

Keep tabs on sale of seeds: MLA

Officials told to cancel licences of those selling spurious seeds



G.H. Tippareddy, MLA, speaking after distributing seeds to farmers at the Raitha Samparka Kendra in Chitradurga on Tuesday.

Officials of the Agriculture Department should keep a strict vigil on those selling seeds and fertilizers in the district as there is every possibility of spurious seeds being sold, G.H. Tippareddy, MLA, has said.

Launching the distribution of seeds and fertilizers at 50 per cent subsidy at a Raitha Samparka Kendra (RSK) here on Tuesday, Mr. Tippareddy said that last year many farmers in the taluk suffered heavy losses because of spurious seeds and blamed it on the negligent attitude of officials. He instructed officials to keep vigil and deal sternly with those selling fake items, besides cancelling their licences. "Officials should also ensure that shopkeepers collect only the maximum retail price (MRP) printed on seed and fertilizer bags," he said.

R. Krishnamurthy, Joint Director of Agriculture, said that the district had received 67.7 mm of rainfall against the normal 486 mm. According to the official forecast, the district would receive good rainfall in the coming days.

Farmers in all six taluks had started preparations for sowing, and the Agriculture Department too had started distributing seeds at 50 per cent subsidy through 22 RSKs and 10 additional distribution centres. Of the 81,683 quintals of seeds required for kharif season, the district had a stock of 18,839 quintals. The State government had been requested to release the remaining quantity, he said.

How much coverage of kuruvai cultivation is possible?

The crop is essentially dependent upon discharge of water from Mettur

Irrigation managers and agriculture officials are debating the exact extent on which farmers can take up cultivation of the short-term kuruvai crop this year under adverse conditions.

Going by data for the last 10 years and observations of officials of the Agriculture and Public Works Departments, it appears that one lakh acres can be covered this year. In a normal year, 3.3 lakh acres are covered.

The present situation is extremely adverse as the Mettur dam, the lifeline of the delta, has a storage of hardly four thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) against the capacity of 93.47 tmc ft. On the same day last year, the storage was about 41 tmc ft. Besides, the groundwater table in the Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Tiruvarur districts, three of which accounts for 85 per cent of the Kuruvai cultivation in the delta, does not present a bright scenario.

In Karnataka too, the situation is very bleak. Four reservoirs in that State across the Cauvery have a combined storage of around 13 tmc ft against their capacity of 114 tmc ft.

The kuruvai crop is essentially dependent upon discharge of water from Mettur which, in turn, relies on release from Karnataka. The normal pattern is to commence nursery in May-June and complete harvest the latest by early October. The idea is to make use of the Cauvery river water

for the cultivation as the period coincides with the southwest monsoon, during which the catchment areas in Karnataka and Kerala usually experience heavy rainfall.

If Karnataka does not release Tamil Nadu's share of water, as prescribed by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, the crop will be in for trouble.

This was what witnessed in at least four years since 2002. During 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, the shortfall in realisation of the water [as per the Tribunal's interim order] during southwest monsoon (June-September) varied from about 97 tmc ft to 107 tmc ft to 35 tmc ft. In 2012-2013, even going by a distress-sharing formula, Tamil Nadu should have received, during the corresponding period, 54.5 tmc ft more than what it realised – around 28 tmc ft. In all these four years, the coverage in Thanjavur, Nagapattinam and Tiruvarur was over one lakh acres.

Last year, due to a combination of steps including 12-hour power supply in the region, the coverage was 1.3 lakh acres. This is why the authorities are hopeful of achieving one lakh acres even this year too. As of now, around 6,920 acres have been covered in Thanjavur and Nagapattinam.

This time, the coverage of the crop is expected to be accomplished by using filter points, tube wells and open wells.

Indicating the Agriculture department's plans for the present year, an official explains that different strategies such as mat nursery and community nursery will be adopted. The System of Rice Intensification (SRI), a cultivation method requiring less nursery area, water and labour apart from fewer seeds, is being encouraged in a big way. Seeds of short-term paddy varieties are being distributed through agricultural extension centres and private dealers. The State has a sufficient stock of certified seeds, fertilizers and pesticides.

Last week, Chief Minister Jayalalithaa chaired a meeting to take stock of the situation. Asked about the outcome, the official replies that there will soon be an announcement.

Drip-fertigation system installed

Farmers have responded positively to drip-fertigation techniques, scientist with the Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM) have said.

The required quantity of soluble fertilizers is supplied to crops along with water through drip-irrigation system, they said here on Tuesday after installing a drip-fertigation system at a farmers' plot at Karanthur under a three-year project named 'Farmer participatory demonstration and evaluation of drip-fertigation technique in Kerala.'

The State Agriculture Department and the CWRDM are managing the project

Millet festival planned

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) has urged the district administration to organise a millet festival in Madurai to propagate the consumption of millet.

R. Shankar Narayan, Assistant General Manager, Nabard, made the request at a workshop on 'Millet production and value addition' held at Sedapatti recently.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Shankar Narayan said that organising the festival will help raise awareness of the nutritional value of millet. "After the 'Maa Madurai Potruvom' festival held recently,

'Sungudi' cotton sarees have caught the fancy of women. Creating a wave of interest in millet will have a positive effect on the health of the people," he said.

"Hotels can be involved in the festival to promote millet. A food festival could be organised on the occasion," Mr. Narayan suggested. According to him, Tamil Nadu is one of the very few

states in India that produce minor millet, which is cultivated in T. Kallupatti, Sedapatti, Tirumangalam and Usilampatti regions in Madurai district. But the area under cultivation has shrunk to a considerable extent over the years, he said.

Raising public awareness will result in increased demand for minor millet and induce the farmers to cultivate more of the crop, he added.

Addressing the self-help group (SHG) members and villagers at the workshop, Collector Anshul Mishra spoke on the need to increase awareness on the health benefits of millet.

The Collector inaugurated a watershed project launched by Nabard at Kalappanpatti.

Expect more rain in the next few days

With the southwest monsoon expected to hit the coast in the first week of June, the weather here has seen a sea change in the last 48 hours.

The searing summer heat with the temperature soaring above 37 degrees Celsius has made way for more pleasant days with the temperature between 31.5 degrees C and 33.9 degrees C over the last three days.

The low pressure area in the Bay of Bengal as well as local conditions have brought intermittent rain. Parts of the city experienced moderate to heavy rain on Monday and Tuesday.

According to data collected by the Indian Meteorological Department on Tuesday, the maximum temperature on Monday was 31.5 degrees C, which is 2 degrees C below normal.

The minimum temperature was 19.9 degrees C, 1 degree C below normal.

Forecast

The weather forecast put out by the Organic Farming Research Station at Naganahalli on Tuesday indicated that the maximum temperature will hover around 32 degrees C in the district, while the minimum temperature will be around 20 degrees C.

It has forecast rain for the next three days, with relative humidity in the morning expected to be around 87 per cent to 89 per cent.

Similar weather conditions have been forecast for Mandya and Chamarajanagar districts.

Advice for farmers

Farmers have been advised to prepare their fields as these showers are encouraging for pre-monsoon crop sowing.

The station has advocated sowing of jowar and red gram. Given the moisture in the soil, farmers have been advised to sow green manure crops and pulses such as cowpea, green gram, black gram, horse gram and field bean.

Drip irrigation helps tide over water scarcity in Mysore

Five horticultural farms have tackled summer this way



Beneficial: Drip irrigation reduces wastage of water and use of electricity for pumpsets, besides giving higher crop yield.— File photo

The water scarcity in the region has left farmers a worried lot. Some horticultural farms, however, have bucked the trend, tackling the crisis by judicious use of resources.

At least five horticultural farms under the control of the Department of Horticulture, including a 196-acre farm at Yelchanahalli, about 15 km from here, have successfully tackled the summer thanks to the drip irrigation system.

These farms got the system installed last year, under the Comprehensive Horticulture Development scheme, sources in the department told *The Hindu*.

Mango, chikoo, oil palm and cocoa are cultivated this way.

The benefits

Drip irrigation reduces wastage of water and use of electricity for pumpsets, besides giving higher crop yield.

Given the benefits of the system, the department is planning to have the system installed for other farms as well by next summer.

Assistant Director of Horticulture (State sector) Raju said that drip irrigation proved very useful for farms faced with depleting groundwater levels. "With good water management techniques, available water can be used effectively, ensuring reasonably good productivity."

"At Yelchanahalli farm, there are hundreds of mango, coconut, cocoa and other varieties of crops grown on about 125 acres. With only two borewells, we almost managed the summer. If we had not installed the drip irrigation system, we would have faced difficulty in watering the crops with the available quantum of water," he said.

Of the 196 acres at the farm, 75 acres have been given to the College of Horticulture.

The oil palm nurseries at Taraka and Kabini farms, Bheemanakolli farm and a farm in Hunsur taluk also have the drip irrigation system in place.

Mr. Raju said: "We are also awaiting the arrival of rains to ease the situation."

The oil palm seed garden near Kabini reservoir is the State's second seed garden after the one located in H.D. Kote taluk.

Non-availability of husk hits coir units

Deficient rainfall last year has hit the coconut farms in and around Pollachi. Apart from the coconut farmers, an associated industry – coir fibre and pith manufacturing – is also affected because of shortage in availability of husk, the main raw material for these units.

Coimbatore district has nearly 500 coir units, mainly in Pollachi. This includes about 40 exporters and at least 10 of them have an annual export turnover of more than Rs. 10 crore.

With nearly a crore coconut trees, Pollachi area has high density of coconut trees, says S. Mahesh Kumar, president of the Indian Coir Pith and Allied Products Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association.

Water scarcity during the last 12 months has resulted in 30 per cent fall in husk availability, especially during the last few months, he says.

Prices have shot up as there is a shortage though the demand for husk remains high from the coir units. Coupled with power cuts, nearly 20 per cent of the coir units in Pollachi area have stopped operations. This will affect the coir industry in the district.

Tamil Nadu exported coir pith and fibre worth Rs. 475 crore in 2012-13. It is nearly 12 per cent higher than the previous year. Mr. Mahesh Kumar says that export of coir and coir products

from the country increased by Rs. 63 crore last year compared to the previous year. Over 80 per cent of the volume of exports is from Tamil Nadu, mainly Pollachi.

However, the export volume is likely to decline this year because the industry is facing power, labour and raw material shortage. China is the largest buyer of Indian coir fibre. The demand from China slowed down during the last two or three months. For coir pith, the demand is largely from the U.S., European Union, Australia and west Asian countries. While the orders from the U.S. are good, those from the EU have dropped.

'Village overlooked for drought relief by officials'

Even as the State Government sanctioned drought relief to the tune of Rs. 62 crore to farmers, Koppampatti village in Kollapatti panchayat, Vedasandur union was totally neglected by revenue officials, alleged farmers from the village who thronged the Collectorate in large numbers here on Monday.

Many farmers raised maize and 'cumbu' in rain-fed areas and crops like tomato and groundnut in irrigated areas on a large scale in Kollapatti.

Crops were completely destroyed owing to failure in monsoons and acute water shortage. But no revenue official has visited the village to assess the crop damage till date, said farmer P.

Jayaraman.

When contacted, the Village Administrative Officer (VAO) said that they would get their compensation shortly and asked them to contact him later. But not even a single farmer's name from this village figured in the list of beneficiaries.

Compensation was given to farmers in 10 villages in Kollapatti panchayat. When we met the VAO again, he ruled out the possibility of getting compensation, Jayaraman alleged.

The high-level committee constituted by the state government did not visit Vedasandur union, one of the gray areas and drought-affected zones in the district.

The officials too neglected our village. Failure to include Koppampatti has left farmers in the lurch, said farmer E. Singaram.

With acute financial crisis, many farmers have been struggling for survival. Immediate disbursal of compensation alone will provide relief, added K. Periasamy.

Call for technologies to cater to water needs of poor

Senior official deploras indiscriminate exploitation of groundwater



Krishna District Deputy Director, Groundwater Department A. Varapasada Rao addressing a seminar at Khammam Institute of Technology & Sciences (KITS) at Ponnekal village in Khammam district on Tuesday. Secretary and correspondent Kota Appireddy is seen.—

PHOTO: G.N. RAO

Budding engineers should gear up to explore new technologies and tap traditional wisdom to effectively conserve and manage water, the precious natural resource, said Angatha Varapasada Rao, Deputy Director, Groundwater Department, Krishna district.

"Technology has a greater role in addressing the grave problem of water scarcity plaguing the country. The engineers should focus on innovation for development of new water conservation technologies more advanced than the existing sprinkle and drip irrigation methods," he said. He

was delivering a talk on “Role of Engineers in Water Conservation and Management” at Khammam Institute of Technology & Sciences (KITS) at Ponnekal in Khammam rural mandal on Tuesday. Speaking at the awareness meet organised by *The Hindu* and the KITS, Mr Rao said the presence of water makes the mother earth unique in the solar system.

The ever increasing population and fast depleting water resources around the world has prompted the scientists to take up space missions to Mars.

The man made calamities and indiscriminate exploitation of groundwater is taking a toll on the precious water resources, he deplored calling for conscious and collective efforts to save water.

The day is not far when the drinking water bottles would have to be kept in bank lockers for want of safety, he quipped.

He exhorted the budding engineers to come up with new technological innovations for catering to the water needs of underprivileged sections and propelling agricultural and economic growth.

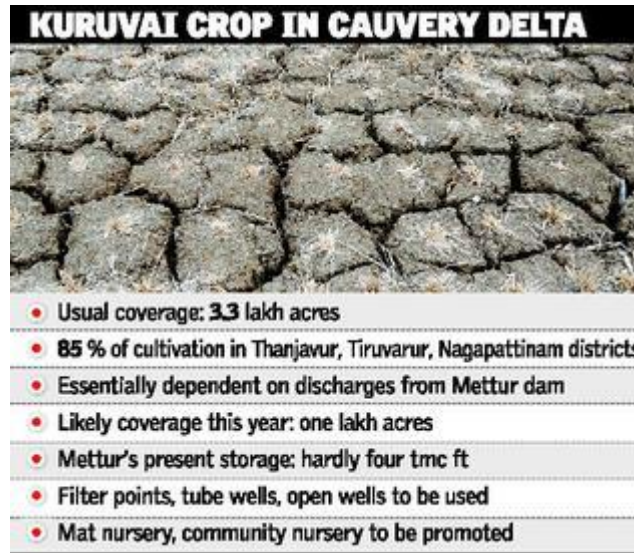
Sir Arthur Cotton, the architect of the Dowleswaram barrage, is being revered by the farmers in delta area like a God for his remarkable contribution to the irrigation system. Quoting references to the wealth of water (Jala Sampadha) as mentioned in epics, he said water is sacred as it is the fundamental source of life.

KITS secretary and correspondent K Appi Reddy said the awareness meet was organised in connection with “World Engineers Day”. He lauded the initiative of *The Hindu* in conducting the awareness programme. The college principal M Murali and others spoke. Later, Mr Rao highlighted the status of surface and groundwater position in the country through a PowerPoint presentation.

Several breathtaking photos published in *The Hindu* on the issues related to water were screened as part of the presentation.

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Panel inspects veterinary college

A Veterinary Council of India team inspected the Veterinary College and Research Institute here on Tuesday to establish if the institution met the required standard and needs of its students.

The panel, comprising Gajaraj Singh, former Dean, College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Central Agricultural University, Aizawl, P. Ameer Hamza, former Dean, College of Veterinary Science, Sri Venkateswara Veterinary University, Hyderabad, and Sushovan Roy, Head, Department of Veterinary Clinical Medicine, College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Durg, Chhattisgarh, inspected the facilities provided in the departments of veterinary parasitology, veterinary microbiology and veterinary pathology.

The team also assessed the facilities provided for first-year students to learn veterinary anatomy, veterinary physiology and biochemistry, animal nutrition, animal genetics and breeding, livestock production and management, instructional livestock farm complex and veterinary clinical complex.

The inspection, that began on Monday, is expected to last till Wednesday.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

New agri-business policy on cards

Gujarat government plans to come out with a new agri-business policy after a gap of 13 years.

The policy is expected to be formulated over the next few months.

State agriculture minister Babubhai Bokhiriya said: "Chief minister Narendra Modi announced the formation of a state agriculture commission a few days ago. The commission will focus on drafting the new agri-business policy with a holistic approach. The government has decided to link agriculture, animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries and agro-processing together. Since irrigation is the most important component in agricultural development, the new policy will focus on linking of irrigation facilities with various other schemes. We will heavily focus on regeneration of all the local irrigation sources like ponds, small rivers etc. The thrust will be on drip irrigation and sprinkler techniques."

Avoiding comments on not revising the policy despite the term of the earlier policy having ended in 2004, the minister said, "We have achieved a tremendous 12% annual agricultural growth in the last decade. We took several new initiatives like Krishi Mahotsav and soil health card project due to which production has increased manifold."

The state government is yet to review the achievements of the previous agri-business policy.

The policy was aimed at creating a world class supply-chain of infrastructure needed for agro

industrial development besides increasing the total flow of investment in terms of both skill and capital in agro industries to establish backward and forward linkages. It also aimed at a close interface between research, extension mechanism, industry and farmers in agricultural sector.

The state government has been claiming double digit growth and the number one status in agricultural growth. But a recent Government of India report 'State of Indian Agriculture 2012-13' ranked Gujarat at eighth among the Indian states in agriculture growth.

Workshop on aquatic animal diseases held

The two-day workshop on national surveillance programme for aquatic animal diseases concluded at National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources on Tuesday. The national disease surveillance programme being led by NBFGR is being initiated in 14 selected aquaculture-important states in the first phase, initially for five years and would be operated by about 20 leading fisheries institutions of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural Universities of the country. The programme is funded by the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad. More than 50 experts from India, including all principal investigators and co-investigators of the nodal institute and all collaborating organisations participated in the workshop. Dr B Meenakumari deputy director general (fishery), ICAR emphasised on the involvement of state fisheries department for successful implementation of this programme.

Dr B Meenakumari, deputy director general (fishery), ICAR, Dr Vishnu Bhat, Fisheries Development Commissioner, Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying and Fisheries (DAHDF), Ministry of Agriculture, Dr CV Mohan, Research and Development Manager, Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific (NACA), Bangkok and Dr Madhumita Mukherjee,

Executive Director (Tech), National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad attended the inaugural session.

In welcome address, JK Jena, director of NBFGR and national co-coordinator of the project stressed on importance of the project in deciding national disease control programmes, taking policy decisions for investment depending on the extent of economic loss and fulfilling international reporting obligations of our country to World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

Dr CV Mohan, Research and Development Manager, Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia Pacific (NACA), Bangkok, Thailand stressed on the importance of the national surveillance programme in providing credible information which can help the competent authority of the country for facilitating trade and management of trans-boundary diseases. Dr Madhumita Mukherjee, senior executive director, NFDB, Hyderabad said that the end product of the project should help the fish farmers of the country. Dr. Vishnu Bhatt, Fisheries Development Commissioner, Department of Animal Husbandry Dairy and Fisheries (DAHDF), Ministry of Agriculture, in his address intimated that this project should be institutionalised after completion of 5 years, so that disease surveillance will be a continuous activity like disease surveillance system in animal husbandry.

Chief guest Dr S Ayyappan in his address informed that the agricultural productivity of the country can be increased by 30% by reducing the biotic and abiotic stress of agriculture production process. He cited the successful example of zoning concept, which eradicated Foot and Mouth Disease in Haryana through animal disease surveillance programme. He advised the scientists to take holistic approach in disease investigation instead of concentrating only on limited pathogen(s) of their area of interest.

Dr Peyush Punia, Head of Division, Fish Health Management Division, NBFGR also spoke on this occasion.

Benefits under new dairy equipment scheme

In order to assist Goan farmers procure dairy equipment and boost the industry, the government has launched a new dairy equipment scheme. Implemented by the department of animal husbandry and veterinary services (AVHS), the scheme also aims to reduce the practical difficulties farmers face while purchasing important equipment needed for dairy farming. This week we look at various steps involved in gaining benefits from this new scheme.

Eligibility criteria

This scheme applies to Goan farmers who are members of dairy societies registered with AHVS

The applicant must be a resident of Goa, domiciled for a minimum period of 15 years

The applicant must own cattle shed/s along with milch animals Milk contributed to the dairy society must be produced at the applicant's dairy farm and not procured from other means

Documents required Application forms for the scheme are available free of charge from

AHVS Residence certificate from mamlatdar or a certificate from the chairman of dairy society, verified and attested by the veterinary officer or assistant director in charge of the area, stating that the applicant is a member of the society

Ownership papers of the land or NOC from owner of land in case of tenanted land

Certificate of being schedule caste/schedule tribe issued by the competent authority (if

applicable) Certified copy of applicant's ration card Quotations of the items to be purchased

under the scheme One passport-size photograph of the applicant Procedure for application

Farmers interested in availing the scheme need to apply in the prescribed application form through the local veterinary officer or assistant director

The concerned officer scrutinizes the application and forwards it to the directorate for further scrutiny

On approval of application, the applicant needs to submit the original purchase receipts from the authorized dealer/supplier within 30 days to the local veterinary officer/assistant director, for onward transmission to the directorate

The department officials, if satisfied with the authenticity of the submitted documents, sanction the subsidy amount

Points to remember

Subsidy under this scheme is available for new equipment/implements for a new dairy unit provided the farmer has not claimed the subsidy for the items purchased earlier under any other scheme

The beneficiary must sign a bond with the department before the release of subsidy

Subsidy on the total implements is limited to 1.5 lakh only

Subsidy will be released only if the farmer has received the approval of the directorate for permission to purchase the equipment

Address/Contact details

Directorate of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services,

Government of Goa,

Pashusamvardhan Bhavan,

Patto, Panaji

Goa-403001

Phone: 2437244

Email: dir-ahvs.goa@nic.in

If you need more details on the procedures mentioned above, email us at

toi.goa@timesgroup.com with "@ your fingertips" in the subject line. You can also write to us at:

At your fingertips, c/o Times of India, Vivenda de Hassan, D Bandodkar Road, Miramar, Panaji-

403001

In valley of apples, a strawberry village



When Haji Abdul Ahad Mir started growing strawberries on a small patch of land a decade ago, it was an experiment. In the valley of apples, Haji picked the strawberry option as one that would give him swift benefits. He was till then growing mustard and paddy, which weren't paying as much as he would have liked.

The strawberries from that small patch earned him Rs 70,000 in a month. He expanded the crop to eight hectares and his earnings swelled into lakhs. He has since become the first Kashmiri to win the Taraqi Yafta Kisan award for three consecutive years – for 2009, 2010 and 2011.

A resident of Gasoo village on the outskirts of Srinagar city, Haji is the first from there to experiment with strawberry. "In 2001, strawberry was not an option. If anybody grew it, it was only as a passion," says Haji. "Now the people have understood its commercial value."

Encouraged his profits and awards at state as well as national levels, many farmers in his village have diverted to strawberry. Today Gasoo is called the "strawberry village" of Srinagar. It

now has 86 hectares under strawberry cultivation and the annual production is 1,290 tonnes, says Akther Hussein, Kashmir's deputy director for horticulture.

"The economic condition of the people of Gasoo, Dhara and Shalimar (places where strawberry cultivation is the highest amount) has improved," says Akhter. "Strawberry being a crop that can be grown on any piece of land, the income from it can be five times higher than that from other crops."


Strawberry branches too have a commercial use. Altaf Ahmad Mir, Haji's younger brother, is among those who have exploited this option. "The horticulture department often takes these branches from us for plantation," he says.

Altaf jumped into the strawberry business after being impressed with his brother's success.


Today, he is one of the largest growers in their village. Like his brother, Mir too was a vegetable grower. "I would earn Rs 5,000 a month until strawberry changed our business. I now earn Rs 3 lakh a month," says Mir.

Chennai - INDIA






Today's Weather

	Wednesday, May 29
Partly Cloudy	Max 35° Min 28°
Rain: 0	Sunrise: 05:41
Humidity: 62	Sunset: 06:31
Wind: normal	Barometer: 1005

Tomorrow's Forecast

	Thursday, May 30
Partly Cloudy	Max 36° Min 29°

Extended Forecast for a week

Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
May 31	Jun 1	Jun 2	Jun 3	Jun 4
				

35° | 30°

37° | 29°

38° | 29°

38° | 29°

37° | 29°

Partly Cloudy

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

Overcast

Airport Weather

Chennai

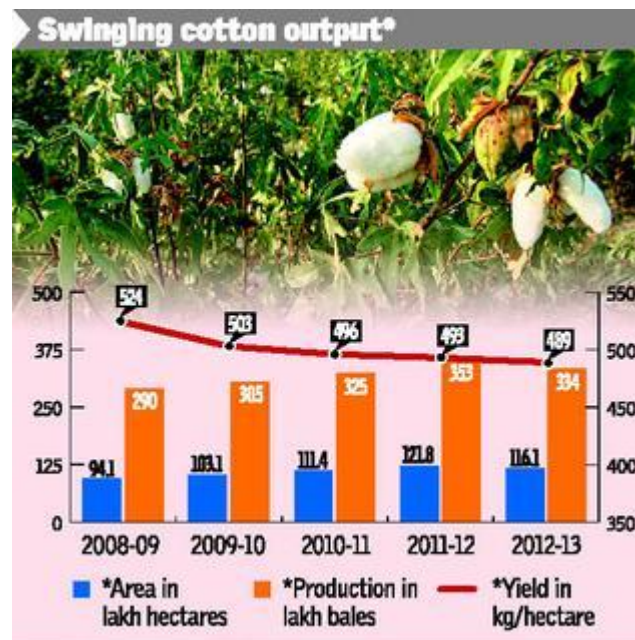
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Monsoon holds the key to cotton acreage this year

Area may drop by 5-10%; higher support prices likely to encourage growers



The cotton industry is divided over cotton plantings this year but it is unanimous in its view that monsoon will have a final say over the sowing pattern.

“Planting intentions of growers look normal at around 110 lakh hectares. But the question is whether the acreage will be maintained. Only timely monsoon will ensure that,” said A. Ramani, a cotton trade analyst.

Problems

The problem with areas under cotton, especially in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, is that they have been going through a prolonged dry period.

“Pre-monsoon rainfall in these areas has been poor,” said Ramani.

Besides that the lack of rainfall has affected soil moisture.

“Cotton area could drop by some five per cent since growers are showing interest to shift to guar (cluster beans),” said Anand Poppat of the Saurashtra Ginners Association. “This is true with regard to Gujarat,” he said.

“There could be 10 per cent drop in cotton acreage since guar is definitely beneficial for growers.

“But the area under cotton is expanding in even States such as Rajasthan as yeoman service is being rendered by the Cotton Development Research programme,” said M.B. Lal, former Cotton Corporation of India chief.

After a record coverage of 121.78 lakh hectares in 2011-12, the area under cotton dropped to 116.14 lakh hectares last season.

Growers are likely to be interested in guar since the Forward Markets Commission has lifted the ban on futures trading in guarseed and guar gum. This, industry players feel, could lead to rise in prices.

“Last year, the area dropped in Maharashtra and Gujarat due to poor monsoon,” said Lal.

minimum support price

“The other aspect that could lead to rise in area under cotton is hike in minimum support price,” said Ramani.

With elections to the Lok Sabha likely early next year, the UPA Government would be keen to increase the support price.

For 2012-13, the support price was raised to Rs 3,600 from Rs 2,800 a quintal for medium staple cotton and to Rs 3,900 from Rs 3,300 for long staple cotton.

“A 10 per cent in support price is likely. If that is raised then cotton price will also gain. It could encourage growers to sow cotton,” said Ramani.

“A higher support price will raise the acreage to some extent. It, in fact, will ensure parity in Indian cotton price compared with rates in China,” said Poppat.

china cotton

Currently, Chinese cotton is ruling at around Rs 18,300 a quintal, while its comparable Indian quality is quoting Rs 11,000.

Cotton prices in the coming season starting October could be good.

The price for Shankar-6 that is in demand for exports could rule around Rs 38,000 for a candy of 356 kg.

“If the support price is hiked, the it could be Rs 37,000-38,000,” said Ramani.

Currently, Shankar-6 is quoting at Rs 37,900-38,200 and experts see prices holding at these levels in view of poor arrivals.

Exports, on the other hand, are dull currently due to absence of Chinese demand. “China has a good inventory and, therefore, it is not buying,” said Poppat.

Besides monsoon, the US crop could also buoy up things.

According to Cotlook, the crop in the US could be around 10 per cent lower this year. This could boost Indian cotton prospects.

Cotlook has also projected India's cotton crop next season unchanged at 340 lakh bales (of 170 kg each).

Bt or genetically-modified varieties that make up 95 per cent of the area under cotton in the country will continue to dominate, according to Ramani.

Coonoor tea turnover rises to 14-week high

Last week's turnover at the Coonoor Tea Trade Association auctions has risen to the highest level in 14 weeks, reveals our analysis of the market reports.

The volume sold 12.27 lakh kg was the same as last week but the average price rose to Rs 92.45 a kg from Rs 91.50.

Consequently, the turnover increased to Rs 11.34 crore from Rs 11.23 crore . This was the highest turnover earned since February 15. Prices rose because of increased demand from exporters.

Spot rubber prices mixed

Physical rubber prices were mixed on Tuesday. The undercurrent was firm in selected counters following a moderate recovery in domestic futures on the NMCE. But RSS 5 and INSR 20 ended on a negative note on buyer resistance in a lacklustre trading session.

In the global market, Tokyo rubber futures firmed up as a retreat in the yen and rebound in Japanese shares eased worries over the slowing Chinese demand and possible oversupplies in coming months.

Sheet rubber increased to Rs 170.00 (Rs 169.00) a kg, according to traders. The grade finished flat at Rs 169.50, as reported by the Rubber Board.

The June contracts improved to Rs 167.95 (Rs 166.90), July to Rs 167.25 (Rs 165.71), August to Rs 165.79 (Rs 164.57) and September to Rs 162.99 (Rs 162.32) while the October futures weakened to Rs 163.00 (Rs 164.52) on the National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE). RSS 3 (spot) recovered to Rs 169.08 (Rs 168.48) at Bangkok. The June futures closed at ¥259.2 (Rs 142.23) on the Tokyo Commodity Exchange (TOCOM).

Spot rubber rates Rs/kg were: RSS-4: 170.00 (169.00); RSS-5: 165.00 (166.00); Ungraded: 158.00 (157.00); ISNR 20: 159.50 (160.00) and Latex 60%: 108.50 (108.50).

Poor quality grinds turmeric

Spot turmeric prices declined on Tuesday due to arrival of poor quality.

“Traders have purchased more than 1,500 bags of turmeric on Tuesday to fulfil their local orders.

But still no trader has received any upcountry orders.

Because of the arrival of medium and poor quality turmeric, the buyers have quoted lesser price.

Even for the hybrid variety they quoted Rs 400 a quintal,” said R.K.V. Ravishankar, President, Erode Turmeric Merchants Association.

About 300 bags of hybrid turmeric arrived and quoted at Rs 7,419 a quintal for the finger variety and Rs 6,449 for the root variety.

It fetched a cheaper Rs 6,100 in Andhra Pradesh.

All these factors caused the decrease, he added.

Ravishankar said 4,250 bags arrived for sale in three markets (the Erode Cooperative Society did not assemble on Tuesday due to cooperative poll nomination in the society), but only 60 per cent stocks were sold.

At the Erode Turmeric Merchants Association sales yard, the finger variety was sold at Rs 4,119-7,079, the root variety Rs 4,117-6,211.

Salem Hybrid Crop: The finger variety fetched Rs 5,606-7,419 and the root variety Rs 5,417-6,449. Of 1,167 bags, only 35 per cent were sold.

At the Regulated Market Committee, the finger variety quoted Rs 6,316-7,250 and the root variety Rs 5,399-6,312.

Of 321 bags arrived, 150 were traded.

At the Gobichettipalayam Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Society, the finger variety was sold at Rs 5,781-7,579 and the root variety Rs 5,612-6,427.

Of the arrival of 255 bags, 244 found takers.

Uptrend continues in pepper on good demand

Uptrend continued in pepper on good buying support on the spot and on IPSTA trading.

Consequently, all the active contracts ended above the previous day closing.

Continued good domestic demand especially for high bulk density pepper has aided the price rise, market sources said.

On the spot 20 tonnes of pepper arrived and the entire quantity was sold. Karnataka pepper was sold at Rs 330-332 a kg while Wayanad (Pulpally and Battery) was sold at Rs 337. High range pepper fetched Rs 342-345 and Rajakumari Rs 347.

July contract went up by Rs 191 a quintal at Rs 35,691. August surged by Rs 93 at Rs 35,750.

Total open interest moved up by four tonnes to 27 tonnes.

Total turnover increased by 20 tonnes to 110 tonnes. Spot prices remained unchanged at Rs 33,700 (ungarbled) and Rs 35,200 (MG 1) on good buying support.

Indian parity in the international market was around \$6,600 a tonne (c&f) for June shipments and \$6,700 (c&f) for July.

Fresh 'low' in Bay may help pull in monsoon current over Arabian Sea

A low-pressure area has sprung up over North Bay of Bengal, and it is expected to intensify into a depression by Wednesday.

This would help the process of advancement of monsoon, likely leading to its onset over the Kerala coast in due course.

The depression will pull in the monsoon current over the Arabian Sea, by prevailing over 'rogue' circulation based out of the waters.

PULL FORCE

India Met Department expected this system, lurking far away from Kerala coast but just skirting the Oman coast, to be active for two more days.

A top meteorologist and a former director of the Met Department cited latest predictions by a number of international models suggesting the onset to happen between June 1 and 3.

Currently, the Bay branch of monsoon seems more active with the low-pressure area.

BAY BRANCH STRONG

The latter is expected to move north-northwest and bring rains into West Bengal and adjoining States, he said. The Met Department more or less agreed saying that conditions were

favourable for advance of monsoon over south-east Arabian Sea (off Kerala) area and more parts of the Bay during next three days.

Satellite cloud imagery showed convective (rain-bearing) clouds rising over Gangetic West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, North, Central and south-east Bay of Bengal, and south-east and west-central Arabian Sea.

Outlook until Friday said that rain or thundershowers may break out at many places over Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Kerala and Lakshadweep and at one or two places over Karnataka, South Konkan, Goa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Slack demand from millers pounds chana



Poor demand in pulses and higher selling pressure pounded chana in local mandis on Tuesday.

Prices dropped by Rs 100 to Rs 3,225 a quintal.

Similarly, chana (desi) declined to Rs 3,050 (Rs 3,200). Chana (masumi) also declined to Rs 3,300-3,400 and Kabuli Bitki to Rs 3,000-3,100.

Due to poor demand in pulses on account of ongoing marriage season, buying support in chana from the millers declined sharply even as arrival outstripped demand.

This has led to sharp fall in chana prices in the past one week, said a chana trader. Sharp decline in spot chana also dragged its dal by Rs 50 with chana dal (average) at Rs 3,850-75, chana dal (medium) at Rs 3,950-75, while chana dal (bold) declined to Rs 4,050-4,100.

Increased arrivals and slack domestic demand also pounded dollar chana in by Rs 300-400 to Rs 3,800-4,000 a quintal amid an arrival of 15,000-16,000 bags.

In container also, slack export demand dragged its prices by Rs 100 with dollar chana (42/44 count) at Rs 5,100-25, 44/46 count at Rs 4,900, 46/48 count Rs 4,700, 58/60 count at Rs 3,800, while dollar chana (60/62 count) ruled at Rs 3,700 a quintal respectively.

Groundnut oil slips on poor offtake



Groundnut oil prices declined further on Tuesday on dwindling demand. According to market sources, buyers were absent in retail market as well as in bulk market. Moreover, new summer crop arrival pressurised the oil market.

Groundnut oil loose declined Rs 15 to Rs 995-1,000 for 10 kg, *telia* tin was down Rs 22 to Rs 1,535-1,536 for 15 kg and groundnut oil new tin decreased Rs 10 to Rs 1,860-1,865. About 10-15 tankers of groundnut oil were traded in Saurashtra.

A Rajkot-based edible oil retailer said that despite lower price, demand for groundnut oil in retail is very nominal. People prefer to buy other edible oils such as cotton oil, palm oil, etc which are cheaper.

Cotton oil price stood at Rs 1,080-1,090 for 15-kg tin and cotton oil wash was Rs 610-613 for 10 kg. About 50-60 tankers of cotton oil were traded from mills in Saurashtra.

A miller said that groundnut oil price is coming down as demand is very poor. Moreover, summer groundnut arrival is increasing which may pressurise the oil price more in coming days.

About 10,000-12,000 bags of new crop arrive every day in Gujarat and are traded at Rs 950-1,000 for 20 kg.

Edible oils rule steady on strong futures



The undercurrent in edible oils market remained firm on Tuesday tracking firm domestic and overseas futures markets and weak Indian currency which led to import parity costly. In local market, barring palmolein which increased by Re 1 and rapeseed oil declined by Rs 3 for 10 kg all other oils ruled unchanged on slack physical demand. The volume was thin, said sources.

In Mumbai, during the day about 150-200 tonnes of palmolein were resale traded at Rs 505-506, an importer sold about 350-400 tonnes of palmolein at Rs 508 for June 15-30. Ruchi sold about 150-200 tonnes of soyabean refined oil at Rs 665. Towards the day's close, Liberty was

quoting palmolein at Rs 515-518 for June 15, super palmolein Rs 550 and sunflower refined oil Rs 780. Ruchi was quoting palmolein Rs 520 ex-Patalganga, soyabean refined oil Rs 665 and sunflower refined oil Rs 760. Palmolein at ex-Kandla was quoted in the range of Rs 502-510 in Gujarat.

Malaysian BMD crude palm oil's June contracts settled higher at MYR 2,372 (MYR 2,365), July at MYR 2,393 (MYR 2,386) and August at MYR 2,388 (MYR 2,381) a tonne.

The Bombay Commodity Exchange spot rates (Rs/10 kg): groundnut oil 1,035 (1,035), soya refined oil 665 (665), sunflower exp. ref. 675 (675), sunflower ref. 762 (760), rapeseed ref. oil 695 (698), rapeseed expeller ref. 665 (668) cottonseed ref. oil 643 (643) and palmolein 508 (507).

Vikram Global Commodities, Chennai quoted Malaysian super palmolein at Rs 560 ex-Chennai.

Sugar slips as mills hold back produce



Sugar prices declined by Rs 10 a quintal in spot market for selected variety while in naka trade it remained almost steady tracking need-based demand at producing level.

Mill tender rates were unchanged as producers held back their produce to avoid losses. Prices are already reeling below cost of production and millers are not very keen to sell at lower prices, said observer.

A Vashi-based wholesaler said, “due to month-end, local retail demand is very low which kept overall volume and price trend thin and range-bound. Some needy producers sold the commodity at reduced rates. Retailer’s demand is also low which led to building up of fresh inventory in the market.

Currently Vashi market carries about 80-90 truck load of stocks which is sufficient to meet the demand.”

In Vashi market for the fourth consecutive day, arrivals proved higher than local demand. About 61-62 truckloads (of 100 bags each) arrived on Tuesday while local dispatches were around 55-56 loads.

On Monday evening, about 12-13 mills offered tenders and sold 34,000-35,000 bags at a steady level of Rs 2,930-3,010 (Rs 2,930-3,010) for S-grade and Rs 3,020-3,100 (Rs 3,030-3,100) for M-grade.

On the NCDEX, sugar June futures dropped by Rs 13 to Rs 3,007 , July by Rs 20 to Rs 3,055 and August by Rs 27 to Rs 3,109 till noon.

Bombay Sugar Merchants Association's spot rates were: S grade: Rs 3,082-3,160 (Rs 3,082-3,170) and M-grade: Rs 3,152-3,371 (Rs 3,152-3,381).

Naka delivery rates: S grade: Rs 3,040-3,080 (Rs 3,040-3,070) and M grade: Rs 3,100-3,190 (Rs 3,100-3,200).

Limited supply could lift wheat



Low availability may push wheat prices further up in the physical market while futures market may remain bearish following profit booking, said trade experts.

Around 1,000 bags of wheat arrived at the Karnal Grain Market Terminal on Tuesday and procurement was done by the private traders.

In the physical market, Dara wheat witnessed a good rally and went up by Rs 50 to Rs 1,465-1,470 a quintal.

Mill delivery was at Rs 1,465 while delivery at the chakki was at Rs 1,470. Desi wheat variety sold at Rs 2,300.

Low availability of stocks coupled with good domestic demand mainly pushed wheat prices upwards, said Radhey Sham, a wheat trader.

Arrivals have been low in the market this year and now it has dropped to just 1,000 bags.

Traders expect wheat prices to rise further in coming days, he added.

In Delhi's Lawrence road market, a benchmark for the country, wheat mill quality traded at Rs 1,550-1,590 a quintal.

On the NCDEX, futures traded down on lack of buying interest. Wheat for June contracts decreased by Rs 11 and traded at 1,582 with an open interest of 20,740 lots.

July contracts went down by Rs 12 and traded at Rs 1,608.

According to the market experts, wheat futures witnessed some correction on profit booking and a weak trend is likely to be witnessed in the coming days.

While, wheat spot prices on the exchange traded at Rs 1,500.

Flour Prices

Following an uptrend in wheat, flour too went up by Rs 30 and quoted at Rs 1,700.

On the other hand, Chokar ruled flat and sold at Rs 1,250-1,275 a quintal.

Coconut oil may rally with onset of monsoon



A sign for the onset of monsoon has revived the coconut oil market with prices firming up in Kerala and Tamil Nadu this week.

Prices in Kerala are ruling at Rs 63/kg against the earlier level of Rs 61 and in Tamil Nadu, it touched Rs 60 against Rs 58 quoted in the previous week.

Prakash B.Rao, Vice-President, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA) said that the advancement of monsoon to the Kerala coast would likely to lead a shortage of raw nuts in the terminal markets. Traders are anticipating a rally in the prices in the coming days if the monsoon further advances, he said.

However, lack of interest shown by corporate buyers for large scale buying is a major concern for the industry. He said purchase of coconut in bulk will definitely boost up market sentiments. Edible oils such as palm oil and palm kernel oil also firmed up this week at Rs 53 a kg and Rs 52 a kg respectively.

Thalath Mahamood, former President, COMA, said that though the prices had started perking up, there is no buying demand. However, the market is witnessing a sign of recovery especially due to the present climatic conditions prevailing in the State.

He pointed out that soap manufacturers, biscuit makers are still depending on palm kernel oil due to its low prices. This has affected the demand.

Bharat N.Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said that the market is slowly going up but at the same time there is no upcountry demand at higher levels.

Business Standard

Pepper futures 'free from mineral oil' to be re-launched

The Forward Markets Commission (FMC), the commodity derivatives market regulator, has approved the re-launch of pepper contracts with mineral oil testing.

In a contract specification approved for the launch of pepper contracts at the India Pepper and Spice Trade Association, the Kochi-based commodity futures trading platform incorporated the clause that pepper traded on the exchange platform should be "free from oil wash".

Though the regional exchange has abstained from the commodity traded with oil (mineral oil) wash, national commodity exchanges, including the National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), had no such mention in its contract specification, resulting in all types traded on this platform.

According to sources, the FMC would mention the clause of "free from oil wash" on contract specifications of all exchanges before its final approval.

Leading agri-centric commodity exchanges, including Ace Derivatives & Commodity Exchange (Ace), NCDEX and Universal Commodity Exchange, have applied for pepper contract approval.

Futures trading in pepper was discontinued temporarily on findings of mineral oil traces in the deposits on NCDEX-registered warehouses early this year. The FMC approved commencement of futures trading in pepper MG-1 contracts for delivery between July and December.