

Arid Farming Made Easy

The Japanese Desert Development Institute has developed an easy method of desert farming which completely eliminates the conventional process of digging and removing the sand.

According to a science journal, the new technique utilises what is called an "asphalt barrier" by laying a 3-mm film asphalt at a depth of about 50 cm. the earth need not be dug up and moved from one place to another. The film makes full use of the limited supply of water and prevents salt in the deserts and from filtering up to the surface soil.

Support Price for Groundnut

The Union Government has fixed Rs. 140 per quintal as the support price for fair average quality groundnut seeds for 1976-77 season and directed the state governments to remove all restrictions imposed by them, on their movement forthwith. On the basis of the recommendation of the Agricultural Prices Commission, the support price for 1976-77 season for sunflower seeds had been fixed at Rs. 150 per quintal inclusive of promotional premium of Rs. 10. The export duty on groundnut kernels has been raised from Rs. 800 per tonne to 1500 and on shell from Rs. 600/- to 1125 per tonne.

High Yield Cotton Variety

Rahuri : The Mahatma Phule Agricultural University has evolved a new hybrid strain of cotton-RHR-253-which gives 20 to 40 per cent more yield per hectare than the existing hybrid varieties. The new strain is superior to H-4, Varalaxmi, CBS-156 and H-5 varieties and is well-suited for multiple cropping. It was tried in 95 fields in eight districts this year and the crop was obtained in 150 to 160 days. The production per hectare was between 30 and 35 quintals with superior fibre quality.

Rs. 244-Crore Irrigation Loss

The losses incurred in commercial irrigation works, the multi-purpose river

valley projects and non-commercial irrigation works would amount to Rs. 244 crore in 1976-77. This was against a loss of Rs. 130 crore made in 1971-72, according to the studies made by Planning Commission. A critical study on water rates and betterment levy had recently been made and a set of guidelines prepared for the benefit of the state. The additional resources raised by the states by way of increase in water rates during 1974-75 would amount to about Rs. 42 crore.

Project Against Fodder Famine

Bangalore : The green grass dehydration and pelletisation project of the Karnataka Forest Industries Corporation is a unique venture in the country. The project is an insurance against fodder famine. The project is of great utility as a third of the State has been facing fodder shortage in the current scarcity spell which has hit 82 taluks. The mobile dehydration and pelletisation plant is to arrive from Denmark. The machinery would turn out 4,000 tonnes of wafers a year.

Costly Fertiliser Going Dead Waste

New Delhi : Nearly 50 per cent of the fertilisers used during kharif season by Indian farmers is going dead waste as the present methods of application of this is very costly and defective. Dr. B.R. Murthy, Project Director of the Nuclear Research Laboratory (NRL) of the I.A.R.I. said that this wastage could be eliminated by adopting the latest techniques in fertiliser application, water management and cropping pattern. Generally the winter crops (rabi) are better although there is less sunlight during that period. This is because farmers are able to manage better and regulate water supply and this in its turn prevents loss of fertiliser.

Effective fertiliser utilisation, particularly of phosphorus, is possible by preventing its fixation and allowing its slow release. The NRL experiment using radioactive phosphorus (P-32 tracer) has shown that the fertiliser value of superphosphate, applied as superphosphate digested compost, is enhanced by nearly 20 per cent