



Tamil Nadu Agricultural University  
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To  
The Editor,

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Sir,

I request that the following matter may kindly be published in your esteemed daily:

### **Tapioca will fetch a good price at harvest in June-August**

World production of cassava in 2012-13 was estimated for about 262 million tonnes. Most of the production is in Africa, with Nigeria being the world's largest producer. However, statistics from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations indicated that Thailand is the largest exporter of dried cassava, with over 75 percent of world exports, followed by Vietnam, Indonesia and Costa Rica. China is the largest export market for cassava produced in Vietnam and Thailand.

In India, Tapioca is cultivated in an area of 2.06 lakhs hectares with a total production of 7.24 million tonnes. It is largely cultivated in Tamil Nadu (54.97%), Kerala (33.62%), parts of Nagaland (2.90%), Meghalaya (2.71%), Andhra Pradesh (2.65%) and Assam (2.16%). India had exported tapioca worth 490 million during 2012-13. Saudi Arabia is the largest buyer of tapioca amounting to 109 million followed by United Arab Emirates and Oman which imported tapioca worth 100 million and 52 million, respectively. Cochin port accounted for 85 percent of exports followed by Chennai and Tuticorin ports which account for 3.7 percent and 3.4 percent of exports, respectively. Besides import from Thailand has declined to 190 metric tonnes during 2012-13 as against 322 metric tonnes during 2010-11.

In Tamil Nadu, tapioca is normally cultivated over an area of about 1.57 lakh hectares covering many districts. The major districts cultivating tapioca are Namakkal (25.66%), Dharmapuri (17.13%), Salem (16.22%), Villupuram (11.64%) and Erode (5.59%), accounting, for 76 percent of total area under tapioca in Tamil Nadu during 2012-13. Besides the area under tapioca is said to be expanding to Trichy (5.67%), Cuddalore (3.23%), Kanyakumari (2.57%), Karur (2.24%) and Tiruvannamalai (2.24%) districts also.

The tapioca tuber is available in the industry from July to April but the maximum amount of raw material is available only during November to February 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. Availability of raw material starts from June end onwards. Tubers from Kolli hills and Patachamalai available during June to August months. Simultaneously from Karamundur Hills arrivals starting from August, September. Panruti area tubers are coming from September to December. From Salem, Namakkal, Harur, Dharmapuri and Erode area tubers arrivals commence from November to March.

Farmers find tapioca a safe crop due to the encouraging climatic conditions. Tapioca fetches good returns with market prices almost doubling this year after slump in production at some centres. Hence, area and production of tapioca has been stabilizing since 2013-14.

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 last 14 years wholesale price of tapioca on Salem market to provide market intelligence for the tapioca grown in plains of major growing districts. Harvesting commences during June-August in Kolli Hills and Pachamallai Hills. The current raw tapioca price is Rs. 10-12 per kg (Starch content of 25%). AMI-BPC analyses revealed that the when harvesting will be done during June-August 2014, the price of raw tapioca would be in the range of Rs. 12-13 per kg. Hence, farmers are recommended to sell the tapioca after harvest.

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