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AGRI BYTES

E- Weekly Newsletter

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1. No shortage of fertiliser in Karnataka: Agriculture dept

The department of agriculture has promised farmers that there was no shortage of fertiliser in the state and their demand would be met adequately. As against the demand for 625,000 tonnes between April and August this year, the department supplied 604,000 tonnes so far, the department said. Besides this, the Karnataka State Cooperative Marketing Federation has supplied another 71,000 tonnes of urea taking the availability to 675,000 tonnes. Of this, 634,000 tonnes has been sold to farmers. Of this, 634,000 tonnes has been sold to farmers.

The sowing has picked up pace in the state following bountiful rains across the state. Till now, the sowing has been completed on 83 per cent of the targeted area. The state government had demanded the Centre supply 150,000 tonnes urea for August. But, the Centre has supplied 89,000 tonnes till now and the remaining 61,000 tonnes is expected to be supplied by the end of August, the agriculture department said.

The Central government has directed fertiliser companies to meet the state's demand for August. The agriculture department has initiated measures to redistribute the required quantity to the respective districts

2. Scheme announced to revolutionise Makhana farming in Bihar

Adhering to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise during his election rallies to give a boost to 'makhana' (fox nut) cultivation and marketing in Bihar, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh announced a scheme to revolutionise its farming.

"Our scientists at Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) have developed a new seed of makhana called 'Suvarna Vaidehi'. The special thing about it is that instead of being cultivated in just ponds and lakes, it can be used in the fields just like we cultivate paddy. The farmers can now integrate Makhana to their crop cycle," Singh said.

The Union Minister expressed concern over the decline in the area of water-bodies over which makhana is cultivated in the state from 20,000 hectare in 2001-02 to 13,000 hectare in 2012-13 and said the new seed will liberate makhana farmers from dependence on ponds and water-bodies to cultivate it.

3. Utkal Alumina forms farmers' club to promote agriculture

Utkal Alumina International Limited, a subsidiary of Aditya Birla-owned Hindalco Industries, has undertaken a series of initiatives to promote agriculture in Kashipur block of Rayagada district. Following the rapid growth of non-farm sectors, profitability has suffered a major setback in agriculture, prompting Utkal Alumina to form 15 farmers' clubs as per guidelines of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in the block.

4. Israeli expert helps in increasing pomegranate production

To help Indian farmers in achieving healthy yield in pomegranate production, Israeli experts visited India to update scientists and farmers on the new technologies available to increase the production of fruit, an official with the embassy said. The visit comes under the backdrop of agriculture cooperation between India and Israel in which seminars are held by experts in both countries.

"We're here to 'train the trainers'. The main activity in these centres is R&D (research and development). We're trying to adapt Israeli technology to the Indian conditions and we're sure we'll get good results," said Itzhak Kosto, Israeli expert, who was in India, to organise a two-day 'Pomegranate Seminar' at the Indo-Israel Centre of Excellence for Fruits at Sirsa.

The Israeli expert updated scientists and farmers on fertigation which is the term used to describe scientific way of supplying fertilisers to plants by mixing it in drip irrigation, apart from pest and disease management, nursery know how and post-harvest practices.

5. Odisha to set two market terminals for farmers

In a bid to provide market facilities to the farmers to sell their products, Odisha government has decided to set up two market terminals in the state. "The market terminals will be set up near Berhampur and Sambalpur, the southern and western Odisha towns respectively in a joint venture by the state government and the centre with an investment of around Rs 90 crore," Odisha's Agriculture Minister Pradeep Maharathi said.

Odisha's Agriculture Minister Pradeep Maharathi said the government emphasised setting up of cold-storages through private entrepreneurs in the state with provision of subsidies. While 75 per cent subsidy would be provided for setting up of the multi-purpose cold-storage in KBK (undivided Kalahandi-Bolangiri-Koraput districts), 60 per cent subsidy declared in the coastal areas.

The government is also planning to lower electricity tariff for cold-storages, he said adding, "We have given a proposal to the chief minister and he has promised to seriously consider it."

6. Karnataka Bank, NBHC sign MoU for storage facilities

Karnataka Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Bulk Handling Corporation for extending storage facilities to farmers. The MoU was signed at the bank's headquarters. NBHC is one of the leading collateral management service providers with a pan-India presence, managing around 1,500 warehouses and cold storages. Finance to farmers would be extended under the 'Ktishik Bhandar' scheme of the bank. NBHC had nominated Karnataka Bank as the preferred financier for extending finance to farmers who could avail the services of NBHC with a nominal fee.

This is another initiative from Karnataka Bank which would help farmers store their agricultural produce to avoid distress sale, earn better price during harvest season and avail loan for further agricultural operations.

7. Basmati rice acreage likely to jump by 40%: Govt

Total area under basmati rice is likely to jump by 40 per cent to 3.5 million hectare in the ongoing kharif season as farmers have sown the premium rice variety in more area in anticipation of better return.

More farmers are growing basmati rice varieties -- Pusa 1501 and Pusa 1121 -- encouraged by fellow farmers, who got better price last year. Farmers had earned three times higher than the support price of Rs 1310 per quintal for common variety paddy during last year.

If such increase in acreage is achieved, the country's total production of basmati rice would touch 8.75 million tonnes this year considering the average yield of 2.5 tonnes per hectare. Last year, basmati rice output stood at 6.25 million tonnes and exports at 7 million tonnes.