

**Directorate of Agriculture Development and Farmers'
Welfare**

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CIRCULAR

Sub:- Annual Plan 2021-22 – Arecanut Package – Working Instructions issued – reg.

Ref:- 1) GO (Rt.) No. 589/2020/AGRI dated 29/06/2020
2) Annual Plan 2021-22.
3) G.O. (Rt.) No. 393/2020/AD dated 22/04/2020
4) Order No. ADFW/3423/2021-TP2 dt. 06/05/2021 of Director of Agriculture

The arecanut farmers in the state have been experiencing a tough time for nearly two decades. Low production and productivity followed by severe disease manifestation especially of fruit rot (Mahali) and yellow leaf disease compounded with the liberal import policies have culminated in drastic price fall. The management practices of arecanut gardens like fertilizer / manurial application, control of Mahali, bud rot and Yellow Leaf disease, irrigation and maintaining the garden in phytosanitary conditions is expensive. The prevailing price of arecanut is also not so remunerative.

Financial support is needed for arecanut farmers throughout the State, especially northern districts. But due to the shortage of funds, the scheme is limited to the northern districts - Kannur, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Idukki and Wyanad districts during 2021-22. Funds for Kasargode district can be located from "Kasargode Package" implemented through the District Collector.

Government of Kerala, vide order read 1st read above accorded Administrative sanction for the implementation of the scheme, 'Arecanut Package' during 2020-21. As per the Annual Plan 2021-22, the scheme is proposed to be continued during current financial year with a total allocation of Rs. 100.00 Lakh under Head of Account **2401-00-108-56 Plan**, abiding by the norms and conditions of the Government Orders as per the references.

Continuous Administrative Sanction for the scheme "Arecanut Package" for Rs. 100 lakh has been received vide reference (4) cited.

Accordingly, Working Instruction for the scheme "Areca nut Package" is issued herewith, the details of which are as follows:

Objective

- Plant protection through spraying against Bud rot & Fruit Rot (Mahali) of Areca nut in 375 ha and providing plant protection equipment.
- Cut & removal of 18750 nos. of bud rot / yellow leaf disease affected palms
- Maintenance of existing garden through intercultural operations, organic manure application, irrigation etc.
- To provide assistance for new seedlings (37625 numbers) for undertaking under planting / new planting.
- To support areca nut farmers to improve areca nut farming practices and provide better returns.

The Programme

Financial Assistance is proposed for the following components:

1. Maintenance of Existing Garden

In order to maintain the areca nut plantation healthy, the following practices have to be adopted.

a. Plant Protection

Areca nut is a crop which is highly prone to diseases like Fruit Rot (Mahali), Bud Rot and yellow leaf. Incidence of Mahali disease, caused by the fungus *Phytophthora palmivora* occurs during monsoon season since the wet conditions are suited for fungal growth and multiplication. Once the palm is infected with Mahali and bud rot, it will be very difficult to control the disease.

(i) Spraying

Prophylactic control measures by adopting two sprayings with Bordeaux mixture before the onset of South-West and North-East monsoons have to be adopted to maintain plantation / crop in a healthy way. Financial assistance is provided for carrying out one spraying, as given below :

Inputs required per ha for preparation of Bordeaux mixture

Copper sulphate @ 9.75 kg (Rs. 210 per kg) Rs. 2047.50

Lime @ 9.75 kg (Rs 15/- per kg) - Rs. 146.25

Rs. 2193.75

Assistance sanctioned	- Rs. 2000 / ha
Area to be covered	- 375 ha
Total amount sanctioned as assistance	- Rs. 7.50 lakh

(ii) Purchase of Plant Protection Equipment

Plant protection Equipment such as Power Sprayers are needed for effective spraying of pesticides. Hence, it is proposed to provide 50% subsidy limited to Rs. 10,000/- per Power Sprayer, to arecanut farmers under this scheme.

Assistance will be provided for purchase of six numbers of Power sprayers with a financial assistance of **Rs. 0.60 lakh**.

b. Cut and removal of Bud rot / Yellow Leaf disease affected palms

Yellow leaf disease is another debilitating disease afflicting Arecanut palms. It is observed that there is practically no control measures against yellow leaf disease, once the infection has started in an arecanut palm. This disease along with Bud rot and Mahali has resulted in economic loss for farmers. Presence of disease affected palms in the plantation serve as source of infection to other healthy palms. Hence, removal of such palms is envisaged in this component. It is also recommended by Kerala Agricultural University that when only a few plants are affected in a garden, remove them to prevent further spread of the disease.

It is proposed to provide financial assistance @ Rs. 200/- per palm for cut and removal of palms affected with yellow leaf disease or bud rot. Maximum number for which assistance can be given is limited to 50 nos. per hectare. Infected plants if any above this number has to be removed by the farmer at his own cost to achieve full control over spread of disease.

An amount of **Rs. 37.50 lakh (Rupees Thirty-Seven lakh Fifty thousand only)** is set apart for this component for cut and removal of 18750 palms on a need-based manner.

c. Application of inputs and intercultural operations

The garden should be kept weed-free through regular intercultural operations. Such phytosanitary measures have proved effective in preventing the occurrence of Yellow leaf disease of arecanut, the cause of which is a

combination of physiological and microbial factors. Organic manures, especially neem cake application can be done to supplement soil health.

Financial Assistance of **Rs. 37.50 lakh (Rupees Thirty-Seven lakh Fifty thousand only)** with 75% subsidy limited to Rs. 10000/ha is provided for application of inputs and intercultural operations in order to improve soil health and tolerance to pests and diseases in 375 ha.

d. Inter cropping

Inter cropping in arecanut gardens with Tubers, Banana etc can be done to utilise the available space for augmenting food production and to generate additional income for the farmer. An assistance @ 2500 per hectare is provided for promoting intercropping in arecanut gardens.

An amount of **Rs. 9.375 lakh (Rupees Nine Lakh Thirty seven thousand & Five hundred only)** for 375 ha of arecanut garden is set apart for this component.

2. Under planting in existing gardens / new planting

Planting with good quality and high yielding varieties and local varieties with good performance has to be done. The cost of high yielding variety comes to Rs. 20/- per seedling. It is proposed to provide 100% assistance for carrying out underplanting in existing gardens to maintain optimum plant population. Under planting / replanting can be done in plantations where disease affected palms have been removed. New planting can also be carried out, wherever required.

No. of seedlings to be planted = 37625 numbers

Total amount sanctioned @ Rs. 20/- per seedling = **Rs. 7.525 lakh**

Financial Outlay

In the annual plan 2021-22, an amount of Rs.100.00 lakh is set apart for the scheme "Arecanut Package" under Head of Account 2401 – 00 – 108 – 56 Plan. The required amount of Rs. 100 lakh (Rupees One Crore only) can be met from this budget provision. Out of the total budget earmarked for the scheme, Rs.5.00 lakh is proposed for Idukki district and Rs.20.00 lakh for Wayand district as per Annual Plan 2021-22. Funds for Kasargode district can be located from "Kasargode Package" implemented through the District Collector.