

POTATO PRICES WILL BE STABLE

Potato popularly known as ‘The king of vegetables’, has emerged as the fourth most important food crop in India after rice, wheat and maize. The demand for potato is much higher worldwide and will increase in the future especially from developing nations. Food and Agriculture Organization of UN has declared potato as 'Food for Future'.

India is the second largest producer and consumer of potato with more than 12 per cent share in the world potato production after China, which has a share of 22 per cent. In India, potato is cultivated in an area of 20.69 lakhs hectares with a production of 459 lakhs tonnes in 2014-15. Fresh potatoes are exported to Sri Lanka, Maldives, UAE, Mauritius, Nepal, Singapore and Kuwait. India has exported about 14.54 lakh tonnes of potato in 2014-2015, which is 47 per cent higher compared to previous year. Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Assam states accounted for 85 per cent share in total area and 90 per cent of the total production of potato in India during 2014-15.

In Tamil Nadu, potato is cultivated in 4680 hectares with 97340 tonnes of production in 2014-15 according to the statistics given by National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation (NHRDF). Potato grown in the Nilgiris fetches higher prices due to better taste as well as longer shelf-life without refrigeration compared to those grown in other states. Potato area and production has decreased by One and Eight per cent respectively when compared to previous year. Potato is grown in the hilly regions of Dindigul, Nilgiris, Krishnagiri and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu.

In Kadaibogam season, sowing starts from September to October and harvesting commences from December to January. There are two major varieties,

viz., Kufri Jyoti and Kufri Giriraj grown in Nilgiris district. At present, good quality potato is selling at Rs.20-23 /kg in Mettupalayam market.

Arrivals from Kolar has already commenced and will continue upto January 2016. Potato from Kolar and Hosur also reaches Bangalore market. Production of potato has already fallen in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Punjab in the current season due to unfavorable weather conditions.

To help the farmers in taking a right decision on selling potato, Back Office of Agro Marketing Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI & BPC) in the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University analyzed the past 18 years prices of potato that prevailed in Nilgiris Co-operative Marketing Society (NCMS), Mettupalayam and the results revealed that farm gate prices of good quality potato would be around Rs.19 to Rs.21 per kg in January' 2016. Hence, farmers are advised to take appropriate selling decision according to the market advisory.

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