



Tamil Nadu Agricultural University
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To
The Editor,

Date: 9-5-2014

Sir,

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

Store and Sell Small Onion

Onion (*Allium cepa*) is one of the most important commercial vegetables grown in India. India ranks second position in World onion production by contributing 19 per cent of the total production. India's onion output was estimated at 19 million tonnes in 2013-14 which is 8 per cent higher than in 2012-13. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar are the major onion growing States in India. India exports onion to North Africa, West Asia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore. In 2013 -14 (April - January), onion exports have declined by 28 per cent to 1.10 million tonnes as compared with 1.53 million tonnes in the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

According to the National Horticultural Board, in Tamil Nadu onion was grown in 0.38 lakh hectares and produced 4.29 lakh tonnes in 2012-13 which is 1.6 per cent higher in area and 22.8 per cent lesser in production compared to previous year. The area and production were 0.37 lakh hectares and 5.56 lakh tonnes in 2011-12.

Tamil Nadu accounted for five per cent of country's area under onion and more than 70 per cent of the area is cultivated by small onion (*A. cepa var. aggregatum*). Around 90 per cent of country's small onion is produced from Tamil Nadu and 10 per cent from Karnataka. Both Kerala and Tamil Nadu together consumption and exports accounts the total small onion produced in Tamil Nadu.

The severe drought and good demand during September to November, 2013 made the small onion price to rule around Rs. 45 to Rs. 80 per kg. Arrivals from Karnataka

start December and ends with April made the price to decline around Rs.15 per kg. Even though Karnataka arrivals stopped at April, fresh arrivals from Dindigul, Perambalur, Trichy, Thiruppur, Coimbatore, Theni and Madurai districts are now arriving to the market. At present farm gate price of small onion is Rs. 15 – 20 per kg. Arrival of new crop and low exports also reduced the price compared to last year as per the trade source. There are chances for the exports to pick up in the coming months.

Thai Pattam (Jan-Feb) is one of the major seasons for cultivation of small onion in Tamil Nadu. Under the circumstances, farmers are interested to know whether they could sell the crop immediately or store to get higher price. To help farmers to take proper marketing decisions, the Back office of Agro Marketing Intelligence and Business Promotion Centre (AMI &BPC), Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS) in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University analyzed the last 15 years prices prevailed in Dindigul market and also conducted traders' survey.

The results revealed that the price of small onion will rule around Rs.2300 – Rs.2500 per quintal during May, 2014 in Dindigul market at farm level. The expected export demand will keep the price rule around higher side in the month of June, 2014 and the expected increase in price is more than the cost of storage and loss including interest charges. Hence farmers are recommended to store and sell small onion in May and June, 2014.

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