

Coconut traders seek Govt intervention to tackle price fall

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Board urges farmers not to sell their produce at lesser price

KOCHI, FEBRUARY 2:

With the continuing downward movement in coconut oil and copra prices, Cochin Oil Merchants Association (COMA) has sought government intervention to arrest the price fall.

Thalath Mahmood, President of COMA, requested the State government to immediately entrust Nafed to re-start copra procurement, as the prices has come down to as low as Rs.5,800 a quintal in Kerala and Rs.5,400 in Tamil Nadu. The current prices are close to the minimum support price fixed in 2015 for procurement at Rs.5,550 for milling copra and Rs.5,830 for ball copra.

The coconut oil market in both the States also started moving southwards with prices quoting at Rs.8,400 in Kerala and Rs.7,550 in Tamil Nadu.

Unless the government takes concrete measures, the prices will come down further affecting the prospects of millions of coconut farmers. With the starting of the New Year, he said the price fall was almost Rs.500-600 a quintal both for copra and coconut oil.

According to him, good arrivals from all production centres following a better crop last year impacted the prices and it is likely to continue. Many of the corporate buyers are not venturing into the market and limited their purchase. This, coupled with the continuing winter in North India, also affected the prices.

However, the fall in prices benefited the ailing coconut oil market in Kerala, leading to a surge in local consumption vis-à-vis other edible oils, he added.

Bharat Khona, former Board Member, COMA, said the stability in prices at the present level may attract upcountry buyers to venture. However the price volatility is keeping the buyers away from the market. The drop in prices is also evident in the loose oil market price which has come down to Rs.1,140 for 15 kg in Tamil Nadu.

Meanwhile, the Coconut Development Board has called upon farmers not to sell their produce at a throwaway price, given the decreasing trend in copra and coconut oil. The Board urged Farmer Producer Organisations to concentrate on primary processing of the produce for enabling them to hold the produce for extended time period. They should concentrate on making copra using quality driers and converting it to coconut oil and branding it.

Our Erode correspondent adds: The price of the coconut oil decreased by Rs.100 per 15 kg in Kangeyam and Uthukuli markets here.

“During the middle of January coconut oil was sold at Rs.1,240 for 15 kg . Within fifteen days the price came down by Rs.100 due to the poor offtake,” said RM Palanisamy, an oil trader. On Monday, copra fetched Rs.5,400-5,500 a quintal.

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