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Tirupur to get 15 solar crop dryers

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In a bid to help farmers produce high quality copra, the Department of Agriculture is planning to set up 15 solar tunnel-model crop dryers in Tirupur district shortly in association with the farming community.

The department has identified 15 farm holdings for the project and each of the beneficiary farmers will be given subsidy from the corpus created under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana to offset 50 per cent of the capital cost subjected to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 50,000.

Of the solar crop dryers planned, two each will be set up at Madathukulam, Udumalpet, Gudiamangalam and Vellakoil blocks, and one each in Dharapuram, Mulanur, Kangayam, Palladam, Pongalur, Uthukuli and Kundadam blocks.

“Each solar crop dryer unit will be set up with five layers of specially designed thermal sheets laid over arch-shaped galvanized iron (GI) B-Class pipes spread over an area of 60 feet in length and 12 feet in width with the height at 6 feet,” Joint Director of Agriculture, Mohamed Kallimullah Sherif, told *The Hindu* .

The unit will help to dry as much as 5,000 nuts at a time under protected environment. Every layer of thermal sheets has specific properties which include ultra violet rays stabilising capability, high capacity to retain heat for long period after the sunset and prevent water as well as moisture from entering the unit, among others.

Mr. Sherif said solar dryer would help the farmers to dry the copra in almost half the number of days, vis-à-vis the conventional drying of copra in open yards because of the heat getting retained for longer duration.

“The system will also prevent fungal attack, otherwise comes in open drying. Besides it, the shifting of copra from the open drying yard during the night hours only to bring it back in the morning can be avoided when using the solar crop dryer,” Mr. Sherif said.

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