



MONTHLY POLICY TRACKER FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE

- **In a bid to strengthen the power infrastructure for the agriculture sector,** the Andhra Pradesh Government, has deployed about Rs 28,000 crore on supply of free power to about 30 lakh pump sets in the farm sector. Further, the State government has so far invested about Rs 2739 crore towards setting up of High Voltage Distribution System (HVDS) to support about 8 lakh farm sector services and thereby help in reducing the energy losses and provide quality supply.
- **Department of Horticulture, Tirupur, Tamil Nadu** is ready to extend subsidy to farmers to set up 205 new honeybee colonies spread over 13 blocks in the district for the promotion of Beekeeping or apiculture activities on a commercial scale. Under the project, the cost of each unit of honeybee colonies will be subsidised to the tune of 50 per cent of the capital expenditure required for the purchase of bee hives, honeybees and honey collection gadgets.
- **The Union Ministry for Rural Development has allocated Rs 500 crore** to the Hyderabad -based National Institute for Rural Development (NIRD). It has released the fund under the 12th plan for pursuing its four-pronged strategic action plan including training, research, consultation and evaluation.
- **Asia's biggest micro-irrigation project** is slated to come up in Hungund taluk of Bagalkot district in Karnataka. The project when completed will cover 24,000 hectares in Hungund taluk. The government has allotted Rs 798 crore tenders to two Israeli companies for implementing the plan and these companies have been asked to execute the work and maintain the project for five years after its completion.

EXPORTS & IMPORTS

- **An analysis of spice imports by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)** found that almost 12 percent of spices brought to the US were contaminated with insects, rodent hair and their excretions. US food authorities have revealed that spices imported from India and Mexico has the highest rate of contamination.

The agency termed this as “a systemic challenge” to the spice producers and said most of the insects found in spices thrived in warehouses and other storage facilities.

- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** approved the cut in minimum export price or floor price for wheat exports by \$40 a tonne to \$260 to make Indian wheat shipments more viable in the global market. This follows the poor response to the recent tenders floated by State entities — STC, MMTC and PEC to export about 1.6 lakh tonnes.
- **The minimum export price of (MEP) of onions has been hiked to USD 1,150 per tonne** by the Centre for boosting domestic supplies and controlling prices which have been ruling at very high levels for about three months. This is the third hike in recent months aimed at discouraging exports. Although export volumes have come down, the domestic retail prices still remain at unaffordable level of Rs 60-70 per kilo in most parts of the country.

Others:

- **Bangladesh has approved commercial cultivation of transgenic Bt brinjal**, becoming the first country in South Asia to cultivate the genetically modified food crop. The Coalition for GM Free India has urged the Environment Minister Jayanthi Natarajan to ensure that Bangladesh puts in place all measures and mechanisms that would ensure that Indian diversity is protected from any trans-boundary movement of this GM food crop.

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