

CMFRI guides Kerala farmers to a bumper harvest of mussels

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Kochi, May 30

After a major setback in last year's flood, farmers of Moothakunnam in Kerala's Ernakulam district have had a bumper harvest of mussels this year, under the guidance of Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

Total yield

Five self-help groups in the region reaped a total yield of 6.5 tonnes of mussels in as many as five farming units.

The farmers, most of whom are women, started the farming in January.

The farmers, who took to bivalve farming as an additional livelihood option, had suffered severe losses in the devastating floods. Their oyster farms were destroyed.

They were also worried that post-flood changes in the aquatic ecosystem may affect mussels farming. They are now relieved and are



Women engaged in the harvest of mussels in Moothakunnam in Ernakulam

hopeful of making up for last year's losses.

The five-month-long farming process was carried out under the guidance of the Molluscan Fisheries Division of the CMFRI.

After the harvest, the produce has undergone de-purification, a scientific process of expelling contaminants from gills and guts of mussels by providing them with purified seawater under, be-

fore being put out for consumption.

As there is no need for feeding, the bivalve farming is less expensive, compared with fish farming. However, the initial capital to set up the farming units is the major expense of the farming.

Mussels are rich in protein, lipids, carbohydrates, minerals (calcium, iron, copper, zinc, phosphorus) and vitamins.