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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:

Tomato Price forecast for Kharif Season

According to the Advance Estimates of National Horticultural Board (NHB), tomato area and production of India during the year 2015-2016 is expected to be around 7.54 lakh hectares and 18.16 million tonnes as against 7.67 lakh hectares and 16.38 million tonnes respectively for the year 2014-2015. Though area under tomato cultivation remained normal in most of the tomato growing states of India viz., Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odhisa, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, a sharp decline in tomato area is witnessed in Karnataka which is the major producer of tomato in the country.

Tomato production is usually constrained by the hot weather and drought during summer months. During this year, prolonged summer with heat stress, unseasonal rainfall in the Southern India and poor germination of seeds in certain states made steep increase in the prices. Only farmers, who brought the good quality tomato, realized a farm gate price of Rs. 40- 50/kg and for the remaining marketable surplus, they realized very nominal prices. But the price is many fold in the wholesale and retail markets. However, it is a short run phenomenon. Under normal situation the percentage of good quality harvested tomato would be much higher than what the farmer harvested during the current season. Under these circumstances, the prices of tomato neither benefit the producers nor the consumers of the state as well as the country.

During 2015 -2016, tomato area and the production in Tamil Nadu is estimated to be 0.24 lakh hectares with a production of 3.05 lakh tonnes as against 0.25 lakh hectares with 3.28 lakh tonnes respectively for the year 2014-15, as per NHB estimates.

The major tomato growing districts of Tamil Nadu are Vellore, Salem, Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Coimbatore, Trichy, Madurai, Dindigul and Erode.

The same phenomenon which affected the tomato production elsewhere in the country like heat stress, flower dropping, poor germination and extended summer, reduced the production slightly when compared to the previous year. At present, tomato arrivals are coming from Maharashtra and Andhra to Tamil Nadu markets. With the onset of South West Monsoon, the demand for tomato from Kerala further contributed for the price hike.

In this situation, to advise the farmers about tomato prices during August 2016, the Price Forecasting Scheme functioning in Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development Studies (CARDS), Tamil Nadu Agricultural University analyzed the prices of tomatoes that prevailed in Ottanchatram and Coimbatore Uzhavar shandies during the past 12 years. The result of the analysis and traders survey indicated that the average farm gate price of good quality tomato during the harvest month (August) would be around Rs.35/- per kg. Hence, the farmers are advised to take a note on the price forecasting of tomatoes during this monsoon for taking appropriate sowing decision.

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