

Kole farmers stage sit-in at Collectorate

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@Thrissur

THE Kole Farmers Association staged a day-long protest at the Collectorate on Wednesday against the exploitation of farmers by mill owners. They also demanded the implementation of the agreement made by the Supplyco and the provision of a better price for paddy procurement.

The farmers sat in protest before the Collectorate from 10 am to 5 pm. They decided to protest after the failure of a meeting conducted with regard to paddy procurement.

Farmers alleged that no solution has been offered despite having held a meeting with the Agriculture Minister and the Civil Supplies Minister to find a way to resolve the issue.

Kole Farmers Association secretary N K Subramanian said the Supplyco, colluding with mill owners, has issued an order that is against the procurement norms of the Central Government. Based on this order, they have been exploiting the farmers, he alleged.

He complained that, though the district administration and the Agriculture Minister have provided assurances, nothing has been done on the ground.

Even though the Central Government has fixed a maximum support price of ₹15.50 per kg of paddy, the incentive and bonus from the Kerala Government is ₹7.80. That makes it a total of ₹23.30. This season, the Central Government has further increased 80 paise per kilogram. However, the state government has not reciprocated.

As per the existing procurement agreement between the Supplyco and the mill owners, it is enough for the farmers to bring the paddy to a point where it is loaded into the vehicle.

The mill owners should then take steps to fill the paddy into bags, weigh and load it into ve-

hicles. For this, the Supplyco should pay ₹1.9 to mill owners.

Of this, 12 paise is being given to farmers and the work supposed to be done by mill owners is pushed onto the shoulders of farmers, Subramanian said.

Farmers do all the work fearing the mill owner may not procure paddy. When farmers came together against the



Supplyco, colluding with mill owners, has issued an order that is against the

procurement norms of the Central Government. Based on this order, they have been exploiting the farmers

N K Subramanian, secretary,
Kole Farmers Association

Need better price for procuring paddy

The Kole farmers also demanded the implementation of the agreement made by the Supplyco and the provision of a better price for paddy procurement

They decided to protest after the failure of a meeting held with regard to paddy procurement



practice, a meeting was held with Agriculture Minister V S Sunil Kumar and Civil Supplies Minister P Thilothaman in attendance.