

Pollachi farmers fix the price of tender coconut

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The concept of farmers themselves fixing the price of their produce introduced by the Tender Coconut Growers Association (TCGA) will be the first of its kind in the world. Thanks to Tender Coconut Growers Association (TCGA). Earlier when the farmers were not aware of the prevailing price trend, tender coconuts were sold @ Rs. four when the existing price was Rs. 12-15. This situation has drastically changed now. The farmers now know that the price will vary according to season and demand. Since it is the peak season now, farmers meet once in a week to discuss and fix the price of tender nut. The fixed price will be messaged to all the 600 member farmers of this Association.

Shri. Rathinam, President of TCGA is a progressive coconut farmer who possesses 450 coconut trees of various varieties including DxT and tall. As on now, the association is doing only the rate fixation based on the prevailing market rates and demand. The demand for tender coconut has not come down, even after the raw coconut price has gone up during this season. They are all aware that Brazil is the world leader in tender coconut production and is the biggest market. To compete with this giant, Indian farmers are willing to work hard. They are planning to seek the assistance of the government in this competition. They are confident that since Pollachi is the tender coconut hub of India and it is possible and they would be able to bring our nation to



the top position in the global tender coconut scenario. From Pollachi around 1,25,000 tender coconuts are going to various Indian markets every day.

To improve the livelihood of the coconut growers, TCGA is trying to reach global markets through processing and value addition of coconut. They are of the opinion that with the available technology in India the real taste of tender coconut cannot be preserved and hence they are looking for a technology similar to that of Brazil which gives the real taste. Eventhough the prevailing price of tender coconut is lesser than the mature coconut, farmers are not facing any problem. TCGA is holding discussions with M/s. Rasna, a soft drink giant on the possibilities

of stating a tender coconut processing and packaging company.

The major problem faced by the coconut farmers in Tamil Nadu is drought and the farmers are waiting for government intervention for solving this problem. Since Shri. Rethinam is also doing coir pith business and export to foreign countries, he had enough experience in global market. He has already discussed with various agencies on fresh tender coconut export. Since it takes time to reach the destination and as they are not confident about the existing technology, the Association is yet to initiate any action on this front. The association is not yet in a position to procure tender coconut directly from its members and market the same. The business is still



being done through the middlemen. Government of Tamil Nadu has announced Rs. one crore for opening a coconut techno park at Pollachi. TCGA is expecting similar assistance from the central government also.

Shri. O V R Somasundaram former President of TCGA too is of the opinion that the idea of farmers fixing the price of their produce would be the first of its kind in the world. The idea is well received and is a grand success too. Since all the members are aware of day to day price, the middle men are not exploiting them. The weekly meetings of TCGA discusses the issues and plans the future course of action. The Association is planning to venture into product diversification and value addition too.

According to Shri. O V R Somasundaram drought is the biggest problem faced by the farmers which has caused to lower yield. Dearth of labourers is another problem faced by farmers here especially harvesters. In his 75 acre plot, he is growing 4300 palms. According to him intercropping is the best practice to realize higher results. Only 25% of the land is utilized for coconut plantations. Hence he has turned to intercropping with nutmeg and cocoa. Both are giving him very good yield. Pedigree selection, proper spacing and scientific

management of the garden are secrets behind his success.

Shri. Mr. V. Jagadeeshwaran, Sulthanpettai, Pollachi has planted 18 acres of his land exclusively with Chowghat Orange Dwarf variety. He

is a member of TCGA and through this membership only he is able to ensure reasonable price for his tender nuts. He is concentrating on seedling production of dwarf variety. Due to the severe drought, coconut farmers are going through a very severe crisis. He is planning to have a tender coconut processing unit for which he is getting ready with the infrastructure facilities. He is in the look out for the best technology for the packing and preservation of tender coconut water. Most of the farmers are in the look out for the technology which does not add additives in the packed water. Once the technology is available many farmers would like to venture to value addition of

tender coconut.

In lines with the TCGA, farmers of Cumbum and Theni area of Tamil Nadu are also planning to form tender coconut growers association. Shri. Devendiran from Theni district who posses 17 acres of coconut has planted 12 acres with Chowghat Orange Dwarf and 5 acres with Gangabondam and Deejay variety. Farmers could get Rs. 23 per tender coconut during peak season and they are getting Rs. 14 per nut now. He is hopeful that with the formation of the association farmers would be equipped together and would be able to negotiate for better price for their produce.

Coconut production in Tamil Nadu is significantly increasing on account of proper management of the coconut gardens by the farmers. Realizing the potential of tender coconut, farmers of Tamil Nadu are keen to cultivate maximum tender coconut varieties like, COD, CGD, MYD, MGD and MOD. Tamil Nadu is the only state where maximum tender coconut varieties are cultivated. It is felt that the tender coconut revolution has already begun in Tamil Nadu.

