



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:

Currently sown tapioca to fetch a good price at harvest

Tapioca or Cassava is the most important starchy root crop grown in the tropics and is mainly cultivated in southern peninsular India. Underground tuber is rich in starch and mainly consumed after cooking. Processed products like chips, sago and vermicelli made of tapioca are also popular in the country. Being easily digestible, it forms an important ingredient in poultry and cattle-feeds. It is also widely used for production of industrial alcohol, starch and glucose.

The world Tapioca production in 2012-13 was 262 million tonnes; the major tapioca producing countries are Nigeria (54 million tonnes), Indonesia (23.92 million tonnes), Brazil (23 million tonnes) and Thailand (22.50 million tonnes). Tapioca is cultivated in an area of 2.43 (lakhs ha) in India, with a total production of 9.94 million tons. In India the tuber crop is largely cultivated in Tamil Nadu and parts of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam and Meghalaya. Current year Indian export of tapioca and its value added products has decreased from 152.4 million (2012-13) to 145.1 million (April-December 2013-14). India export several forms of tapioca products like raw tapioca tuber, starch, sago and sago pith.

Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the two major tapioca growing states in India, together accounting for 98 per cent of total tapioca growing area in India. However; it is grown widely as a food crop in Kerala while it is grown mainly for industrial purposes in Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, tapioca is normally cultivated over an area of about 1.05 lakh hectares covering many districts. The major districts cultivating tapioca are Namakkal (27.03 thousand ha), Dharmapuri (18.04 thousand ha), Salem (17.08 thousand ha), Villupuram (12.26 thousand ha) and Erode (5.89 thousand ha), accounting, for 76 percent of total area under tapioca as on 2011-12. Besides the area under tapioca is said to be expanding to Trichy (5.97 thousand ha), Cuddalore (3.40 thousand ha), Kanyakumari (2.71 thousand ha), Karur (2.36 thousand ha) and Tiruvannamalai (2.36 thousand ha) districts also.

In Tamil Nadu, tapioca is being cultivated under irrigated (March-April) rainfed (June-July and November-December) conditions coinciding with the South-West and North-East Monsoons respectively. There are three hybrids of tapioca viz., White Rose (H-226), H-165 and Mulluvadi (MVD-1) which are popular in Tamil Nadu and these three hybrids are mainly planted for industrial use such as, sago and starch and these varieties occupy more than 75 percent of total tapioca area in Salem, Dharmapuri and Namakkal Districts.

Nowadays, most of the tapioca growers are switching over to other crops especially, maize cultivation in Salem district. 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 10 years wholesale price of tapioca on Salem market to provide market intelligence for the tapioca grown in plains of major growing districts. AMI-BPC analyses revealed that when sowing is taken up in March 2014 harvesting is done by November-December 2014. At that time the price of raw tapioca would be in the range of Rs.12-14 per kg.

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