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To
The Editor,

Date: 4-6-2015

Sir,

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

Hill Grown Tapioca Price may Decline

India is the Tenth largest producer of tapioca in the world. During 2013-14, India's tapioca production was 8.14 million tonnes of which Tamil Nadu alone produced 4.98 million tonnes accounting for 61.17 per cent of total production in the country. In Tamil Nadu, Namakkal, Dharmapuri and Salem are the major tapioca cultivated districts with a share of half of total production of the state.

Tapioca is mainly grown in rain fed conditions in Tamil Nadu. Normally, sowing takes place during the months of November-December and March-April in order to harvest the tubers during pre-monsoon and post-monsoon period. During June-August, the hill grown tapioca comes for harvest and fetches relatively better price because of very good color and premium quality to the final consumable products such as, sago and starch when compared to tapioca cultivated in plains, After August, plain cultivated tapioca comes for harvest and continue to hit market till the month of February.

Due to favorable rainfall during the last North-East Monsoon season (Oct-Nov, 2014), majority of farmers in Karumandurai, Salem district and Kolli hills of Namakkal districts had taken up tapioca cultivation. As per the sources from officials of Horticulture Department, Kolli hills is having the cultivation area of 4300 hectares and Karumandurai Hills with 420 hectares under tapioca.

Also, the sago and starch was traded at Rs. 4000 and Rs. 2500 respectively per 90kg bag during April, 2015, it is further declined to Rs.3850 and Rs. 2350 respectively due to poor response from North Indian traders as they have started importing both food and

industrial grade starch from Vietnam and Thailand. Major port of import destinations for starch are Nhava Sheva, Chennai and Tuticorin.

Normally, raw tapioca price is calculated based on its starch content. Currently, raw tapioca fetches Rs. 7200-7800 per ton. In this situation, to aware the price behavior of raw tapioca during this harvest period viz, June – August 2015, 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 June-August, 2015 the prices may decline and trade for the Rs.4800-5200 per ton for hill grown tapioca. As per trade sources, the imports from Vietnam and Thailand are expected to be higher in coming months. Hence, the chances for price increase is very limited and the tapioca farmers are recommended to sell their products immediately.

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