this sector could increase the production and productivity of crops; financing of farm ponds to be considered to facilitate water storage and recharge of ground water.

Reclamation measures and technical guidance for improvement of the soil should be extended on regular basis. Setting up of soil testing labs by private entrepreneurs should be encouraged with financial assistance from bank, the paper said.

Panel soon to fix remunerative price for farm produce



The State government has plans to form a committee to determine remunerative price for various agricultural produce, Public Works Minister K.V. Ramalingam has said.

The Chief Minister would make an announcement in this regard shortly, Mr. Ramalingam said after inaugurating the Ulavan Producers Company Limited here on Sunday. The company was launched by a group of farmers in the district for marketing their produce effectively and get better prices.

Welcoming the initiative, the minister assured farmers that the State would extend necessary help for the effective functioning of such companies.

Revenue Minister N.D. Venkatachalam pointed out the sharp fall in the prices of turmeric and heavy losses faced by the farmers. Tamil Nadu was the second largest turmeric producer in the country.

Officials estimating crop losses

Even as the Chief Minister has announced relief for farmers in delta administration, the official machinery in Coimbatore district has almost concluded that the loss to farmers on account of very poor rainfall during the South West and North East monsoons should be anywhere between Rs. 12 crore to Rs. 15 crore.

The average loss of food grains is expected to be around 1,200 tonnes.

An announcement from the Chief Minister on the quantum of relief for farmers in non-delta districts is expected any moment.

The State Government has a norm to provide relief for farmers in the wake of the crop loss exceeding 50 per cent and rainfall deficit ranging over 40 per cent.

Coimbatore district has witnessed a deficit rainfall of 38 per cent which is just two per cent away from the Government fixed norm of 40 per cent.

Sources said that there had been extensive loss for the farmers who had coconut crop, maize and small crops and horticulture crops, paddy in Thondamuthur and Anaimalai blocks, cereals, dhal and groundnuts.

On his farm's firm ground



At a time when farmer suicides put a blot on the agrarian sector of the State two years ago, Digol Thomas, an engineering graduate, started scripting a different farm story — one marked by hard work, perseverance, and fine imagination. Avani farm, a high-tech precision farm at Arattuthara village, near Mananthavady, in Wayanad district, has set a model for the State to emulate.

The State government selected Digol Thomas as the best 'young farmer' in 2012. Digol Thomas was at the crossroads after leaving his interior designer job in Abu Dhabi when he visited some precision farms there which functioned profitably and in adverse climatic conditions. "Perhaps, my frequent visits to those farms gave me the confidence to set up such a farm here," he says.

His father, Thomas of Aryapallil, a traditional farmer, also inspired Digol Thomas to go ahead.

When the State Horticulture Mission came forward to offer technical and financial support, he set up the Avani farm on 25 cents of land. He spent Rs.12 lakh, including Rs.4.75 lakh as subsidy from the mission and Rs.4.lakh as agriculture loan. Salad cucumber or English cucumber, which was not widely grown then, was Digol Thomas's first crop. He could also convince local people of the benefits of precision farming. He then grew cold-clime vegetables.

He formed a collective of 50 young farmers christened 'Innovative farmers club of Wayanad.' The MS Swaminathan Research Foundation is providing technical and marketing support.

"Crops can be raised irrespective of factors such as climate through this method," Digol Thomas says adding productivity and quality of produce would increase under scientifically created conditions.

“Dearth of workers is a major issue. A certain number of workers are required even if the farming is undertaken in polyhouse units,” Digol Thomas says. (Polyhouse is a tunnel-like structure made of polyethylene used in precision farming).

The Agriculture Department is promoting precision farming in the district. The department will set up a demonstration unit each on 500 sq m at the Regional Agricultural Research Station, Ambalavayal, and the Rural Agriculture Wholesale Market, Sulthan Bathery, Alex C. Mathew, Deputy Director, Horticulture Mission, says.

The mission will also set up three naturally ventilated polyhouses in select panchayats in the district. A structure will cost Rs.4 lakh and 75 per cent of the cost will be borne by the department and the rest by the farmers, Mr. Mathew says.

Second round of vaccination for cattle, buffaloes from today

The month-long second round of vaccination drive for foot-and-mouth disease for over 6.8 lakh head of cattle and buffaloes in Mysore district in the current year (2013–14) will begin on February 11 and end on March 12.

The first round of vaccination was taken up during August-September last year, covering nearly 85 per cent of the cattle and buffaloes.

No incidence of the disease outbreak was reported from any part of Mysore district in the last three years, Prasadmurthy, Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry, Mysore district, told *The Hindu*.

The affected animals lose fertility, and milk production would come down drastically. Such animals would not be able to eat fodder and would ultimately die of starvation. The non-prevalence of the disease should also be counted as one of the contributory factors for the rise in milk production in the district in recent times, he said.

Team formed

A team of five to seven members, led by an Assistant Director, three veterinary inspectors and group “D” personnel would visit the villages in each taluk to vaccinate the animals.

A calendar of events had been chalked out in this regard by the department, Mr. Prasadmurthy said.

Enough quantity of vaccine had been procured from Indian Immunologicals, a subsidiary of the NDDB, he said. As per the available statistics, there are 6.16 lakh head of cattle and 66,235 buffaloes in Mysore district.

He agreed that cattle let into forest for grazing stood the risk of contracting the disease. The cooperation of the Forest Department had been sought to vaccinate animals in the fringe areas of forests. The department would provide vehicles, if necessary, to go into the fringe areas. Mr. Prasadmurthy appealed to farmers too to cooperate in the endeavour.

To a certain extent, animals that were being brought to Karnataka from the neighbouring States were found to be the carriers of the disease in the past, Mr. Prasadmurthy stated.

They too were being covered under the drive. Farmers too had become aware of the utility of the vaccination and were coming forward to get their animals vaccinated, he added.

Some farmers were refusing to vaccinate bullocks owing to the fear that they would not be able to use them in daily work as vaccination could result in rise in temperature of the animals. Mr. Prasadmurthy agreed that some animals like strays, calves and pregnant cattle.

Minister inspects withering crops



TAKING STOCK: Forest Minister K.T. Pachaimal inspecting withered paddy crop at a village in Thoivalai taluk on Sunday.

Forest Minister K.T. Pachaimal took stock of withering crops in Parappuvilaimedu, Kadampadivilagam, Kollivachanmedu, Chenneerkonam, Kadukkraipallam, Kadeerripattu and Chenbagaramanputhur in and around Thovalai taluk on Sunday.

Later, interacting with some of the affected farmers, he said that paddy crops raised on over 325 acres in Thovalai taluk had started withering owing to lack of adequate water, following monsoon failure. Though Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had announced compensation of Rs. 15,000 per acre to the affected farmers, steps had been taken to save the withering crops by making use of available water in the four dams — Pechipparai, Perunchani, Chittar I and Chittar II, he said.

Earlier, the Minister flagged off new bus services from Christopher bus stand at Vadaserry to Tirunelveli via Valliyur, the only stop en route. Two buses would be operated daily at 6 a.m., 7 a.m., 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 12 noon, 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 4 p.m., 7.15 p.m. and 8.15 p.m. from Vadaserry bus stand.

Kanyakumari

He also flagged off a new bus service (route no.302) at a function held at Kanyakumari bus stand. The new bus service would be operated from Arockiyapuram to Kaliyakkavilai via Chinna Muttom, Kanyakumari, Kovalam, Manakudi, Pallam, Manavalakurichi, Mondaicadu, Colachel, Mullurthurai, Thengapattinam, Poovaru and Orrampu.

The Minister also distributed free mixers, grinders and fans to 681 beneficiaries under Vellamadam fair price shop limits in Beemangari panchayat at a function held on the Government High School premises at Vellamadam. He said that in 2012, 70,000 family card holders in the district received freebies, while the target was 97,000 card holders for the current year. Once the distribution of the freebies was completed at the panchayat level, it would be extended to town panchayats and municipalities.

The target of disbursing freebies to all the family card holders would be achieved during the five-year tenure of the AIADMK government, the Minister said.

MLA Nanjil A. Murugesan, District Revenue Officer S. Palanisamy, Sub-Collector Shankar Lal Kumavath, Executive Engineer (irrigation) Subramanian, Joint-Director (agriculture) Syed

Ahmed Meeranji, Deputy Managers of Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (Tirunelveli division) Thanulingam, Muthukrishnan, Thiruvambalam, Aravind, and Sam Jeyarajan among other officials attended the functions.

Relief measures for farmers welcomed

Farmers' associations have welcomed the relief measures announced by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa for the benefit of drought-hit farmers in the delta region. "But it would be better if the government could revise the relief to Rs. 25,000 per acre as that was our demand based on the amount invested by the farmers in their fields," State General Secretary of the Tamizhaga Vivasayigal Sangam K. Sundaram said.

He urged the government to extend relief to all the farmers who were affected by the drought and not only for farmers who lost over 50 per cent of the crops. "Cancelling land tax is also welcomed by the association but it will not be a big benefit for farmers as it is only around Rs. 10 or lesser per acre. The government should consider waiving agriculture loans of the farmers in all banks and give incentives to the farmers to take up agriculture in the years to come as they have lost heavily due to the drought and don't have money to invest anymore," Mr. Sundaram said.

About the announcement to increase the number of days for employing agricultural labourers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme that was extended from 100 days to 150 days, the Secretary noted that it would greatly benefit the labourers when they don't have work due to the drought.

"However, the government should be clear on how many months this amendment will be in effect. It would be helpful for farmers if the government explains if this will still be in effect when it rains," he added.

“Northern districts more hit by drought than delta”

Farmers feel discriminated against as compensation covers delta region alone



Farmers dependent on water from Palar, Cheyyar and Then Pennai are left high and dry this season. The dry bed of Then Pennai River.

As Chief Minister Jayalalithaa’s announcement of compensation of Rs. 15,000 per acre to drought affected farmers covers only those in delta region, farmers in northern districts of the State, affected by the worst drought this year, feel disappointed and discriminated.

K.V. Rajkumar, State executive president of the Consortium of Indian Farmers Associations told *The Hindu* that compensating farmers of one region while agriculture in the rest of the State was also severely affected necessitating the State to declare all the districts except Chennai as drought affected, was nothing but betrayal.

With no water flowing downstream of Sathanur reservoir, the status of farmers in Tiruvannamalai and Villupuram districts was not different from that of delta.

The Sathanur reservoir irrigates 45,000 acres in Villupuram and Tiruvannamalai districts through left and right bank canals. But the dam with 7321 million cubic feet (mcft) storage capacity has only 546 mcft of water that can be released for irrigation this year.

Taking this into consideration, the district administration has decided that the water would only be sufficient to feed system tanks connected to right and left bank canals and no water would be available to canal irrigation this year.

Opening of the dam even to the benefit of system tanks is expected in a week or two after much delay. No better is the well irrigated farmers or those dependent on other small rivers.

Farmers dependent on water from Palar, Cheyyar and Then Pennai in the northern districts are more affected than the Cauvery delta, farmers say. Unlike the farmers dependent on major rivers, farmers relying on groundwater have to spend money to dig wells and bore wells and on diesel for pumping water as power shortage was acute. They take more risk, spend extra money and require more labour and the government's discrimination was painful, farmers add.

"While rice grown by delta farmers mostly goes to other States, the food grains consumed by local people, including Chennai, are widely grown by the farmers of northern districts. Their produce comes out of more hard work and investment. Government should not overlook their plight," says Mr. Rajkumar.

"Government's compensation covering only paddy is another kind of discrimination while all the crops like sugarcane, groundnuts, banana and others are affected by the drought. Any compensation should cover drought affected farmers of the State irrespective of the region and type of crop," he demands.

Watermelons may become dearer



With temperature rising gradually , arrival of watermelons in Thanjavur has come as a cool breeze on a hot day.

Chinthamani, a regular vendor who sells the fruits on Medical College Road, has already procured two tonnes of watermelons from Dharmapuri. While she has keeps a portion of the fruits for daily sale, she sells the remaining to retail merchants.

This year the fruits could turn dearer as many marginal and small farmers had not cultivated it due to water and power shortage. Only big farmers have cultivated the fruits and hence they may be costly this year. "I am selling one kg of water melon at Rs.15 this year. A fruit may weigh six to seven kilos. Slices are priced at Rs.5 each," she said.

Sales would peak in March, April, and May. Demand may be more this year as the summer could be very hot and there is a possibility of drinking water scarcity , Ms.Chinthamani said.

She said that local fruits from Thiruvaiyaru and Pudukottai, which are in the harvest stage, would arrive soon. Fruits from Maracanam are also being brought.

Officials estimating crop losses

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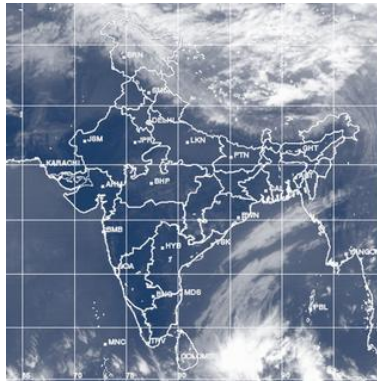
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weather



New Delhi (Plm)	23	9	0	69
New Delhi (Sfd)	23	7	0	103
Chandigarh	22	8	0	95
Hissar	23	4	0	48
Bhuntar	19	2	0	234
Shimla	17	5	0	241
Jammu	21	7	0	86
Srinagar	11	-2	0	83
Amritsar	21	4	0	37
Patiala	22	6	0	64
Jaipur	23	10	0	10
Udaipur	23	6	0	2
Allahabad	27	8	0	9
Lucknow	24	7	0	112
Varanasi	25	9	0	20
Dehradun	23	9	0	247

Agartala	29	10	0	0
Ahmedabad	28	14	0	0
Bangalore	32	17	0	1
Bhubaneshwar	31	16	0	1
Bhopal	24	13	0	15
Chennai	31	22	0	tr
Guwahati	29	12	0	0
Hyderabad	29	21	0	3
Kolkata	27	14	0	12
Mumbai	31	21	0	0
Nagpur	31	16	0	10
Patna	24	9	0	13
Pune	33	15	0	0
Thiruvananthapuram	34	24	0	22
Imphal	28	8	0	tr
Shillong	19	8	0	9

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (tr-trace) and total rainfall in mm since 1st January.

Rainfall

RAINFALL: Weather was dry over the region.

MINIIMUM TEMPERATURES : The minimum temperatures changed little over the region. They were appreciably below normal in Punjab, below normal in Haryana, east Rajasthan and east Uttar Pradesh and normal in rest of the region. The lowest minimum temperature in the plains was 03.9°C recorded at Adampur (Punjab).

FORECAST VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 12th FEBRUARY 2013: Rain/snow may occur at one or two places over Jammu and Kashmir during next 48 hours and mainly dry weather

thereafter. Rain/snow may occur at one or two places over Himachal Pradesh on 12th February. Weather would be mainly dry over rest of the region.

FORECAST FOR DELHI AND NEIGHBOURHOOD VALID UNTIL THE MORNING OF 12th FEBRUARY 2013: Mainly clear sky. Mist/shallow fog in the morning.

weather

Chennai

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather



Partly Cloudy

Monday, Feb 11

Max Min

30° | 24°

Rain: 0

Humidity: 66

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 06:33

Sunset: 06:13

Barometer: 1014

Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

Tuesday, Feb 12

Max Min

32° | 21°

Extended Forecast for a week

Wednesday Feb 13	Thursday Feb 14	Friday Feb 15	Saturday Feb 16	Sunday Feb 17
31° 21° Partly Cloudy	31° 22° Overcast	31° 21° Overcast	31° 22° Overcast	32° 22° Overcast

Airport Weather

Delhi

Delhi

Rain: 0

Humidity: 100

Wind: normal

Sunrise: 07:03

Sunset: 06:08

Barometer: 1018



Foodgrain output to fall 3.5% due to drought

Country's foodgrain production is estimated to decline by 3.5% to 250.14 million tonne in 2012-13 crop year as poor rains have hit rice and coarse cereal crops, but the government said the output will be enough to meet the demand.

The foodgrain production was a record 259.32 million tonne in 2011-12 crop year (July-June).

"We had produced about 260 million tonne foodgrains last year. This year, we have crossed 250 million tonne irrespective of drought in some districts of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan

and parts of Karnataka," agriculture minister Sharad Pawar said at a conference organised by the National Seed Association.

This year's production is sufficient to meet the domestic demand, he added.

As per agriculture ministry's second advance estimate of foodgrain production for 2012-13 crop year released today, the country's rice output is expected to fall to 101.8 million tonne in 2012-13, from a record 105.31 million tonne in the previous crop year.

Wheat output is pegged at 92.3 million tonne in 2012-13, lower from a record 94.88 million tonne in the previous year.

Coarse cereals production is estimated to decline to 38.47 million tonne in 2012-13, from 42.04 million tonne in the previous year. However, pulses would witness higher output at 17.58 million tonne, from 17.09 million tonne last year.

In non-foodgrain category, oilseeds output is estimated to fall marginally to 29.46 million tonne in 2012-13, from 29.79 million tonne in previous year.

Cotton output is likely to fall to 33.8 million bales, from 35.2 million bales, while sugarcane output is estimated to dip at 334.54 million tonne, from 361 million tonnes.

In 2012, monsoon -- the life line of the country's agriculture -- was below normal in some parts of the country resulting in drought in four states -- Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

11.02.2013 A.M

10th jan 2013

Pepper declines on bearish cues

The pepper market witnessed a downtrend last week and thus the concerted efforts of the operators to pull down the prices appear to have yielded positive results. It so happened when there was good domestic demand and a squeeze in supply .

Availability of physical pepper on the spot continued to remain thin. At the same time, thousands of tonnes of pepper continued to remain locked up in the accredited warehouses of the exchange with no signs of its release in the near future.

On the exchange, Feb contract is nearing its maturity. Many are said to be apprehensive as to whether they would get the material if they opted for delivery or “may they have to satisfy with the pittance given as default penalty”, market sources alleged.

Arrivals from the primary markets continued to remain very thin. On Saturday only 15 tonnes of fresh pepper arrived and that were all traded at Rs 395 and Rs 405 a kg.

Most of the current crop is reportedly being taken away from inter-State dealers from Erode in Tamil Nadu, who are said to be carrying cash and buying the material on cash and carry basis from the farmers directly and from the primary market dealers in the high ranges and Pathanamthitta district at terminal market prices. Wayanad-based inter-State dealers were also equally active in these areas while low bulk density pepper of below 500 GL with above 20 per cent moisture content was understood to be bought by dealers from Jharkhand and Bihar at Rs 370 a kg, the sources claimed. Low bulk density pepper from Pulpally and Sultanbathery of Wayanad district was also being sold at Rs 370.

Even though some consignments of pepper have reached the north Indian markets, demand continued to persist as good part of the pipelines are claimed to be empty. At the same time availability of good quality material is said to be limited.

Thus, there exists a mismatch in demand and supply, at present, and any increase in the latter outstripping the former would take place only when the arrivals picked up to the expected levels and/ or the thousands of tonnes of pepper held in the exchange warehouses were released, they pointed out.

Activities on the futures and spot were limited last week. People were trying to buy but were not getting the material. All the activities were concentrated in March.

On the NCDEX last week all the contracts decreased on bearish activities. Feb, March and April dropped by Rs 130, Rs 1,245 and Rs 1,040 respectively to close at Rs 38,740, Rs 35,690 and Rs 34,595 a quintal.

Total turn over decreased by 3,363 tonnes to close at 7,766 tonnes last week. Total open interest increased by only 131 tonnes.

Spot prices last week decreased by Rs 400 to Rs 39,500 (ungarbled) and Rs 41,000 (MG 1) a quintal despite good buying interest.

Indian parity in the international market was at \$8,000 a tonne (c&f) for prompt Feb shipping while Feb was at \$7,600 (c&f) and \$7,000 (c&f) for Mar.

Sugar prices may go up Rs 2/kg after April: ICRA



Sugar prices may rise by Rs 2 per kg after April on supply constraints in the wake of expected fall in domestic output of the sweetener, rating agency ICRA has said.

While sugar mills are likely to benefit from steady sugar and by-product realisation, growth in cane prices will impact profits of sugar mills adversely in the ongoing 2012-13 marketing year (October-September), it noted.

Pegging country's overall sugar output at 23-24 million tonnes and consumption at close to 23.5 million tonnes for this year, ICRA said that domestic prices could firm up due to supply pressure in the second half of this year as extra stocks would be 6 million tonnes sufficient to meet three months demand.

"Given the production decline, ICRA expects a marginal increase of Rs 1,000-2,000 per tonne in the second half of 2012-13 from current levels," it said.

Currently, ex-mill price of sugar is Rs 31-32 per kg, while rates in the retail market are ruling at Rs 40 per kg.

In the medium terms, ICRA said sugar price trend will continue to be determined by three factors. "Firstly, the domestic sugar balance. Secondly, the global crude oil prices, which will determine the raw sugar- ethanol mix in Brazil, the world's largest producer and exporter; and finally, government's policies regarding exports of sugar and import duties."

Last year, sugar production stood at 26 million tonnes. ICRA has said that the fall in output this year was due to weak and delayed monsoon in several key growing regions.

Maharashtra is likely to witness the largest decline in sugar production this year followed by Northern Karnataka although Uttar Pradesh is likely to witness growth in production because of higher sowing in previous seasons and more favourable weather conditions, it said.

On performance of sugar mills this year, ICRA said the operating profits for millers in most parts of the country barring Uttar Pradesh has been supported by higher volumes and improved conversion margins, however the impact at the net level has been moderated by higher interest costs.

While margin pressures will be partly offset by improved volumes for UP-based sugar mills, in Karnataka and Maharashtra reduced crushing will also impact profits for most mills, it added.

Deadline extended for registration under Food Safety Act

In respective statements here, Tamil Nadu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Tamil Nadu Foodgrains Merchants Association along with Tamil Nadu Hotel Association, have said that upon their respective representations to the authorities at New Delhi, recently, seeking the extension of the time limit set to get registered and take license under Food Safety and Standards Act 2011, the time limit, vide its Statutory Authority dated 05.02.2013, has been extended up to Feb 4, 2014.

Onion prices set to soften soon

Consumers shedding tears over onion prices that have quadrupled in the last six months can heave a sigh of relief. Prices are set to decline soon.

Changdev Holkar, Board member of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (Nafed), is of the view that prices will ease as soon as the rabi onion crop, which was planted in October, arrives in the market, in early April.

Supplies from States such as Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan are also improving, he said, adding that these would help cool prices. Currently, the market is facing a shortage because kharif and late-kharif crop got affected due to the poor rain in June and July "There was not enough water for a good yield. There is almost a 30 per cent decline in kharif and late kharif production. Plus, kharif onion does not have a long shelf life," Holkar said.

In the last six months, onion prices have soared to Rs 1,700-2,000 a quintal from Rs 500-600 at Lasalgaon market in Nashik district of Maharashtra. Lasalgaon, in Northern Maharashtra, is Asia's largest onion market.

Since November, prices have more than doubled in the retail market. With supplies being tight due to low rainfall, onion is quoted at Rs 37/kg across the country.

Decline in acreage

Another onion trader from Lasalgaon, Nitin Jain, said the onion market has in the last two years witnessed major price fluctuations and a massive increase in input costs. Therefore, farmers had cut the area under onion, affecting supplies to some extent.

He said that the decline in onion acreage has led to a higher area getting covered under maize. "After all, farmers find alternative crops to augment their income," he said.

Agri research body plans seed hub in West Bengal

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) plans to set up a seed hub in West Bengal to produce better quality and varieties of seeds.

According to Swapan K. Datta, Deputy Director-General of ICAR, the proposed seed hub would come up in the North Bengal region of the State.

"West Bengal offers tremendous potential in the agriculture and horticulture sectors. What we need is development of good quality and varieties of seeds so as to be able to enhance productivity," Datta told newsmen on the sidelines of the valedictory session of the agri-horti food festival.

Private participation

The festival was organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce jointly with the State Departments of Agriculture, Food Processing and Horticulture here on Sunday.

While ICAR will provide the necessary infrastructure and technology for setting up the seed hub, the private sector should chip in to scale it up on a commercial basis, he said.

The 12th Plan proposes setting up of four seed hubs across the country at an estimated investment of Rs 200 crore, he said, adding one of these would come up in West Bengal.

Despite being the second largest producer of potatoes in the country, West Bengal is dependent on states such as Punjab and Uttar Pradesh for its seeds, he said, highlighting the need for a seed hub.

“If the State can produce its own seeds then it will prove to be cost effective. Apart from potatoes, there is also a potential for developing oil seeds and maize seeds which have a good demand,” he pointed out.

Model Farms to be set up

The West Bengal Government would facilitate setting up of model farms for promoting production of agriculture and horticulture products in various districts, said Subrata Saha, State Food Processing Industries and Horticulture Minister.

The State Government would provide necessary infrastructural support to farmers who have adopted a cluster approach.

“Once we roll it out in districts we will slowly spread out to sub divisions and blocks,” he said.

Demand lifts tea prices at Kochi auction

A good demand perked up prices of almost all varieties of tea at the Kochi Tea auction. In Cochin Sale No: 6, the quantity on offer in dust CTC category was 10,70,500 kg.

The market was firm to dearer by a rupee to two and sometimes more following quality, according to auctioneers Forbes, Ewart and Figgis (P) Ltd.

In the dust orthodox grades, the quantity on offer was 10,500 kg. The market for primary varieties remained steady, while others tended to ease. Bulk of the offerings was absorbed by upcountry buyers.

In the best CTC dusts, PD varieties quoted prices at Rs 102/110, RD grades quoted Rs 104/140, SRD ruled at Rs 106/138 while SFD grades stood at Rs 107/139.

The leaf sale also witnessed a good demand and the quantity on offer in orthodox grades was 197,500 kg. The market for select best all varieties of Nilgiri teas were fully firm to dearer. Others were irregular and lower and witnessed some withdrawals. Medium bolder broken remained steady, while tippy grades were irregular and lower. Secondary broken were fully firm to dearer.

The quantity on offer in the CTC grades was 71,500 kg and the market for all varieties was dearer by Rs 1-3 and sometimes more. Exporters and upcountry buyers were active.

In the dust category, Injipara (Prm) SFD quoted the best prices of Rs 145 followed by Injipara (Prm) SRD at Rs 143. In the leaf varieties, Chamraj Green FOP (S) fetched best prices of Rs 401 followed by Pascoes Hyson Green tea at Rs 356.

Anti-GM lobby decries linking food security with transgenics



Seed industry seeks strong bio-safety measures to aid research

New Delhi, Feb. 10:

On the third anniversary of the moratorium on the commercial release of Bt brinjal, both pro- and anti-genetically modified (GM) crop campaigners rooted for their respective stand.

The Coalition for GM-Free India observed February 9 as Food Safety Day, marking three years of moratorium on Bt brinjal in India.

Pointing out that food security arguments around GM crops were baseless and fallacious, over 150 scientists sought the intervention of the Ministry of Environment and Forests to counter the Agriculture Ministry's affidavit in the Supreme Court that GM crops were essential for food security.

In a letter to the Environment Minister Jayanthi Natarjan, the scientists said food security had no link with yield increases. They presented data from various countries to support their argument.

Non-GM solutions

"Food security is not just about yield increases, but poverty, livelihoods and access for the vast majority of the people. We have buffer stocks, mountains of grain rot and yet 320 million people go hungry in the country. So, it's not a supply side issue, as is made out to be by the Agriculture Ministry," said Kavita Kuruganti, Member, Coalition for a GM-Free India, at a press conference.

Calling for non-transgenic solutions to increase productivity, such as the rice-intensification programme, Kuruganti said there were molecular approaches to developing newer seeds and India should invest in them instead.

On why open-field trials were being opposed, she said organisms that could propagate themselves in open fields were dangerous without proper safeguards in place and strict implementation of regulatory measures.

"We are not opposed to research trials. But something as complex as transgenics should be tested in greenhouses with simulated conditions such as drought, etc," Kuruganti added.

In the letter, the scientists pointed out flaws in the Agriculture Ministry's stance that the apex court's Technical Expert Committee (TEC) had recommended a 10-year moratorium on agri-biotech research.

"The Ministry has, in its narrow definition, included only GM crops as agriculture biotechnology. The TEC is specific; it is about GM crops and trees, and not about other biotechnologies," says the letter.

Meanwhile, at a session on “Technologies for Tomorrow” at the Indian Seed Congress, Deepak Pental, former Delhi University Vice-Chancellor, said the delay in having a good bio-safety regime was hurting transgenic research in the country. He stressed upon the need for robust public-private partnership models for furthering research.

Pental also called for creating a national document on germplasm by undertaking technology mapping for each crop.

The seed industry believes that technology would help the country address food security as arable land shrinks amidst growing demand for food. Industry leaders stressed the need to fuel growth of the seed sector by bringing in uniform policy and operative mechanism across States, higher R&D and introduction of latest and effective practices and technologies.

Seed exports may double in next 2-3 years



Export of agri-seeds from the country may more than double to Rs 1,000 crore in the next 2-3 years as 38 varieties from India have been registered in the OECD list, industry body National Seed Association (NSAI) said on Sunday.

The listing of Indian seeds with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a group of 34 countries, guarantees the quality of seeds that can be imported by countries participating in the OECD Seed Schemes. About 57 nations are registered in such seed schemes.

“Seed export is expected to rise to Rs 1,000 crore in the next 2-3 years as for the first time 38 Indian private seed varieties have been registered in the OECD list,” Executive Director of NSAI, Raju Kapoor said.

Currently, India exports Rs 400-450 crore worth of seeds. The shipment of agri-seeds is likely to increase as non-member countries of OECD also go by this list, he said.

Kapoor said the registration of 38 varieties takes the total number of Indian seeds in the OECD list to 95. The recently registered varieties are hybrid and mostly cotton, millets, maize and vegetables.

Another 118 Indian varieties are in the pipeline for registration with OECD in the coming months, he added.

At present, the size of the domestic seed market is Rs 13,000 crore, while India's share in the world seed market is one per cent. However, the proposed National Seed Mission aims to increase the trade to 10 per cent of global trade by 2020, Kapoor said.

Global coffee exports at 113 mn bags in 2012

Global coffee exports rose by 8.2 per cent to a record 113 million bags in 2012 due to higher demand even as shipments from India declined during the year, according to International Coffee Organisation (ICO).

World Coffee exports were to the tune of 104.57 million bags in 2011. One bag contains 60 kg of beans. India's coffee exports fell by 9.4 per cent to 5.28 million bags in 2012.

"Total exports in calendar year 2012 reached a record 113.1 million bags, 8.2 per cent higher than 2011, and predominantly fuelled by a high volume of robusta shipments," ICO said in its report.

The strong export levels seen over the last couple of years have also led to a reduction in opening stocks in exporting countries. At the beginning of current crop year, total opening stocks were 15.3 million bags, compared to 18.2 million in the previous year, it said.

According to ICO data, robusta export rose by 24 per cent to 46.61 million bags in 2012 from 37.53 million bags in the previous year, but arabica shipments fell slightly to 66.52 million bags from 67.04 million bags in the review period.

The demand for robusta varieties rose because the bean is less expensive than Arabica and has higher caffeine content.

Brazil continued to maintain the world's top coffee exporter slot in 2012 despite over 15 per cent decline in shipments at 28.26 million bags as compared with 33.50 million bags in 2011 calendar year.

But shipments from other two major exporting nations Vietnam and Indonesia rose significantly during the last year.

Vietnam shipped 25.47 million bags of coffee beans in 2012 against 17.67 million bags in the previous year. Indonesia's exports were at 10.62 million bags in 2012, 72 per cent higher than 6.15 million bags in the previous year.

Brazil, Vietnam and Indonesia are major producers of robusta coffee in the world.

Among other major exporters, Colombia's shipments declined by 7.5 per cent to 7.16 million bags in 2012 from 7.77 million bags in the previous year.

Similarly, coffee exports from India declined by 9.4 per cent to 5.28 million bags from 5.84 million bags in the review period, the ICO data showed.

In 2012-13 crop year, total world coffee production is estimated at 144.06 million bags as against 134.56 million bags in 2011-12. The crop year varies in different countries. In India, the crop year runs from October to September.

Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

11.02.2013 A.M

Oil prices up in Asian trade

Oil prices were higher in Asian trade today on optimism that robust trade data from the US and China will augur well for energy demand.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for delivery in March was up 11 cents to \$95.83 and Brent North Sea crude for March delivery gained nine cents to \$118.99.

"Positive trade data out of the world's two largest economies sent traders into the Chinese New Year holidays in an upbeat mood," said Jason Hughes, head of premium client management at IG Markets Singapore.

"The US narrowed its trade gap to the smallest margin in three years, thanks mainly to record oil exports. Meanwhile, China saw growing demand for exports which raised hopes its recovery is no flash in the pan," he said in a market commentary.

The US Commerce Department last Friday reported the trade deficit shrank more than expected in December to \$38.5 billion, its lowest level since January 2010, from a revised \$48.6 billion in November.

Hughes said that China, the world's second biggest economy and largest energy consumer, also "starts the new year full of beans as better-than-expected economic news continues to be released."

China's exports jumped 25% year-on-year for January while imports soared nearly 29%.

In Europe, "the black cloud lifted somewhat... After policymakers reached an agreement on its long-term spending plans," Hughes said.

"For the first time, EU leaders agreed to cut spending as part of the seven-year budget," he added. The deal, however, has to be approved by the European Parliament, where legislators have expressed reservations.

Gujarat rabi sowing down 20%

Delayed and scanty rains in Gujarat have hit rabi sowing this year. According to latest estimates by the state government, rabi sowing in the state declined about 20 per cent, compared to last year. For the 2012-13 rabi season, sowing was registered at 2.98 million hectares, against 3.71 million hectares reported in the corresponding period last year, according to data provided by the Gujarat agriculture department.

Compared with the three-year average of 3.42 million hectares, sowing declined about 13 per cent. Rabi sowing starts from October, while harvesting begins in February-March.

"The fall in rabi sowing is primarily because of the shortage of water in the Saurashtra and Kutch regions. Rains in most parts of the state were delayed and now, there is not enough water in some regions. Grain production, especially wheat production, would be affected due to the fall in rabi sowing. However, we would be able to produce more than our requirement," said Govindbhai Patel, minister of state for agriculture, Gujarat. The acreage for grains, including wheat, jowar, maize and chana (pigeon peas), saw a decline. Acreage for oilseeds and vegetables, too, fell this rabi season. This year, wheat sowing was carried out across 1.04 million hectares, against 1.3 million hectares last year. The three-year average for rabi wheat sowing stands at 1.27 million hectares.

This year, production of chana in Gujarat is also expected to fall. Chana acreage this rabi season stood at 1,71,500 hectares, against 2,36,700 hectares last year. "We expect jeera, mustard and cumin seed production to be fairly good this year. Most of the north Gujarat regions have benefited from the Narmada canal. We expect good production there," said Patel.

Meanwhile, the rabi sowing acreage across the country rose compared to last year. According to data from the Union agriculture ministry, total sown area for the 2012-13 rabi season stands at 61.67 million hectares, against 61.55 million hectares last year. However, the acreage for wheat and rice crops is lower than last year.

Delta farmers rue loss of crop due to drought

CHENNAI: T Jayaraman, a 62-year-old farmer from Thiruvarur got only two bags of paddy when he reaped the harvest from his land in the Vennar division of Cauvery delta on Saturday. Earlier, he used to get about 70-90 bags from his meager three acres of land.

Jayaraman is a tragic symbol of farmers in the Cauvery delta districts whose hopes have turned into ashes with their farmlands transformed into barren stretches. More than six lakh acres of land in the delta that was once the state's rice bowl lies barren.

"Water is used up by the upper reach farmers since it is closer to the water source. This causes the drying up of standing crops at the tail end of every village," said Jayaraman.

The leader of [Cauvery Delta Farmers Welfare Association](#), S Ranganathan, says the area has got just 30% of the normal yield this year. "How can the farmers survive with just 10 to 30% of the normal yield. Every village has a water channel but they have all dried up. Each person has a different story to tell," he said. However, production on three lakh acres in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam districts, where farmers cultivate with water from pumps, are normal because of the free electricity given by the government.

Organic scientist G Nammalvar said either flooding or [drought](#) will continue to hit the region. "It's high time to take corrective measures in farming methods. We need to dig more water bodies in every land to save surface water. When there is little monsoon rain and we get heavy rains only from cyclone that floods the region, maintaining water bodies and preserving the surface water is the main solution to save our crops. The government also needs to correct major flaws in its

planning that damaged agriculture sector over the years," he said.

"But many farmers who followed organic farming methods and cultivated traditional varieties of paddy have not suffered in Nagapattinam and other drought-hit areas in the delta region," said Nammalvar.

Better seeds key to bumper crop: Governor

GURGAON: Governor of Haryana Jagannath Paharia emphasized on the importance of seeds as the key to a bumper crop during the valedictory function of the fourth session of the Indian Seed Congress in Gurgaon on Saturday.

The Governor also elaborated the fact that farmers are an integral part of the society to ensure prosperity and they should be provided with high-yielding and draught-resistant seeds.

"Seed is an important element to enhance crop productivity. Coupled with best crop management practices, it would not just enhance productivity and income of farmers but would usher India into a completely different horizon of growth," said Paharia, adding that the role of the Indian seed industry is significant because more than 80% of the farming is carried out by small and marginal farmers. With small landholdings, better seeds, which can yield higher profits per unit area, are direly needed for the farmers.

"Seeds which can be resistant to draught, salinity and products which can stay long on shelves would perhaps provide solution to many of India's current agriculture challenges," said Paharia. He added that the massive losses that Indian food and agriculture produce due to pests, weeds and poor infrastructure in the food supply chain can now be answered by developments in seed industry.

Paharia said these developments are not only scientific marvels, but have great potential for controlling economic challenges like food inflation and also nutritional challenges like nutrition

deficiencies. He said the contribution of the seed Industry often go unnoticed as they work tirelessly with growers and people outside the field are not aware of the technological advancements.

"Unlike other industries, the seed industry work closely with the farmers who are not their customers but are partners as no technology could take a shape until farmers adopt it and provide their inputs and support, the Governor asserted.

The Indian seed industry, fifth largest in the world, had earlier urged the government to facilitate an enabling environment, including providing [tax incentives](#) and ensuring regulated operative mechanisms of rules so that all states follow uniform policies.

Sukhbir Badal denounces proposal of cut in fertilizer subsidy

MOGA: Punjab deputy chief minister and [Shiromani Akali Dal](#) chief [Sukhbir Singh Badal](#) has accused the UPA government's proposed move to cut [fertilizer subsidy](#) by 15 percent from next fiscal year.

Sukhbir said SAD would not allow further cut in fertilizer subsidy till minimum support price of agricultural produce was not linked with the price index as per the recommendations of Swaminathan commission.

He also questioned the silence of Punjab Congress on this crucial issue.

Addressing gatherings in the favour of SAD-BJP candidate Joginder Pal Jain at villages Darapur, Chotian Kalan, Chotian Khurd and Budh Singh Wala, the SAD president said the agriculture sector the world over was highly subsidized but here in India the UPA government was bent upon squeezing even the last drop of blood of peasantry with series of anti-farmer measures.

He said that first this government decontrolled the fertilizer sector by nutrient-based formula, which has doubled the price of DAP within six months and raised the price of Urea, then decontrolled diesel prices and now they were further going to cut fertilizers subsidy by 15 percent which would adversely affect the dwindling economy of agriculture sector.

Demanding MSP for wheat at Rs 2,200 per quintal in view of rising input costs, Sukhbir said that on one hand Congress led UPA government was taking decisions that were raising the price of agriculture inputs by 100 percent and on other hand there was meager rise in MSP.

**Foodgrain production in India to fall 3.5% to 250 mn tonne due to drought:
Sharad Pawar**

India's foodgrain production is estimated to decline by 3.5 per cent to 250.14 million tonne in 2012-13 crop year as poor rains have hit rice and coarse cereal crops, but the government said the output will be enough to meet the demand.

The foodgrain production was a record 259.32 million tonne in 2011-12 crop year (July-June).

"We had produced about 260 million tonne foodgrains last year. This year, we have crossed 250 million tonne irrespective of drought in some districts of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and parts of Karnataka," Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said at a conference organised by the National Seed Association.

This year's production is sufficient to meet the domestic demand, he added.

As per Agriculture Ministry's second advance estimate of foodgrain production for 2012-13 crop year released today, the country's rice output is expected to fall to 101.8 million tonne in 2012-13, from a record 105.31 million tonne in the previous crop year.

Wheat output is pegged at 92.3 million tonne in 2012-13, lower from a record 94.88 million tonne in the previous year.

Coarse cereals production is estimated to decline to 38.47 million tonne in 2012-13, from 42.04 million tonne in the previous year. However, pulses would witness higher output at 17.58 million tonne, from 17.09 million tonne last year.

In non-foodgrain category, oilseeds output is estimated to fall marginally to 29.46 million tonne in 2012-13, from 29.79 million tonne in previous year.

Cotton output is likely to fall to 33.8 million bales, from 35.2 million bales, while sugarcane output is estimated to dip at 334.54 million tonne, from 361 million tonnes.

In 2012, monsoon -- the life line of Indian agriculture -- was below normal in some parts of the country resulting in drought in four states -- Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Gujarat.