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Farmers disgusted on wheat price

New Delhi : The farmers in general were disgusted on the procurement price of wheat Rs. 105 per quintal fixed by Agricultural price commission and approved by the Govt. Most of the states put compulsory levy and no incentive to sell the wheat in open market has been left to the farmers. They say that the bonus Rs. 4.75 paise quintal plus Rs. 105/- per quintal wheat price does not cover even the cost of production. To cover up the floor price should be at least Rs. 125/- per quintal.

The farmers say that this price should also be announced before sowing of wheat as in other countries. Farmers should also be allowed to sell the wheat in the open market to the consumers at the price settled between the producer and consumer. After giving the levy this may be allowed by the govt. to the wheat producers. They say that the support price of Rs. 125/- should also be guaranteed by the govt.

WFP's Food Aid Plan

Rome : The governing body of the World Food Programme (WFP) after a seven-day session, on March 25 approved more than \$129 million in food aid and received additional pledges from donor countries to surpass its \$440 million target for 1975-76.

The conference approved \$76.5 million under urgent procedures for India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The food will be shipped this year.

It also proposed to its parent bodies—the United Nations and Food and

Dr. Cracknell visits India

Dr. M.P. Cracknell, Secretary General of International Federation of Agricultural Producers, Paris visited India to make first hand acquaintance with the Bharat Krishak Samaj, member of I.F.A.P. During his stay on 8th and 9th April, 1975 he met the Chairman Shri R. Srinivasan, and the members of the Standing Committee of the Samaj and representatives of other organizations. He had good discussions on the role of IFAP at the International level in influencing the agricultural policies in the interest of agricultural producers. The members of the Samaj informed him of the agricultural situation in India. He also discussed the activities of the IFAP Regional Office at New Delhi with Bharat Krishak Samaj for keeping close contacts with South East Asian countries. Dr. Cracknell also addressed a Press Conference which was well reported in the press. He visited International Co-operative Alliance, Afro-Asian Rural Reconstruction Organization, National Co-operative Union of India and met Agricultural Ministry officials informally. Dr. Cracknell informed that the next conference of IFAP is being held in Washington, D.C. in the last week of October, 1975 and expected to meet the Indian delegation at the conference.

Agriculture Organisation—that it be reconstituted as the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes. This body would help evolve and coordinate short and long term food aid policies and programmes in accordance with the recommendations of the recent World food Conference,

Nuclear Agro Complex can Solve India's Food Problem

New Delhi : India would be able to solve its problem of food shortages by setting up a nuclear-powered agro-industrial complex in upper Gangetic plain, according to study conducted in the United States.

Study was conducted by Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) of the United States Atomic Energy Commission.

The study report has said that the Gangetic plain with its high rainfall, year-round growing climate and underground water resources—is probably better than San Joaquin Valley in California, but agricultural production is low because of lack of energy supplies.

To overcome this energy barrier the study has advocated one largescale nuclear power unit for service of agricultural and related industry like fertiliser.

A single 1,000 magawatt atomic reactor producing electricity in the Indo-Gangetic plain will provide enough energy to irrigate 4.7 million more acres of land and produce food for 44 million people, it is said.

With six such units having similar food producing potential in the Indo-Gangetic plain, "the age-old gap between foodgrain needs and supplies should close for India up to 1990," it is claimed.

"This striking new dimension for Indian agriculture" is a consequence of (1) high-yielding varieties of Mexican Wheat, (2) low-cost electricity from large nuclear plant and (3) industrial advances in the Indo-Gangetic plain, the report says.

The report was prepared by Prof. Perry R. Stout of the University of California in 1968.

The upper Gangetic plain is suggested for the world's first nuclear-powered project because its soil and climate are said to be ideally suited to second and even third cropping of cereals, if irrigation is provided after the rain fed monsoon crop. "Thus each acre which can be planted and harvested during the dry winter and spring season is equivalent to one addi-

tional acre of new land for India's agriculture."

According to the ORNL report, the US President's Science Advisory Committee had examined north India's agricultural promise in 1967 and had suggested "Uttar Pradesh or Punjab as the most favourable spot, possibly in the whole world for such an effort (nuclear-powered agro-complex)."

Outlining the project in the upper Gangetic plain the ORNL report says it would contain "twin reactors" of 1,000 mw capacity and a fertiliser plant, an electrolysis plant for making hydrogen like the Nangal plant in Punjab. The project will manufacture 352,000 tonnes of nitrogen for 44 million persons.

About 40 per cent of the power will go to agriculturally related industries and to meet the demands of drainage project and farm equipment. About 6,400 km of new roads are planned for the project and a transmission grid will be constructed to service 94,000 tubewell points.

The capital cost of the project has been estimated at 637 million (\$125 million in foreign exchange) and the annual operating expenditure would be \$156 million. The income from the sales of the project has been estimated at \$835 million. In other words the net income in one year is more than the capital cost of the project, it is said.

The ORNL report says "the Government of India, in conjunction with State Governments of the Gangetic plain could benefit greatly in pursuing the proposition of accelerating agricultural energy use within the plain as rapidly and as vigorously as possible."

Nuclear energy, the report says, "is perhaps the quickest and most economical energy source" that can fill the power gap which stands in the way of exploiting the potential agricultural wealth of the upper Gangetic plain.

"Herein lies India's way out of a deep morass imposed by threats of famine," the report concludes.

Farm Varsities urged to help step up food production

Mr. P.N. Haksar, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, called for removing the basic problem of poverty at grassroots. He regretted despite the fact that the basic economic infrastructure had been developed, the problem of poverty continued to afflict the people. He opposed the importing of models and ideas because neither the Japanese nor any socialist models would help.

Delivering the convocation address at Haryana Agricultural University, Mr. Haksar urged the agricultural universities to rise to the occasion and help the country in becoming self-sufficient in food. He said the world was passing through various types of crisis despite development in science and technology and this revealed that there was some disequilibrium somewhere.

He admitted that the country was not free from disarray on the economic front and inflation and rising demands had created a sort of "turbulence". It was the duty of every section of society, therefore, to save the country and people from the present turmoil.

Mr. Haksar referred to the manifold progress the country had made since independence and said still the gap between national production and demand was wide. He suggested that things should be created by "conservation and not consumption".

He stressed the need for improving power generation in the country. He called for a proper liaison between national production and demand was wide.

He stressed the need for improving power generation in the country. He called for a proper liaison between agriculturists, economists and sociologists which could provide a base for "good planning".

He told the young graduates that life was full of frustrations and temptations. He advised them to rise to the occasion and lend a helping hand to the current pace of transforming the nation into an integrated country of bliss.

He opposed the idea of building a consumer society which was motivated as nothing could be done by consumption. He said mere talk of revolutions and total revolution would not help the country.

New Department

Vice-Chancellor N.N. Kashyap said in his annual report that two new departments—agricultural business management and animal products technology—would be opened. He referred to various research projects which had helped the State to grow more food and assured the gathering that the university would step up its programme of improving cropping practices and cattle wealth in the State.

Haryana Governor B.N. Chakravarty presided and awarded Ph.D. degree to 28 students. In all, 64 students were awarded the master's degree and 186 students the Bachelor's degrees.

FARM FINANCE

Farmers' Service Societies

New Delhi: On the basis of the recommendations made by the National Commission on Agriculture, Government has formulated a scheme for the setting up of farmers Service Societies for providing credit, inputs and services in an integrated manner primarily for the benefit of small farmers, Minister of State for Agriculture Shah Nawaz Khan told Parliament.

The Farmers Service Society will be a large-sized multipurpose cooperative society financed either by a commercial bank or by a cooperative bank, and will have the support of the concerned State Government. Though membership of the society will be open to all agriculturists, two-third of the membership of the Board of Management will be reserved for small and marginal farmer members. In selecting areas for organising Farmers Service Societies preference would be given to small Farmers Development Agency project areas, he said.

Each society will cover at least a population of 10,000.

Farms attain optimum output with less fertilizers

It would have been as obscure as any other village but for the success story the farming community at Beggar in Alwar district of Rajasthan had to tell.

There, some 30 farmers with average holding of three acres have been enabled to make do with less fertilisers, an input which has become so costly as to put it almost beyond the means of small cultivators, and yet keep the wheat production optimum and the crop as good as any in the neighbourhood.

At the average yield level of 50 maunds an acre which they hope to harvest, the output they knew is by no means peak but still it is 20 odd maunds more than they used to produce. They have also cut down the cost by Rs. 100 per acre by reducing the nitrogen dosage, a party of visiting newsmen was told on the occasion of a "Kisan Mela" at the village over the week-end.

The theme of optimising agricultural production under limited availability of fertilisers has been demonstrated by the Indian Potash Limited, a joint sector undertaking, which "adopted" the village (population 600) last year, and has since been arranging bank credit for farmers and providing them fertilisers (at 25% subsidised rates), other inputs and technical guidance.

Underlining the significance of the demonstration in a situation of shortage and high price of nitrogenous fertilisers. Mr. Sohan Singh, Managing Director of the undertaking, explained: "Practically, the same level of production results by relatively reducing nitrogen dose and balancing it with phosphatic and potassic fertilisers, which increase the productive efficiency of nitrogen".

Under the improved technique, the fertiliser is applied as the crops need it during their various growth stages. Instead of applying the total requirements at the time of sowing, it helps in increasing the production if nitrogen and potash fertilisers are applied in two to three split doses, scientists explain. By this method, it is claimed, crop yields may increase up to 12% without additional investment.

Explaining the fertiliser economics, Mr. S.L. Thakor, Regional Manager of the IPL claimed that for every rupee invested in fertilisers the return was Rs. 2.36. As part of its extension activity, the IPL plans to "adopt" 12 more villages in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and U.P. from the 1975 kharif, it was announced at the Mela.

27 m. ton Rabi Wheat likely

Wheat production this Rabi season is estimated to be around 26 to 27 million tonnes, according to official sources.

The production last year was 22 million tonnes. The all-time high in the past was 26.4 million tonnes achieved in 1971-72.

The excellent yield showing this year is attributed to rains in October last and again during winter months, generally good weather conditions, and a relative freedom from pests.

These favourable factors have boosted the production not only of wheat but other rabi crops as well. Cotton output this time is estimated at 62 lakh bales against last year's 58 lakhs. Among oil-seeds, output of rapeseed and linseed together is estimated at 24 lakh tonnes against a normal yield of 14 to 18 lakhs.

Next National Convention of Samaj in Punjab

The Standing Committee of Bharat Krishak Samaj in their meeting at New Delhi on 9th April, 1975 decided to hold the next National Convention of Bharat Krishak Samaj and the All India Farmers Council meeting in Punjab at the suggestion of Mr. Balram Jakhra of Punjab to coincide with the Birth Day of Dr. Panjabrao S. Deshmukh on 27th December, 1975. The next meeting of the Governing Body will be held at Jalgaon sometime in May or June 1975 at the invitation of President Maharashtra Krishak Samaj, Mr. V.V. Patil to coincide with the opening of their 'Krishak Bhavan' Building of the Samaj.

Increasing Milk Output

Ludhiana : A.P. Shinde, the Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Irrigation, has called upon animal scientists and livestock breeders to accept the challenge of increasing milk production and provide necessary leadership to the country's problems of cattle development and milk production.

Inaugurating a two-day conference of the all-India animal scientists and livestock breeders organised recently by the Animal Husbandry Commissioner of India and Department of Animal Science of Punjab Agricultural University here, Mr. Shinde said : "Milk availability per head has started looking up in some parts of the country"

Mr. Shinde said it should be possible to work out an ambitious but feasible plan of action of development of cattle and milk production bearing in mind the short-term and long-term aspects of the programme.

He said : "In our anxiety to introduce the economic traits of milk production in our indigenous breeds, it is essential that we ensure that variety and richness of the germplasm that we possess in our indigenous breeds of cattle will continue to be bred in Government farms to preserve the gene pool. Even from the point of view of cross-breeding, it will be essential for us to develop indigenous breeds which may, when bred with selected exotic males, give us the maximum desired result of improved milk production of more lasting character".

He also suggested maintenance of records and data collection regarding milk production, breeding and progeny performance. It will be impossible to identify the relative merits of individuals in a herd, both male and female, without doing this.

He said "progeny testing programmes" were essential for indigenous breeds and also for testing cross-bred bulls produced for further breeding. The immediate objective, however, in the case of pure-bred exotic herds was to "breed

them with imported frozen semen from the best available donor bulls, which should be expected to produce superior progeny.

Mr. Shinde also laid emphasis on the need for providing adequate health and nutrition cover for livestock development. On the question of providing a remunerative market for all livestock and livestock products, Mr. Shinde said : "This is an essential production incentive, which has to be on a fully farmer-oriented basis."

He suggested that in this matter all agricultural universities and research institutions could take a beginning by adopting villages and institutions, where a full package of technical inputs could be marketed to best advantage and where necessary, training facilities could be made available at low cost.

AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY

Tractor Output Up

There has been a spurt in the production of agricultural tractors in India during the financial year ended March 31, 1975 over the previous year.

During 1973-74, the production figure for agricultural tractors was 24,425 while the number for the 1974-75 was 31,292. This represents an increase of 28 per cent.

The achievement is considered still more impressive in the context of several constraints on production like power cuts and shortage of a number of critical inputs. The present level of production is expected to fully meet the internal demand for agricultural tractors.

The tractor industry has also made a good beginning on the exports front during the year 1974-75. During the year, 1,105 tractors, valued at Rs. 3.51 crores, were exported to a number of countries in Asia and Africa, such as Afganistan, Indonesia, Turkey, Uganda, Somalia and Tanzania.

New Farm Credit Act in Karnataka

Bangalore : Karnataka farmers are now vested with rights of alienation to enable them to obtain loans, as a result of the Karnataka Agricultural Credit Operations and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1974.

In this Act, the terms, agriculture and agricultural purposes, have been re-defined to encompass a vast sphere of agrarian activity. Credit agency has been defined to include a number of lending institutions.

The Act seeks to ensure that all institutional credit agencies engaged in surveying credit are treated on par so that none is handicapped by special facilities or priorities provided to another. Provision has been made to simplify the procedure of registration of charge and mortgage in favour of credit agencies.

The difficulties credit agencies may have in recovering loans and other operational problems are also sought to be removed. To facilitate prompt recovery of dues without resorting to protracted and time-consuming litigation, the State Government is vested with powers to depute an official who shall have the authority to issue a certificate for recovery of dues and arrears of land revenue.

Credit agencies have been empowered to purchase and sell properties if there are no bidders at auctions conducted by them.

Credit agencies are also enabled to provide finance through primary agricultural credit cooperative societies. Provision has been made to enable them obtain the necessary information to see that the funds originally emanating from them are being properly utilised. Power has been vested in them to recover dues from defaulting member of the cooperative societies.

The Act provides for the creation of a charge on land of interest thereon in

favour of a credit agency by a declaration and also provided for automatic registration of such changes and mortgages in favour of the credit agency. The fee for registration is waived.

The State expects that with this Act in force, the quantum of lending by commercial bank in the agricultural sector would vastly increase and be at least of the order of Rs. 75 crores of short-term lending a year.

Samaj News

Meerut Farmers Meet

Meerut District Krishak Samaj organised the meeting of farmers on 17th and 18th April, 1975 in the pandal of Navchandi Mela. Mr. Laxman Singh presided over the meeting. Mr. Shah Nawaj Khan, State Minister of Agriculture and Dr. D.A. Bholey, Secretary General of Bharat Krishak Samaj attended the meeting.

Dr. Bholay discussed important problems of farmers and strengthening the District Krishak Samaj. The farmers were very much dissatisfied over the way the Agricultural prices are fixed by the Government at the end the season without due consideration of the increased cost of production. It was suggested by the farmers that either the wheat prices fixed by the Government should be raised to Rs. 125/- per quintal without any misleading bonus or the prices of agricultural inputs should also be brought down to last years level before they were allowed the increased prices. The farmers would be allowed to sell directly to consumers at fixed prices and compelled to sell to Government.

Mr. Shah Nawaj Khan explained the Government's role and responsibility while fixing the prices in the larger interest of the country and also of farmers. Mr. Nepal Singh, Secretary thanked the guests and the farmers.

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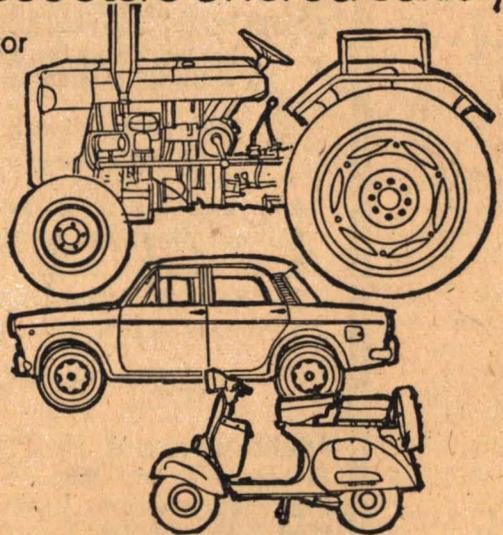
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