

## Red gram price going northward

*State's decision to increase the MSP for red gram has had a positive impact*

The State government's decision to increase the minimum support price for red gram from Rs. 3,850 to Rs. 4,500 a quintal has had a positive impact on the wholesale market. Red gram prices have stabilised and are gradually increasing.

Secretary of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Chandramohan, who is also in-charge Managing Director of the Red Gram Development Board, told *The Hindu* here on Wednesday that price of red gram, which was hovering around Rs. 3,700 a quintal prior to the market intervention, was now more than Rs. 3,900 a quintal. Every day, the market was showing signs of increasing prices of red gram.

He said the board had established procurement centres in the taluk headquarters in all the three districts — including Gulbarga, Aland, Afzalpur, Jewargi, Chittapur, Chincholi and Sedam in Gulbarga district; Bidar, Humnabad, Aurad, Basavakalyan and Bhalki in Bidar district; and Yadgir, Shahpur, Surpur and Gurmitkal in Yadgir district. The response from farmers had been overwhelming, he said. Mr. Chandramohan said that nearly 11,000 quintals of red gram from 862 farmers had been directly purchased through procurement centres by paying a total sum of Rs. 4.83 crore.

So far, 10,300 farmers had registered their names for selling their produce at the centres, he added.

“There has been a great rush in all procurement centres. Purchasing red gram from farmers following the procedures and conducting the quality tests is a lengthy process.”

Official sources denied earlier reports of the Centre imposing import duty of 10 per cent on red gram imported from other countries. However, the Centre is seriously considering imposing an import duty of 15 per cent on red gram imported from other countries.

Mr. Chandramohan said that according to indications available in the market, prices of red gram would continue to increase after February 28.

To a question, he said there was no shortage of funds for purchasing red gram and the procurement process would continue till the end of March this year.

### **Shimoga to see a spurt in floriculture**

*Farmers to get subsidy for setting up polyhouses, shade-nets under RKVY scheme*

The inclusion of Shimoga district under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikasa Yojana (RKVY) is expected to give a boost to floriculture here.

Under RKVY, subsidy will be extended to farmers who opt for protected cultivation methods such as construction of polyhouse and installation of shade-nets in their farms. The farmers can avail subsidy of Rs. 4.1 lakh for constructing polyhouse measuring 1,000 square metres and an amount of Rs. 16.40 lakh for constructing polyhouse measuring 4,000 square metres. Similarly, a subsidy of Rs. 1.15 lakh can be availed for installing shade-net measuring 500 square metres and Rs. 9.45 lakh for shade-net measuring 4,000 square metres.

Deputy Director of Horticulture M. Vishwanath told *The Hindu* that RKVY had been implemented in 11 districts in the State, including Shimoga. An amount of Rs 1.08 crore had been sanctioned for the district under the scheme in 2012-13 to extend subsidy to farmers.

He said that as the climate in Malnad region was conducive for floriculture and the returns from it were also lucrative, farmers had showed interest in it. He said that 28 farmers were growing flowers and vegetables in the district in polyhouses at present.

### **Old scheme**

So far, the farmers in the district used to avail subsidy under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) to set up polyhouses. Under , Rs. 4.67 lakh is paid as subsidy to set up polyhouse measuring 1,000 square metres, and Rs. 9.34 lakh is paid as subsidy to setup polyhouse measuring 2,000 square metres.

However, availing loan from the bank was mandatory to claim the subsidy under this scheme. It was difficult for farmers who had already taken bank loans to avail this scheme. Such farmers can now avail subsidy under RKVY as borrowing loan from banks is not mandatory in this scheme.

Under NHM, the maximum size of the polyhouse to avail the subsidy is 2,000 square metres while under RKVY, subsidy is offered to set up polyhouse measuring up to 4,000 square metres. Mr. Vishwanath said that those who have set up polyhouse under NHM can go for expansion by availing further subsidy under RKVY.

He said owing to the introduction of RKVY in the district, there would be a rapid expansion of the area under floriculture. The NHM will also be available, under which those interested to set up polyhouse measuring up to 2,000 square metre and those who are eligible for bank loan can avail the subsidy, he said.

### **Cashew exports hit by ICTT strike: CEPCI**

*'Declare trade transportation as vital service'*

The Cashew Export Promotion Council of India (CEPCI) says that the ongoing strike by container truck staff at the International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT), Vallarpadam, in Kochi has badly affected the cashew industry.

CEPCI Chairman Hari Krishnan R. Nair has said that cashew kernel exports have been hit because of the strike.

In a statement on Wednesday, Mr. Nair said that going by average export figures during this time of the year, more than 1,000 tonnes of cashew kernel, worth about Rs.40 crore, would be the pending shipments accumulated over the last eight days since the strike has been on.

Non-fulfilment of shipping contracts leads to order cancellations which would be to the benefit of competitors from countries like Vietnam and Brazil. The strike would also hamper the operation of cashew factories affecting the livelihood of lakhs of workers, a majority of them women.

### **Heavy demurrage**

He said thousands of tonnes of imported raw cashew nuts are also lying un-cleared at the ICTT incurring heavy demurrage, for no fault of the processors. Besides deterioration in quality, this adds to the cost of processing which is already under severe stress due to the fall in consumption in Europe and USA on account of the prevailing economic situation there.

Mr. Nair alleged that the container truck employees, who are relatively small in numbers, are capitalising on their monopolistic nature to hold the industry to ransom. The CEPCI wanted the authorities concerned to take steps to resolve the problem once and for all by declaring trade transportation as an essential service and preventing wholesale disruption of service on account of strikes, he said.

## **Drought relief measures**

The district administration has resolved to intensify the drought relief measures. Convening a meeting on Wednesday, District Collector Mini Antony directed officials to ensure the speedy completion of schemes launched to ensure drinking water supply.

Ms. Antony also called for ensuring the maximum utilisation of available resources for the mission. She assured that there would not be any hindrances in providing administrative sanctions for project proposals that are found relevant. She also suggested employing the services of MGNREGA workers in sterilizing the water bodies.

## **Ornamental fish farming**

The Fisheries Department has invited applications from farmers' groups who are interested to take up ornamental fish farming as a career.

A group comprising a minimum of five farmers will get 50 per cent subsidy to purchase quality fish fingerlings and set up farms.

People who have already benefitted from similar schemes introduced by the Central and State governments will not be eligible for the new scheme. The filled application should reach the Fisheries Deputy Director's Office at West Hill before February 23, a press release issued here said.

## **Rice fallow pulses planned on 35,000 hectares**

*Cultivated in lands where paddy harvest has been completed*



Greener pastures:A woman working at a black gram field at Soorakottai in Thanjavur on Wednesday—Photo:B.Velankanni Raj

Farmers of Thanjavur district with assured irrigation such as pumpsets have started cultivation of rice fallow pulses, mostly black gram. Rice fallow pulses are cultivated in lands where paddy has been harvested.

Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture, Thanjavur district, said that sowing of black gram has been completed in 5,000 hectares as on Wednesday.

“We hope to cover an area of 35,000 hectares this year under rice fallow pulses,” he said.

Agriculture department has been promoting pulses cultivation under National Food Security Mission (pulses component) and seed village concept. In both schemes subsidies are given for seeds and other inputs such as fertilizers.

“We are providing them Di Ammonium Phosphate for foliar spraying ,” Mr.Yahiya said. Farmers have raised ADT3 and ADT5 black gram varieties which have a duration of 90 days.

Sowing of rice fallow pulses will continue till the end of February. Cultivation is going on mostly in Thanjavur and Orathanadu areas. Yield may be around 200 to 250 kilos per acre.

Farmers may take up gingili, maize, and groundnut cultivations too in the summer season.

Meanwhile samba paddy harvest is being carried out in pumpset irrigated areas.

Both samba and thaladi harvest has been completed in around 60,000 hectares in the district.

Yield is around 4 to 4.5 tonnes per hectare.

Normally the yield may go up to five to six tonnes per hectare but due to the prevailing drought conditions the yield is low, agriculture department officials said.

### **Less methane, more milk**

*Valorex, a French cattle feed company, offers a solution to stop cows from emitting climate-changing flatulence*



A French cattle feed company on Tuesday unveiled a novel form of carbon credits aimed at incentivising farmers to stop cows from emitting climate-changing flatulence.

Grass-chewing farm animals are an often-overlooked contributor to global warming, as their emissions are of methane, a gas that is two dozen times more efficient than carbon dioxide in trapping solar heat. In France, cattle account for five percent of the country's carbon output.

### **Novel solution**

At a press conference, the company Valorex said it would offer a carbon-credit bonus to farmers who join the "Bleu-Blanc-Coeur" (Blue-White-Heart) initiative, which promotes food products with higher levels of the valued protein Omega 3.

### **Emit 64% less methane**

Valorex sells a trade mix that comprises corn, soy, lupin and linseed, which it says means cows emit 64-percent less methane, deliver better quality milk and need fewer vet bills.

A credit of 100 euros (\$134) will be awarded for every tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gas that is saved from entering the atmosphere, said Valorex president Pierre Weill.

It has to be exchanged for goods and services provided by other companies which are part of a long-running "Bleu-Blanc-Coeur" initiative.

The new scheme, certified as bona fide by the French government and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has so far notched up 8,365 tonnes of averted carbon.

Out of France's 72,000 milk producers, 500 have joined Bleu-Blanc-Coeur, which requires them to follow strict guidelines.AFP

### **Fermented castor solution traps pests of sugarcane, groundnut**





Reducing expense: Insects like rhinoceros beetle shown dead after falling in the pot.— Photo: Special arrangement

Andiyur village in Erode district is well known for groundnut and sugarcane cultivation.

But the farmers there face a recurring pest problem called white grub that makes it difficult for them to harvest a good yield. Managing the pest proves difficult for the groundnut cultivators as the grub lives under the soil and its lifecycle takes a year to complete.

It feeds on the root system of the crops and the plants wither and die. Annually nearly 41 per cent of crop loss is being reported from this region.

### **No effect**

“Chemical control measures did not prove to be a long-standing solution for this and the pest keeps recurring,” says Dr. K. Alagesan, Program Co-ordinator, Myrada (Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency), Gobichettipalayam, Tamil Nadu.

A progressive farmer G.R. Sakthivel, who grows sugarcane and groundnut, repeatedly faced losses due to this pest.

“I used almost all the pest preventive measures available in the market for this but the problem continued. No amount of specialist intervention could offer a long standing solution to this.

### **Accidental discovery**

“One day I casually happened to see a large number of the grubs moving on a heap of de-oiled castor cake I had left near my cow shed. This made me think of using this as an effective trap for the insects. I tried it first in a small mud pot in my sugarcane field and found that it had the desired result. I started increasing it for my entire crops,” he says.

Detailing the method on how it should be done, the farmer says:

“Select some five litre mud pots and bury them till the neck at different places in the field.

Pulverise about 5kg of castor seed and mix it in five litres of water. Keep this solution undisturbed in a plastic drum for 10 days.

### **Foul smell**

On the 11th day pour two litres of this liquid in all the buried pots and fill it with water till the neck portion. The odour that comes out from the pot attracts the pest towards it.

“In addition to white grub this solution is also found effective to control the notorious rhinoceros beetle that infests coconut trees,” explains the farmer.

In fact, coconut growers are well aware about the rhino beetle and its damage to fronds and small nuts. This method is a good way of controlling it and does not require a big investment.

The mud pot with the solution needs to be buried near the trunk of the tree and attracted by the odour from the pot the insects come towards it and fall into the pot and die.

Collect the dead insects found floating in the pot once every 2 days and keep filling the pot with solution whenever the quantity gets reduced. The solution can be kept for a period of three months, according to Mr. Sakthivel.

Myrada did an extensive study on this indigenous technology over a period of four years and found that about five pots suffice for an acre. This method is found to reduce the plant protection expense to 20 per cent since the cost of the entire process comes to Rs.200-250.

### **Expense**

If farmers use the conventional methods they need to spend anything from Rs.450 to 600 for buying chemicals.

Though the farmer developed this concept some 10 years back, today nearly 300 farmers in the region follow this for their groundnut, sugarcane and cotton crops.

“We found that there is an 80 per cent reduction in white grub and rhinoceros beetle pest population and 35-40 per cent yield increase in sugarcane and groundnut crops when this castor trap is used.

### **Problems galore**

“Though, during the start of the green revolution fertilizers and pesticides led to high yields in hybrid crops, later on it led to serious issues like development of insect resistant, resurgence and residual problems.

“Natural and non pesticidal methods for controlling pests have been in place since time immemorial. But sadly the present generation of farmers has either forgotten their efficiency or are not prepared to accept them,” says Dr. Alagesan.

To know more, interested readers can contact Mr. G.R.Sakthivel at No. 149, Ganeshapuram, Gettavadi (P.o), Talavadi (Via), Sathyamangalam(T.K), Erode District-638461, Mobile: 94863 16041 and Dr. P. Alagesan, Programme Co-ordinator, Myrada Krishi Vigyan Kendra, No.272, Perumal Nagar, Pudevallyampalayam Road, Kalingiyam – Post, Gobichettipalayam – 638453, Erode District, Tamil Nadu, e-mail : myradakvk@gmail.com, , website : www.myradakvk.org, Phone : 04285 241626, 241627.

### **Integrated aquaculture for improving productivity**

The farmers of Sonmar in Sarai Ranjan block, Samastipur district, Bihar have shown a way for productive utilization of water bodies (called chaur) into an integrated aquaculture model.

The chaur are spread over 44 hectares and about 43 farmers control their ownership. Till 2008, these chaur were being utilized for capture of wild fishes.

### **Training**

About six young farmers from the area were trained by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna through Central Institute of Fisheries Education Regional Station, Kakinada by the State Fisheries Department, Government of Bihar.

The State Fishery Department, Govt. of Bihar with the help of a local bank called Kshetriya Gramin bank and Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana constructed a series of about 50 ponds for increased fish production.

About 43 farmers came together and formed Sonmar Chaur Matsya Vikash Samiti to monitor these activities, facilitate the resources, inputs and market the fishes.

Due to delayed rainfall, tubewells were sunk in several locations and a solar operated pump was also established with the help of fishery department.

### **Participatory mode**

ICAR joined the farmers to work in participatory mode to boost the economic status and nutritional security of the farmers by enhancing the aquaculture / agriculture production from the chaur.

Since, farmers were finding it difficult to feed the fishes properly due to high cost of concentrate, the Council integrated duck, goat and cattle with fish to facilitate the supply of organic wastes to improve the overall productivity.

Fruits and vegetable crops were planted on the pond bunds to give additional income to farmers.

Several demonstrations for fish farmers for monitoring water quality in the pond were also done at periodical intervals by the scientist team.

A programme was organized to bring in awareness and encourage more farmers to take up this vocation.

(Dr. B.P. Bhat, Director, ICAR research complex for eastern region, Patna, email: director@ihr.ernet.in and iihrdirector@gmail.com, phone: 0612 2223962.

### **Sharmila promises welfare scheme for farmers**

YSR Congress leader Sharmila on Wednesday said that if her brother Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy comes to power, his government would implement a Rs.3,000 'Srikiran' welfare scheme to provide relief to farmers raising sweet lime plantations in the district, which has the largest such area in the State.

Interacting with farmers during the sixth day of her 'Maropraja Prasthanam Padayatra', after covering 15.8 km in Gouraram, Amargudam and Marepalli, in Kanagal mandal, she hit out at the State Government for 'utterly failing' to solve the burning problems of the people. While seeking support for Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy, she asserted that the woes of the people would end only when he forms the Government after the elections. During a 'rachabanda' women and farmers

explained to her their problems and said agriculture was no more remunerative because of the drought prevailing in the district and banks failing to provide financial assistance to the needy ryots, who were in distress.

The YSRC leader's yatra entered the 65th day on Wednesday. She has so far covered over 940 km.

### **Tirupur to get 15 solar crop dryers**

In a bid to help farmers produce high quality copra, the Department of Agriculture is planning to set up 15 solar tunnel-model crop dryers in Tirupur district shortly in association with the farming community.

The department has identified 15 farm holdings for the project and each of the beneficiary farmers will be given subsidy from the corpus created under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana to offset 50 per cent of the capital cost subjected to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 50,000.

Of the solar crop dryers planned, two each will be set up at Madathukulam, Udumalpet, Gudiamangalam and Vellakoil blocks, and one each in Dharapuram, Mulanur, Kangayam, Palladam, Pongalur, Uthukuli and Kundadam blocks.

"Each solar crop dryer unit will be set up with five layers of specially designed thermal sheets laid over arch-shaped galvanized iron (GI) B-Class pipes spread over an area of 60 feet in length and 12 feet in width with the height at 6 feet," Joint Director of Agriculture, Mohamed Kallimullah Sherif, told *The Hindu*.

The unit will help to dry as much as 5,000 nuts at a time under protected environment. Every layer of thermal sheets has specific properties which include ultra violet rays stabilising

capability, high capacity to retain heat for long period after the sunset and prevent water as well as moisture from entering the unit, among others.

Mr. Sherif said solar dryer would help the farmers to dry the copra in almost half the number of days, vis-à-vis the conventional drying of copra in open yards because of the heat getting retained for longer duration.

“The system will also prevent fungal attack, otherwise comes in open drying. Besides it, the shifting of copra from the open drying yard during the night hours only to bring it back in the morning can be avoided when using the solar crop dryer,” Mr. Sherif said

### **“Declare Puducherry, Karaikal as drought-hit”**

*Government urged to pay same compensation as in Tamil Nadu*

The Puducherry Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) have urged the territorial administration to declare Puducherry and Karaikal regions as drought-affected.

V. Vaithilingam, Leader of Opposition, said here on Tuesday that the standing paddy crop was badly hit in the Karaikal region owing to the non arrival of Cauvery water and failure of monsoon. All farmers, including those who adopted direct sowing method, pump set irrigation, had suffered heavy loss. Reports suggested that the samba crop was a failure and farmers had also lost the kuruvai crop earlier.

Similarly, farmers in the Puducherry region were also affected by scanty rainfall. The yield of paddy crop in rural areas was not satisfactory. Farmers had suffered production loss in the range of 40 to 50 per cent. Similarly, sugarcane farmers were experiencing a tough situation owing to poor water availability .

While pointing out the announcement made by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa declaring all districts except Chennai as drought hit , Mr. Vaithilingam said Karaikal was situated in the tail end area of Cauvery delta region. When the upstream areas of Cauvery delta in Tamil Nadu were announced as drought hit, why Karaikal should not be declared as drought affected, he asked.

A high-level team should be sent to Karaikal to study the extent of drought and all farmers should be duly compensated by the territorial administration.

A. Anbalagan, AIADMK legislative party leader, Puducherry, said Ms. Jayalalithaa had declared that compensation to the tune of Rs. 15,000 per acre would be given to the affected farmers. The same approach should be adopted by the Puducherry government, he demanded.

### **Too much emphasis on commercial crops endangers food security**

#### *Low external input and sustainable agriculture*

Focussing too much on commercial (cash) crops will endanger food security, proponent of organic agriculture Nammalwar has said. In a statement, he said industrialised agriculture does not lead even to breakeven situation. That was why farmers switched over to commercial agriculture.

For example, Tamil Nadu has 38 sugar mills each one having a registered cane area of about 20,000 acres. In other fertile lands, cash crops such as banana, coconut, turmeric, cotton, flowers and tobacco are raised.

All the governmental assistance such as free electricity and fertilizer subsidy go only to commercial crops. Thus food production faces serious threat, he added.



Pointing out that 80 per cent of the farmers in the State own less than two acres each, he lamented that they are forced to rely on income from other sources for their livelihood.

Their farming activities are totally dependent on rivers and rains. And the skirmishes between the States regarding water, drought due to climatic changes and floods, affect them directly.

“Industrialised agriculture contributes 35 per cent to global warming,” he observed.

He said that industrialised agriculture required items from industries and hence would require quite a lot of energy. Thus it becomes “high energy input agriculture.” But organic agriculture, which is given several names including ecological farming, bio-dynamic agriculture, and natural way of farming, is one with “low external input and sustainable agriculture (LEISA).” Farmers and non-governmental organisations which wanted a change found LEISA method to have a number of solutions to the complexities of agriculture.

### **Organic farming**

That’s why organic farming is considered both producer-friendly and consumer-friendly, he added.

Mr.Nammalwar said as early as 2006 the National Commission for Agriculture pinpointed the problems faced by Indian agriculture. Even the commission’s chairman and the father of Green Revolution M.S.Swaminathan had said that if proper solutions were not found, agriculture would reach an irredeemable stage, he warned.

The organic scientist said farmers at present are meeting too many problems and are incurring huge expenses. A large number of them are committing suicide. Only 28 per cent of them are able to get loans from the nationalised banks while the rest are still at the mercy of private

lenders. While groundwater level is going down year after year, salinity in cultivable lands has increased. Nutritional deficiency is found in almost all the fields.

Farm produce do not fetch remunerative price. And there is no scope for improving the productivity of the lands that offered food grains for the public distribution system at the initial stages. And consumers become victims of diseases such as jaundice, diabetes, and cancer. Both pregnant and lactating women suffer nutritional deficiency. Even children are born with low weight and poor physical and mental growth. Crops with high nutrient content like cholam, cumbu, ragi, varaghu, kudiraivali, samai, thinai and panivaraghu require less water. But the lands where these are raised have been rendered fallow and hence considered orphan crops.

Quoting Mr.Swaminathan, Mr.Nammalwar says “in late 1960s we were awaiting the arrival of ships for food. Now we don’t have even such an opportunity.”

As African countries are facing serious drought and suffering, the entire focus of the world has turned towards them.

The problems of Indian agriculture need a deep and long-term research and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has the facilities to do so and the NGOs can involve the public both in research and growth.

Hence, he is confident that if both these organisations were to act in unison it could bring about a sea change in agriculture in the State.

*Only 28 per cent of farmers could get loans from Nationalised banks*

**Krishi Utsav today**

Krishi Utsav, an awareness programme for farmers, will be held under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture and Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project at taluk stadium in Shikaripur on February 14.

A Department of Agriculture press release that the experts would deliver talks on scientific methods of cultivating maize, methods to detect adulterated fertiliser and pesticide, growing banana under comprehensive cultivation method and on rearing sheep under stall method.

### Focus on genetically improved tilapia



V. K. Venkataramani, Dean, Fisheries College and Research Institute, inaugurating a training programme in Tuticorin on Wednesday. Photo: N. Rajesh

A three-day national agriculture development programme was organised at Fisheries College and Research Institute here on Wednesday to establish a state-of-the-art fish hatchery for production and supply of genetically improved tilapia, an edible fish.

The objective was to devise strategies to increase fish production with genetically improved farm culture, V. K. Venkataramani, Dean, FCRI, said.

Compared to native fish species, the genetically improved tilapia variety had a remarkable growth rate and it would fetch a better price in domestic and international markets.

“It has a good taste. Tilapia grows in various aquatic systems and can tolerate low oxygen, high organic load and saline water,” he said.

Under the guidance of faculty members of the Department of Fisheries Biotechnology, farmers would be trained in identification of genetically improved farm tilapia, breeding and rearing techniques under different culture systems. Farmers would gain an exposure to processing this species for export.

Thirty persons from Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, Ramanathapuram, Madurai and Nagapattinam districts participated in the programme.

Earlier, he released the training manual.

K. Karal Marx, Professor and Principal Investigator, welcomed the gathering, R. Jayaraman, Professor, proposed a vote of thanks.



## weather

Chennai

### Chennai - INDIA

#### Today's Weather



Cloudy

**Thursday, Feb 14**

**Max Min**

30° | 25°

**Rain:** 0

**Humidity:** 79

**Wind:** normal

**Sunrise:** 06:32

**Sunset:** 06:14

**Barometer:** 1011

#### Tomorrow's Forecast



Partly Cloudy

**Friday, Feb 15**

**Max Min**

30° | 23°

#### Extended Forecast for a week

**Saturday**

**Feb 16**



30° | 23°

Cloudy

**Sunday**

**Feb 17**



31° | 23°

Overcast

**Monday**

**Feb 18**



31° | 24°

Overcast

**Tuesday**

**Feb 19**



31° | 24°

Cloudy

**Wednesday**

**Feb 20**



30° | 24°

Overcast

#### Airport Weather

Delhi

**Delhi**

**Rain:** 0

**Humidity:** 100

**Wind:** normal

**Sunrise:** 07:00

**Sunset:** 06:10

**Barometer:** 1014



# THE HINDU Business Line

TODAY FARM NEWS

14.02.2013 A.M

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13<sup>th</sup> jan 2013

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To a question, he said there was no shortage of funds for purchasing red gram and the procurement process would continue till the end of March this year.

### **Shimoga to see a spurt in floriculture**

*Farmers to get subsidy for setting up polyhouses, shade-nets under RKVY scheme*

The inclusion of Shimoga district under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikasa Yojana (RKVY) is expected to give a boost to floriculture here.

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Under NHM, the maximum size of the polyhouse to avail the subsidy is 2,000 square metres while under RKVY, subsidy is offered to set up polyhouse measuring up to 4,000 square metres. Mr. Vishwanath said that those who have set up polyhouse under NHM can go for expansion by availing further subsidy under RKVY.

He said owing to the introduction of RKVY in the district, there would be a rapid expansion of the area under floriculture. The NHM will also be available, under which those interested to set up polyhouse measuring up to 2,000 square metre and those who are eligible for bank loan can avail the subsidy, he said.

### **Cashew exports hit by ICTT strike: CEPCI**

*'Declare trade transportation as vital service'*



The Cashew Export Promotion Council of India (CEPCI) says that the ongoing strike by container truck staff at the International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT), Vallarpadam, in Kochi has badly affected the cashew industry.

CEPCI Chairman Hari Krishnan R. Nair has said that cashew kernel exports have been hit because of the strike.

In a statement on Wednesday, Mr. Nair said that going by average export figures during this time of the year, more than 1,000 tonnes of cashew kernel, worth about Rs.40 crore, would be the pending shipments accumulated over the last eight days since the strike has been on.

Non-fulfilment of shipping contracts leads to order cancellations which would be to the benefit of competitors from countries like Vietnam and Brazil. The strike would also hamper the operation of cashew factories affecting the livelihood of lakhs of workers, a majority of them women.

### **Heavy demurrage**

He said thousands of tonnes of imported raw cashew nuts are also lying un-cleared at the ICTT incurring heavy demurrage, for no fault of the processors. Besides deterioration in quality, this adds to the cost of processing which is already under severe stress due to the fall in consumption in Europe and USA on account of the prevailing economic situation there.

Mr. Nair alleged that the container truck employees, who are relatively small in numbers, are capitalising on their monopolistic nature to hold the industry to ransom. The CEPCI wanted the authorities concerned to take steps to resolve the problem once and for all by declaring trade transportation as an essential service and preventing wholesale disruption of service on account of strikes, he said.

## **Drought relief measures**

The district administration has resolved to intensify the drought relief measures. Convening a meeting on Wednesday, District Collector Mini Antony directed officials to ensure the speedy completion of schemes launched to ensure drinking water supply.

Ms. Antony also called for ensuring the maximum utilisation of available resources for the mission. She assured that there would not be any hindrances in providing administrative sanctions for project proposals that are found relevant. She also suggested employing the services of MGNREGA workers in sterilizing the water bodies.

## **Ornamental fish farming**

The Fisheries Department has invited applications from farmers' groups who are interested to take up ornamental fish farming as a career.

A group comprising a minimum of five farmers will get 50 per cent subsidy to purchase quality fish fingerlings and set up farms.

People who have already benefitted from similar schemes introduced by the Central and State governments will not be eligible for the new scheme. The filled application should reach the Fisheries Deputy Director's Office at West Hill before February 23, a press release issued here said.

## **Rice fallow pulses planned on 35,000 hectares**

*Cultivated in lands where paddy harvest has been completed*



Greener pastures:A woman working at a black gram field at Soorakottai in Thanjavur on Wednesday—Photo:B.Velankanni Raj

Farmers of Thanjavur district with assured irrigation such as pumpsets have started cultivation of rice fallow pulses, mostly black gram. Rice fallow pulses are cultivated in lands where paddy has been harvested.

Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture, Thanjavur district, said that sowing of black gram has been completed in 5,000 hectares as on Wednesday.

“We hope to cover an area of 35,000 hectares this year under rice fallow pulses,” he said.

Agriculture department has been promoting pulses cultivation under National Food Security Mission (pulses component) and seed village concept. In both schemes subsidies are given for seeds and other inputs such as fertilizers.

“We are providing them Di Ammonium Phosphate for foliar spraying ,” Mr.Yahiya said. Farmers have raised ADT3 and ADT5 black gram varieties which have a duration of 90 days.

Sowing of rice fallow pulses will continue till the end of February. Cultivation is going on mostly in Thanjavur and Orathanadu areas. Yield may be around 200 to 250 kilos per acre.

Farmers may take up gingili, maize, and groundnut cultivations too in the summer season.

Meanwhile samba paddy harvest is being carried out in pumpset irrigated areas.

Both samba and thaladi harvest has been completed in around 60,000 hectares in the district.

Yield is around 4 to 4.5 tonnes per hectare.

Normally the yield may go up to five to six tonnes per hectare but due to the prevailing drought conditions the yield is low, agriculture department officials said.

### **Less methane, more milk**

*Valorex, a French cattle feed company, offers a solution to stop cows from emitting climate-changing flatulence*



A French cattle feed company on Tuesday unveiled a novel form of carbon credits aimed at incentivising farmers to stop cows from emitting climate-changing flatulence.

Grass-chewing farm animals are an often-overlooked contributor to global warming, as their emissions are of methane, a gas that is two dozen times more efficient than carbon dioxide in trapping solar heat. In France, cattle account for five percent of the country's carbon output.

### **Novel solution**

At a press conference, the company Valorex said it would offer a carbon-credit bonus to farmers who join the "Bleu-Blanc-Coeur" (Blue-White-Heart) initiative, which promotes food products with higher levels of the valued protein Omega 3.

### **Emit 64% less methane**

Valorex sells a trade mix that comprises corn, soy, lupin and linseed, which it says means cows emit 64-percent less methane, deliver better quality milk and need fewer vet bills.

A credit of 100 euros (\$134) will be awarded for every tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gas that is saved from entering the atmosphere, said Valorex president Pierre Weill.

It has to be exchanged for goods and services provided by other companies which are part of a long-running "Bleu-Blanc-Coeur" initiative.

The new scheme, certified as bona fide by the French government and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has so far notched up 8,365 tonnes of averted carbon.

Out of France's 72,000 milk producers, 500 have joined Bleu-Blanc-Coeur, which requires them to follow strict guidelines.AFP

### **Fermented castor solution traps pests of sugarcane, groundnut**



Reducing expense: Insects like rhinoceros beetle shown dead after falling in the pot.— Photo: Special arrangement

Andiyur village in Erode district is well known for groundnut and sugarcane cultivation.

But the farmers there face a recurring pest problem called white grub that makes it difficult for them to harvest a good yield. Managing the pest proves difficult for the groundnut cultivators as the grub lives under the soil and its lifecycle takes a year to complete.

It feeds on the root system of the crops and the plants wither and die. Annually nearly 41 per cent of crop loss is being reported from this region.

### **No effect**

“Chemical control measures did not prove to be a long-standing solution for this and the pest keeps recurring,” says Dr. K. Alagesan, Program Co-ordinator, Myrada (Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency), Gobichettipalayam, Tamil Nadu.

A progressive farmer G.R. Sakthivel, who grows sugarcane and groundnut, repeatedly faced losses due to this pest.

“I used almost all the pest preventive measures available in the market for this but the problem continued. No amount of specialist intervention could offer a long standing solution to this.

### **Accidental discovery**

“One day I casually happened to see a large number of the grubs moving on a heap of de-oiled castor cake I had left near my cow shed. This made me think of using this as an effective trap for the insects. I tried it first in a small mud pot in my sugarcane field and found that it had the desired result. I started increasing it for my entire crops,” he says.

Detailing the method on how it should be done, the farmer says:

“Select some five litre mud pots and bury them till the neck at different places in the field.

Pulverise about 5kg of castor seed and mix it in five litres of water. Keep this solution undisturbed in a plastic drum for 10 days.

### **Foul smell**

On the 11th day pour two litres of this liquid in all the buried pots and fill it with water till the neck portion. The odour that comes out from the pot attracts the pest towards it.

“In addition to white grub this solution is also found effective to control the notorious rhinoceros beetle that infests coconut trees,” explains the farmer.

In fact, coconut growers are well aware about the rhino beetle and its damage to fronds and small nuts. This method is a good way of controlling it and does not require a big investment.

The mud pot with the solution needs to be buried near the trunk of the tree and attracted by the odour from the pot the insects come towards it and fall into the pot and die.

Collect the dead insects found floating in the pot once every 2 days and keep filling the pot with solution whenever the quantity gets reduced. The solution can be kept for a period of three months, according to Mr. Sakthivel.

Myrada did an extensive study on this indigenous technology over a period of four years and found that about five pots suffice for an acre. This method is found to reduce the plant protection expense to 20 per cent since the cost of the entire process comes to Rs.200-250.

### **Expense**

If farmers use the conventional methods they need to spend anything from Rs.450 to 600 for buying chemicals.

Though the farmer developed this concept some 10 years back, today nearly 300 farmers in the region follow this for their groundnut, sugarcane and cotton crops.

“We found that there is an 80 per cent reduction in white grub and rhinoceros beetle pest population and 35-40 per cent yield increase in sugarcane and groundnut crops when this castor trap is used.

### **Problems galore**

“Though, during the start of the green revolution fertilizers and pesticides led to high yields in hybrid crops, later on it led to serious issues like development of insect resistant, resurgence and residual problems.

“Natural and non pesticidal methods for controlling pests have been in place since time immemorial. But sadly the present generation of farmers has either forgotten their efficiency or are not prepared to accept them,” says Dr. Alagesan.

To know more, interested readers can contact Mr. G.R.Sakthivel at No. 149, Ganeshapuram, Gettavadi (P.o), Talavadi (Via), Sathyamangalam(T.K), Erode District-638461, Mobile: 94863 16041 and Dr. P. Alagesan, Programme Co-ordinator, Myrada Krishi Vigyan Kendra, No.272, Perumal Nagar, Pudukkottai Road, Kalingiyam – Post, Gobichettipalayam – 638453, Erode District, Tamil Nadu, e-mail : myradakvk@gmail.com, , website : www.myradakvk.org, Phone : 04285 241626, 241627.

**Integrated aquaculture for improving productivity**



The farmers of Sonmar in Sarai Ranjan block, Samastipur district, Bihar have shown a way for productive utilization of water bodies (called chaur) into an integrated aquaculture model.

The chaur are spread over 44 hectares and about 43 farmers control their ownership. Till 2008, these chaur were being utilized for capture of wild fishes.

### **Training**

About six young farmers from the area were trained by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna through Central Institute of Fisheries Education Regional Station, Kakinada by the State Fisheries Department, Government of Bihar.

The State Fishery Department, Govt. of Bihar with the help of a local bank called Kshetriya Gramin bank and Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana constructed a series of about 50 ponds for increased fish production.

About 43 farmers came together and formed Sonmar Chaur Matsya Vikash Samiti to monitor these activities, facilitate the resources, inputs and market the fishes.

Due to delayed rainfall, tubewells were sunk in several locations and a solar operated pump was also established with the help of fishery department.

### **Participatory mode**

ICAR joined the farmers to work in participatory mode to boost the economic status and nutritional security of the farmers by enhancing the aquaculture / agriculture production from the chaur.

Since, farmers were finding it difficult to feed the fishes properly due to high cost of concentrate, the Council integrated duck, goat and cattle with fish to facilitate the supply of organic wastes to improve the overall productivity.

Fruits and vegetable crops were planted on the pond bunds to give additional income to farmers.

Several demonstrations for fish farmers for monitoring water quality in the pond were also done at periodical intervals by the scientist team.

A programme was organized to bring in awareness and encourage more farmers to take up this vocation.

(Dr. B.P. Bhat, Director, ICAR research complex for eastern region, Patna, email: director@ihr.ernet.in and iihrdirector@gmail.com, phone: 0612 2223962.

### **Sharmila promises welfare scheme for farmers**

YSR Congress leader Sharmila on Wednesday said that if her brother Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy comes to power, his government would implement a Rs.3,000 'Srikiran' welfare scheme to provide relief to farmers raising sweet lime plantations in the district, which has the largest such area in the State.

Interacting with farmers during the sixth day of her 'Maropraja Prasthanam Padayatra', after covering 15.8 km in Gouraram, Amargudam and Marepalli, in Kanagal mandal, she hit out at the State Government for 'utterly failing' to solve the burning problems of the people. While seeking support for Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy, she asserted that the woes of the people would end only when he forms the Government after the elections. During a 'rachabanda' women and farmers

explained to her their problems and said agriculture was no more remunerative because of the drought prevailing in the district and banks failing to provide financial assistance to the needy ryots, who were in distress.

The YSRC leader's yatra entered the 65th day on Wednesday. She has so far covered over 940 km.

### **Tirupur to get 15 solar crop dryers**

In a bid to help farmers produce high quality copra, the Department of Agriculture is planning to set up 15 solar tunnel-model crop dryers in Tirupur district shortly in association with the farming community.

The department has identified 15 farm holdings for the project and each of the beneficiary farmers will be given subsidy from the corpus created under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana to offset 50 per cent of the capital cost subjected to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 50,000.

Of the solar crop dryers planned, two each will be set up at Madathukulam, Udumalpet, Gudiamangalam and Vellakoil blocks, and one each in Dharapuram, Mulanur, Kangayam, Palladam, Pongalur, Uthukuli and Kundadam blocks.

"Each solar crop dryer unit will be set up with five layers of specially designed thermal sheets laid over arch-shaped galvanized iron (GI) B-Class pipes spread over an area of 60 feet in length and 12 feet in width with the height at 6 feet," Joint Director of Agriculture, Mohamed Kallimullah Sherif, told *The Hindu*.

The unit will help to dry as much as 5,000 nuts at a time under protected environment. Every layer of thermal sheets has specific properties which include ultra violet rays stabilising

capability, high capacity to retain heat for long period after the sunset and prevent water as well as moisture from entering the unit, among others.

Mr. Sherif said solar dryer would help the farmers to dry the copra in almost half the number of days, vis-à-vis the conventional drying of copra in open yards because of the heat getting retained for longer duration.

“The system will also prevent fungal attack, otherwise comes in open drying. Besides it, the shifting of copra from the open drying yard during the night hours only to bring it back in the morning can be avoided when using the solar crop dryer,” Mr. Sherif said

### **“Declare Puducherry, Karaikal as drought-hit”**

*Government urged to pay same compensation as in Tamil Nadu*

The Puducherry Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) have urged the territorial administration to declare Puducherry and Karaikal regions as drought-affected.

V. Vaithilingam, Leader of Opposition, said here on Tuesday that the standing paddy crop was badly hit in the Karaikal region owing to the non arrival of Cauvery water and failure of monsoon. All farmers, including those who adopted direct sowing method, pump set irrigation, had suffered heavy loss. Reports suggested that the samba crop was a failure and farmers had also lost the kuruvai crop earlier.

Similarly, farmers in the Puducherry region were also affected by scanty rainfall. The yield of paddy crop in rural areas was not satisfactory. Farmers had suffered production loss in the range of 40 to 50 per cent. Similarly, sugarcane farmers were experiencing a tough situation owing to poor water availability .

While pointing out the announcement made by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa declaring all districts except Chennai as drought hit, Mr. Vaithilingam said Karaikal was situated in the tail end area of Cauvery delta region. When the upstream areas of Cauvery delta in Tamil Nadu were announced as drought hit, why Karaikal should not be declared as drought affected, he asked.

A high-level team should be sent to Karaikal to study the extent of drought and all farmers should be duly compensated by the territorial administration.

A. Anbalagan, AIADMK legislative party leader, Puducherry, said Ms. Jayalalithaa had declared that compensation to the tune of Rs. 15,000 per acre would be given to the affected farmers. The same approach should be adopted by the Puducherry government, he demanded.

### **Too much emphasis on commercial crops endangers food security**

#### *Low external input and sustainable agriculture*

Focussing too much on commercial (cash) crops will endanger food security, proponent of organic agriculture Nammalwar has said. In a statement, he said industrialised agriculture does not lead even to breakeven situation. That was why farmers switched over to commercial agriculture.

For example, Tamil Nadu has 38 sugar mills each one having a registered cane area of about 20,000 acres. In other fertile lands, cash crops such as banana, coconut, turmeric, cotton, flowers and tobacco are raised.

All the governmental assistance such as free electricity and fertilizer subsidy go only to commercial crops. Thus food production faces serious threat, he added.

Pointing out that 80 per cent of the farmers in the State own less than two acres each, he lamented that they are forced to rely on income from other sources for their livelihood.

Their farming activities are totally dependent on rivers and rains. And the skirmishes between the States regarding water, drought due to climatic changes and floods, affect them directly.

“Industrialised agriculture contributes 35 per cent to global warming,” he observed.

He said that industrialised agriculture required items from industries and hence would require quite a lot of energy. Thus it becomes “high energy input agriculture.” But organic agriculture, which is given several names including ecological farming, bio-dynamic agriculture, and natural way of farming, is one with “low external input and sustainable agriculture (LEISA).” Farmers and non-governmental organisations which wanted a change found LEISA method to have a number of solutions to the complexities of agriculture.

### **Organic farming**

That’s why organic farming is considered both producer-friendly and consumer-friendly, he added.

Mr.Nammalwar said as early as 2006 the National Commission for Agriculture pinpointed the problems faced by Indian agriculture. Even the commission’s chairman and the father of Green Revolution M.S.Swaminathan had said that if proper solutions were not found, agriculture would reach an irredeemable stage, he warned.

The organic scientist said farmers at present are meeting too many problems and are incurring huge expenses. A large number of them are committing suicide. Only 28 per cent of them are able to get loans from the nationalised banks while the rest are still at the mercy of private

lenders. While groundwater level is going down year after year, salinity in cultivable lands has increased. Nutritional deficiency is found in almost all the fields.

Farm produce do not fetch remunerative price. And there is no scope for improving the productivity of the lands that offered food grains for the public distribution system at the initial stages. And consumers become victims of diseases such as jaundice, diabetes, and cancer. Both pregnant and lactating women suffer nutritional deficiency. Even children are born with low weight and poor physical and mental growth. Crops with high nutrient content like cholam, cumbu, ragi, varaghu, kudiraivali, samai, thinai and panivaraghu require less water. But the lands where these are raised have been rendered fallow and hence considered orphan crops.

Quoting Mr.Swaminathan, Mr.Nammalwar says “in late 1960s we were awaiting the arrival of ships for food. Now we don’t have even such an opportunity.”

As African countries are facing serious drought and suffering, the entire focus of the world has turned towards them.

The problems of Indian agriculture need a deep and long-term research and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has the facilities to do so and the NGOs can involve the public both in research and growth.

Hence, he is confident that if both these organisations were to act in unison it could bring about a sea change in agriculture in the State.

*Only 28 per cent of farmers could get loans from Nationalised banks*

**Krishi Utsav today**

Krishi Utsav, an awareness programme for farmers, will be held under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture and Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project at taluk stadium in Shikaripur on February 14.

A Department of Agriculture press release that the experts would deliver talks on scientific methods of cultivating maize, methods to detect adulterated fertiliser and pesticide, growing banana under comprehensive cultivation method and on rearing sheep under stall method.

### **Focus on genetically improved tilapia**



V. K. Venkataramani, Dean, Fisheries College and Research Institute, inaugurating a training programme in Tuticorin on Wednesday. Photo: N. Rajesh

A three-day national agriculture development programme was organised at Fisheries College and Research Institute here on Wednesday to establish a state-of-the-art fish hatchery for production and supply of genetically improved tilapia, an edible fish.

The objective was to devise strategies to increase fish production with genetically improved farm culture, V. K. Venkataramani, Dean, FCRI, said.

Compared to native fish species, the genetically improved tilapia variety had a remarkable growth rate and it would fetch a better price in domestic and international markets.



“It has a good taste. Tilapia grows in various aquatic systems and can tolerate low oxygen, high organic load and saline water,” he said.

Under the guidance of faculty members of the Department of Fisheries Biotechnology, farmers would be trained in identification of genetically improved farm tilapia, breeding and rearing techniques under different culture systems. Farmers would gain an exposure to processing this species for export.

Thirty persons from Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, Ramanathapuram, Madurai and Nagapattinam districts participated in the programme.

Earlier, he released the training manual.

K. Karal Marx, Professor and Principal Investigator, welcomed the gathering, R. Jayaraman, Professor, proposed a vote of thanks.

# Business Standard

TODAY FARM NEWS

14.02.2013 A.M

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## **Turmeric remains up on lower output hopes**



Turmeric futures for April gained Rs 86, or 1.38% to Rs 6336 per quintal in 27,655 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract moved up by Rs 80, or 1.26% to Rs 6,436 per quintal in 8,215 lots.

Prices went up as speculators enlarged positions triggered by reports of lower output this season.

## **Pepper extends gains, up 0.4% on tight supply**



Pepper futures for February added Rs 145, or 0.37% to Rs 39,510 per quintal in 612 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the March contract gained Rs

105, or 0.29% to Rs 36,565 per quintal in 2,118 lots.

Prices gained as speculators enlarged positions, driven by increased spot market demand against tight supplies.

However, expectations of higher output this year and sluggish exports capped the gains.

### **Chana remains high as demand picks up**



Chana futures for April added Rs 17, or 0.5% to Rs 3446 per quintal in 75,360 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the May contract moved up by Rs 14, or 0.4% to Rs 3496 per quintal in 20,640 lots.

Prices strengthened as speculators enlarged positions, driven by pick-up spot market demand.

However, supplies from the new season crop and expectations of rise in output capped the gains.

### **Jeera falls 0.8% on profit-booking**

Jeera futures for March fell by Rs 102.50, or 0.78%, to Rs 13,035 per quintal in 11,376 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the April lost Rs 87.50, or 0.66%, to Rs 13,130 per quintal in 7,221 lots.

Prices dipped as speculators booked profits at existing levels amid expectations of higher output and supplies from the new season crop.

### **Pepper up 1.24% on thin supply**



Pepper futures for February moved up by Rs 480, or 1.24%, to Rs 39,200 per quintal in 651 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the March traded higher by Rs 235, or 0.65%, to Rs 36,400 per quintal in 2,100 lots.

Prices rose as speculators created fresh positions, driven by a firm trend at spot market on pick-up in demand against thin supplies.

However, expectations of higher production this year and sluggish exports restricted the gains.

### **Barley falls 2.8% on stockist selling**



Barley futures for July dropped by Rs 33, or 2.27% to Rs 1,421.50 per quintal in 110 lots.

At the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), the April contract moved down by Rs 10.50, or 0.76% to Rs 1,374 per quintal in 5,120 lots.

Prices dropped due to stockist-selling at existing higher levels amid reports of higher production this season.

Increased supply in physical markets also led to the fall in prices.

Poor demand from beer and cattle feed making industries also helped bring down the trading sentiments, they added.



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

TODAY FARM NEWS

14.02.2013 A.M

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## Red gram price going northward

*State's decision to increase the MSP for red gram has had a positive impact*

The State government's decision to increase the minimum support price for red gram from Rs. 3,850 to Rs. 4,500 a quintal has had a positive impact on the wholesale market. Red gram prices have stabilised and are gradually increasing.

Secretary of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Chandramohan, who is also in-charge Managing Director of the Red Gram Development Board, told *The Hindu* here on Wednesday that price of red gram, which was hovering around Rs. 3,700 a quintal prior to the market intervention, was now more than Rs. 3,900 a quintal. Every day, the market was showing signs of increasing prices of red gram.

He said the board had established procurement centres in the taluk headquarters in all the three districts — including Gulbarga, Aland, Afzalpur, Jewargi, Chittapur, Chincholi and Sedam in Gulbarga district; Bidar, Humnabad, Aurad, Basavakalyan and Bhalki in Bidar district; and Yadgir, Shahpur, Surpur and Gurmitkal in Yadgir district. The response from farmers had been overwhelming, he said. Mr. Chandramohan said that nearly 11,000 quintals of red gram from 862 farmers had been directly purchased through procurement centres by paying a total sum of Rs. 4.83 crore.

So far, 10,300 farmers had registered their names for selling their produce at the centres, he added.

“There has been a great rush in all procurement centres. Purchasing red gram from farmers following the procedures and conducting the quality tests is a lengthy process.”

Official sources denied earlier reports of the Centre imposing import duty of 10 per cent on red gram imported from other countries. However, the Centre is seriously considering imposing an import duty of 15 per cent on red gram imported from other countries.

Mr. Chandramohan said that according to indications available in the market, prices of red gram would continue to increase after February 28.

To a question, he said there was no shortage of funds for purchasing red gram and the procurement process would continue till the end of March this year.

### **Shimoga to see a spurt in floriculture**

*Farmers to get subsidy for setting up polyhouses, shade-nets under RKVY scheme*

The inclusion of Shimoga district under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikasa Yojana (RKVY) is expected to give a boost to floriculture here.

Under RKVY, subsidy will be extended to farmers who opt for protected cultivation methods such as construction of polyhouse and installation of shade-nets in their farms. The farmers can avail subsidy of Rs. 4.1 lakh for constructing polyhouse measuring 1,000 square metres and an amount of Rs. 16.40 lakh for constructing polyhouse measuring 4,000 square metres. Similarly, a subsidy of Rs. 1.15 lakh can be availed for installing shade-net measuring 500 square metres and Rs. 9.45 lakh for shade-net measuring 4,000 square metres.

Deputy Director of Horticulture M. Vishwanath told *The Hindu* that RKVY had been implemented in 11 districts in the State, including Shimoga. An amount of Rs 1.08 crore had been sanctioned for the district under the scheme in 2012-13 to extend subsidy to farmers.

He said that as the climate in Malnad region was conducive for floriculture and the returns from it were also lucrative, farmers had showed interest in it. He said that 28 farmers were growing flowers and vegetables in the district in polyhouses at present.

### **Old scheme**

So far, the farmers in the district used to avail subsidy under the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) to set up polyhouses. Under , Rs. 4.67 lakh is paid as subsidy to set up polyhouse measuring 1,000 square metres, and Rs. 9.34 lakh is paid as subsidy to setup polyhouse measuring 2,000 square metres.

However, availing loan from the bank was mandatory to claim the subsidy under this scheme. It was difficult for farmers who had already taken bank loans to avail this scheme. Such farmers can now avail subsidy under RKVY as borrowing loan from banks is not mandatory in this scheme.

Under NHM, the maximum size of the polyhouse to avail the subsidy is 2,000 square metres while under RKVY, subsidy is offered to set up polyhouse measuring up to 4,000 square metres. Mr. Vishwanath said that those who have set up polyhouse under NHM can go for expansion by availing further subsidy under RKVY.

He said owing to the introduction of RKVY in the district, there would be a rapid expansion of the area under floriculture. The NHM will also be available, under which those interested to set up polyhouse measuring up to 2,000 square metre and those who are eligible for bank loan can avail the subsidy, he said.

### **Cashew exports hit by ICTT strike: CEPCI**

*'Declare trade transportation as vital service'*



The Cashew Export Promotion Council of India (CEPCI) says that the ongoing strike by container truck staff at the International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT), Vallarpadam, in Kochi has badly affected the cashew industry.

CEPCI Chairman Hari Krishnan R. Nair has said that cashew kernel exports have been hit because of the strike.

In a statement on Wednesday, Mr. Nair said that going by average export figures during this time of the year, more than 1,000 tonnes of cashew kernel, worth about Rs.40 crore, would be the pending shipments accumulated over the last eight days since the strike has been on.

Non-fulfilment of shipping contracts leads to order cancellations which would be to the benefit of competitors from countries like Vietnam and Brazil. The strike would also hamper the operation of cashew factories affecting the livelihood of lakhs of workers, a majority of them women.

### **Heavy demurrage**

He said thousands of tonnes of imported raw cashew nuts are also lying un-cleared at the ICTT incurring heavy demurrage, for no fault of the processors. Besides deterioration in quality, this adds to the cost of processing which is already under severe stress due to the fall in consumption in Europe and USA on account of the prevailing economic situation there.

Mr. Nair alleged that the container truck employees, who are relatively small in numbers, are capitalising on their monopolistic nature to hold the industry to ransom. The CEPCI wanted the authorities concerned to take steps to resolve the problem once and for all by declaring trade transportation as an essential service and preventing wholesale disruption of service on account of strikes, he said.

## **Drought relief measures**

The district administration has resolved to intensify the drought relief measures. Convening a meeting on Wednesday, District Collector Mini Antony directed officials to ensure the speedy completion of schemes launched to ensure drinking water supply.

Ms. Antony also called for ensuring the maximum utilisation of available resources for the mission. She assured that there would not be any hindrances in providing administrative sanctions for project proposals that are found relevant. She also suggested employing the services of MGNREGA workers in sterilizing the water bodies.

## **Ornamental fish farming**

The Fisheries Department has invited applications from farmers' groups who are interested to take up ornamental fish farming as a career.

A group comprising a minimum of five farmers will get 50 per cent subsidy to purchase quality fish fingerlings and set up farms.

People who have already benefitted from similar schemes introduced by the Central and State governments will not be eligible for the new scheme. The filled application should reach the Fisheries Deputy Director's Office at West Hill before February 23, a press release issued here said.

## **Rice fallow pulses planned on 35,000 hectares**

*Cultivated in lands where paddy harvest has been completed*



Greener pastures:A woman working at a black gram field at Soorakottai in Thanjavur on Wednesday—Photo:B.Velankanni Raj

Farmers of Thanjavur district with assured irrigation such as pumpsets have started cultivation of rice fallow pulses, mostly black gram. Rice fallow pulses are cultivated in lands where paddy has been harvested.

Mohammed Yahiya, Joint Director of Agriculture, Thanjavur district, said that sowing of black gram has been completed in 5,000 hectares as on Wednesday.

“We hope to cover an area of 35,000 hectares this year under rice fallow pulses,” he said.

Agriculture department has been promoting pulses cultivation under National Food Security Mission (pulses component) and seed village concept. In both schemes subsidies are given for seeds and other inputs such as fertilizers.

“We are providing them Di Ammonium Phosphate for foliar spraying ,” Mr.Yahiya said. Farmers have raised ADT3 and ADT5 black gram varieties which have a duration of 90 days.

Sowing of rice fallow pulses will continue till the end of February. Cultivation is going on mostly in Thanjavur and Orathanadu areas. Yield may be around 200 to 250 kilos per acre.

Farmers may take up gingili, maize, and groundnut cultivations too in the summer season.

Meanwhile samba paddy harvest is being carried out in pumpset irrigated areas.

Both samba and thaladi harvest has been completed in around 60,000 hectares in the district.

Yield is around 4 to 4.5 tonnes per hectare.

Normally the yield may go up to five to six tonnes per hectare but due to the prevailing drought conditions the yield is low, agriculture department officials said.

### **Less methane, more milk**

*Valorex, a French cattle feed company, offers a solution to stop cows from emitting climate-changing flatulence*



A French cattle feed company on Tuesday unveiled a novel form of carbon credits aimed at incentivising farmers to stop cows from emitting climate-changing flatulence.

Grass-chewing farm animals are an often-overlooked contributor to global warming, as their emissions are of methane, a gas that is two dozen times more efficient than carbon dioxide in trapping solar heat. In France, cattle account for five percent of the country's carbon output.

### **Novel solution**

At a press conference, the company Valorex said it would offer a carbon-credit bonus to farmers who join the "Bleu-Blanc-Coeur" (Blue-White-Heart) initiative, which promotes food products with higher levels of the valued protein Omega 3.

### **Emit 64% less methane**

Valorex sells a trade mix that comprises corn, soy, lupin and linseed, which it says means cows emit 64-percent less methane, deliver better quality milk and need fewer vet bills.

A credit of 100 euros (\$134) will be awarded for every tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gas that is saved from entering the atmosphere, said Valorex president Pierre Weill.

It has to be exchanged for goods and services provided by other companies which are part of a long-running "Bleu-Blanc-Coeur" initiative.

The new scheme, certified as bona fide by the French government and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), has so far notched up 8,365 tonnes of averted carbon.

Out of France's 72,000 milk producers, 500 have joined Bleu-Blanc-Coeur, which requires them to follow strict guidelines.AFP

### **Fermented castor solution traps pests of sugarcane, groundnut**



Reducing expense: Insects like rhinoceros beetle shown dead after falling in the pot.— Photo: Special arrangement

Andiyur village in Erode district is well known for groundnut and sugarcane cultivation.

But the farmers there face a recurring pest problem called white grub that makes it difficult for them to harvest a good yield. Managing the pest proves difficult for the groundnut cultivators as the grub lives under the soil and its lifecycle takes a year to complete.

It feeds on the root system of the crops and the plants wither and die. Annually nearly 41 per cent of crop loss is being reported from this region.

### **No effect**

“Chemical control measures did not prove to be a long-standing solution for this and the pest keeps recurring,” says Dr. K. Alagesan, Program Co-ordinator, Myrada (Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency), Gobichettipalayam, Tamil Nadu.

A progressive farmer G.R. Sakthivel, who grows sugarcane and groundnut, repeatedly faced losses due to this pest.

“I used almost all the pest preventive measures available in the market for this but the problem continued. No amount of specialist intervention could offer a long standing solution to this.

### **Accidental discovery**

“One day I casually happened to see a large number of the grubs moving on a heap of de-oiled castor cake I had left near my cow shed. This made me think of using this as an effective trap for the insects. I tried it first in a small mud pot in my sugarcane field and found that it had the desired result. I started increasing it for my entire crops,” he says.

Detailing the method on how it should be done, the farmer says:

“Select some five litre mud pots and bury them till the neck at different places in the field.

Pulverise about 5kg of castor seed and mix it in five litres of water. Keep this solution undisturbed in a plastic drum for 10 days.

### **Foul smell**

On the 11th day pour two litres of this liquid in all the buried pots and fill it with water till the neck portion. The odour that comes out from the pot attracts the pest towards it.

“In addition to white grub this solution is also found effective to control the notorious rhinoceros beetle that infests coconut trees,” explains the farmer.

In fact, coconut growers are well aware about the rhino beetle and its damage to fronds and small nuts. This method is a good way of controlling it and does not require a big investment.

The mud pot with the solution needs to be buried near the trunk of the tree and attracted by the odour from the pot the insects come towards it and fall into the pot and die.

Collect the dead insects found floating in the pot once every 2 days and keep filling the pot with solution whenever the quantity gets reduced. The solution can be kept for a period of three months, according to Mr. Sakthivel.

Myrada did an extensive study on this indigenous technology over a period of four years and found that about five pots suffice for an acre. This method is found to reduce the plant protection expense to 20 per cent since the cost of the entire process comes to Rs.200-250.

### **Expense**

If farmers use the conventional methods they need to spend anything from Rs.450 to 600 for buying chemicals.

Though the farmer developed this concept some 10 years back, today nearly 300 farmers in the region follow this for their groundnut, sugarcane and cotton crops.

“We found that there is an 80 per cent reduction in white grub and rhinoceros beetle pest population and 35-40 per cent yield increase in sugarcane and groundnut crops when this castor trap is used.

### **Problems galore**

“Though, during the start of the green revolution fertilizers and pesticides led to high yields in hybrid crops, later on it led to serious issues like development of insect resistant, resurgence and residual problems.

“Natural and non pesticidal methods for controlling pests have been in place since time immemorial. But sadly the present generation of farmers has either forgotten their efficiency or are not prepared to accept them,” says Dr. Alagesan.

To know more, interested readers can contact Mr. G.R.Sakthivel at No. 149, Ganeshapuram, Gettavadi (P.o), Talavadi (Via), Sathyamangalam(T.K), Erode District-638461, Mobile: 94863 16041 and Dr. P. Alagesan, Programme Co-ordinator, Myrada Krishi Vigyan Kendra, No.272, Perumal Nagar, Pudukkottai Road, Kalingiyam – Post, Gobichettipalayam – 638453, Erode District, Tamil Nadu, e-mail : myradakvk@gmail.com, , website : www.myradakvk.org, Phone : 04285 241626, 241627.

**Integrated aquaculture for improving productivity**



The farmers of Sonmar in Sarai Ranjan block, Samastipur district, Bihar have shown a way for productive utilization of water bodies (called chaur) into an integrated aquaculture model.

The chaur are spread over 44 hectares and about 43 farmers control their ownership. Till 2008, these chaur were being utilized for capture of wild fishes.

### **Training**

About six young farmers from the area were trained by the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR), Research Complex for Eastern Region, Patna through Central Institute of Fisheries Education Regional Station, Kakinada by the State Fisheries Department, Government of Bihar.

The State Fishery Department, Govt. of Bihar with the help of a local bank called Kshetriya Gramin bank and Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana constructed a series of about 50 ponds for increased fish production.

About 43 farmers came together and formed Sonmar Chaur Matsya Vikash Samiti to monitor these activities, facilitate the resources, inputs and market the fishes.

Due to delayed rainfall, tubewells were sunk in several locations and a solar operated pump was also established with the help of fishery department.

### **Participatory mode**

ICAR joined the farmers to work in participatory mode to boost the economic status and nutritional security of the farmers by enhancing the aquaculture / agriculture production from the chaur.

Since, farmers were finding it difficult to feed the fishes properly due to high cost of concentrate, the Council integrated duck, goat and cattle with fish to facilitate the supply of organic wastes to improve the overall productivity.

Fruits and vegetable crops were planted on the pond bunds to give additional income to farmers.

Several demonstrations for fish farmers for monitoring water quality in the pond were also done at periodical intervals by the scientist team.

A programme was organized to bring in awareness and encourage more farmers to take up this vocation.

(Dr. B.P. Bhat, Director, ICAR research complex for eastern region, Patna, email: director@ihr.ernet.in and iihrdirector@gmail.com, phone: 0612 2223962.

### **Sharmila promises welfare scheme for farmers**

YSR Congress leader Sharmila on Wednesday said that if her brother Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy comes to power, his government would implement a Rs.3,000 'Srikiran' welfare scheme to provide relief to farmers raising sweet lime plantations in the district, which has the largest such area in the State.

Interacting with farmers during the sixth day of her 'Maropraja Prasthanam Padayatra', after covering 15.8 km in Gouraram, Amargudam and Marepalli, in Kanagal mandal, she hit out at the State Government for 'utterly failing' to solve the burning problems of the people. While seeking support for Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy, she asserted that the woes of the people would end only when he forms the Government after the elections. During a 'rachabanda' women and farmers

explained to her their problems and said agriculture was no more remunerative because of the drought prevailin in the district and banks failing to provide financial assistance to the needy ryots, who were in distress.

The YSRC leader's yatra entered the 65th day on Wednesday. She has so far covered over 940 km.

### **Tirupur to get 15 solar crop dryers**

In a bid to help farmers produce high quality copra, the Department of Agriculture is planning to set up 15 solar tunnel-model crop dryers in Tirupur district shortly in association with the farming community.

The department has identified 15 farm holdings for the project and each of the beneficiary farmers will be given subsidy from the corpus created under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana to offset 50 per cent of the capital cost subjected to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 50,000.

Of the solar crop dryers planned, two each will be set up at Madathukulam, Udumalpet, Gudiamangalam and Vellakoil blocks, and one each in Dharapuram, Mulanur, Kangayam, Palladam, Pongalur, Uthukuli and Kundadam blocks.

“Each solar crop dryer unit will be set up with five layers of specially designed thermal sheets laid over arch-shaped galvanized iron (GI) B-Class pipes spread over an area of 60 feet in length and 12 feet in width with the height at 6 feet,” Joint Director of Agriculture, Mohamed Kallimullah Sherif, told *The Hindu* .

The unit will help to dry as much as 5,000 nuts at a time under protected environment. Every layer of thermal sheets has specific properties which include ultra violet rays stabilising

capability, high capacity to retain heat for long period after the sunset and prevent water as well as moisture from entering the unit, among others.

Mr. Sherif said solar dryer would help the farmers to dry the copra in almost half the number of days, vis-à-vis the conventional drying of copra in open yards because of the heat getting retained for longer duration.

“The system will also prevent fungal attack, otherwise comes in open drying. Besides it, the shifting of copra from the open drying yard during the night hours only to bring it back in the morning can be avoided when using the solar crop dryer,” Mr. Sherif said

### **“Declare Puducherry, Karaikal as drought-hit”**

*Government urged to pay same compensation as in Tamil Nadu*

The Puducherry Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) have urged the territorial administration to declare Puducherry and Karaikal regions as drought-affected.

V. Vaithilingam, Leader of Opposition, said here on Tuesday that the standing paddy crop was badly hit in the Karaikal region owing to the non arrival of Cauvery water and failure of monsoon. All farmers, including those who adopted direct sowing method, pump set irrigation, had suffered heavy loss. Reports suggested that the samba crop was a failure and farmers had also lost the kuruvai crop earlier.

Similarly, farmers in the Puducherry region were also affected by scanty rainfall. The yield of paddy crop in rural areas was not satisfactory. Farmers had suffered production loss in the range of 40 to 50 per cent. Similarly, sugarcane farmers were experiencing a tough situation owing to poor water availability .

While pointing out the announcement made by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa declaring all districts except Chennai as drought hit, Mr. Vaithilingam said Karaikal was situated in the tail end area of Cauvery delta region. When the upstream areas of Cauvery delta in Tamil Nadu were announced as drought hit, why Karaikal should not be declared as drought affected, he asked.

A high-level team should be sent to Karaikal to study the extent of drought and all farmers should be duly compensated by the territorial administration.

A. Anbalagan, AIADMK legislative party leader, Puducherry, said Ms. Jayalalithaa had declared that compensation to the tune of Rs. 15,000 per acre would be given to the affected farmers. The same approach should be adopted by the Puducherry government, he demanded.

### **Too much emphasis on commercial crops endangers food security**

#### *Low external input and sustainable agriculture*

Focussing too much on commercial (cash) crops will endanger food security, proponent of organic agriculture Nammalwar has said. In a statement, he said industrialised agriculture does not lead even to breakeven situation. That was why farmers switched over to commercial agriculture.

For example, Tamil Nadu has 38 sugar mills each one having a registered cane area of about 20,000 acres. In other fertile lands, cash crops such as banana, coconut, turmeric, cotton, flowers and tobacco are raised.

All the governmental assistance such as free electricity and fertilizer subsidy go only to commercial crops. Thus food production faces serious threat, he added.

Pointing out that 80 per cent of the farmers in the State own less than two acres each, he lamented that they are forced to rely on income from other sources for their livelihood.

Their farming activities are totally dependent on rivers and rains. And the skirmishes between the States regarding water, drought due to climatic changes and floods, affect them directly.

“Industrialised agriculture contributes 35 per cent to global warming,” he observed.

He said that industrialised agriculture required items from industries and hence would require quite a lot of energy. Thus it becomes “high energy input agriculture.” But organic agriculture, which is given several names including ecological farming, bio-dynamic agriculture, and natural way of farming, is one with “low external input and sustainable agriculture (LEISA).” Farmers and non-governmental organisations which wanted a change found LEISA method to have a number of solutions to the complexities of agriculture.

### **Organic farming**

That’s why organic farming is considered both producer-friendly and consumer-friendly, he added.

Mr.Nammalwar said as early as 2006 the National Commission for Agriculture pinpointed the problems faced by Indian agriculture. Even the commission’s chairman and the father of Green Revolution M.S.Swaminathan had said that if proper solutions were not found, agriculture would reach an irredeemable stage, he warned.

The organic scientist said farmers at present are meeting too many problems and are incurring huge expenses. A large number of them are committing suicide. Only 28 per cent of them are able to get loans from the nationalised banks while the rest are still at the mercy of private

lenders. While groundwater level is going down year after year, salinity in cultivable lands has increased. Nutritional deficiency is found in almost all the fields.

Farm produce do not fetch remunerative price. And there is no scope for improving the productivity of the lands that offered food grains for the public distribution system at the initial stages. And consumers become victims of diseases such as jaundice, diabetes, and cancer. Both pregnant and lactating women suffer nutritional deficiency. Even children are born with low weight and poor physical and mental growth. Crops with high nutrient content like cholam, cumbu, ragi, varaghu, kudiraivali, samai, thinai and panivaraghu require less water. But the lands where these are raised have been rendered fallow and hence considered orphan crops.

Quoting Mr.Swaminathan, Mr.Nammalwar says “in late 1960s we were awaiting the arrival of ships for food. Now we don’t have even such an opportunity.”

As African countries are facing serious drought and suffering, the entire focus of the world has turned towards them.

The problems of Indian agriculture need a deep and long-term research and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has the facilities to do so and the NGOs can involve the public both in research and growth.

Hence, he is confident that if both these organisations were to act in unison it could bring about a sea change in agriculture in the State.

*Only 28 per cent of farmers could get loans from Nationalised banks*

**Krishi Utsav today**

Krishi Utsav, an awareness programme for farmers, will be held under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture and Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project at taluk stadium in Shikaripur on February 14.

A Department of Agriculture press release that the experts would deliver talks on scientific methods of cultivating maize, methods to detect adulterated fertiliser and pesticide, growing banana under comprehensive cultivation method and on rearing sheep under stall method.

### **Focus on genetically improved tilapia**



V. K. Venkataramani, Dean, Fisheries College and Research Institute, inaugurating a training programme in Tuticorin on Wednesday. Photo: N. Rajesh

A three-day national agriculture development programme was organised at Fisheries College and Research Institute here on Wednesday to establish a state-of-the-art fish hatchery for production and supply of genetically improved tilapia, an edible fish.

The objective was to devise strategies to increase fish production with genetically improved farm culture, V. K. Venkataramani, Dean, FCRI, said.

Compared to native fish species, the genetically improved tilapia variety had a remarkable growth rate and it would fetch a better price in domestic and international markets.



“It has a good taste. Tilapia grows in various aquatic systems and can tolerate low oxygen, high organic load and saline water,” he said.

Under the guidance of faculty members of the Department of Fisheries Biotechnology, farmers would be trained in identification of genetically improved farm tilapia, breeding and rearing techniques under different culture systems. Farmers would gain an exposure to processing this species for export.

Thirty persons from Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, Ramanathapuram, Madurai and Nagapattinam districts participated in the programme.

Earlier, he released the training manual.

K. Karal Marx, Professor and Principal Investigator, welcomed the gathering, R. Jayaraman, Professor, proposed a vote of thanks.