

## **Chance of Price Increase is Remote for Tapioca**

In India, Tapioca is cultivated in an area of 2.28 lakhs hectares with a total production of 4.37 million tonnes during 2014-15. It is largely cultivated in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, parts of Nagaland, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. India exports several forms of tapioca including tapioca chips, starch, sago and sago pith. According to Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India exported tapioca starch worth ₹ 18.96 crores during April to Dec, 2015.

Thailand is the largest supplier of tapioca starch followed by Vietnam and Indonesia to our country. Chennai Sea accounted for 34.9 per cent of import followed by Visakhapatnam Sea and Nhava Sheva Sea which accounted for 28.5 per cent and 25.1 per cent of imports respectively. Huge imports from Thailand have led to drastic fall in the starch price.

Starch is the most important value added product produced from cassava. There are 650 Starch processing units located in Salem, Namakkal, Erode, Dharmapuri, Tiruchirapalli districts in Tamil Nadu. Some units in Kerala manufacture white and yellow dextrans using cassava starch. Starch is mainly used in the textile industry, adhesives, pharmaceuticals, paper industry, confectionery industry, etc. 80 per cent of the cassava starch produced in India is from Tamil

Nadu while the remaining quantity is from Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Sixty to seventy per cent of sago produced in India is from Tamil Nadu.

Namakkal, Dharmapuri and Salem are the major tapioca cultivating districts in the state. Normally, planting takes place during the months of November-December as a rainfed crop and during March-April irrigated condition. The tapioca harvest commences from October and extends till February for the rainfed crop. The tapioca tuber is available for 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.

The Back Office of Agro Marketing Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI &BPC) in Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has analyzed the prices for past 15 years of raw tapioca in Salem market and also conducted the traders' survey.

The result of the analysis indicated that during harvest months, the farm gate price of the rainfed tapioca will be in the range of Rs. 2500 - Rs. 3000 per tonne. The chance for price increase is very limited and hence the tapioca farmers are advised to take up planting decisions according to the advisory.

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