



INDIAN CHAMBER OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



**INDIA AGRI
EXPORT COUNCIL**

**IAEC BOARD
MEETING**

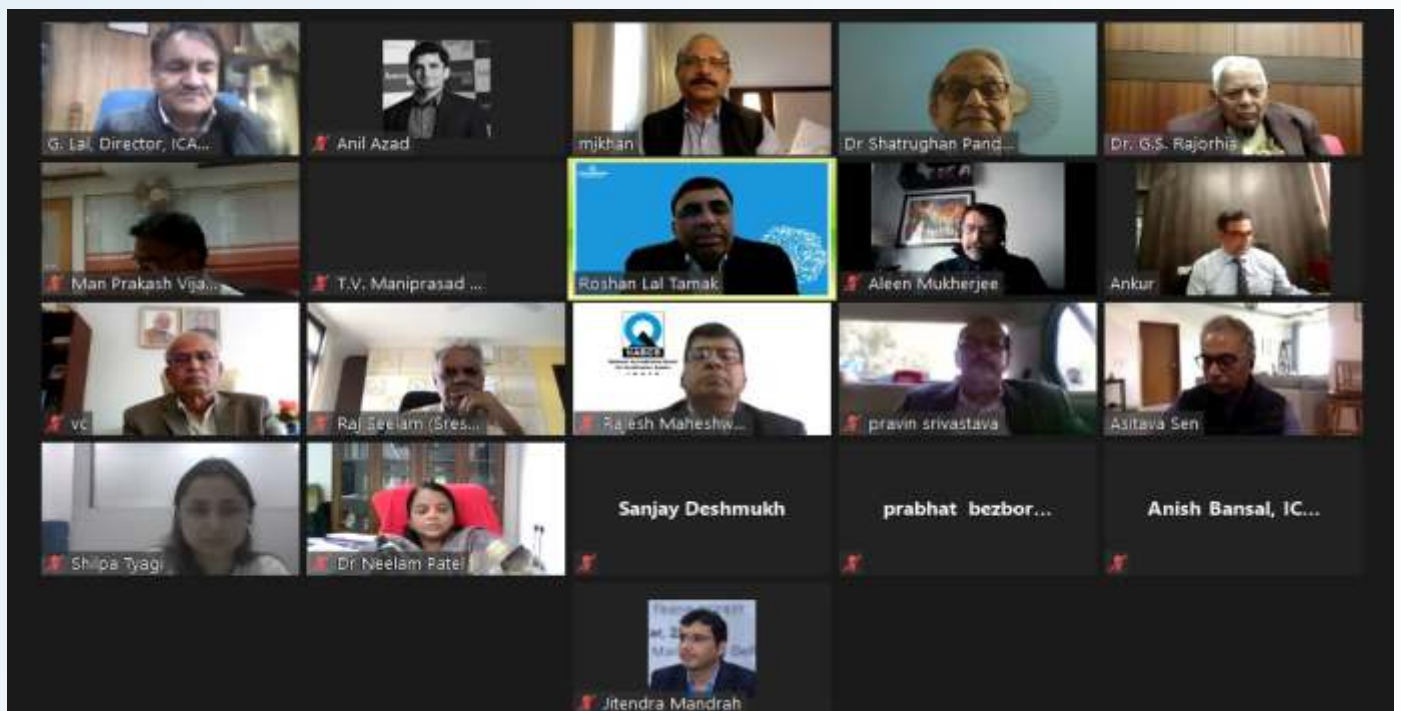
1st India Agri-Export Council Advisory Board Members Meeting

The Indian Agriculture industry today is undergoing wide ranging transformation and is well poised to tap the humongous exports market. While Indian agri exports grew at exponential rate between 2007 & 2016, it still remains far to be a story of untapped potential. India has a huge potential to become a global supplier of agriculture commodities and its exports can grow 10 times in next five years from current level, given the directive from government with its new Agri Export Policy 2018 to create pro export environment in the country.

Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) is working as the apex policy and trade facilitation body aimed at unleashing the potential of farmers. ICFA with its strong national and global presence through its Industry working groups, State level councils, Institutional partnerships and JBCs with various countries is also serving as the platform for farmers' services, agribusiness development and global partnerships. ICFA's objective has been to proactively respond to the opportunities and challenges for Indian Agriculture through its pro-agri policy, farmers market connect programs and development agenda and by entering into national and global partnerships creating opportunities for growth, value addition and trade to help improve the income of farmers.

ICFA established a special purpose vehicle, India Agri Export Council (IAEC) with the objective to work with concerned stakeholders (States Government, Exporters, Farmers, Academia, Tech Institutions, Startups and Services Providers) to promote production stewardship, stimulate sustainable collaborations across the board towards robust export growth for India becoming a major global agri-exporter. The vision of India Agri Export Council is to promote product stewardship, stimulate sustainable collaborations, alliances and networks across all the stakeholders engaged in the agri-export towards robust growth thus becoming a major global agri-exporter.

In order to move forward with this vision, India Agri Export Council organized 1st IAEC Advisory Board Meeting for their guidance and to prepare an action plan for 2021-22. The recommendations by Advisory Board have been noted and will be helpful to chalk out strategy for working in different areas and pushing India closer to the vision of Doubling Agro Exports by 2022. The agenda of meeting was to Discuss on opportunities areas, potential target markets/regions and their products; Identify the challenges faced by exporters/importers; Explore the approach and suggestive ideas/activities to overcome trade barriers ; Understanding the Effects of pandemic on agro-trade ; Revisiting EXIM policy and listing suggestions and discuss activities to be undertaken by IAEC in 2021-22.



Participants

1. Mr. PK Bezboruah, Chairman, Tea Board of India
2. Mr. GS Rajhoria, President, Indian Dairy Federation
3. Dr. Shatrughan Pandey, Board Member, APEDA
4. Mr. Rajesh Maheshwari, Chief Executive Officer, Quality Council of India
5. Dr. Chindi Vasudevappa, Vice Chancellor, NIFTEM
6. Dr. Gopal Lal, Director , ICAR-National Research Centre on Seed Spices, Ajmer
7. Dr. Neelam Patel, Senior Adviser (Agriculture), NITI Aayog
8. Mr. Man Prakash Vijay, Assistant General Manager, APEDA
9. Mr. Rajashekhar Reddy Seelam, Founder, 24 Mantra
10. Mr. Astiava Sen, Chief Executive Officer, CropLife India
11. Mr. Aleen Mukhrjee, Chief Executive Officer, NCDEX
12. Mr. RL Tamak, Chief Executive Officer (Sugar), DCM Shriram Ltd.
13. Mr. Jitendra Mandrah, India Representative, GlobalGAP
14. Dr. MJ Khan, Chairman, ICFA
15. Mr. Pravin Srivastava, Director General, ICFA
16. Mr. Ankur Malhotra, Vice President, ICFA
17. Ms. Shilpa Tyagi, Manager, ICFA
18. Mr. Anish Bansal, Assistant Manager, ICFA

Key Recommendations

1. IAEC to take up policy issues with concerned Ministries
 - Tea Export Clusters framed under AEP need to be expanded
 - Timely announcement of new agriculture policies
 - Setting standards for MRLs and aligning with CODEX
 - Focusing on value added/branded exports for organic products
 - Extending benefits to organic farmers so as to attract new growers and making Organic a viable option
 - Developing a holistic document, dividing sunrise sectors and develop protocol for each.
2. Undertaking research studies to explore untapped market opportunities in each sub sector of agriculture and food.
3. Undertake studies for customer mapping, understand their pallet and direct our products accordingly so as to attract potential customers.
4. Advocating for getting regulatory functions to be under an independent Organic Board so as to work effectively and avoid any miscommunications between different Ministries. In addition to organic, there are many other commodities managed by multiple Ministries/departments. IAEC can identify those and propose to Government to merge the same and formulate one board/council for better coordination and functioning.

5. Focusing on Infrastructure development projects and improving logistics-
 - Promote setting up testing labs for pesticides (focusing majorly in western India), produce rapid testing kits
 - Developing warehouses and cold chains in rural areas
 - To Promote connectivity of ports to railways to facilitate smoother logistics operations (cost effective and on time transportation)
6. Undertaking Training and Capacity Building Programs
 - Price Risk Management workshops for exporters
 - Good Agriculture Practices workshops for farmers to train them on judicious usage of pesticides
 - On-farm awareness building to train farmers on producing exportable produce and promote their own brands
 - Training FPOs to be export oriented so as to achieve target of developing atleast 100 FPOs to be export Units in next 3 years
7. Promoting Digitization in entire transactions of Agri-exports. There is still lot of physical movement of documents and IAEC can map entire transaction of export and see where digital intervention could be done to make it more efficient and transparent.
8. Promote developing more centers for Radioactive certification. Currently, only three centers are operating under BRCGC.
9. Promoting Quality in Pre-harvest activities, logistics and Processing
 - Quality of wagons to be focused in sugar transportation. Extra wagons to be made available at ports and quality to be improved.
 - Appropriate pre-harvest and postharvest handling and technology play a key role in increasing food availability and maintaining food quality.
10. Promoting the extraction of High Value compounds which could be used for medicinal purposes, will be valuable for Indian exports.

Welcome and Opening Statements

Dr. MJ Khan, Chairman, ICFA – Dr. Khan welcomed the guests with a brief introduction of India Agri-Export Council and explained the inception of this idea of creating a platform for all the stakeholders in Export Industry to get together so that they could discuss and deliberate upon key issues in a summarized manner. He highlighted that MoC have selected few of the commodities to launch trade boards, rest commodities IAEC will be launching and will act as umbrella organization for all private sector trade boards. IAEC will take commodity specific approach and three focused areas are identified for each board - Quality improvement, Policy Advocacy and Market Access.



Mr. Pravin Srivastava, Director General, ICFA - Mr. Srivastava welcomed all the guests and gave a background of current scenario of Indian Agri-Exports. He also gave a brief introduction of ICFA , working as the apex policy and trade facilitation body aimed at unleashing the potential of farmers. He followed this with introducing IAEC and its working areas. The vision of India Agri Export Council is to promote product stewardship, stimulate sustainable collaborations, alliances and networks across all the stakeholders engaged in the agri-export towards robust growth thus becoming a major global agri-exporter. IAEC has formulated seven working groups targeting all the divisions of agri export sector that addresses logistics, value chain, traceability, certification, quality and policy



issues. The council will be undertaking Advocacy as one of its working areas. The other working areas include Capacity Building and Trade Promotion.

Session Proceedings

Mr. PK Bezboruah, Chairman, Tea Board of India- Mr. Bezboruah initiated discussion with introduction of Tea Board of India setup in 1951 with mandate to push India tea exports. But over the years, the domestic consumption outstripped external demand. He stressed on having a promotion department consisting of skilled experts. He added that India needs to setup Export promotion councils to push exports. He also touched upon MRL issue. He mentioned that we have to motivate producers to produce tea which are compliant in target market to overcome Trade barriers. He also highlighted that the Tea Export clusters framed under AEP (upper Assam- Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, and Tinsukia) need to be expanded as most of the exports take place from Central-Assam. He also supported the strategy framed by Sh. Jyoti Raje Scindia during his tenure to push exports- 5 markets, 5 activities in each market in 5 years. He stressed on revival of Indian tea exports that Indian Government needs to strongly focus on getting back its older markets. He suggested that an Industry led export council should be formed with Government support and possible tea board and coffee board can be wound up and they can move marketing activities under one special cell of agriculture ministry.

Mr. Man Prakash Vijay, Assistant General Manager, APEDA - Mr. Vijay introduced the ongoing development in India's export sector, schemes of APEDA and products in which APEDA deals. He highlighted India's Agri export contributes nearly 12% of its total merchandise exports. APEDA exports pertains to agri products (\$18.73 bn) out of which, Cereals and Fresh horticulture 52.6%, Processed foods 23.9% and Animal products 23.4%. He then detailed about the working of APEDA wherein they have conducted Sixteen V-BSMs to name a few UAE, Kuwait, Indonesia, Switzerland, Belgium, Iran, Canada (Organic products), UAE & USA (GI products), Germany and more. Country specific agri export strategy reports have been prepared for 60 countries in consultation with the Indian Embassies/High Commissions of the respective countries to tap the opportunities being emerged during Covid pandemic and the potential for agri exports to these countries. Also, APEDA has been focusing on promoting GI products and efforts are being made to showcase the range of GI products at strategic locations like airports, Trade facilitation centers etc. He also threw light on Agri Export Policy 2018 and the clusters formed under AEP and developments till date.

Dr. RL Tamak, Chief Executive Officer (Sugar), DCM Shriram Ltd.- Dr. Tamak gave threw light on the exports of sugar in 2020 which were 6MT. He then gave suggestions for IAEC to take up under its working plan. Firstly, timely announcement of policies. The experience of sugar exporters weren't good as the AEP announcement was done quite late. Secondly, there are few operational issues faced by sugar industry. Like, In sugar transportation the Quality of wagons is not good and at times under loading of wagons results in lower dispatch/lower exports. Some extra wagons to be made available at ports and quality to be improved. Next is that Ports are not connected with railways. This needs a mapping and connectivity of railways to be ensured to all ports in order to have smoother, cost effective and on time transportation. Third, Digitization has to be adopted in entire transactions. There is still lot of physical movement of documents and IAEC can map entire transaction of export and see where digital intervention could be done to make it more efficient and transparent. Fourth, Radioactive certification by BRC. There are only 3 centers at present and we need to have more centers in order to complete certification quickly. Talking about fundamental issues, Dr. Tamak spoke about Customer mapping which should be done to understand demand of particular product and to be renewed on yearly basis. He then asserted that researchers to remain cost competitive they need to focus on three things- high productivity, Product quality and meeting customer requirements. Eg- processing efficient products to be there.

Mr. Astiava Sen, Chief Executive Officer, CropLife India – Mr. Astiava Sen, Chief Executive Officer, CropLife India – Mr. Sen spoke about agrichemical industry. He suggested IAEC to take up policy issues for 2021. He stressed that there is lack of alignment between FSSAI, CIB, and Health Ministry in setting up standards. In August last year, FSSAI introduced new MRLs and lowered 162 of them. Despite India being signatory to CODEX alimentarius, the lowering of MRLs made exporters unhappy. Tea and spices exporters are not happy with these lowering of MRLs and it is not in interest of Indian farmers. CropLife as an association advocates that India must harmonize its MRLs with CODEX so as to minimize food wastage and reduce uncertainty for exporters. Indian Government needs not to lower their MRLs as CODEX is already in place and organizations across the world are following the same. Doing so will help remove trade barriers and increase exports thus increasing our revenues. He also reflected on the role of GAP to manage MRLs. One has to use pesticides so as to have good yield but judicious usage is required which we can implement via GAP.

Dr. Shatrughan Pandey, Board Member, APEDA - Dr. Pandey stressed on raising infrastructure in rural areas so as to procure at high rates, logistics to be improved awareness must be raised in rural areas. Today, Indian farmers are producing in large amounts and farmers are looking at how they can transfer their produce. He gave an example that in Varanasi, all FPOs are connected directly to importers in foreign countries and doing exports. There is a huge demand for Kala namak and only few districts in UP are as of now producing this. He stressed on Infrastructure financing and asserted that in order to increase the incomes and double revenues we need to focus on improving the rural infrastructure.

Dr. Chindi Vasudevappa, Vice Chancellor, NIFTEM- Dr. Vasudevappa stressed on promoting micro entrepreneurs and linking them to operators. Upgrading skills on one side and upgrading machinery on other side will lead to quality product. Any exports will depend much on logistics and infrastructure, cold chain, quality and safety. He asserted that On-farm Awareness building is important so as to promote our own products and infrastructure; our farmers need to be aware so that they can maintain quality for exports. Eg- India is the second largest producer of milk but we are not exporting much of milk; so awareness and infrastructure needs to be improved. We have to promote our own brand. Dr. Vasudevappa underscored the importance of Customer mapping by doing trade exhibitions to attract new customers. We have to come up with good products which can be made available for sensory evaluation, taste evaluation then we can attract potential customers. We have to match the products according to our customers pallet.

Mr. Rajashekhar Reddy Seelam, Founder, 24 Mantra- Mr. Reddy represented the Organic Industry and mentioned that the regulatory function has to be brought under an independent organic board to work effectively and avoid any miscommunications. He then stressed that India has lost or is losing equivalence with EU & US in organic sector. We need to negotiate and reinstate else exports will get affected. He threw light on Organic market of India which is more than is \$1.2B and India's share is 0.6%. It is a growing market so we need to do in-depth study to understand and tap market opportunities. APEDA/ Commerce ministry has to sponsor a serious and in-depth study on product- markets strategy and the action plan for the same. Organic farmers should be given equivalent benefits like conventional farmers so organic farming becomes viable for them. He closed his speech by focusing on supporting the Value added/ Branded exports and Indian Government needs to take the same on priority.

Mr. Aleen Mukherjee, Chief Executive Officer, NCDEX – Mr. Mukherjee stressed on the challenge faced by exporters are the export prices of Seed Spices and other cereals. He suggested to take up awareness on Price risk management on domestic bourses. Adding to this Mr. Mukherjee suggested IAEC to train FPOs to be export oriented, With a target of atleast 100 FPOs to be export Units in next 3 years. He added that IAEC may implement these two pointers in long and medium term and prioritize for 2021.

Dr. Gopal Lal, Director , ICAR-National Research Centre on Seed Spices, Ajmer - Dr. Lal focused on seed spices. He asserted that during COVID, the export of seeds increased drastically and in last 3 quarters India exported 17% of its production. Seed spices we have been exporting in more quantity. After chilli, cumin is being exported in high quantity. India exported it to 185 countries. He then asserted that there are many quality issues present and we need to standardize MRLs for seed spices and these are to be made common across the world. He then suggested that Value chain management should be cost effective. He added that India is lagging behind Extraction of high value compound which is quite actively done in other countries. There are no labs present for Testing of pesticides in western India. We need to work on the same. Rapid testing kits to be developed, for immediate testing of pesticides. Private labs charge a lot so we have to setup testing labs with nominal charge.

Dr. Rajesh Maheshwari, CEO, NABCB - Dr. Maheshwari introduced Quality Council of India and two accreditation boards. The two boards are- NABCB providing accreditation to all certification bodies and inspection bodies and NABL which is providing accreditation to laboratories. Regulators like food authority leverage accreditation for testing or for safety audits. He then listed few QCI schemes- INDGAP, INDHACCP, INDGMP. Highlighting the pointed raised by Dr. Vasudevappa on millets, he mentioned that they recently signed agreement with ICRISAT on millets and they will be rolling out certificates on smart food. Highlighting the point raised by Dr. Lal on lack of availability of labs, he mentioned there are lots private organizations willing to set up labs and high end equipment's provided there is assured business in that region. Lastly, he assured that QCI is ready for all the assistance required accreditation or setting up labs, they are trying to create an ecosystem for Quality in food sector.

Dr. Neelam Patel, Senior Advisor (Agriculture),Niti Aayog - Dr. Patel asserted that at the policy level, India is struggling hard to increase Agri-exports, instead of having sufficient vegetables and dairy. She suggested that we can identify different sectors and develop total protocol with the identification of quantity, procedure for certification, application of Good Agriculture Practices and then capacity building and skilling of the farmers specially women as they involved in primary processing. So, if we can develop the holistic document and not mix other things, we can divide star sectors and start working. Instead of a targeting agriculture as whole we must divide it into sub sectors, develop protocol for each and start working. This document can be then circulated to KVKs, states, districts and ask them to follow the same to increase exports of their products. We have to educate our farmers in selling the product.

Dr. GS Rajhoria, President, Indian Dairy Federation - Dr. GS Rajhoria, President, Indian Dairy Federation - Dr. Rajhoria presented Dairy Industry and gave introduction on how well Dairy industry performed during covid period, maintaining good supply chain. He then suggested that our exports of dairy products are less than 1% and Ministry has suggested increasing it to 10%, so now we to look for new markets. Some study should be commissioned to find out newer markets. LATAM countries are still untouched, US has disposable incomes and they will enjoy the taste of milk and milk products. There is a need to reclassify the HS Codes. Many manufactured are facing issue in the identification and they should be scientifically done. He stressed on processing of dairy so as to have multiple products and be more export focused.

About ICFA

Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture is the apex body in India, working on business, policy and development agenda and serving as global platform for trade facilitation, partnerships, technology and agribusiness services. A proactive approach helps ICFA in discerning critical challenges emerging in Indian agriculture along with creating opportunities for development, value addition and international trade to accelerate growth in food and agriculture sector globally. With its 27 industry Working Groups and sector specific Business Councils, ICFA represents the interests of key stakeholders at the national level and through its international platforms and partnerships, ICFA facilitates India's global engagement in food and agriculture sector.

For enhanced sustainability, food safety and quality standards, ICFA has taken up the Agriculture Stewardship Program by launching Healthy Food Initiative program and Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) project. In a short period of five years, the Chamber has signed up MoUs with the University of California, University of Maryland, Michigan State University, Iowa State University, Western Australia University, German Agribusiness Alliance, Borlaug Institute for South Asia, African Asian Rural Development Organization Nasscom, Sociedad Rural Argentina (SRA), FAMATO, CCI Pau Béarn and IFPRI etc. Through international partnerships, ICFA envisions to mobilise technologies and investments that will catalyse agribusiness and agri start-ups. The 20 Member ICFA Board has distinguished luminaries with the Pioneer of India's Green Revolution, Prof MS Swaminathan as its Patron.

ICFA Partners



ICFA Members



Awaiting to assist your participation

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