

Clusters identified for promotion of Agriculture Exports

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has announced first ever Agriculture Export Policy in December, 2018. **In order to achieve the objectives of the Agriculture Export Policy, clusters have been identified across the country for development of exports. In Maharashtra, six clusters have been identified for grapes, mango, pomegranate, banana, oranges and onion.** For successful implementation, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO's) and co-operatives should be linked with the farmers and exporters. Hence, required infrastructure needs to be provided in these clusters and use of latest technology in agriculture has to be adopted. The Indian Institute of Packaging has been roped in for working on packaging standards for international markets in order to increase the demand for the identified products.

Many countries in the Middle East region are ready to invest in facilities like cold chain and warehousing in India for import of agro and processed food products by them. Therefore, State Governments have a very important role in implementation of the agri export policy. The main aim of the policy is to reach farmers at grass-root level and double their income for achieving the overall objective of the policy.

In India, agriculture and horticulture production is around 600 million tonnes per year. About 30% of fresh horticulture produce goes waste and there is an urgent need to strengthen the supply chain to avoid the losses. India's agri produce should not be confined to our boundaries and for that international markets need to be explored. Adherence to quality standards and health standards at the production level itself have to be followed.

As part of the Policy, shrimps, meat, basmati & non-basmati rice, grapes, bananas, pomegranate, vegetables including potatoes, processed / value added products, cashew, plant parts/medicinal herbs in value added form, including herbal medicines, food based nutraceuticals, aromatics, spices (cumin, turmeric, pepper), ethnic & organic food have been identified as potential winning sectors. Most of the

products / clusters are already aligned with this objective.

Emphasis has been given on processing and value addition in the policy through workshops synergy amongst all relevant stakeholders is expected to provide necessary boost in achieving higher exports of India's high quality agri products.

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