

Agriculture extension work to get a boost

Revival possible by freeing technical staff from clerical duties

If the mandate of the Agriculture Department is to promote better agricultural activities through extension work, it has been able to devote only about 15 per cent of its time and energy to this. Reason: pre-occupation with other activities such as clerical-cum-administrative work and distribution of subsidised farm inputs.

This shocking revelation has been made by a joint study taken up by the four agriculture universities in the State, following an initiative by the government to know the status of extension activity.

Concerned over the findings, the State government has decided to take measures, including outsourcing of clerical work and facilitating online billing work by linking all the 747 Raitha Samparka Kendras through a computer network.

The government is now focussing on extension by evolving a seven-day foundation-training course for 2,650 field-level extension staff of the Agriculture Department through the four agriculture universities.

The need-based course, evolved by university experts, was launched on Gandhi Jayanti in Bangalore.

Inaugurating the course, Minister of State for Agriculture Krishna Byre Gowda said the government would call for tenders for computerisation of the RSKs to facilitate online billing under the K-kissan project. This is expected to cost Rs. 50 crore to Rs. 60 crore. Similarly, every RSK will get clerical staff through outsourcing so that technical staff will be relieved of non-extension works.

He cautioned that the country's food security may face a threat in about five years if the agriculture sector does not grow at 4 per cent. There was a dire need to wake up now and strengthen the agri extension activities to help improve crop productivity.

He called for building a strong extension network that facilitates seamless flow of communication among farm universities, agriculture departments and farmers.

Speaking on the occasion, UAS-B Vice-Chancellor K. Narayana Gowda expressed concern over agriculture experts preferring teaching and research work to extension work. "As a person who spends 20 years in extension work, I can tell you that nothing gives more satisfaction than agricultural extension as that helps improve the lives of farmers and directly contributes to agricultural development," he said. State Agriculture Mission Chairman S.A. Patil highlighted the role of extension work in improving crop productivity.

He said it was possible to increase dryland yield by 20 to 25 per cent through simple land engineering concepts alone. There was a need to build a dedicated team of extension workers to take such concepts to farmers, he said.

- ***Government launches a seven-day training programme for agriculture extension staff***
 - ***Clerical work to be outsourced, Raitha Samparka Kendras to be computerised***
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Papaya's prospects look good due to ready markets



untapped:Mr. Rajarathnam, papaya grower from Mettupalayam, says there is enormous potential for marketing the fruit.— Photo: Special arrangement

A ready market for produce becomes a big bonus for growers. “Whatever be the crops grown, availability of an immediate selling point and a good price from a prompt buyer encourages a farmer to grow more,” says Mr. S. Rajarathnam, a progressive papaya grower from Mettupalayam region, Tamil Nadu.

The farmer is presently cultivating red lady variety papaya (well known in the region) in about 75 cents and is able to earn more than Rs. 2 lakhs in 15 months.

Not an issue

“The acreage of cultivation is not a big issue but the price is,” he says and adds, “crops can be in a few cents or 30 acres; what is really important is immediate sale. There must not be a glut in sales if farmers need to earn some money.”

The reason for selecting papaya according to him is that in Mettupalayam and surrounding areas like Palladam, Satyamangalam and Chenampatti several farmers are growing this crop and are marketing the fruits in Delhi, Mumbai, Kerala, and Kolkata, thus earning a good income.

“Unlike other fruit crops, papaya does not demand much work. The farmer needs to source the seedling from a good authorised source and take care of the crop for 6-7 months.

“The fruits come to harvest in about a year and half. The important beneficial aspect in papaya is that we need not look for labour for pruning as labour is very scarce in the State today,” he says.

There are several private buyers in the region who discuss and decide the price with the concerned farmer and also bring their own manual labour to pluck and pack the fruits after mutual consent.

“The truth is that there is enormous potential for marketing the fruit and till date I feel the papaya market has not been fully exploited,” he says.

Income

The farmer has been able to earn about Rs. 2, 30,000 as gross income from his 600 trees in the last one and half years.

“Since all the trees are grown organically, I did not spend much for the maintenance. Except for installing sprinkler irrigation all the necessary inputs are sourced at the farm itself.

“I started harvesting the fruits from June 2012 and till date harvested 100 kg of fruits from each tree. I expect the same yield to continue for the another six months,” says Mr.

Rajarathnam.

His suggestion to other farmers is to grow tree crops along with fruit crops. For instance he has planted melia dubia (malai vembu in Tamil) tree seedlings in between the papaya trees. The seedlings act as effective wind breakers during monsoon and heavy winds and protect the tender papaya tree stems from breaking.

The trees can be cut from the third or fourth year after planting, and fetch a good price for wood in the local market.

Pest infestations

Regarding pest attacks, the farmer says that “mealy bug is a common infestation that affects all papaya varieties in Tamil Nadu. The pest appears like a white powder coating on the fruits. There have been a lot of efforts to control this infestation both organically and conventionally.

“But I have not faced much problem from it probably because I practice only natural and sustainable methods for cultivation.”

Along with the papaya trees the farmer is also maintaining a nursery called Eden gardens. The nursery has been identified as ‘New Rural Industry’ under the National Innovation Project of ICAR, New Delhi and is also a registered member in the Agri Business Incubator model of Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU), Coimbatore.

Certification

“Our nursery is a certified bamboo nursery by the Forest College and Research Institute, TNAU, Mettupalayam. Recently we have developed a new technology for propagation of plants using their leaves. It is a very simple technique and can be easily used by a farmer to propagate any plant varieties of his choice using this method,” he explains.

For details contact Mr. S. Rajarathnam, No 23/15- Karuppayamal thottam, Vellipalayam road, Mettupalayam, Tamil Nadu: 641301,web: edennurserygardens.com, mobile: 094860-94670 and 94860-94660.

Managing blister blight on tea plants

It can be managed by IPM

Tea is an evergreen plant. Different types of tea such as black tea, green tea, white tea are available, all produced from the same plant. The difference between them is only in processing procedures and not in varieties.

Several factors

Production of tea is affected by various biotic and abiotic factors. Among them fungal disease blister blight caused by *Exobasidium vexans* causes enormous yield losses of 40-50 per cent.

This disease can be managed through integrated management practices like:

Cultural practices: Severely infected tender young tea plants should be pruned immediately.

Pruning the branches of the shade trees to allow sunlight to fall on the tea plants. It is ideal to do it at the beginning of the monsoon season and during the tea leaf plucking stage.

Chemical control: Copper fungicides like copper oxychloride (COC) were found to control the disease most effectively. The copper fungicides act as protective chemicals against systemic fungicides such as Hexagonazole, Propiconazole, and Baycor.

Biological control: Foliar application of bio formulations of *Pseudomonas fluorescens* Pfl at rate of 0.5 per cent on 7th, 14th and 21st day intervals after planting was found to consistently reduce the infestation for two consecutive seasons, mid-June to October.

Agents

Antagonistic agents like *Trichoderma harzianum*, *Gliocladium virens*, and *Bacillus subtilis* were also found to control tea blister blight most effectively.

Growing resistant cultivars is the best another option to control the tea blister blight.

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Farmers stage road blockade

Members of Vivasayigal Sangam and political parties staged a road blockade here in Thalainayar protesting the poor flow in river Harichandra, which is affecting the prospects of samba. Harichandra irrigates 15 villages in Thalainayar, including Kurinjimoolai, Vaataakudi, Thirumaalai, and Pazhayatrankarai. Dry spell and poor flow in the river has hit ryots.

Don't mess with farmers: APNGOs

The message was fast and straight: 'Do not mess with the farming community' at the Rythu Maha Garjana organised here on Wednesday by the APNGOs, as part of the ongoing Samaikyandhra agitation.

Delivering the presidential address at the farmers' meet, the APNGOs Joint Action Committee president P. Ashok Babu said that the culture of every civilisation, be it the Indus Valley or the Nile, owes its evolution, existence and development to agriculture and hence the best thing for any political party would be to leave the farmers alone.

Injustice to ryots

The bifurcation of the State, however, would badly hurt the farming community of East and West Godavari and Krishna districts, as the districts were located in the lower part of the two major rivers, the Godavari and Krishna.

"A majority of the catchment areas and projects on both the rivers were located in the upper regions of Telangana, and in the event of bifurcation the lower coastal districts would suffer," he said. He further pointed out that it was not a mere apprehension but history proves that none of inter-State water disputes were solved so far be it Cauvery or Sutlej, he said.

The meet was attended by over 15,000 farmers from the twin Godavari districts and from the districts of Guntur and Krishna. Wearing the symbolic green scarf, the farmers along with their family members were seen trooping in at the venue, a dried up tank located just in front of the famous Hanuman temple at Hanuman Junction, since morning in tractors. It was estimated that about 300 tractors moved in from Guntur and Krishna district alone.

Asked why he had come, Suryanarayana, a farmer from Pamarru, said, "Water is our lifeline and we hear that it will be affected once the State was bifurcated. We have come to understand what's in store for us in the event of bifurcation and how it will affect us."

10 centres to process fruits, vegetables planned

To strengthen the post-harvest management activities and help the farming community gain value-addition for the produce, the Department of Horticulture aims to create as many as 10 fruit and vegetable processing units in the district with the participation of farmers/allied entrepreneurs.

For setting up these facilities, the department will be extending subsidy assistance at the rate of 40 per cent of the project cost subject to an upper subsidy disbursement ceiling of Rs. 9.6 lakh per unit to the people joining the project.

“Considering that the marketing of fruits and vegetables are challenging because of its perishable nature and seasonality, the processing of these produces into value-added products like juices, concentrates, jams and jellies, will give enhanced earnings and better unit value realisation for the farming community on a more sustainable basis,” Deputy Director of Horticulture M. Tamilselvan told *The Hindu*, while explaining the benefits of the processing industry.

He added that in the case of processing units for production of turmeric powder, it would be ensured that the premises had drying, grading and storage facilities embedded in it.

To increase overall productivity of horticulture crops and earnings of farmers, the department has also planned to bring 1,330 hectares of additional area under micro irrigation during the current fiscal. “Enhanced production of fruits and vegetables, attained by following micro irrigation methods, will in turn be also guaranteeing constant flow of ‘raw materials’ for the processing units,” horticulture officials pointed out.

For promoting micro irrigation in new areas, subsidy assistance will be extended to farmers at stipulated financial scales. The department, along with Tamil Nadu Horticulture Development Agency, will offer 100 per cent subsidy in the case of marginal and small farmers for an area of 2.5 acres and 5 acres, respectively. In the case of large farmers, subsidy will be 75 per cent of the cost for an area of 12.5 acres,” officials said.

Star treatment at Italian buffalo dairy

A buffalo enjoying a massage at the Tenuta Vannulo dairy (Left). Photos: AFP

The best buffalo mozzarella cheese starts with the best care for animals

A queue forms for rub-downs as jazz piano tinkles out of the speakers: some of the best buffalo mozzarella in the world starts with in-stable VIP treatment.

Ducky, Sweetie and Lady lumber towards the sound system, attracted to the smooth Keith Jarrett licks at the exclusive Tenuta Vannulo dairy in southern Italy.

"The music helps them produce more milk because the animal feels more relaxed," said Valentina Michelucci, a stable hand.

The half-tonne black water buffaloes spend their days lounging on rubber mattresses, munching on organic hay or looking forward to vaporised showers that form a fine cooling mist from overhead pipes.

When they feel the urge, they saunter into a special pen for automatic milking by a unique machine that knows the exact shape of each udder thanks to a code emitted by the electronic collars the buffaloes wear.

Or they can head to large round brushes that twist into action when the animals come into contact with them, providing a soothing back and shoulders massage.

"Animals have to be treated well to produce stress-free milk," Antonio Palmieri, owner of the 200-hectare (500-acre) farm said.

"They can't speak for themselves so it's up to us to understand how they want to be cared for," he said, sitting in a manicured garden next to his three stables, which house 500 buffaloes.

The farm sells around 300 kilogrammes (800 pounds) of mozzarella per day for 13 euros a kilo -- nearly \$8 a pound.

There's just one catch: If you want it, you have to drive to the farm, 50 kilometres (30 miles) south of Salerno, to buy it, as Palmieri does not bother with distribution -- or marketing, for that matter.



Brisk business

Business is brisk anyway, thanks to the dairy's word-of-mouth fame and international reputation among jet-setting buffalo milk aficionados.

Around 45,000 customers visited the on-site farm shop in August alone.

The staple remains mozzarella but Vannulo also make a range of buffalo milk-based products including yoghurt, ice cream and, starting next year, chocolate.

Vannulo's "is widely regarded as the best mozzarella," said Piero Sardo, president of the Foundation for Biodiversity at Slow Food, an Italy-based international gourmet and eco-friendly farming group.

"The well-being of animals is an important issue," said Sardo, a cheese expert, although he admitted that the link between better treatment and tastier milk was scientifically "difficult to prove".

The history of buffalo dairying in Italy has been traced to the 12th century, but it remained a mainly local affair until relatively recently because of the difficulties in refrigerating the milk. Before the 1980s, most dairies in the region were small producers like Vannulo.

But in recent years, buffalo mozzarella has gone international and is now prized in the best restaurants from Dubai to Moscow to Sydney. The coveted cheese sells for 30 euros a kilo in Russia.

AFP

Khova prices on the rise

Rising prices of condensed milk or *khova* this festive season, is robbing the celebrations of their sweetness. The milk product, used in making the city's very own *double ka meetha* or *kaddu ki kheer* , is now priced above Rs. 200 a kilogram. A month ago, *khova* prices stood at Rs. 160 per kilogram.

"Prices keep fluctuating and can go up to Rs. 250 a kilogram in the next few weeks," says Syed Ismailullah, a trader.

Interestingly, *khova* sold in the city is not manufactured here, or even in the State. It is mostly procured from Maharashtra, and traders attribute the rise in milk prices there as a reason for a surge in the price.

High demand and shortage of the produce in festive season is another reason, traders say.

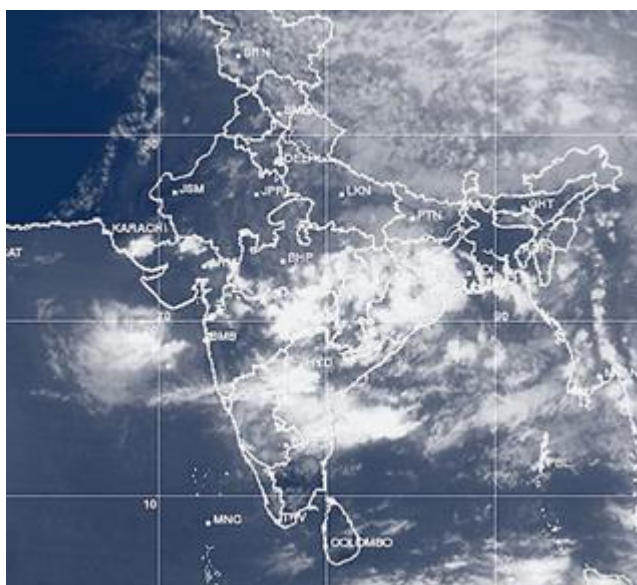
"A kilogram of condensed milk is made from four to five litres of milk," explains A. Kiran, another trader.

The price rise has obviously not gone down well with the public.

"We usually buy at least two kilograms of condensed milk to prepare sweets at home, but considering the price hike, we are cutting down on the quantity," says Saleemuddin, a businessman from Falaknuma.

The milk product, used to make sweets, is now priced at above Rs. 200, as against Rs. 160 a month ago

Weather



ANDHRA PRADESH

Anantapur	32	24	0	11
Arogyavaram	30	22	0	0
Bapatla	35	25	11	11
Calingapatnam	32	25	2	15
Gannavaram	34	25	3	3
Hanamkonda	34	23	0	0

Hyderabad AP	33	23	0	0
Kakinada	32	26	tr	tr
Khammam	33	24	0	0
Kavali	37	25	4	4
Kurnool	33	25	0	0
Mahabubnagar	32	24	0	0
Machilipatnam	35	26	0	0
Narasapur	34	27	0	0
Nellore	37	28	tr	tr
Nizamabad	33	25	2	2
Ongole	35	27	0	0
Ramagundam	32	23	3	3
Tirupathi AP	35	26	4	5
Tuni	33	25	3	3
Vizag AP	33	27	0	0
Vizag	32	26	tr	tr
KARNATAKA				
Agumbe	25	18	6	65
Bengaluru AP	29	21	0	0
Bengaluru	29	21	0	tr
Belgaum AP	30	20	0	0
Bellary	32	23	0	1
Bijapur	31	21	0	1
Chitradurga	30	21	0	1
Chickmagalur	27	17	4	4
Chintamani	30	20	0	0
Gadag	31	21	18	22
Gulbarga	32	23	tr	1
Hassan	29	20	0	0
Honavar	31	24	5	16
Karwar	33	25	1	13
Madikeri	23	19	9	69
Mangalore AP	28	24	7	8
Mysore	32	21	4	5
Mandya	31	21	0	0
Panambur	29	24	15	16
Raichur	31	23	0	0
Shirali	31	24	tr	9
KERALA				
Alappuzha	30	24	8	17
Kannur	33	25	1	36
Kochi AP	31	22	24	34
Kottayam	32	24	4	5
Kozhikode	33	25	0	2
Punalur	31	24	5	7
Thiruvanantha				
-puram AP	31	24	6	9
Thiruvanantha				
-puram City	32	24	10	14
Vellanikkara	31	24	tr	5

TAMIL NADU

Adiramapattinam	35	27	0	0
Chennai	35	26	6	8
Chennai AP	35	27	0	12
Coimbatore AP	32	23	0	0
Coonoor	22	14	tr	tr
Cuddalore	37	27	tr	tr
Dharmapuri	35	21	0	0
Kanyakumari	33	25	0	tr
Karaikal	36	27	tr	0
Kodaikanal	19	12	0	0
Madurai AP	38	27	tr	0
Nagapattinam	36	27	tr	tr
Palayamkottai	38	26	0	0
Pamban	33	27	0	0
Parangipettai	36	27	0	0
Puducherry	37	27	0	0
Salem	35	23	tr	0
Thanjavur	37	27	0	0
Tiruchi AP	37	26	tr	tr
Tiruchi	—	—	—	—
Tirupattur	33	19	8	8
Tiruttani	35	25	0	0
Tondi	32	28	0	0
Tuticorin	37	27	0	0
Ooty	18	10	0	0
Valparai	25	15	0	5
Vedaranyam	—	—	—	—
Vellore	35	25	5	10

LAKSHADWEEP

Amini Divi	31	27	tr	tr
Minicoy	31	25	1	5
Kavarathi	—	—	—	—

OTHER STATIONS

Kolkata (Alipore)	29	26	11	39
Mumbai	33	26	0	0
New Delhi	34	26	0	4

The columns show maximum and minimum temperature in Celsius, rainfall during last 24 hours (trace) and total rainfall in mm since October 01, 2013.

ISOLATED RAIN IN ANDHRA PRADESH

CHENNAI: RAINFALL OCCURRED AT A FEW PLACES OVER KERALA, COASTAL KARNATAKA AND TELANGANA. ISOLATED RAIN OCCURRED OVER COASTAL A.P., T.N., INTERIOR KARNATAKA AND RAYALASEEMA AND MAINLY DRY WEATHER PREVAILED OVER LAKSHADWEEP.

ON TUESDAY, THE MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE ROSE MARKEDLY AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER NORTH COASTAL A.P., ROSE APPRECIABLY AT A FEW PLACES OVER REST NORTH COASTAL ANDHRA PRADESH, AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER NORTH KERALA, ROSE AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER TELANGANA AND INTERIOR KARNATAKA AND CHANGED LITTLE ELSEWHERE OVER THE REGION. THEY WERE MARKEDLY ABOVE NORMAL AT ONE OR TWO

PLACES OVER COASTAL T.N., APPRECIABLY ABOVE NORMAL AT MANY PLACES OVER INTERIOR T.N., AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER KARNATAKA, AND SOUTH COASTAL A.P., ABOVE NORMAL AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER NORTH T.N., NORTH KERALA, SOUTH INTERIOR KARNATAKA, BELOW NORMAL AT ONE OR TWO PLACES OVER TELANGANA, COASTAL KARNATAKA AND WERE GENERALLY NORMAL OVER THE REST OF THE REGION.

FORECAST (VALID UNTIL FRIDAY MORNING): RAIN OR THUNDERSHOWER WOULD OCCUR AT MANY PLACES OVER COASTAL A.P. AND TELANGANA AND AT A FEW PLACES OVER KERALA, LAKSHADWEEP AND KARNATAKA. ISOLATED RAIN OR THUNDERSHOWER MAY ALSO OCCUR OVER T.N., PUDUCHERRY AND RAYALASEEMA.


HEAVY RAINFALL WARNING : ISOLATED HEAVY RAIN MAY OCCUR OVER NORTH COASTAL A.P. AND TELANGANA DURING NEXT 24 HOURS.



weather

Chennai - INDIA

Today's Weather




Cloudy

Thursday, Oct 3

Max	Min
32°	27°

Rain: 0	Sunrise: 05:58
Humidity: 79	Sunset: 05:57
Wind: normal	Barometer: 1008.0

Tomorrow's Forecast








Partly Cloudy

Friday, Oct 4

Max	Min
32°	26°

Extended Forecast for a week

Saturday Oct 5	Sunday Oct 6	Monday Oct 7	Tuesday Oct 8	Wednesday Oct 9
				
34° 25°	34° 23°	34° 24°	34° 25°	34° 24°
Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast	Overcast

Now, a centre for excellence in millets by Tamil Nadu Agricultural University

COIMBATORE: [Tamil Nadu Agricultural University](#) (TNAU) on Wednesday announced that a centre for excellence in millets will be inaugurated soon in Athiendal village in Thiruvannamalai district.

Speaking to reporters, TNAU vice chancellor K Ramasamy said that the growing popularity of millets requires it to be studied in detail. "Millets and products made out of them are becoming popular among people. But we need more measures in order to make the farmers consider millets as a growing option as well. This centre for excellence will take care of the farmer's needs," he added.

Millets are small-seeded grasses that grow well in dry zones as rain-fed crops, under marginal conditions of soil fertility and moisture. They are also unique due to their short growing season. They can develop from planted seeds to mature, ready to harvest plants in as little as 65 days. However, farmers complain that the returns are less. To address this issue, Ramasamy said, this centre for excellence will attempt to develop varieties which will meet the challenges faced by farmers.

He added that the agricultural sector should be able to exploit the growing popularity of millets in the markets. Millet biscuits are becoming a popular product in the market. "Millets is considered to be ideal for diabetic patients and others with life style diseases. Since it has lesser amount of carbohydrates and is also slow to digest," he said.

The centre for excellence will develop improved varieties of millets, which will not sacrifice the quality of the traditional varieties. They should be pest and disease resistant and consume less water and nutrients.

The centre will function at an area of 38.5 acres. The government has allotted Rs 1 crore for the present year and Rs 20 crore for the next 4 years as part of the exchequer. Around 16 faculties have been deputed to the centre. "Apart from this, post-doctoral researchers and 5 more faculties will be deputed to the centre," Ramasamy added.

DECCAN Chronicle

Pep up your food pie chart with oranges



We have all humme-d the very famous English nursery rhyme “Oranges and Lemons” at a singing-game back in our primary school days in kindergarten classes. And ever since, the round orange citrus fruit has tickled our imaginative palate. We are ever eager to grab a bite and drink its juice. And we are no less curious to know about its rare finds and wholesome effects. It is the best summer fruit, coming in both juicy and tangy flavours. And the colour of the fruit itself states its benefits.

While it is feasible to say that “an apple a day keeps the doctor away, similarly an orange a day keeps the dermatitis away”. So young girls specially craving for a bright and radiant-looking skin can surely include one single orange in their everyday diet. Not only the fruit, but its so called ‘ever-youth’ peel too has many health benefits. It is helpful in the management of asthma, skin allergies and skin infections. It is also rich in phytonutrients, which helps the human body fight against diseases and also lowers the cholesterol levels. Medically, it helps prevent cancer, kidney diseases, regulates the blood pressure, alkalises the body and also boosts the heart-health. It’s therapeutic properties further provide people with immense relief from acute joint pains and those suffering from osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis.

In today’s world, where researches show that a massive 80 per cent of the population is deficient with the vital vitamins A and D (causing rickets with weak and deformed bones and respectively), there, a glass of fresh, orange juice fortified with the essential vitamin content

can work wonders on a man's physical constitution. Oranges being a rich fibrous fruit can also solve all intestinal issues and mitigate the bowel problems.

Anybody looking for a weight-loss intake, can certainly chew on a low-calorie orange which contains zero saturated fats. It strengthens the emotional aspects and spurts a general feeling of joy and well-being. Delicious oranges are thus goodwill ambassadors in a nutshell. They are popular with athletes because they can be easily eaten for a burst of rejuvenating energy. Quite a pep pill we say!

Business Standard

Coffee exports drop 5% on sluggish global prices in 2012-13



India's [coffee exports](#) dropped 5% in the 2012-13 marketing year on sluggish prices and lower supplies even as global demand remained reasonably good amid an economic slowdown, according to the Coffee Board.

The country exported 3,00,525 tonnes of coffee in the marketing year ended September compared with 3,16,160 tonnes a year earlier, its latest data showed.

"Two key developments -- fall in prices and lower stock of old crop -- affected volumes of exports in 2012-13," a senior Coffee Board official told PTI.

The value of coffee exports declined to Rs 4,548.84 crore from Rs 4,725.26 crore, while realisation was slightly higher at Rs 1,51,363 per tonne as against Rs 1,49,457 per tonne, according to the Board.

The [robusta](#) variety accounted for 70% of the coffee exports and the rest was [arabica](#), the official said.

Attributing the fall in shipments to depressed global prices following large supplies from Brazil, the official said there was a declining trend in arabica rates at the beginning of the year and later prices of robusta too started falling.

Currently, arabica prices are ruling at a four-year low. The drop in global prices has

discouraged domestic planters from selling their stock, the official said.

Traders did not have enough old stock to meet orders as they had exhausted much of it in the previous year, taking advantage of higher prices, the official said.

According to the Coffee Board, global demand was reasonably good in the 2012-13 despite the economic slowdown. Supplies increased because of higher crop output in other countries, especially Brazil, the world's largest grower and seller of coffee.

India exports coffee primarily to Italy, Germany, Russia and Belgium.

The board pegged coffee production at 3,47,000 tonnes in the 2013-14 marketing year. Harvesting of coffee will start in mid-October.

Led by north India, tea prices fall



The Indian tea industry is likely to close the season at prices lower than last year's.

Representatives said prices of [Assam](#) teas had slipped by Rs 4-5 a kg, and indications were the season would close at those levels. The main reason was a higher crop due to better weather conditions. If it happens, then it would be a deviation after many years. Since 2006, [north India](#) has closed the season at prices higher than the previous year.

“We are making up for the crop lost in 2012. So far, Assam would be higher by 15-20 million kg. The season will probably end at those levels because we are already in October,” said Kamal Kishore Baheti, wholetime director or McLeod Russel, the world's largest bulk tea producer.

According to the last figures released by the [Indian Tea Association](#)(ITA), till July, the production in north India stood at 414.62 million kg, vis-à-vis 375.02 million kg in 2012.

The picture in South India, however, is quite different. Till July, South India clocked in a production of 132.2 million kg, down by almost six million kg. “Till date, we have lost almost 10 million kg compared to last year and this is the fifth year of lower production for South India. Naturally, prices are higher by about Rs 10-12 a kg,” said Ullas Menon, secretary general, the United Planters' Association of Southern India.

However, despite south India clocking in a much higher increase than the dip in North India prices, the all-India figures would be lower than last year, as the north accounts for around 75

per cent of total tea production.

The drop in prices appears to have happened in the April-July period. The ITA-released data show auction prices of north India tea during January-July was at Rs 142.57 a kg, compared with Rs 129.41 a kg a year ago. However, the April-July figures show a drop of around Rs 3 a kg. All-India figures during April-July were higher by around Rs 4 kg. In 2010, too, the industry average for all-India was lower than 2009, but it was led by a sharp drop in South India [tea prices](#).

THE HINDU Business Line

International Agri-Food Network wants stronger voice for farmers in the UN: Hakan Bahceci



Hakan Bahceci

Mumbai, Oct. 2:

He is CEO of Dubai-headquartered Hakan Agro Group with processing and logistics facilities in 26 different locations around the world. He also serves as President of International Pulse Trade and Industry Confederation (CICILS-IPTIC) since 2010.

Bahceci recently took on additional responsibility as Chairman, International Agri-Food Network (IAFN), at the same time and will lead the network to bring together international

agricultural associations, representing over 10,000 businesses worldwide. IAFN works on a variety of issues including providing the focal point for the CFS.

In an exclusive interview to Business Line, Bahceci shares his thoughts and plans for IAFN and CICILS-IPTIC. His keen desire to promote food and nutrition security particularly in developing economies is well known. Excerpts

What does the Network stand for; what are its major achievements so far; and what are your plans for the Network during your tenure?

The International Agri-Food Network was formed in 1996 as a coalition of agri-food associations. This is the first time CICILS-IPTIC with focus on pulses has chaired the coalition. Of late, the network has been co-ordinating private sector input into the UN Committee on World Food Security.

The focus of the work has been on encouraging the UN to consider the breadth of the value chain and its role in food security, right from what is needed on farms to grow food, all the way through the food traders and processors. During my two-year term as chairman of the Network, I would like to see a focus on talent development in the UN CFS.

It was a great honour to see the UN respond positively to the private sector proposal to focus on the knowledge, skills and training for promoting agriculture. We will be holding our first event on the topic October 10 in Rome.

‘Responsible agricultural investment, biofuels, food waste, and investing in smallholder agriculture’ are four major issues for IAFN to grapple with. What guidance do you propose to provide on these issues?

The thing that strikes me most with all these issues is the challenging role that the agri-food sector must play in meeting growing demand, evolving consumer needs, while also providing livelihoods for the rural communities and adapting to climate change. One of the things we’ve been saying regularly is that we need diverse diets, robust nutrition programmes, a diversity of farming systems, and a respect for businesses of all scales-small, medium and large.

For instance, in looking at responsible agricultural investment, one investment can create jobs and provide a local school or good medical care. This is helping food security because it gives people incomes and helps the community. Another investment can increase agricultural production to get more cash income for farmers. Another can be focused on local markets. All of them are positive and have a contribution to make. We need to offer as many solutions as possible to tackle the challenges of feeding a hungry planet. In that diversity lie stronger, more resilient systems.

Agriculture plays a crucial role in many developing economies for generating employment and income. In most cases, smallholders dominate. Does IAFN have specific plans for agrarian economies?

IAFN is comprised of international associations for various sectors in the agri-food chain. Almost all of them have national structures in India and other countries around the globe. One of the things we’d like to see is a stronger voice for the businesses and farmers in the UN in Rome and New York.

What are your plans for strengthening the global pulses industry and trade in the next two years?

The usage of pulse flours must be encouraged in snacks, protein bars, biscuits, muesli, etc. due to its high nutritional values. The increase of pulse flour usage in food sector shall certainly increase the consumption.

So efforts on pulse innovation, pulse breeding, creating awareness, increasing production, increasing consumption shall be our focus.

Poultry feed demand likely to improve

Karnal, Oct. 2:

A steady production cost will keep poultry feed products unchanged in the coming days, said market experts.

With the cost of production being steady, feed products remained unchanged this week.

Aditya Mishra, a commodity expert, told *Business Line* that good demand and steady input cost kept feed products unchanged and prices may continue to rule around current levels for the next few days.

Though, there is some fluctuation in the prices of key ingredients, it has not made much impact on the cost of production, he said.

Demand for feed products is likely to improve in the coming weeks, said Aditya Mishra.

In the physical market, soyameal ruled flat at Rs 32,700 a tonne while Bajra eased by Rs 50 at Rs 1,250 a quintal.

Di-calcium phosphate moved down by 10 paise to Rs 34.60 a kg; MBM went down by Rs 3 to Rs 30 while maize eased by Rs 20 to Rs 1,470-1,500.

DRB improved by Rs 500 to Rs 11,300 a quintal while rice bran oil continued to rule flat at Rs 59.

Mustard de-oiled cake improved by Rs 300 to Rs 14,600 a tonne.

Feed products

Broiler concentrate quoted at Rs 1,960 for a 50-kg bag while broiler starter mash at Rs 1,500. Pre-lay mash sold at Rs 1,025.

Layer concentrate 25 per cent was sold at Rs 1,465, while Layer concentrate 35 per cent quoted at Rs 1,150.

Meanwhile, broiler and chick improved on fresh buying while egg ruled flat, on Wednesday.

Broiler improved by Rs 8 at Rs 72 a kg; egg ruled flat at Rs 3.11, while chick was up Rs 4 at Rs 24.

High water storage level boosts rabi planting prospects



Rice production target is set at 14 mt, marginally higher than 11.64 achieved last rabi (file photo).

New Delhi, Oct 2: The six per cent excess monsoon rainfall, which has boosted reservoir levels across the country, has raised the prospect for good rabi plantings, set to start in the next 10 days.

“The reservoir position is pretty good and we expect the rabi acreage to be between 62-65 million hectares” J.S. Sandhu, Agriculture Commissioner, told *Business Line*. Last year, rabi acreage stood at 62.9 million hectares (ha).

Sandhu said the water level in the 85 major reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission was at 84 per cent of the full storage capacity.

The live storage in these reservoirs is estimated at 130 billion cubic metres (BCM) against the full capacity of 155 BCM.

The recent rains have enhanced the soil moisture level, which is good for sowing of mustard and chickpea.

However, these rains have affected the harvest of kharif crops, such as soyabean and pulses, and the quality of the produce may be affected, he said.

Planting of mustard is expected to start in the next 10 days, mainly in the rain-fed areas, Sandhu said.

The Government is targeting rabi oilseeds output of 10.5 million tonnes, against last year’s 10.14 mt.

Wheat planting is expected to be carried out in about 29 million ha, same as last year.

The Government is targeting wheat output of 92.5 mt, almost same as last year. However, with the Government planning to step up the production of sorghum to offset the decline in kharif, the rabi area under the coarse cereals may increase. “Our strategy is to focus on increasing the rabi sorghum output to offset the kharif decline.

“The emphasis will be on the selection of suitable varieties and making available enough seeds.

“We will be focussing on southern States such as Andhra, Karnataka, Maharashtra and even Gujarat” Sandhu said.

Sorghum was planted in about 3.9 million ha last rabi.

But, with part of Bihar reeling under drought, the rabi maize acreage may see a decline.

The Government is targeting maize output of 5.5 mt against 6.19 mt achieved last rabi.

Similarly, the rice production target is set at 14 mt, marginally higher than 11.64 achieved last rabi.

The production of pulses is pegged at 12 mt, marginally lower than 12.54 achieved last year. vishwanath.kulkarni@thehindu.co.in

Rally in urad set to continue

Indore, Oct. 2: Higher demand and weak arrivals have lifted prices of majority of pulse seeds in Indore mandis in the past one week.

With demand outstripping arrivals, the bullish trend continued in urad for the second consecutive week.

Though local mandis remained closed on Wednesday on account of ‘Gandhi Jayanti’, in private trading urad (bold) was quoted at Rs 4,000-4,050 a quintal (up Rs 200 from last week) and urad (medium) at Rs 3,450-3,750.

Given lower crop estimate this year owing to decline in sowing area and report of extensive damage to the crop due to heavy rains in Madhya Pradesh and other major urad growing

States including Rajasthan and Maharashtra, arrival of new urad across Madhya Pradesh and other neighbouring States is far from satisfactory.

Added to this, in absence of any major import deals in urad, there is remote chance of arrival of urad import at Mumbai port.

Traders are expecting a rally in urad in the coming days with its prices going as high as Rs 4,200-4,300.

With steep rise in urad prices urad dal (medium) was quoted at Rs 4,400-4,500; urad dal (bold) Rs 4,600-4,700, while urad mongar was ruling at Rs 6,700-7,000.

Weak arrival and improved demand also lifted tur prices with tur (Maharashtra) currently ruling at Rs 4,400 a quintal, while tur (Madhya Pradesh) ruled at Rs 3,800-4,200.

Tur dal, on the other hand, ruled stable amid subdued demand with tur dal (full) being quoted at Rs 6,200-6,400, tur dal (sawa no.) at Rs 5,600-5,800, while tur marka ruled at Rs 7,000.