

India: Kerala coop body seeks ban on rubber imports

KOCHI, DEC 18:

The Kerala State Cooperative Rubber Marketing Federation (RubberMark) has called for steps to impose a total ban on import of rubber as well as encouraging exports by extending subsidy.

T.H. Musthaffa, President, RubberMark, said that the quantity of rubber produced in Kerala is sufficient for domestic consumption and there is no need for import under any circumstances. The production in the last financial year was 9.04 lakh tonnes and consumption during the period was 9.64 lakh tonnes.

Out of this, 48,200 tonnes were exported.

Up to August, 2,13,785 tonnes were imported, he said and stressed the need to take steps for exporting the surplus quantity over own consumption.

In a memorandum submitted to the Union Commerce Ministry, Musthaffa pointed out that the fall in rubber price is the result of RSS IV and ISNR 20 to help rubber companies.

It is only because of the pressure from tyre companies rubber imports were being allowed.

It is significant to note that when the price of rubber was in the downward trend, prices of tyres have not declined and in turn, they had gone up, he added.

Prices of RSS IV, which was Rs 201 a kg in April has come down to Rs 160 in December.

The price of crumb rubber also declined from Rs 198.50 to Rs 159 during the same period.

When the prices were ruling high, rubber growers extended wages hike and other benefits to workers.

However, it is not possible to reduce these benefits, while the price realisation has come down. Moreover, the increase in fertiliser costs also added to the woes of rubber growers, he said.

The Federation also requested the Ministry to grant a short term loan of Rs 50 crore as a need-based working capital and Rs 1 crore each to the member societies to reinforcing the cooperative marketing set up.