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National Round Table on coconut sector blames “flawed” trade policies for
present crisis
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Farmers at the National Round Table on coconut farming on Saturday.

| Photo Credit: special arrangement

A National Round Table of coconut farmers and other stakeholders in the sector has observed that the present crisis in the country's coconut sector was mainly due to flawed policies related to trade policies and agreements that have resulted in dumping of edible oil from other countries. The Round Table that had been organised by the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) in Bideregudi of the State's coconut belt of Tiptur on Saturday expressed concern over India importing edible oil like palm oil from other countries instead of taking measures to promote the healthy coconut oil being produced by its own farmers. The Round Table observed that such indiscriminate import of edible oil was responsible for the crash in prices of coconut and its products in India. Taking serious note of such a situation, the Round Table adopted a resolution seeking a thorough review and prompt revision of the trade policy. The trade policy should strike a balance between protecting domestic products and enhancing the country's competitiveness in the global market, it said. By implementing revised trade policies, the government could ensure that coconut growers have a level playing field for their produce both domestically and internationally, it observed. The Round Table sought the establishment of a Free Trade Impact Monitoring Cell, comprising farmers' organisations to monitor and safeguard the interests of coconut farmers in the context of regional free trade agreements. As an immediate measure to bail out the farmers in crisis, it demanded that the minimum support price for copra should be increased and unconditional procurement of all the ball copra produce. KRRS leaders Chukki Nanjundaswamy, K.T. Gangadhar and farmers as well as experts from the southern States participated in the event. GI tag sought for Tiptur ball copra

The National Round Table of coconut farmers and other stakeholders demanded that efforts should be made to get Geographical Indication tag for Tiptur ball copra. The Round Table held in Tiptur on Saturday resolved to seek a special scientific study to establish geographical indication for the renowned Tiptur ball copra and its natural processing technology. It also suggested that collaborative efforts with institutions like CFTRI-Mysore and the Institute of Development Studies in this regard. The Round Table observed that such a tag would go a long way in benefiting the coconut farmers of the region.

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