

Tapioca will Fetch Good Price in October-November, 2013 (Nov 2013)

Tapioca or Cassava (*Manihot esculenta*), is cultivated in all tropical regions of the world and was produced in more than 80 countries with a production of 250 million tonnes during 2011-12, Major tapioca producing countries are Nigeria (37.5 million tonnes), Brazil (24.35 million tonnes), Indonesia (23.91 million tonnes) and Thailand (22.01 million tonnes). In tapioca cultivation, India ranks 17th in area, 9th in production, and first in productivity (34.75 tonnes/ha). Tapioca is cultivated in an area of 2.32 (laks ha) in India, with a total production of 8.06 million tons during 2011-12. In India the tapioca is largely cultivated in Tamil Nadu and parts of Kerala, Meghalaya, Assam and Andhra Pradesh. It is consumed both as freshly cooked tubers and processed food products like chips and sago. It also forms a component of animal and poultry feed. Industries use tapioca for producing starch, glucose and other food products. India ranks 8th place in tapioca export value led by Thailand, China and Vietnam during 2011-12. Indian export value has increased from `60.86 million (2006-07) to `95.64 million (2011-12). India exports two forms of tapioca raw tubers such as, frozen tapioca and raw tubers to the Middle East countries.

Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the two major tapioca growing States in India, together accounted for 88.65 per cent of total tapioca growing area in India. However, it is grown widely as a food crop in Kerala while it is grown mainly for industrial purposes in Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, tapioca is being cultivated over an area of about 1.20 lakh hectares covering many districts. The major districts cultivating tapioca are Dharmapuri (29.90 thousand ha), Namakkal (21.54 thousand ha), Salem (19.55 thousand ha), Villupuram (11.52 thousand ha) and Erode (8.69 thousand ha), accounting, for 70 percent of total area under tapioca during 2010-11. Besides the area under tapioca is said to be expanding to Trichy (5.88 thousand ha), Cuddalore (4.28 thousand ha), Karur

(3.63 thousand ha) and Tiruvannamalai (3.50 thousand ha) districts. In Kanyakumari (3.54 thousand ha), district it is mostly used for culinary purposes.

In Tamil Nadu, tapioca is being cultivated under both irrigated (June-July) and rainfed (November-December) conditions coinciding with the South-West and North-East Monsoons, respectively. There are three hybrids of tapioca strains viz., White Rose (H-226), H-165 and Mulluvadi (MVD-1) are popular in Tamil Nadu and these three hybrids are mainly planted for industrial use such as, sago and starch and they occupy more than 75 percent of total tapioca area in Salem, Dharmapuri and Namakkal Districts of Tamil Nadu.

Tapioca tuber is available for the industry from July to April but the peak period of raw material availability is only during the November to February period during which the starch content of the tubers is at its peak. Winter appears to be helpful for the consolidation of starch in the tubers. Maximum crushing activity is being undertaken during this period only. Tapioca is being used as a raw material for a number of value added industrial products such as starch, sago, glucose, dextrin, gums and fructose syrup. Liquid glucose and dextrose are widely used in food and pharmaceutical Industries. There are about 1,500 units manufacturing Sago and Starch in and around Salem. Nowadays, most of the tapioca growers are switching over to other crops especially, maize cultivation. Hence, area and production of tapioca has declined during 2012-13. Under these circumstances, back office of Agro Marketing Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI&BPC) in Centre for Agricultural Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has analysed the wholesale price of the last 10 years of Salem market to provide market intelligence for the tapioca grown in plains of major growing districts. The analyses revealed that the price for the harvested tubers would be Rs.9 to 10 per kg during October-November 2013. Accordingly, farmers are advised to take up their selling decision.