The Cocommunity

Monthly Newsletter of the International Coconut Community

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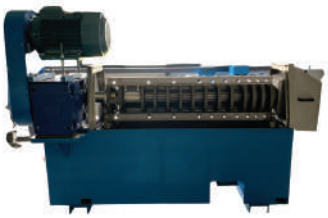

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE LIST

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SPEAKS

"Exploring the Feasibility of Digital Transformation in the Coconut Sector"

In recent years, the agricultural sector has undergone a transformative shift driven by digital technologies, which have revolutionized traditional practices and propelled the industry towards unprecedented growth and sustainability. This digital transformation is reshaping every aspect of the agriculture value chain—from breeding, farming, and processing to marketing and distribution. At the core of this evolution lies digital farming and precision agriculture, where modern farmers utilize sensor-based technologies, Internet of Things (IoT) devices, and drones to monitor plant growth and health in real-time.

In the processing sector, particularly in large industries, smart technologies and automation are streamlining traditional methods, improving efficiency, and ensuring product consistency. Automated sorting systems, robotic harvesters, and AI-driven processing equipment are enhancing the speed and accuracy of coconut processing operations, reducing labor costs, and minimizing post-harvest losses. For instance, in India, technologies like "Sapper," a robotic tapper developed by Nava Design and Innovation, are revolutionizing coconut sap harvesting— An illustration of how technology and tradition converge, promoting sustainability and preserving agricultural heritage.

Furthermore, the implementation of blockchain technology is revolutionizing supply chain transparency and product traceability in the coconut sector. By recording transactions, stakeholders can track the journey of coconuts from farm to table, ensuring authenticity, quality, and ethical sourcing practices. This transparency fosters consumer trust and facilitates compliance with regulatory standards.

In the realm of marketing and distribution, e-commerce platforms and digital marketing strategies are expanding market reach and directly connecting coconut producers with consumers worldwide. Online marketplaces showcase various coconut-based products, while social media campaigns promote the health benefits and versatility of coconuts, driving consumer demand and brand recognition.

Despite its transformative impact, digital transformation in the coconut sector also presents significant challenges. Many small farmers lack access to essential digital tools, limiting their ability to adopt and utilize digital technologies effectively. Additionally, low levels of digital literacy among small farmers pose challenges for farming practices, data management, and market access. The fragmented coconut value chain, with multiple intermediaries between farmers and markets, complicates the integration of digital systems and requires intensive coordination.

Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning and tailored approaches to ensure that the benefits of digital technologies reach all stakeholders, particularly small farmers. Capacity building and training, promoting accessible and affordable technology, fostering community-based initiatives, and developing user-friendly digital solutions are essential steps towards inclusive digital transformation in the coconut sector. Collaborative partnerships, research and development initiatives, technical, financial and policy supports, and robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will further drive sector resilience and sustainability in the digital age.

By adopting a holistic approach that combines technological innovation with targeted capacity building and policy advocacy and supports, the coconut sector can overcome challenges and empower small farmers and together with industries to thrive in a digitally-enabled environment while enhancing overall sector sustainability and resilience.

DR. JELFINA C. ALOUW
Executive Director

PREVAILING MARKET PRICES OF SELECTED COCONUT PRODUCTS AND OILS

February 2024 marked a notable surge in the prices of various coconut-related products across major producing nations like the Philippines, Indonesia, India, and Sri Lanka. The price of Coconut Oil (CNO) saw an uptick in the Philippines and Indonesia. Additionally, the price of Desiccated Coconut (DC) experienced increases in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka.

COPRA: In February 2024, the prices of Copra in Indonesia exhibited a marginal increase, reaching US$659 per metric ton, compared to US$651 per metric ton in the preceding month. Noteworthy was the significant rise of US$71 per metric ton from the same period in the previous year. Concurrently, the Copra market in the Philippines experienced a modest uptick, rising from US$628 per metric ton in January 2024 to US$635 per metric ton in February 2024. Despite this increase, it maintained a US$5 per metric ton lead over the corresponding period of the previous year, which reported prices at US$630 per metric ton.

COCONUT OIL: In February 2024, Coconut Oil prices exhibited a coordinated upward trend in Indonesia, India, and Sri Lanka. In Europe (C.I.F. Rotterdam), the average price surged to US$1,175 per metric ton, reflecting a 6% increase compared to the previous year. Similarly, the Philippines witnessed a local market settlement at US$1,144 per metric ton, representing a $21 rise from the previous year. Meanwhile, Indonesia experienced a significant surge, with local prices climbing to US$1,144 per metric ton in February 2024 from US$1,120 per metric ton in January 2024, indicating an increase of US$21 per metric ton compared to February 2023.

COPRA MEAL: A nuanced perspective emerges upon examination of Copra Meal prices. In the Philippines, the average domestic Copra Meal price was US$244 per metric ton in February 2024, reflecting a slight decrease from the previous month. Notably, this figure marked a decrease of US$55 per metric ton compared to the corresponding period last year. Conversely, Indonesia observed an uptick in the average domestic Copra Meal price, reaching US$259 per metric ton in February 2024. However, despite this increase, it represented a US$34 per metric ton decrease compared to the previous year.

DESICCATED COCONUT: In February 2024, the average price of DC (Desiccated Coconut) FOB (Free on Board) USA rose to US$1,800 per metric ton, marking a decrease of US$74 per metric ton from the prior year. Sri Lanka experienced an increase in the domestic price of Desiccated Coconut to US$1,857 per metric ton, while the Philippines maintained a steady DC price in the domestic market at US$2,039 per metric ton. Indonesia's FOB price for DC surged to US$1,800 per metric ton, surpassing both the figures from the previous month and the previous year, which were US$1,400 per metric ton.

COCONUT SHELL CHARCOAL: In February 2024, the average price of Coconut Shell Charcoal in the Philippines remained stable at US$363 per metric ton, marking a slight increase of US$3 per metric ton compared to the previous month. Indonesia maintained charcoal prices at US$461 per metric ton during the same period, while Sri Lanka witnessed a marginal increase to US$350 per metric ton.

COIR FIBRE: In Sri Lanka, the domestic trade of Coir Fiber in February 2024 showed mixed fiber averaging at US$64 per metric ton, with bristle ranging between US$431 and US$613 per metric ton. Meanwhile, Indonesia maintained the price of mixed raw fiber at US$110 per metric ton in February 2024, indicating a slight increase from the previous year's figure of US$90 per metric ton.

Price of Coconut Products and Selected Oils (US$/MT)

Products/Country	2024 Feb	2023 Jan	2023 Feb	2024 (Annual Ave.)
Dehusked Coconut				
Philippines (Domestic)	134	128	135	131
Indonesia (Domestic, Industry Use)	202	198	152	200
Sri Lanka (Domestic, Industry Use)	219	207	217	213
India (Domestic Kerala)	475	447	420	461
Copra				
Philippines (Dom. Manila)	635	628	630	631
Indonesia (Dom. Java)	659	651	588	655
Sri Lanka (Dom. Colombo)	1,054	1,047	1,168	1,050
India (Dom. Kochi)	1,151	1,102	1,043	1,127
Coconut Oil				
Philippines/Indonesia (CIF Rott.)	1,175	1,126	1,107	1,151
Philippines (Domestic)	1,144	1,124	1,123	1,134
Indonesia (Domestic)	1,134	1,120	1,119	1,127
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	1,819	1,982	2,017	1,901
India (Domestic, Kerala)	1,775	1,786	1,728	1,780
Desiccated Coconut				
Philippines FOB (US), Seller	1,800	1,764	1,874	1,782
Philippines (Domestic)	2,039	2,039	2,039	2,039
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	1,857	1,771	1,554	1,814
Indonesia (FOB)	1,800	1,750	1,400	1,775
India (Domestic)	1,805	1,822	1,416	1,814
Copra Meal Exp. Pel.				
Philippines (Domestic)	244	249	299	246
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	296	292	289	294
Indonesia (Domestic)	259	257	293	258
Coconut Shell Charcoal				
Philippines (Domestic), Buyer	363	360	368	362
Sri Lanka (Domestic)	350	328	354	339
Indonesia (Domestic Java), Buyer	461	461	463	461
India (Domestic)	330	329	375	329
Coir Fibre				
Sri Lanka (Mattress/Short Fibre)	64	56	36	60
Sri Lanka (Bristle 1 tie)	431	397	414	414
Sri Lanka (Bristle 2 tie)	613	631	483	622
Indonesia (Mixed Raw Fibre)	110	110	90	110
Other Oil				
Palm Kernel Oil Mal/Indo (CIF Rott.)	1,034	978	1,037	1,006
Palm Oil Crude, Mal/Indo (CIF Rott.)	857	845	950	851
Soybean Oil (Europe FOB Ex Mill)	912	971	1,243	942

Exchange Rate

Feb 29, '24 1 US$ = P56.23 or Rp15,761 or India Rs83.03 or SL Rs315.47

1 Euro = US$1.09 n.q. = no quote

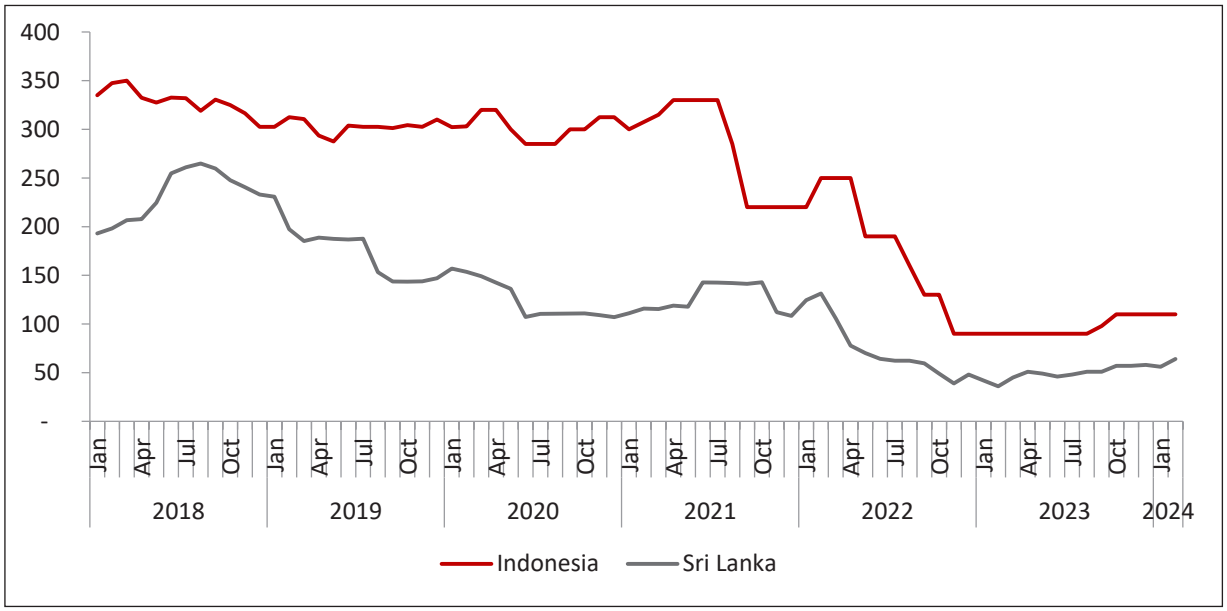
MARKET REVIEW OF COIR

In 2023, the coir fiber market weathered a prolonged period of price depression, following a downturn observed in the previous year. Notably, Indonesia saw the average coir fiber price plummet to US$96 per metric ton, marking a significant 46% decrease compared to the average price in 2022. Similarly, Sri Lanka experienced sluggish market conditions, with an average price of USD49 per metric ton during January to December 2023, reflecting a notable 34% decline compared to the previous year. However, there are promising signs of improvement in demand, suggesting a potential price upturn in 2024. Recent data indicates a positive shift in price trends, with coir fiber prices rising to US$110/MT in Indonesia and US$64/MT in Sri Lanka as of February 2024.

Despite the challenges faced by the coir market since 2022, major exporters such as India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka have continued to play pivotal roles in the global trade of coir-based products. According to the latest report from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India, total coir and coir product exports amounted to 1.058 million tons in 2023, marking a marginal 3% increase in volume compared to the same period in 2022, generating an export revenue of US$292.22 million. Coir pith and fiber remained the primary products, accounting for over 98% of the total volume and contributing 86% of the export revenue. Key export destinations for Indian coir products included China, European countries, and the USA, collectively covering more than 85% of global demand.

In Indonesia, the export volume of coir-based products from January to December 2023 totalled 26,184 metric tons, marking an 8.7% decline compared to the corresponding period in the previous year. This decrease in volume was accompanied by a 22.5% reduction in export value, reflecting a downward trend in product prices. Over the past five years, Indonesian coir product exports have demonstrated a consistent decline, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of -5% in quantity and -21% in value. Key export destinations for Indonesian

Figure 1. Average Monthly Price of Coir Fibre, January 2018 – February 2024 (US$/MT)



coir products included China, South Korea, and Australia, collectively representing over 95% of the exported volume. It is noteworthy that the export reach of Indonesian coir products has expanded significantly. In 2019, these products were shipped to 13 countries globally, while in 2023, they reached 23 countries. Notably, coir fiber and coir pith comprised the primary products exported from Indonesia to the global market.

Similarly, Sri Lanka experienced a decline in export revenue for coir-based products in 2023, with a decrease of 15% from Rs76,836 million in January to December 2022 to Rs65,355 million in 2023. Over the past six years, Sri Lanka has consistently observed a positive trend in coir product exports, with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) reaching 16%. Moulded coir products utilized in horticulture emerged as the largest contributor to the country's export revenue from coir-based products, amounting to Rs48,482 million, representing over 74% of the total export value in 2023. However, the export value of moulded coir products witnessed a 13% decrease compared to the previous year. Other significant contributors to export earnings included mattress fiber, Coir Brooms & Brushes, and coir twine. Primary export destinations for moulded coir products for horticulture from Sri Lanka included Mexico, China, Japan, Morocco, the USA, South Korea, and Turkey.

Figure 2. Export of Coir Products from Indonesia, 2019-2023

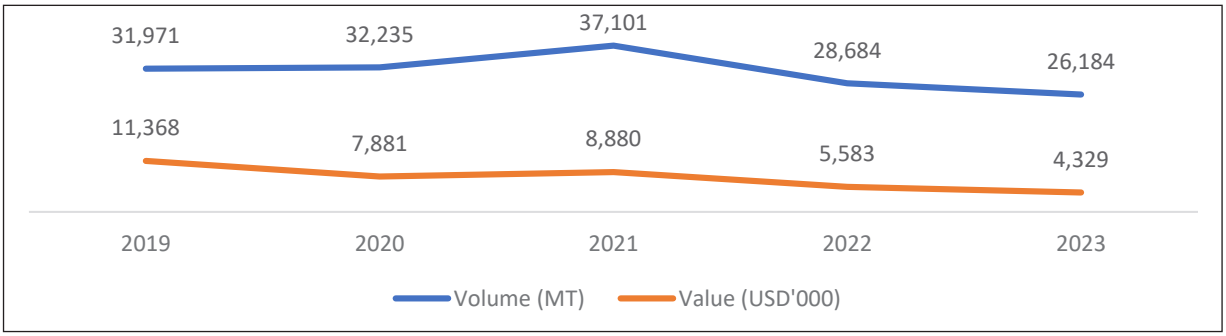
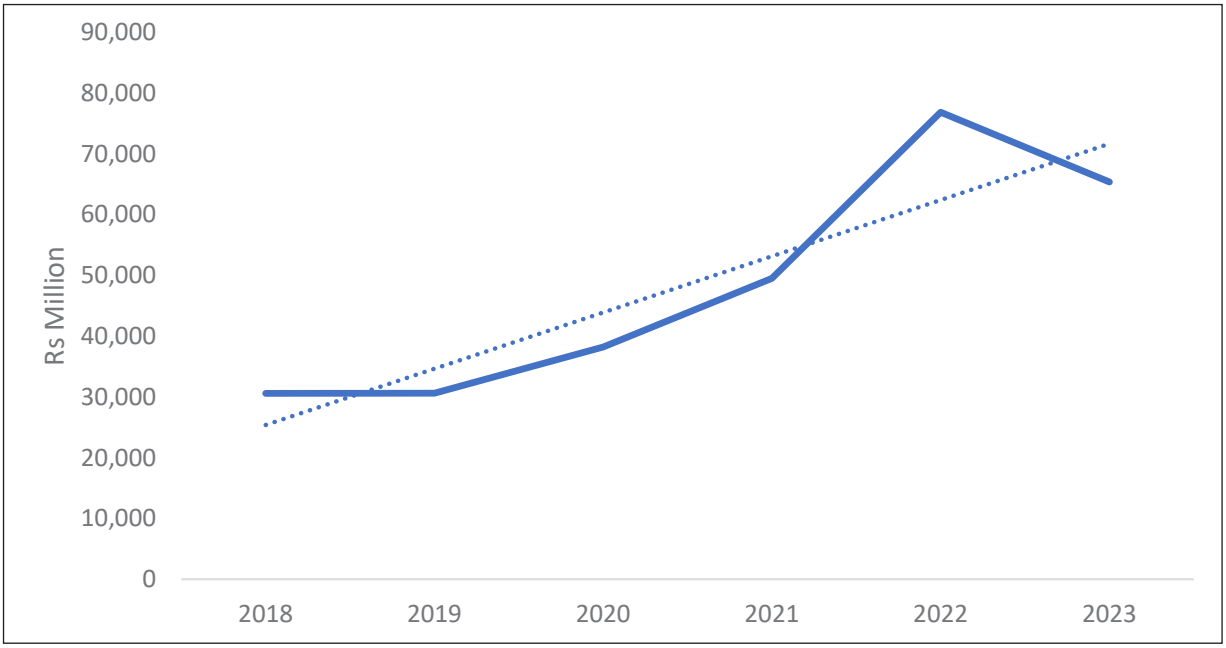


Figure 3. Export Value of Coir Products from Sri Lanka (Rs million), 2018-2023



COMMUNITY NEWS

PILOT SITES FOR COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE CONTROL

The Papua New Guinea Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle task force team has agreed to set up pilot coconut palm demonstration sites to test out best control measures against the invasive Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles which have been aggressively attacking coconut trees in parts of Papua New Guinea.

Principal scientist and CRB expert Dr. Trevor Jackson said the goal of the CRB task force is to coordinate efforts to understand the distribution of the different biotypes of CRB and improve management response to limit damage from the pest in Papua New Guinea.

"We're going to monitor the initial pilot sites intensively to see which ideas work for those communities and which don't work so well, so we can make solid recommendations." Said Dr. Trevor.

The initiative is part of the Pacific Awareness and Response to Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle project funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and implemented by the Pacific Community in partnership with Ag Research NZ and PNG partners National Agriculture & Quarantine Inspection Authority, Kokonas Indastri Koporesen and PNG Oil Palm Research Association which make up the CRB task force team.

The team has been meeting every year in PNG since 2020 to share their experiences and findings, which included advances made in establishing the current distribution status of the CRB; pest damage surveys, particularly along the Central-Gulf coastlines, to determine the extent of the CRB infestation in PNG; trials investigating potential biocontrol agents that could control and contain the coconut pest.

PARC project manager Dr. Mark Ero says Port Moresby has suffered a massive loss in coconut palms over the years, where coconuts are now becoming expensive and being sourced outside the city.

"Our message for the people of PNG is that this is a new strain of the pest, and it's quite invasive from what we've seen. It is very hard in a country like PNG to regulate the transport of plant materials and other goods, which is one of the reasons why it has spread very quickly, so we need to work out an immediate response that needs to be implemented country-wide. We do not want this situation to spread to other parts of PNG."

"if there's a problem, It's important to notify local authorities like NAQIA or KIK to engage in recommendations for cleaning up the breeding sites and work together to get this under control."

The pilot sites are expected to start quickly, with the first mapping of the sites and the first activity already set up by NAQIA.

The task force team will hold their 5th CRB meeting at Madang Province this week. *(Saipan Tribune)*

THAI COCONUT SEES HIGH PRICING THANKS TO SHORT CROP AND LUNAR NEW YEAR DEMAND

The supply of Thai coconuts shipping to the U.S. is quite slim and weakened right now. "Usually we are shorter in supply at this time of year but, this year it is much shorter," said Elena Kong of Love April.

While the shorter supply is partly weather-related due to less rain, it's also because of Lunar New Year shipments. "At this time of the year, the Thai coconut prices are decided by the demand of China due to the fact that Thailand and China are very close and lots of Chinese are drinking coconut for Lunar New Year. Therefore, for a few weeks now, all the coconuts are going to China and not to the U.S." says Kong. Another reason is that from Thailand to the U.S., it will take 45 days and there are not enough Lunar New Year demand like Thailand.

Easy open addition

Thai coconuts are shipped largely year round and come in four types: regular Thai coconut in conventional and organic and an "easy open" version which comes with an inserted spout, also in conventional and organic. Demand is growing in the U.S. because coconut water is increasingly gaining attention for being a healthy drink to consume. "People drink it from the pouch but they prefer the fresh one, that's why the "easy open" coconut was developed," says Kong.

Part of that softer demand could also be related to pricing for Thai coconut right now which is high due to Lunar New Year demand. Generally, pricing is between $11-$15 for Thai coconut even though at this time of the year, pricing is between $18-$20. "We won't have enough fruit in the U.S. until May, and I don't think the price will come down to $10 but it may go to $13-$15, though even a $1 difference in pricing is very sensitive because Thai coconut margins are minimal," says Kong. *(Fresh Plaza)*

COCONUT FARMERS FROM WESTERN REGION AT THE FOREFRONT OF INDEFINITE FAST IN CHENNAI

Coconut farmers from Coimbatore and Tiruppur districts, which together account for 30% of the crop area in Tamil Nadu are at the forefront of the ongoing indefinite fast in Chennai demanding the replacement of palm oil with coconut oil, groundnut oil and gingelly oil for supply through fair priced shops.

The protesting farmers were arrested for the second day on Thursday when they attempted to march towards the Secretariat to remind the DMK Government of its 66th poll promise, which is the distribution of coconut oil through public distribution outlets. "Arrest of farmers for raising a just demand is condemnable," a functionary of Tamil Nadu Farmers' Protection Movement in Tiruppur said.

The farmers belonging to Coimbatore, Tiruppur and other districts including Thanjavur, Dindigul, Kanyakumari, Theni, Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri, where coconut is one of the main crops, are taking part in the protest.

The protest comes in the wake of their complaint on low procurement prices made to the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, New Delhi. Against the current procurement of copra at ₹110.60 per kg, the farmers have been seeking a minimum support price of ₹150 a kg, factoring in the costs incurred towards manure, fertilizer, pesticides, harvest charges and labor charges.

They have also demanded for the inclusion of coconut oil in the list of edible oils and ban on import of palm oil from Malaysia and Indonesia. "We are the ones who voted for the DMK government, believing in its 66th poll promise, and not the farmers in Malaysia or Indonesia," a protesting farmer said.

Distribution of imported palm oil costing ₹100 a liter through public distribution outlets, with ₹75 subsidization, at a time when coconut, ground nut, gingelly and other oil seed farmers were on the throes of crisis defies logic, according to the protesters.

"The subsidy amounting to a whopping ₹1,100 crore per year could well be spent on the welfare of farmers in Tamil Nadu," a coconut cultivator in Coimbatore said.

The farmers' associations in Coimbatore, Tiruppur and elsewhere in the State have planned to widespread the protests in the coming days if there is no positive response from the State government. *(The Hindu)*

RESEARCHERS TRANSFORM COCONUT JELLY BIO WASTE INTO HIGH-PURITY ADDITIVES

Researchers from the Petroleum and Petrochemical College at Chulalongkorn

University (Chula), in Bangkok, Thailand, have transformed coconut jelly biowaste into valuable food ingredients.

The collaboration between Chula researchers and companies such as Ampol Food Processing, has effectively reproduced leftover coconut jelly scraps into efficient food additives.

The innovation, named 'cello-gum,' can be used in the food, pharmaceutical and cosmeceutical industries. which would potentially reduce the need for "costly imported additives" within Thailand.

The research team, led by Hathaikarn Manuspiya, is very much confident that the ingredient will propel circular economy development within the country while increasing the value of waste generated by the food and agricultural industries.

Cello-gum is a nanocellulose product made from residual jelly scraps, typically discarded as waste from the coconut jelly production process. These, which are abundant in Thaliand, are transformed into products that serve as effective additives in food and other industries.

Coconut jelly is a bacterial cellulose that possesses strong mechanical properties, high porosity and substantial water absorption capacity. It is easily moldable, biodegradable and non-toxic and when used as a composite material or additive, it ensures good adhesion of other substances.

The bacterium responsible for producing coconut jelly is Acetobacter xylinum, which can be cultured in a lab and fed with sugar and carbon sources. When the bacteria get fed, they excrete fiber, which is a good type of cellulose.

"The additives are high in purity and safe," Manuspiya explained. "Food stabilizers play a pivotal role in industries. Rice milk products, for example, additive substances are essential to maintain colloidal properties, preventing the milk from separating into layers. This enhances the texture, giving the product the appearance of containing rice. The same goes for fruit juices which often incorporate cellulose-based additives to augment content."

The collaboration with Ampol Food Processing, a global exporter of coconut jelly, aims to leverage the knowledge of bacterial cellulose to create additives that add significant value to the coconut jelly scraps.

Manuspiya added: "Upon discovering research on transforming coconut jelly scraps into high-value materials, the company expressed interest in such possibilities. Enormous amount of scrap are generated daily during the production process and typically discarded through burning. By reproducing them into additives, we can contribute to reducing Thailand's importation of various additives, which amounts over 10 Billion THB (approx. $278.5 million) per year."

She further explained that various agricultural wastes, despite containing smaller amounts of cellulose, can be turned into cello-gum. "The production process can incorporate bagasse, corn and pineapple, albeit with potential alterations or additions," Manuspiya said.

Owing to the success of cello-gum, Chula's College of Petroleum and Petrochemicals, Center for Excellence in Petrochemical and Materials Technology has launched a spin-off company, Bionext.

Bionext aims to expand commercial production capacities of cello-gum and collaborate with large companies. To do this, Bionext expects to scale up its development, conduct research and implement various projects. *(FoodBev)*

TAMIL NADU LISTS MEASURES TO BOOST COCONUT CULTIVATION

The Tamil Nadu government listed out various measures to promote coconut cultivation in the State, while presenting the Agriculture Budget for 2024-25 in the Assembly.

Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare M.R.K. Panneerselvam said demonstrations will be held in farmers' fields and state coconut nurseries at an outlay of ₹12.50 crore to increase coconut Productivity and motivate Farmers to adopt improved technologies.

He said a demonstration will be established in 25,000 acres at the cost of ₹12 crore to showcase how timely application of necessary inputs in right quantities would improve the productivity of coconut.

Under the Integrated Coconut Development Scheme, the area under coconut cultivation would be increased by 10,000 acres along with intercropping by distributing seven lakh quality coconut seedlings at an outlay of ₹4.8 crore, he added.

"Assistance will be given for intercropping with banana up to five year old coconut gardens and nutmeg in well-developed coconut gardens at an outlay of ₹5.7 crore," the Minister said.

To meet the demand for coconut seedlings, assistance would be extended for the establishment of coconut nurseries, upgradation of state coconut nurseries, rejuvenation of old coconut gardens and setting up of a new unit for conversion of coconut waste into organic manure, he said. Integrated pest and nutrient management strategies would be demonstrated among coconut farmers to control Kerala Root Wilt disease and Whitefly and a sum of ₹1.15 crore would be allocated in this regard, he further added.

During 2024-25, 60 coconut nurseries will be established in coordination with Horticulture Department through interested and trained women self-help groups at a cost of ₹2.40 crore. The coconut seedlings produced in these nurseries will be supplied to Horticulture Department for distribution under schemes, he said.

Training with a demonstration will be conducted for farmers in five state coconut nurseries on timely harvesting of coconut, solar drying and oil extraction. *(The Hindu)*

COCONUT JAGGERY, LAKSHADWEEP'S MOST EXPENSIVE & EXCLUSIVE FOOD PRODUCT

Saifulla and his wife are busy cooking various dishes for lunch as tourists are set to visit their 'thatched roof restaurant' after a long swim in the sea.

Even as they busily fry the fish that they caught a few hours ago, they often stir a yellow-colored liquid in a big vessel on the hearth.

A closer look would reveal two coral stones placed inside the vessel.

Saifullah's wife runs a small restaurant on Thinnakara Island, catering exclusively to tourists who visit the island en route to Bangaram Island.

The liquid they boil is the lifeline for Saifullah and family and about 10 others staying in this island.

The liquid is the sap of the coconut tree extracted carefully by them. This liquid is boiled continuously for over four hours so they get a jelly like substance, which is called coconut jaggery.

Coral stones are used to remove the sourness from the sap to extract sweet jaggery, an exclusive product of the Lakshadweep islanders, which they use generously to make the Lakshadweep Halwa and other sweets.

'If we condense 30 liters of coconut sap, (locally known as meera) we can get only 2.5 kg of jaggery. So, it's very expensive, costing Rs 1,000 per kg,' Saifullah told PTI.

The demand for this product is so high that one needs to pre-book if they want to get the jaggery.

The islanders, who believe that this jaggery is safe for diabetes patients, say that such people may use the jaggery for making sweets, preparing tea and as a bread spread or sweetener.

The islanders said this product has a 'very long shelf life' and it should not be refrigerated.

'This is a special product of Lakshadweep. We need to use the coral stones collected from the sea to remove the sourness. Otherwise, we cannot use the jaggery as it would be too sour,' Saifullah said.

Fifteen-odd people stay on this island, exclusively to tap the sap and make jaggery from it.

These people move out of the island when the rainy season begins as smaller boats from Agatti Island stop service to Thinnakara.

The Lakshadweep halwa (locally known as Lakshadweep unda), which the islanders say helps sailors sail for long hours without food, is made using coconut jaggery.

They allege that there are some cheap imitations in the market which are made using regular jaggery. *(Deccan Herald)*

NEW EVIDENCE FOR INVASIVE COCONUT REMOVAL ON PALMYRA ATOLL

At Island Conservation, holistic restoration of islands is what we do best. Removing harmful invasive species from islands is proven to be one of the most successful methods for restoration and rewilding these delicate ecosystems. On Palmyra Atoll, for example, removing invasive rats in 2011 led to a 5000% increase in native plants.

Imagining this restored ecosystem could evoke images of sandy beaches, crystal-clear waters, and swaying palm fronds. However, beneath the picturesque appearance of these coconut palms lies an ecological challenge.

Copra, the dried, white flesh of the coconut, is a common crop that helps sustain island communities. However, coconut palms can become invasive when they dominate island plant communities. Their aggressive growth outcompetes native plants for resources both above and below ground. Furthermore, when coconut palms displace native plant species preferred by seabirds for roosting and nesting habitats, they disrupt nutrient pathways in marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

On Palmyra Atoll, located in the Northern Line Islands of the Pacific Ocean, an abandoned coconut plantation has made the terrestrial ecosystem unfriendly to seabirds and other native species. Alongside partners at The Nature Conservancy, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Zoological Society of London, researchers have been working to develop the most successful methods for removing these harmful plants.

Under the banner of the Palmyra Atoll Rainforest and Reef Resilience Project (PARP), researchers evaluated three methods for controlling coconut palm seedlings: foliar herbicide application, cut-stem treatment, and a combination of cut-stem with herbicide. The findings of a recently published paper in *Conservation Evidence Journal* revealed that the cut-stem combined with herbicide application resulted in the highest mortality rate among seedlings.

At the end of 2022, PARP had achieved control of over 1.1 million coconut palms across 115 hectares of land at Palmyra–thanks to approximately 6 thousand hours of hands-on work!

These efforts have led to significant progress in managing invasive coconut palms on Palmyra Atoll. By strategically applying herbicides and employing effective control methods, humans can significantly reduce the impact of these invaders on native ecosystems. Seabird populations now have more native tree nesting habitats, and we can expect that richer nutrient cycling will bring multiple benefits to the land and sea. *(Island Conservation)*

DINAGAT ISLANDS GETS P20M GRANT FOR COCONUT TREE PLANTING PROJECT

The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) has turned over a check amounting to 20 million Philippine Peso to the provincial government of Dinagat Islands to fund its participation in a nationwide program to plant a million coconut trees.

The project primarily aims to reinvigorate the coconut industry by planting 100 million trees from 2023 to 2028, in which PCA targets to plant 20 to 25 million trees yearly within five years in areas mostly in Mindanao, which includes the Province of Dinagat Islands.

Under a Memorandum of Agreement, the PCA and the Provincial Government of Dinagat Islands will implement the program which includes seed farm development and coconut fertilization, among other activities.

Dinagat Islands Governor Nilo Demerey Jr. thanked the PCA for approving his request to consider the province as one of the project's beneficiaries, stating, "This served as a beacon of hope, especially to our coconut farmers who were greatly affected by Super Typhoon Odette in 2021. It destroyed more than 8,000 hectares of coconut plantations in the province, which affected around 5,000 of our coconut farmers."

"With this funding, the provincial government intends to initiate a large-scale coconut planting and replanting program that will restore our local coconut industry, create employment opportunities, and improve the overall livelihood of our coconut farmers," the governor said.

"We assure you that all allocated funds will be used judiciously and according to the guidelines and regulations set by PCA. The provincial government of Dinagat Islands is fully committed to reviving this vital sector, as it plays a crucial role in the province's socio-economic growth and well-being. This this will also contribute to the overall success of the national coconut industry rehabilitation efforts," Demerey added.

The country has been consistent as the top coconut exporter in the world. Coconut exports contributed an average of 35 percent to the country's total agricultural export earnings from 2013 to 2022.

However, in 2022, the Philippines ranked third in coconut production, next to Indonesia and India, due to the recorded 6.2 million decline of coconut-bearing trees as challenges confronting the sector, such as increasing tree senility, bearing tree losses due to pests and diseases, natural disasters, and climate change impact.

To regain the country's dominance as a leading coconut producer in the international market, the PCA launched the coconut planting and replanting program to address the impact of senilities and typhoon destruction on the sector, awaring that the last time Philippines implemented massive coconut planting was in the '70s or '80s. *(Philippine Information Agency)*

BRIDGING THE GENERATIONAL AND GENDER GAP: NAVELIM'S ESTELLA PIRES TRAINS PEOPLE TO CLIMB COCONUT TREES

Estella Pires believes in being true to, and proud of her roots. At 24, India's Navelim-based agro-entrepreneur is carrying forward the profession of her ancestors, who were paddy farmers, albeit with a modern and diversified twist.

Estella is an agriculture and horticulture consultant who also dabbles in landscape and garden design, conducts workshops on kitchen gardens, manuring, natural pesticides, marketing of produce, etc, under the brand she founded when she was still in college- Casa de Vegetais, now a shop located in Cuncolim. In a bid to help more city dwellers discover the joys of nature, she also organizes agri and eco treks and tours with her friend Liza Pinheiro.

However, her latest passion is now taking her to greater heights- quite literally! Estella trains

people of all ages to climb coconut trees, so they can harvest their own coconuts and tap toddy.

"I was trained by the best, my senior Shweta Gaonkar, who is affectionately known as the 'Goan renderina'," says Estella, who attended the week-long course offered by the Agriculture Department a couple of years ago. Now, she teaches people to scale the tree using the coconut climbing machine, now easily available in Goa. "We use the basic manual variant of the machine, which costs between Rs 3,000 to 4,000. While the device itself is quite safe and heavy-duty, you can also get a harness for added protection, especially if you have a fear of heights," explains Estella, adding that there is also an automatic machine available in the market.

She points out that the numbers of toddy tappers and coconut pluckers in Goa are fast dwindling, and people with coconut trees often find it difficult to find the labor to harvest their coconuts. "Toddy tappers are even fewer, and there is always a shortage of toddy for the vinegar as well as the feni producers," she says, recalling how her own grandfather, who was a feni distiller in his days, had to shut shop as he was finding it difficult to source enough fresh toddy.

Estella says a tree-climbing aspirant does not have to be particularly athletic – the will to climb is most important. "I wish more young people will come forward to learn this skill – the Agriculture Department offers the course for free – and Goan youth can also take this up as a business and offer the service to people with coconut trees," she says earnestly.

While Estella is keen on expanding her knowledge about traditional toddy tapping, the BA Agriculture graduate says it's a myth that tapping toddy from a tree decreases its coconut yield. "On the contrary, tapping toddy gives the tree a boost to produce more coconuts after an initial slowdown," she says.

Estella says she has always been outdoorsy, and nursed a special love for nature, that led her to pursue a degree in agriculture even though her parents were not so keen. "During my childhood, I would accompany my father's sisters to our paddy fields, and assist them with every step in the process, from fieldwork to boiling and processing the paddy. My parents wanted me to become a physiotherapist, but I envisioned a life close to the soil and nature," she quips, adding that former agriculture officer, Goa's plant man Miguel Braganza is her mentor and motivator to move forward.

"In my final year of college, during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, I took up a horticulture project and grew a variety of vegetables at home,. When they were ready to harvest, I did not want to sell my products and forget about it. With the help of my friends Vandit and Priyanka Naik of RasRaj farms, who provided me with fantastic vermicompost and organic fertilizers, I started my agro-venture in Cuncolim to market my production," she says.

Estella recently demonstrated her coconut tree climbing skills at the Ostoreanchem Fest in Navelim on Republic Day, and was surprised by the feedback she received from people of all ages.

"I was heartened by the response from both girls and boys, and I'm glad youngsters are showing interest in traditional Goan occupations, so we can preserve our natural wealth for posterity," she says. *(O Heraldo)*

COCONUT PRODUCTION INCHES UP 2.4 PERCENT

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Forestry report showed that Cambodia's coconut production rose by 2.4 percent to 258,935 tonnes.

Kampong Speu province had the largest share of coconut production, at 22.8 percent of total production, followed by Kampot province 21.1 percent, and Battambang province 9.5 percent, according to the report.

The report said Cambodia has planted coconuts on a total of 19,998 hectares, of which 14,225 hectares, or 71 percent, have been harvested.

"New coconut plantation area expanded by 2,567.5 hectares and average yield of coconut production increased to 1,293 tons per hectare," read the report.

Suong Noy, President of Cambodia Fragrant Coconut Agricultural Cooperative, said coconut production has increased as demand for domestic consumption hassurged.

"Domestic demand for coconut has risen remarkably, due to the popularity of coconut as natural fruit juice and some people think of health advantages when they consume coconut juice," he told Khmer Times.

The ministry has informed the owners of coconut plantations, aromatic coconut farming communities and the owners of fresh coconut processing and packaging factories who wish to produce and process fresh coconuts for the Chinese market to apply for registration of their plantations and factories.

The move was made after China signed a protocol of phytosanitary requirements last September allowing the export of fresh coconuts from Cambodia to China.

Coconuts are traditionally planted in the southwest of the country. Most coconuts in Cambodia come from Kampot, Kep, Takeo, Preah Sihanouk, Koh Kong and Kampong Speu provinces.

A 2017 study, by the Global Leaders Program of Hong Kong-based think tank Global Institute for Tomorrow, found that the coconut sector in Cambodia remains largely underdeveloped and untapped, despite showing that the industry could generate far larger profits if other uses for the ubiquitous commodity were considered, such as using coconuts and its derivatives for cooking, building materials and fuel.

However, lack of infrastructure and know-how when it comes to coconut processing are keeping the sector stuck at a very primal stage of development, the study underlined. *(Khmer Times)*

DISTRIBUTE COCONUT, SESAME AND GROUNDNUT OIL THROUGH PDS

The East Coast Coconut Farmers Association (ECCFA) has urged the state government to distribute coconut oil, sesame oil, and groundnut oil through ration shops, rather than relying solely on imported palm oil.

Farmers engaged in the cultivation of coconut, groundnut, and sesame crops find themselves in economic distress, struggling to meet their income needs.

ECCFA president E V Gandhi highlighted the state government's practice of importing two crore liters of palm oil from Indonesia at Rs 100 per liter, only to sell it to cardholders through ration shops at Rs 75 per liter, with a subsidy of Rs 25.

Gandhi said that the DMK, in its 2021 assembly election manifesto, pledged to procure coconut oil directly from farmers, intending to distribute it to cardholders for the benefit of the agricultural community. While coconut was valued at Rs 20 per unit in 2019, it has now plummeted to Rs 10 per coconut. He said that the labor costs incurred by groundnut farmers are disproportionate to the earnings from cultivating the crop.

To exert pressure on the state government, the farmers conducted a hunger strike on February 7 and 8. *(The Times of India)*

CONDITIONS RIPE IN BEN TRE PROVINCE FOR DEVELOPING COCONUT INDUSTRY

Ben Tre Province will have more favorable conditions to develop coconut farming

following the recent decision by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to make the nut a key industrial crop.

The Cuu Long (Mekong) Delta province is the country's largest coconut producer, and exports US$300 million worth of coconut products annually, according to its Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Some 70 percent of the province's population has livelihoods related to coconut, it said.

The ministry has approved a plan to designate coffee, rubber, tea, cashew, pepper, and coconut as key industrial crops.

The plan envisages having a total of 195,000-210,000 ha of coconut, including 170,000-175,000 ha in the Cuu Long Delta, 16,000-20,000 ha in the south-central coast and 9,000-15,000 ha in the north-central and south-eastern regions.

Among them, 30% of the production will meet good agricultural practices (GAP) or equivalent standards. This program will focus on developing both fresh and processed products, high-value products such as smokeless coconut shell charcoal, oil, dried flesh, canned milk and juice, coconut fiber mattresses, and handicraft products.

It also aims to develop villages and production establishments that make coconut products to serve tourists.

Huynh Quang Duc, deputy director of the department, said making it a key industrial crop would take the position and scale of the coconut industry, especially Ben Tre's, to new heights at home and abroad.

The brand names and prestige of Vietnam's coconut products would be enhanced and they would have the opportunity to expand to foreign markets, he said.

He said that socio-economic and cultural activities and services centered on the coconut, like tourism, cultivation and processing, could be further fostered with this initiative.

The province would benefit from national support policies and development orientation, he further said.

Coconut could become a key crop in coping with the growing impacts of climate change, he added.

Nguyen Van Tam in Giong Trom District's Chau Binh Commune said his family's income was mainly from coconut farming but prices had been low in recent years.

He said farmers were glad that coconut had been named a key industrial crop because they would benefit from development policies.

To improve coconut farmers' incomes, Ben Tre encourages the establishment of linkages between various stakeholders in the value chain. Among the province's 78,000 ha of coconut orchards, 23,747 ha have such linkages, including 18,525 ha planted to organic standards, according to the department.

The province aims to increase its organic growing areas to 20,100 hectares by 2025, mainly in Mo Cay Nam, Mo Cay Bac, Chau Thanh, Giong Trom, Thanh Phu, and Ba Tri districts. They have been teaching farmers the best organic techniques, including ways to create organic fertilizers. The province has also established six concentrated coconut growing areas on a pilot basis, covering a total area of 2,202 hectares. These areas have proven to be effective, with five of them, covering 2,162 hectares, growing organic coconuts for their flesh, and the other area growing young coconuts for juice. The province encourages farmers to establish co-operatives and cooperative groups to link up with companies. Currently, there are 32 co-operative groups and 30 co-operatives that have developed value chains for their coconuts. It includes the Thoi Thạnh Agriculture Co-operative in Thạnh Phu District's Thoi Thanh Commune for its nearly 150ha of organic coconuts grown by 85 members.

Phạm Van Ha, a co-operative member, said his family had been farming 1.7ha for four years and the co-operative bought all his mature coconuts at higher than market prices.

"Besides, members are also taught how to make organic fertiliers to help reduce costs."

Besides growing and buying coconuts, the co-operative also does semi-processing of organic coconuts for the Luong Quoi Coconut Co Ltd located in Chau Thanh District. *(The Star)*

COCONUT PROCESSORS WANT MORE FUNDING FOR VCO RESEARCH

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) need to fund more studies to prove the health benefits of virgin coconut oil (VCO), a coconut processors group said.

The VCO Producers and Traders Association of the Philippines (VCO Philippines) said a 2021 clinical trial on VCO as an effective adjunct treatment for COVID-19 cases in Valenzuela City has gained international publication.

The group said studies on the coconut derivative product would be a big boon to the coconut farming industry as well as the coconut processing industry, showing the multiplier effects of such government assistance to the sector.

VCO Philippines issued the call after a study spearheaded by the DOST-Food Nutrition and Research Institute (DOST-FNRI) titled, "Virgin coconut oil (VCO) supplementation relieves symptoms and inflammation among COVID-19 positive adults: A single-blind randomized trial," was published by the Cambridge University Press on their prestigious Journal of Nutritional Science last Jan. 23, which is an international, peer-reviewed, online-only, open-access journal that welcomes high-quality research articles in all aspects of nutrition. The journal says that the underlying aim of all published research should be the development of nutritional concepts.

"More studies on the efficacy of VCO should be considered to determine whether VCO can provide safe and affordable adjunct therapy against viruses. This will also be a valuable support for the VCO industry," VCO Philippines said. *(Philstar Global)*

AS PEAT MOSS SOURCES BECOME LIMITED, COCONUT COIR PROVIDES AN ALTERNATIVE

An old moss plant asked a new moss plant how he likes living in the bog. "I'm lichen it so far," was the response.

As a young gardener, I remember my mom buying large bales of peat moss, sold as poultry bedding, from the local elevator. Since the 1950s, peat moss has been a garden staple, replacing manure as the standard component used to amend soil and create potting mixes.

Peat moss, dug from bogs, has been the holy grail of soil amendments and potting mixes for as long as most gardeners can remember. Unfortunately, its days might be numbered. On the upside, there's a good replacement.

Supplies of peat moss are threatened in part because it takes thousands of years to form. The supply is further threatened because harvesting peat moss has become controversial, with the product even being banned in some countries.

The controversy is better understood by examining peat bogs and their relation to climate. According to Oregon State University, peat moss is harvested from bogs primarily in Canada and Russia, and these water-logged bogs have absorbed carbon from the atmosphere and safely trapped it for the past 10,000 to 12,000 years.

As the peat is harvested, the carbon escapes back into the atmosphere, contributing to a warming climate, according to OSU.

"Bogs represent 5% of the earth's surface, and yet they have captured more carbon

than all the planet's forests combined," Linda Brewer, soil scientist with OSU's Department of Horticulture, said in an article published by the OSU Extension Service.

"Some bogs are being replanted, but it takes centuries for a bog to fully recover," Brewer continued. "The damage has already been done by that time."

As an example of how seriously some countries are taking the ecological impact, the sale of peat moss will be banned in England starting this year.

Other reports downplay the impact of peat harvest, saying only a small fraction of the world's vast peat lands are being harvested, while the majority remains intact.

Peat moss has been invaluable to the horticultural industry. Most commercial greenhouses use mixes containing peat to grow their plants, and it's in most potting mixes used by home gardeners. Peat is an important soil conditioner for vegetable gardens and flowerbeds.

Peat moss is valued for its ability to hold just the right amount of water, yet it provides good drainage and oxygen exchange that makes roots thrive.

If peat moss gradually becomes unavailable, what are gardeners to do? Luckily, there are alternatives, such as using compost and other organic materials to condition outdoor soil.

There's a relatively new star on the horizon for the all-important potting mixes: coconut coir.

Coir is the brown fiber from coconut husks. It's easily renewable since coir is produced as long as a tree bears coconuts. To increase the supply, we simply need to plant more coconut trees.

I first became familiar with coconut coir a few years ago, when I tried a moisture-control potting mix with a delightfully different texture, and the labeled ingredient was coir. The plants grew beautifully.

Next, a gardening friend showed me the mix he used for starting seeds indoors. It was coir, which was sold in dry, compressed bricks.

This spring, as I was ordering my seed starting mix, my familiar brand of bagged mix had been replaced with bricks of coconut coir. Always up for a new gardening experience, I'm giving it a try.

The directions say to add a gallon of water to each brick, which I did, enclosed in a tub. Almost immediately, the compressed brick swelled in size, ballooning to 16 quarts of seeding mix!

Coconut coir has other advantages besides being renewable and an excellent use as a by-product of edible coconut. Unlike peat moss, which becomes difficult to re-wet after it dries out, coconut fiber easily absorbs water even when extremely dry.

Unlike peat-based potting mixes, coir-based potting mixes don't shrink away from the pot when they're dry. When trying to water a dried-out peat-type potting mix, water often runs right off or down the sides, leaving the mix dry as a bone. *(Inforum)*

STARTUP TO CONVERT COCONUT SHELL INTO PELLETS FOR CO-FIRING

Even as the Mangaluru City Corporation (MCC) is finding it difficult to manage the huge quantity of tender coconut shell waste that the city generates, a startup in Ullal is all set to convert it into pellets for co-firing required in cement factories and other thermal units in various industries.

Pranali M Gupta, CEO of XPozz India, told TOI that the startup has already submitted a proposal to the MCC seeking approval to commence collecting of tender coconut shells

and agricultural residues from the city which can be converted into pellets for co-firing.

"The startup has proposed to convert tender coconut shell waste into refuse-derived fuel (RDF) and sustainable green energy, burnable pellets. We have prepared a plan to procure agro-residue wastes, such as tender coconut shells and toddy palm shells from the doorsteps of the commercial establishments and transport them to the waste management unit of the MCC at Pachanady. We will bring down the moisture content using the mechanical drying system and crush it. After removing the dust particles, it will go to the pelletization unit, where an 8 mm pellet of 2-inch diameter will be produced. These pellets are an alternative fuel for co-firing in industries that use boilers," she said.

The startup has sought the MCC in its proposal for a long-term contract of more than 10 years and adequate space, power, and water supply and decide tipping fee as applicable. XPozz India will invest in all infrastructures handling facilities in its scope and will independently trade its products and byproducts in the domestic and international markets, said Pranali.

"We aim to convert waste to wealth and thereby produce green sustainable energy which in turn will help to earn green carbon credits," she added.

Mayor Sudheer Shetty Kannur said a proposal from the startup has been discussed in the recently held council meeting and it was decided to seek a report from the standing committee on health. *(The Times of India)*

AN EXPERT TEAM TO STUDY COCONUT WILT DISEASE

A team will study coconut wilt disease in the Coimbatore region, said Agriculture Minister MRK Panneerselvam.

He was speaking after visiting the flower show in the botanical garden on the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) premises.

The minister said, "Farmers have demanded a solution for coconut wilt disease in the region.

TNAU vice-chancellor, horticultural department director, and agricultural department officials will visit the fields for two days to study the disease.

This comes after Coimbatore south MLA Vanathi Srinivasan pointed out that the state government is not taking any measures to control coconut wilt disease in Pollachi and Kinathukadavu.

Srinivasan had made the comments after the government presented the agricultural Budget for 2024–25. *(The Times of India)*

MARICO PARACHUTES INTO COCONUT COUNTRY TO HELP FARMERS BOOST YIELD

Coconut is transforming the lives of farmers in Tamil Nadu and FMCG major Marico's Parachute Kalpavriksha Foundation (PKF) is right in the middle of it. The Parachute Kalpavriksha initiative began in 2017 in Thanjavur district and has expanded to 23 districts. It now covers 44,000 farmers and 2.19 lakh acres in the state.

"Marico has had a 20-year association with farmers in this region," says Amit Bhasin, chief legal officer, and secretary of the CSR committee, Marico Limited.

PKF's objectives are to improve coconut crop yields by providing scientific knowledge about pest control, crop disease, nutrient and water management. "Our aim was to increase productivity by 16% and we've hit that already," he says.

Coconut is a critical cash crop for Tamil Nadu. According to state govt data, around 4.44 lakh hectares are currently under coconut farming with an average annual production of 51,282 lakh nuts and productivity of 11,526 nuts per hectare. In the agriculture budget presented in TN assembly by M R K Panneerselvam, govt announced that the area under coconut

cultivation will be increased by 10,000 acres along with intercropping by distributing seven lakh quality coconut seedlings. The PKF initiative ties neatly into the govt's plans.

"Farmers are trained by experts or field service personnel (FSPs) who are locally hired to reduce travel time and cost," says Bhasin. "Each FSP covers 12-15 farms a day." The project is also focusing on constructing farm ponds as part of a water conservation effort called 'Jalashay'.

This initiative has provided assistance to farmers like Ravi from Devanampalayam in Pollachi, who were facing several challenges on their farm, such as a decreasing water table and shedding of coconuts that led to a lower yield. Upon enrolling in a training program, Ravi received support to construct a farm pond for rainwater harvesting on his property. The initiative is also working towards increased mechanization in farming. The PKF has set up four agri-business centers — including two in Pollachi and one in Thanjavur — to offer subsidized services to farmers. "They can hire implements such as rotavators and power tillers at subsidized cost from these centers," says Bhasin.

"We are also working on a pilot project to solve the problem of manual fruit plucking with an automated climber called Amaran in collaboration with Amrita University," he added. Joint development of this product is now under discussion.

But the real work, he mentioned, is that the initiative actually tracks its impact through a long-term engagement with the farming community. That's how PKF knows that farmers are already beginning to see what new farming know-how can do. Take Raj Kumar, a farmer from Pollachi. "Based on the advice from the Kalpavriksha team, I have done soil testing in my farm, sown sun hemp and applied fertilizer based on the results," he says. This has helped increase the yield on his farm from 10,000-12000 to 15,000 nuts.

The success of the scheme has prompted Marico to continue investing in PKF. The overall CSR spend at the PKF level is around `25 crore with `7 crore-`8 crore pumped in every year. "Bulk of that money comes into the Pollachi area, but our focus is to get more farmers to join the programme and to expand its coverage to include other crops such as banana and paddy," says Bhasin. *(The Times of India)*

ERNAKULAM-BASED STARTUP'S ROBOTIC TAPPER IS GIVING COCONUT FARMERS AN EXTRA ZAP

At a time when demand for neera (sap extracted from coconut inflorescence) is on the rise and the neighboring state of Tamil Nadu has even begun exporting the product to the US, Kerala is struggling to increase production due to a dearth of tappers.

It is against this backdrop that a robotic tapper, named Sapper, developed by an Ernakulam-based startup, Nava Design and Innovation, assumes great importance. The company had its first customer when Thrissur Coconut Farmers' Co. installed four Sappers on its farm in Kuttanellur.

"We supplied four Sappers to the company, which is a grouping of around eight farmers' collectives in Thrissur. They have started marketing the neera tapped using our Sappers," says Charles Vijay Varghese, founder of Nava Design.

Following the success, the company has placed an order for 100 more Sappers. The startup has also received interest from Malaysia, which has vast coconut fields and produces toddy on a large scale. The company has bagged patents in 28 countries for its invention. Explaining the functioning of the Sapper, Charles says, "It comprises an automated unit that is attached to the coconut inflorescence and a container on the ground which are connected by a tube. The Sapper keeps tapping the inflorescence for around two to three months."

Traditionally, a tapper must climb a tree multiple times every day to keep the sap flowing by making fresh cuts to the inflorescence. "The Sapper reduces this effort. This, in turn, enables one to tap more trees," he adds.

"This is cost-effective," says E V Vinayan, chairman of Thrissur Coconut Farmers Co, which markets neera under the name Thrissur Neera Co. He says it is wrong to say the widespread use of the Sapper will leave tappers jobless.

"Instead, it reduces workload and risk. Productivity will increase. On average, a tapper can handle around seven to 10 coconut trees a day. But with the Sapper, one will not find it difficult to tap 100 trees. This, in turn, will help increase the income of tappers," says Vinayan. *(The New Indian Express)*

AGRICULTURE MINISTER ATTEMPTS TO USE ONMANORAMA REPORT TO WRIGGLE OUT OF TOUGH SITUATION

In the Assembly, Agriculture Minister P. Prasad faced tough questions from Muslim League's Tirur MLA Kurukkoli Moideen regarding the plight of coconut farmers in Kerala. Moideen presented figures that showed how coconut farming was declining in Kerala and how neighboring states like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were faring better. According to Moideen, the area under coconut cultivation in Kerala had fallen from 790.22 hectares to 760.35 hectares in five years, and production had fallen from 5873 coconuts per hectare to 5642 coconuts per hectare. This decline was so severe that a quarter century ago, Kerala's coconut productivity was 14,000 nuts per hectare.

Prasad did not dispute these figures but instead referred to a 2023 Onmanorama report that Industries Minister P. Rajeeve had also presented in the last Assembly session. Prasad used this report to demonstrate his government's commitment to coconut farmers. He quoted a section of the report that mentioned how the oil industry in Kangeyam, in Tamil Nadu's Tirupur district, was destroyed by the Kerala government's proactive policies. The minister also mentioned the success of Kodiyathur Service Cooperative Bank according to the Onmanorama report. The report had stated that the bank's mill had to increase its production capacity from 3000 liters to 10,000 liters. Prasad argued that the government was taking adequate steps to improve the lives of coconut farmers.

However, Moideen and later Opposition Leader V. D. Satheesan contended that the government was not procuring coconuts from farmers. Moideen accused the government of stopping procurement since December and stopping the mobile procurement unit before that, in May. Satheesan alleged that no procurement worth its name had taken place from 2017-18 to 2020-21.

Prasad, citing the Onmanorama report, argued that the increase in procurement by Kerafed had led to the shutdown of oil mills in Kangeyam. However, the Onmanorama report also stated that procurement was done from only a fraction of coconut farmers in Kerala. The report noted that the copra and oil market in Kangeyam was majorly disrupted because of the Kerala government's 'Year of Enterprises' campaign, which was launched to help start 1 lakh micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) in 2022-2023. This was the victory of the Industries Department. The UDF's claim against the Agriculture Department, that it was not procuring enough, therefore remains. It is clear that the minister selectively used the Onmanorama report to advance his case. *(Onmanorama)*

UNFAO TO SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TEA, RUBBER AND COCONUT PLANTATIONS IN SRI LANKA

The Minister of Agriculture and Plantation Industries, Mr. Mahinda Amaraweera, recently announced that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization has shown interest in

developing tea, coconut, and rubber plantation crops, in addition to paddy cultivation and other non-plantation crops in Sri Lanka.

Dr. Qu Donguyi, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, visited Sri Lanka to attend the 37th Asia Pacific Summit. During his visit, he observed the Athukorala Tea Factory and tea estate in Elpitiya and the Agalawatta Rubber Research Institute. The Minister of Agriculture and Plantation Industry, Mr. Mahinda Amaraweera, also joined this event, which was conducted at his request.

During the visit, the group observed the tea products of Athukorala Estate Company and expressed their satisfaction with the great taste and quality of Sri Lankan tea. The Minister informed the media that the Director General has expressed interest in providing assistance to Sri Lanka's paddy and other crops, as well as plantation crops such as tea, rubber, and coconut.

The group also demonstrated the use of a robotic machine for tapping rubber, which is traditionally done manually. The Minister highlighted that such mechanical methods are currently being tried as a remedy for the labor shortage in this industry.

When asked about the measures taken by the Sri Lankan government to promote tea, coconut, and rubber cultivation, the Minister mentioned that arrangements have been made to provide fertilizers for these crops at a subsidized price. He also stated that fertilizers produced by two government-owned fertilizer companies would be provided in this way.

The Director General expressed great interest in tea cultivation in Sri Lanka and highly appreciated many varieties of Sri Lankan tea, as well as Kitul Hakuru.

The Minister also stated that all arrangements have been made for the 37th Asia Pacific Regional Forum, which will begin under the chairmanship of the Honorable President Ranil Wickremesinghe. This conference will be attended by the largest number of government representatives after the Easter attack, the Covid-19 epidemic, and the economic crisis. *(Daily News)*

RESEARCHERS UP IN ARMS AGAINST COCONUT BEETLE

A joint project by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) seeks to formulate sustainable pest management strategies against the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) to protect farms with local and hybrid coconut varieties.

Agricultural researchers said the CRB, locally known as 'Uang,' is a widespread insect pest that burrows into the crown of coconut trees, consuming the sap and damaging the leaves.

Their destructive behavior reduces coconut yields, directly affecting the livelihood of countless coconut farmers and their families.

Juanito Batalon, DOST Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) deputy executive director for Research and Development led the project review along with crops research division director Leilani Pelegrina and other key personnel.

Project leader Johana Orense from the PCA Davao Research Center said the project addresses the need for establishing feasible integrated pest management technologies for the sustainable management of CRB.

To determine the response of hybrids and their parentals to the different CRB genotypes and their biological control agents, Orense and her team successfully germinated 170 hybrid seedlings and 213 parentals during the initial year of project implementation.

These seedlings will be screened and evaluated for their tolerance to CRB attacks under controlled screen house conditions.

Orense said they also collected baseline data on CRB genotypes and their natural enemies from one site in Davao Oriental, five sites in Bicol, two sites in Central Visayas, and six sites in Caraga Region.

Sampling in 28 selected sites distributed across the Philippines is still underway.

She said this initiative aims to gather comprehensive information that will be useful in creating a nationwide incidence map to aid in effective pest management.

The team initially observed and profiled natural genetic differences in the first 113 CRB samples from Bohol, Albay, and Sorsogon.

Orense said the result will aid in identifying traits affecting CRB's resistance to biocontrol agents and its adaptability to different environments.

The project is funded by the Coconut Farmers and Industry Development Plan-Coconut Hybridization Program. *(Manila Standard)*

SECOND KING COCONUT CULTIVATION VILLAGE TO BE ESTABLISHED

The establishment of the second king coconut cultivation village in the vicinity of Murutawela Raluwa village with the aim of exportation was done by the Minister of Agriculture and Plantation Industry, Mr. Mahinda Amaraweera.

The first village to grow king Coconut for export started last year in Pahala Muruthawela and 10,000 king Coconut saplings are going to be planted in these two villages.

There is high demand for Sri Lankan king Coconut in the United Arab Emirates and from many other countries.About 252,000 king coconuts are exported to the United Arab Emirates per week. In 2022, exporting king Coconuts earned two billion rupees, and last year (2023), the expected income was six billion rupees.

King Coconut is a native crop of Sri Lanka and although many countries have tried to grow king coconut, those efforts have failed due to lack of high taste like king coconut in Sri Lanka. Because of this, Sri Lanka still has the monopoly in the world market for king coconut. To maximize fruit yield, several villages in Sri Lanka, especially Murutawela area have been utilized for king coconut plantations. During the event, the minister distributed 1600 king coconut saplings to farmers for the cultivation of the second king coconut model village. The Chairman of the Coconut Cultivation Board, and other officers also participated in this event. Expressing his opinion on King Coconut, the Minister says that Sri Lankan King Coconuts are the tastiest in the world. As a result, efforts will be made to promote them worldwide under the brand name "Sri Lanka Sweet Coconut." The Coconut Cultivation Board and Coconut Development Authority have been tasked with implementing this program.

Currently, Sri Lanka exports king coconuts to several countries, including the United Arab Emirates, where they sell for 1500 to 2000 rupees per fruit. Sri Lankan king coconuts have no competition from any other country in the world. However, competition between local businessmen has increased, as 200 containers of king coconut are exported to the Dubai market every month. The minister also mentioned that the exporters agreed to maintain this amount at the level of 2000 rupees.

"It is certain that king coconut will become the main export crop of our country in the future. Even now we cannot provide even 02 percent of the high demand in the world," the minister added Therefore, he advised the Coconut Cultivation Board to take steps to expand king coconut cultivation country-wide. *(Daily News)*

TRADE NEWS

INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

Prices of vegetable oils showed mostly improved levels during the week.

After five weeks of lackluster dealings, coconut oil in the Rotterdam market eventually reported trade at the close of the week at $1,285/MT CIF, low MOAH oil. After a firmer start, prices this week turned steadier but towards the weekend eased following other vegetable oils. Opening quotes were at $1,181.75-1,205.00/MT CIF for positions from February/March through to July/August and closed at $1,155.00-1,197.50/MT CIF.

The palm kernel oil market was more active than coconut oil with three trades reported for the week concluded at $1,000-1,015/MT CIF, higher than the prior week's paying level at $980-990/MT CIF. The market likewise opened firmer at $1,015-1,050/MT CIF for positions from February/March through to August/September, Subsequently, it virtually followed the coconut oil price action. By the week's end, levels stood at $1,002.50-1,035.00/MT CIF.

The price premium of coconut oil over palm kernel oil narrowed this week across most positions compared to the corresponding levels in the previous week. Thus, the average for the week contracted to $158.85/MT from $161.24 a week ago. Premium per position are shown following: January/February no data ($158.46 week-earlier); February/March $144.00 ($173.25); March/April $171.35 ($171.75); April/May $157.10 ($154.35); May/June $157.45 ($165.40); June/July $166.20 ($173.90); July/August $171.75 ($180.30); August/September $177.13 ($112.50); September/October $125.83 (new position).

At the CBOT soya complex market, soybean futures tracked lower, after a positive start, on an improved outlook on South American production and on USDA estimates indicating higher planted area by 3.1 million acres bringing the total to 86.7 million acres. The agency also estimated production and stocks to be higher. However, the market returned to the positive territory at the close fueled by short covering and technical buying after earlier losses.

At the palm oil section, the market was firmer earlier during the week, continuing the previous week's bull run. Support came from bullish MPOB January data. Malaysian palm oil stocks contracted 11.8% to a 6-month low of 2.02 million metric tons, and production also dropped to a 9-month low of 1.4 million metric tons. The last two days of the week though saw a market turnaround linked to weaker CBOT soybean oil, a stronger Malaysian currency, and a drop in exports for the first half of February by 11-17% according to cargo surveyors' data.

Prices of tropical oils this week for the nearest forward shipment showed price increases across the board from the previous week. Coconut oil, however, posted the least increment at $10.75 from last week at $1,173.25 to $1,184.00/MT CIF presently. Palm kernel oil bounced back from last week's fall and showed the highest rise at $40.00 from $1,000 to $1,040/MT CIF. Palm oil registered a $27.50 gain from $956.50 to $984.00/MT CIF. Consequently, the price premium of coconut oil over palm kernel oil and palm oil were pared from what they were a week ago. The spread over palm kernel oil narrowed appreciably from $173.25 last week to $144.00/MT currently; and against palm oil from $216.75 to $200/MT. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

MARKET ROUND-UP OF COCONUT OIL

Coconut oil in Rotterdam market finally reported business this week done lately at $1,285/MT CIF for low MOAH oil for June/July delivery. The market earlier was firmer but settled mostly lower at the close with sellers quoting $1,190 for February/March; $1,182.50 for March/April; $1,155 for April/May; $1,163.75 for May/June; $1,187.50 for June/July; $1,197.50 for July/August; $1,185 for August/September; and

$1,195/MT CIF for September/October. Buyers were still a no-show, save for earlier bids indicated at $1,090 for March/April and $1,100/MT CIF for April/May which thereafter disappeared.

The FOB coconut oil market was still closed. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

MOU ON CRUDE COCONUT OIL EXPORT TO EUROPE

The Philippine Coconut Authority has inked a memorandum of understanding with Ares Merchants Philippines Inc. (AMPI) and Limketkai Manufacturing Corp. to jointly produce mosh moah-free or EU-compliant crude coconut oil to be refined by the first Filipino-owned refinery in Europe.

The PCA will share technology while LMC will provide transport and other necessary logistical support to the coconut farmers.

AMPI is responsible for the procurement of a minimum of 4,000 metric tons of mosh moah-free copra monthly in Cagayan de Oro through the Limketkai Oil Mill and selling it to its own refinery in Europe. *(Philstar Global)*

WHY PRICE OF COCONUT WILL CONTINUE TO RISE

The Federal Government's dream of increasing the country's coconut production level from the current 224,186 metric tonnes (MT) yearly to 500,000 MT by 2025 may not be feasible after all, considering the array of challenges facing the sector.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Alhaji Abubakar Kyari, who made the declaration last year during the 10th International Coconut Festival (AGUNFEST) in Badagry, Lagos, said Nigeria ranked 19th in the world among coconut-producing countries, noting that increasing Nigeria's production is capable of making a great economic impact on the country.

But with the year 2025 less than 12 months away, there appears no strategy in sight to hit the target, as the country still relies on importation from neighboring countries to bridge the demand gap.

Investigations revealed that the huge gap between demand and supply of the produce, coupled with the closure of the border has resulted in the price hike of the produce.

According to a market survey, a medium size coconut, which sells for between N200 and N250, now sells for between N550 and N600, while the small size, sold at the rate of N100 and N150, now sells for N450.

An officer at the Permaculture Forest Farm, Badagry, Adeosu Lawal, attributed scarcity of the produce and current price hike to an increase in the prices of other commodities. "Therefore, people that are living on coconut too must increase the price; otherwise, they will not be able to meet up.

"When the subsidy is removed and other prices go up, if you don't increase the price of your products, you will definitely go to the market and you won't be able to afford anything."

The South Africa Nigeria Business Chamber's study of the coconut commodity chain in Nigeria revealed that the major problem affecting coconut production and all other agricultural products is the import tariffs that have put fertilizer and other inputs out of reach of small-scale farmers, thus, leading to low yield and hard manual labor.

A member of the Lagos State Coconut Sellers Association, Femi Okanlolu, attributed the development to the closure of the border. "When we were importing coconut from Ghana, the price of coconut was cheap."

A farmer from government-owned Coconut Farm in Okoafo, Badagry, Taiwo Sunday, said the high demand for the commodity necessitated

the hike in price, forcing it to go beyond the reach of the masses.

"The demand in the international market is high. Coconut is used in the production of body creams and soaps. The price of coconut palm has increased from N500 to N2,500. With the increased price of transportation and all other things, the price of coconut has to increase. We work with instructions; we are working with the price contained in the circular shared with us," Sunday said.

Sunday, who expressed confidence that the country has the chance to meet the increasing market demands without depending on coconut imports, said Nigeria must produce more to increase its market share and the best way to achieve this is to improve cultivation by assisting local farmers.

He also mentioned the need to have an organized supply chain and provision of adequate infrastructure to support farmers, adding that for the country to meet its increasing market demands there's a need for a sustainable source of the coconut palm. *(The Guardian)*

BANGLADESH IMPORTS INDIAN COCONUTS THROUGH HILI PORT FOR THE FIRST TIME

Bangladesh imported coconuts from neighboring India through the Hili land port in Dinajpur to meet local demand for the very first time.

Two Indian trucks carrying 50 tons of coconut from Tamil Nadu state arrived at the local landport around 5 p.m.

Local business organization M/S Nasat Traders imported the consignment of coconut, costing $250 per ton.

Importer Nur Islam said they decided to bring coconuts from India considering the huge demand in the local market.

He said the imported coconuts would be sent to several parts of the country after completing procedures at the port.

Customs revenue officers of the port informed that for the first time, two Indian trucks – loaded with coconuts entered Bangladesh. *(Dhaka Tribune)*

OTHER VEGEOIL NEWS

MALAYSIA LIKELY TO EMERGE BIG WINNER WITH UK'S CPTPP MEMBERSHIP

Malaysian palm oil is likely to gain an edge in terms of exports to the United Kingdom after the latter obtained membership into the CPTPP and a new acknowledgment of its sustainability standard.

After leaving the European Union in January 2020, the United Kingdom successfully obtained membership to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) trade agreement in July 2023. The country becomes the 12th member, joining the existing members Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Brunei, New Zealand, Mexico, Canada, Peru, and Chile. This is expected to enter into force in the second half of this year.

While there were concerns that the deal could lead to an increase in palm oil imports from deforested land, the UK Trade and Agriculture Commission (TAC) said such has been addressed, saying "the risk that CPTPP would lead to an increase in imports of palm oil from deforested land has been determined to be low for a variety of reasons." The UK's CPTPP membership also paves the way for zero-tariff Malaysian palm exports to the UK as part of the agreement. In addition, the TAC indicated acknowledgment of Malaysia's MSPO standards as an acceptable sustainability benchmark to be used in the trade. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

MALAYSIA TO TAKE STERN ACTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATORY PALM OIL PRODUCTS LABELING

In a statement, the Ministry of Plantations and Commodities (KPK) said it will take the issue of discriminatory or negative labeling of palm oil products seriously and will take strict action in accordance with the laws and regulations against importers, traders, sellers, and related parties who commit such offenses. The penalty for a violation of the regulation is a fine of up to RM220,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years.

The Multi-Agency Enforcement Force inspected several premises in Selangor on January 26 and revealed that some food products in these establishments were conspicuously labeled with discriminatory labeling against palm oil (DLAPO), for example, with statements such as 'no palm oil' or 'without palm oil.' These shops included those selling local products such as baby food and imported food labeled DLAPO.

According to KPK, such labeling techniques give consumers the negative impression that the use of palm oil is harmful to health if the product contains palm oil. "Apart from that, the action also damages the good reputation of the palm oil industry in the country and violates the principles of fair and transparent trade," it said. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

INDONESIA'S DOMESTIC MARKET OBLIGATION POLICY NO LONGER NEEDED

The Indonesian Palm Oil Association (GAPKI) has recently stated that the domestic market obligation (DMO) policy currently imposed by the government is no longer needed. GAPKI Chairman Eddy Martono said that the volume of production of palm oil is now much higher than the volume of consumption, so the DMO policy is no longer necessary. He explained that the policy is more appropriate if applied during high prices at the global market, which could cause supply shortages at the local market. Moreover, the DMO policy causes additional cost at an average of around USD20 per ton.

GAPKI anticipates the country's palm oil production, including crude palm oil (CPO) and palm kernel oil (PKO), to reach 53-55 million MT in the current year, though absorption of palm oil or DMO consumption changes according to government policy. Government data show that the per capita consumption of cooking oil in Indonesia is around 20 kilograms per year. The country needs around 5.4 million kilograms of cooking oil every year, which is produced from CPO.

Meanwhile, the Association of Indonesian Oil Palm Smallholders (Apkasindo) stated that the DMO policy and the Domestic Price Obligation (DPO) policy need to be evaluated or revoked, because currently, the world market price of palm oil has dropped significantly compared to that of 2022 when the DMO policy was initially applied. The Association noted that based on their data, the average price of CPO International Rotterdam in 2023 dropped 25.9% compared to that of 2022. *(UCAP Bulletin)*

HEALTH NEWS

COCONUT FLOUR: A NUTRITIOUS POWERHOUSE FOR WEIGHT LOSS, ENERGY, AND BLOOD SUGAR CONTROL

Whether you are looking to shed some pounds, boost your energy, or maintain steady blood sugar levels, coconut flour emerges as a promising contender in the realm of health foods. A staple in tropical cuisines, this superfood is gaining worldwide recognition for its impressive nutritional profile and numerous health benefits.

The Nutritional Profile of Coconut Flour

Coconut flour is derived from the white flesh of mature coconuts. It is rich in essential vitamins and minerals, including magnesium and potassium, and packs a powerful punch of medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs). The liver easily converts MCTs into ketones, providing a quick source of energy for the body. Moreover, coconut flour is brimming with dietary fiber, making it an excellent choice for those following a high-fiber diet.

The Low Glycemic Index of Coconut Flour

Another notable feature of coconut flour is its low glycemic index. Foods with a low glycemic index are absorbed more slowly into the body, resulting in a gradual, steadier rise in blood sugar levels. This makes coconut flour a suitable option for people with diabetes or those looking to regulate their blood sugar levels.

Coconut Flour for Weight Loss and Energy

With its high fiber content and low carbohydrate content, coconut flour can aid in weight loss. The fiber helps to promote feelings of fullness, which can help to curb overeating and snack cravings. Additionally, the MCTs in coconut flour can give a quick energy boost, making it an excellent addition to your pre-workout meal. However, it is important to remember that coconut products can be high in calories and should be consumed in moderation.

Promoting Heart Health

Coconut flour may also promote heart health. Dietary fiber can help to lower 'bad' LDL cholesterol levels, thereby reducing the risk of heart disease. The presence of lauric acid, a type of MCT, in coconut flour also contributes to heart health by helping to increase 'good' HDL cholesterol levels.

Using Coconut Flour as a Healthier Alternative

Coconut flour can seamlessly substitute regular flour in your cooking and baking. It's perfect for keto-friendly baking recipes, and can be used in a variety of dishes from savory to sweet. Unsweetened coconut products, including coconut flour, do not significantly impact blood sugar levels, making them a healthier choice. *(Medriva)*

UNVEILING THE NUTRITIONAL POWERHOUSE

Healthy eating has become a priority for many, as people increasingly seek alternatives to support a healthier lifestyle. Understanding the benefits of unfamiliar foods can be enlightening, and one such example is sprouted coconut. Offering a myriad of health benefits, sprouted coconut has the potential to enhance one's well-being and fitness. Aparna Sasidhar Devarakonda, known for selling sprouted coconut under the brand name Coconut Flowery, has garnered attention at Numaish.

Reflecting on the inception of his venture, Devarakonda shares, "In 2018, I stumbled upon the idea. By 2020, I decided to pursue it full-time. A family friend expressed interest in sprouted coconuts, sparking my curiosity. With little initial knowledge, I delved into research, connecting with farmers in East and West Godavari. This experience proved invaluable, teaching me about cultivation and supply chain logistics. Presently, I distribute them in Tamil Nadu."

Differentiating sprouted coconut from its conventional counterpart, Devarakonda explains, "While a regular coconut primarily contains water, sprouted coconut houses flowers within. These flowers develop from the water content while the coconut is in the ground, owing to cultivation techniques. Harvested coconuts undergo drying before being planted, resulting in the unique sprouted variety."

Enumerating the health advantages, he asserts, "Sprouted coconut aids in blood sugar regulation, particularly beneficial for diabetics. Consistent consumption over six months yields noticeable improvements. Rich in calcium, it fortifies bones and bolsters digestive health with ample fiber content. Moreover, its vitamin composition combats elevated cholesterol, mitigating risks of heart attacks and strokes while reducing the likelihood of kidney stones."

Regarding availability beyond Numaish, Devarakonda laments the financial setback of exhibiting independently yet emphasises the importance of raising awareness. "Although my stall incurs losses, it serves the purpose of familiarising customers with sprouted coconut. While I supply to various stores like Ratnadeep, Vijetha, Reliance, Puro Natural, and Polimeras as a wholesaler, increased awareness could boost sales. Encouragingly, notable establishments like Pista House have expressed interest in featuring sprouted coconut on their event menus."

Elaborating on his serving approach, he mentions, "At Numaish, I offer sliced sprouted coconut topped with jaggery, a delightful combination. With a shelf life of one month, it's advisable to consume promptly once opened."

In summary, sprouted coconut presents a flavourful and nutritious addition to dietary choices, promising a range of health benefits for those seeking wholesome alternatives. *(The New Indian Express)*

COCONUT RECIPE

GALAKTEBOUREKO WITH COCONUT MILK BY STELIOS PARLIAROS

This fasting sweet, with exotic aromas and coconut flavor, is reminiscent of our favorite galaktoboureko.

Materials
1 liter of coconut milk
150 gr. crystal sugar
90 gr. corn flour
80 ml of water
5-6 sheets of filo pastry
120 ml corn oil

[For the syrup] 350 gr. crystal Sugar
200 ml of water
80 ml of glucose

Step 1
Syrup: Boil all the ingredients for the syrup together for 2 minutes from the moment it starts boiling. Set aside off the heat to cool.

Step 2
Pour the coconut milk into a saucepan with the sugar and place it on the flame. In another bowl, mix the corn flour with 80 ml of water. Before the coconut milk starts to boil, slowly add the cornflour and water, mixing quickly with an egg beater. As soon as the cream has set, remove from the heat.

Step 3
In an oiled 20×20 cm square pan, place the filo sheets crosswise, oiling them in between and letting them protrude from the sides of the pan.

Step 4
Pour the hot cream over the filo pastry and cover it with the protruding filo, oiling them as well.

Step 5
Bake in a preheated oven at 170°C for 40 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, leave for 2'-3' and pour the cold syrup.

(Greek City Times)

STATISTICS

Table 1. SRI LANKA: Exports of Mattress, Bristle and Twisted Fibers, 2021-2023 (In MT)

Month	Mattress Fiber			Bristle Fiber			Twisted Fiber		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
January	4,832	6,161	5,362	112	206	119	3,475	1,436	674
February	6,810	9,765	6,925	232	155	146	2,359	1,580	891
March	10,169	9,714	9,457	135	249	230	2,125	1,322	1,297
April	5,475	4,796	5,847	88	138	161	1,415	1,012	1,647
May	6,432	5,143	4,496	113	143	148	1,404	1,216	1,354
June	6,333	6,648	6,771	157	181	98	1,608	966	1,173
July	6,953	5,189	7,808	204	242	193	1,855	1,280	1,301
August	5,111	6,329	8,209	185	230	222	1,230	1,066	1,359
September	6,757	5,232	4,193	126	130	150	1,631	978	1,002
October	5,674	6,654	3,700	151	146	124	1,181	1,374	710
November	4,416	4,371	3,313	107	96	129	1,325	1,022	1,051
December	4,530	3,340	2,807	175	192	133	1,112	517	857
Total	**73,492**	**73,342**	**68,888**	**1,785**	**2,108**	**1,853**	**20,720**	**13,769**	**13,316**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 2. SRI LANKA: Monthly Export Prices of Mattress, Bristle and Twisted Fibers, 2021-2023 (US$/MT, FOB Colombo)

Month	Mattress Fiber			Bristle Fiber			Twisted Fiber		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
January	253	270	196	1,308	1,380	1,512	305	432	345
February	250	277	160	1,398	1,288	1,362	301	353	300
March	251	255	171	1,263	1,310	1,291	359	393	260
April	254	255	169	1,125	1,434	1,167	359	387	338
May	256	243	173	1,119	1,160	689	376	364	254
June	265	240	169	1,432	1,420	661	362	360	297
July	282	222	152	1,197	859	1,015	381	514	289
August	268	231	156	1,446	1,042	1,116	398	342	206
September	256	212	155	1,271	1,067	1,057	432	399	234
October	258	202	160	1,315	1,122	1,141	396	270	229
November	281	182	160	1,666	1,179	953	439	309	217
December	265	180	177	1,432	1,343	1,164	395	383	240
Average	**262**	**231**	**167**	**1,331**	**1,217**	**1,094**	**375**	**375**	**267**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 3. SRI LANKA: Exports of Yarn, Twine and Pith, 2021-2023 (In MT)

Month	Coir Yarn			Coir Twine			Fiber Pith		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
January	115	82	27	909	800	742	4,000	3,119	2,175
February	112	76	97	603	609	461	4,011	3,411	2,561
March	117	172	58	682	625	249	5,569	3,360	2,237
April	146	57	42	194	1049	341	3,027	2,319	2,688
May	74	97	125	652	540	719	3,796	2,574	2,158
June	111	87	63	517	945	763	3,052	3,784	1,479
July	137	75	59	540	561	519	3,108	3,035	1,919
August	55	52	90	874	628	566	2,870	3,324	1,986
September	89	91	49	583	1004	557	2,816	2,849	1,722
October	69	44	65	809	877	375	3,871	3,185	1,952
November	23	107	106	728	571	653	3,197	1,815	1,392
December	61	35	20	1,100	871	733	3,250	2,148	1,645
Total	**1,109**	**975**	**801**	**8,191**	**9,080**	**6,678**	**42,567**	**34,923**	**23,914**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

Table 4. SRI LANKA: Monthly Export Prices of Yarn, Twine and Pith, 2021-2023 (US$/MT, FOB Colombo)

Month	Coir Yarn			Coir Twine			Fiber Pith		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
January	990	992	744	1,231	1,374	1,170	251	253	266
February	797	879	691	1,263	1,611	1,055	328	232	262
March	790	670	657	1,363	1,144	1,313	265	226	257
April	1,022	774	619	1,216	1,136	1,344	259	266	306
May	796	813	718	1,221	1,211	1,180	245	258	278
June	841	951	748	1,304	1,337	1,294	277	249	255
July	796	856	619	1,352	1,266	1,180	248	278	262
August	777	775	590	1,309	1,317	1,203	280	244	220
September	807	627	625	1,394	1,194	1,130	336	225	220
October	751	613	678	1,216	1,287	1,041	300	227	209
November	804	685	624	1,518	1,210	1,112	273	245	215
December	750	383	488	1,420	1,115	1,079	235	253	206
Average	**827**	**752**	**650**	**1,317**	**1,267**	**1,175**	**275**	**246**	**246**

Source: Coconut Development Authority, Sri Lanka

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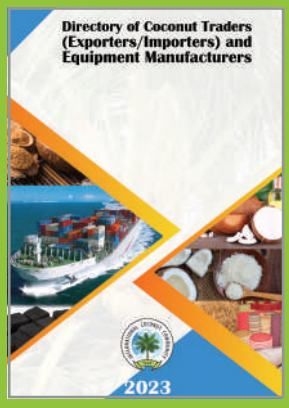

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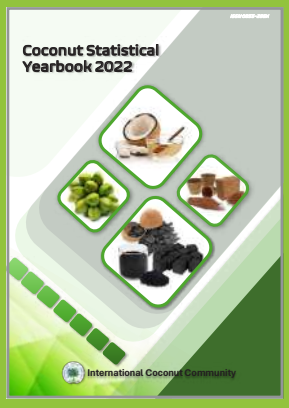

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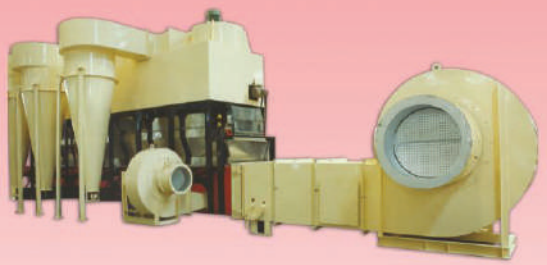

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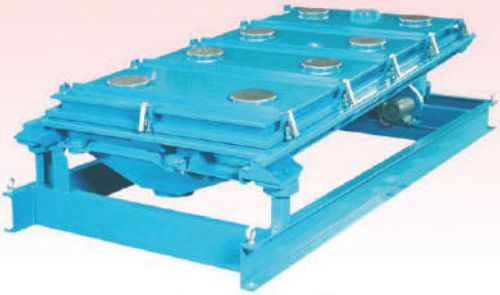
Output Capacity :
1000 to 4000 Kgs/hr.



NOVATEX SCREENER/GRADER

Output Capacity :
1000 to 1500 Kgs/hr.

DESHELLING MAHINE
Output Capacity :
250 to 300 nuts/hr.

DEHUSKING MACHINE
Output Capacity :
1200 nuts/hr.

OIL EXPELLER

RADIATOR
Extruded Fins or
Plate Fins Type

STAINLESS STEEL PERFORATED APRON TRAYS
Width: 2640mm & 3250mm

STAINLESS STEEL CHAIN

GEM

GEMTECH PROJECTS LLP.

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BY AIR MAIL

The ***COCOMMUNITY*** is the monthly Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL COCONUT COMMUNITY (ICC) incorporating current news, features, statistical data, business opportunities, and market information relating to the world coconut industry.

Established in 1969, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Commision for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), the ICC is an independent regional intergovernmental organization which consist of twenty one member countries and accounts for 85-90% of the world production of coconut. The ICC member countries are: the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Phillipines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Vietnam.

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