

## Steps taken to streamline sago production



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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*P. Amudha, Commissioner of Food Safety and Drug Administration, addressing sago unit owners at the Salem Collectorate on Wednesday. E. Lakshmi Narayanan*

The State government has initiated steps to streamline the production of sago and also the starch without adulteration, P. Amudha, Commissioner of Food Safety and Drug Administration, said here on Wednesday.

Addressing a meeting of the sago production monitoring committee at the Collectorate here on Wednesday, Ms. Amudha said that the officials of the Sago serve and the professors of Periyar University will jointly undertake research in this regard and suggest ways for streamlining the sago and starch production without any adulteration.

Good demand

Ms. Amudha said Salem district was a front-runner in production of sago and accounted for about 300 sago manufacturing units. The sago produced here has good demand in many north Indian states.

The sago producers have assured to strictly adhere to the norms of the government in the production of sago and starch once the same were announced. They have also demanded government support for the introduction of alternative methods in the production of starch. The government will favourably consider their demands, she said.

Sago manufacturing units are functioning in seven districts and chemicals and other harmful products should not be mixed in the production of sago. The product should be always in its natural colour.

Ms. Amudha said that the Food Safety Department will take steps for the creation of awareness in this regard among the sago manufacturers, traders and consumers soon.

Farmers and the sago manufacturers have demanded a tapioca board in Salem. She assured to take up this demand to the notice of the government.

The department will also take initiatives for doing research on producing value added products from sago and starch, she said.

Referring to the functioning of the Food Safety Department, Ms. Amudha said that a total of 2,909 complaints on adulteration etc were received through the exclusive WhatsApp number in the recent past. About 68 per cent of the complaints were attended and action taken.

She said that the department was receiving about 20 to 30 complaints a day about hotels, drinking water manufacturing units, anganwadis etc. "We take serious note of the complaints and initiate against them. Even the government-run anganwadis are not left out," she said.

In this connection Ms. Amudha said that the department ordered the closure of 10 drinking water manufacturing units for the violation of norms.

Rohini R. Bhajibhakare, District Collector, S. Mariappan, Designated officer of the Tamil Nadu Food Safety Department, and other officials participated in the meeting.