

Face to Face at World Cashew Convention 2017

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Dr R K Bhooles, Vice-Chairman, CEPCI

An Exclusive Interview with Dr R K Bhooles, Vice-Chairman, CEPCI, at the World Cashew Convention, 09-11 Feb, 2017, Singapore

How can India regain its position as the top exporter of cashew kernel?



CEPCPI is trying to regain its position in the international market, as we are well aware that it was India which initiated industrialisation of cashews and brought cashew kernel as a commodity in the International market and now it’s the biggest consumer. Even though the exports have decreased, the processing has in fact had gone up indicating that domestic market has picked up greater momentum. Hence, we have not been able to cater to the international markets, but we should have kept the export markets

at the earlier levels and should have gone for more production so that we would be able to supply international markets as well as cater to the domestic market. CEPCI has taken a lot of initiatives to improve the exports but the biggest concern is maintaining parity between RCN prices and kernel price. Right now, the domestic price for cashew kernels is much higher than prices in export market. Hence most of the exporters have started supplying more to domestic markets. Earlier most of wholes and pieces were exported leaving brokens to domestic market. Now, in domestic market we have demand for all grades leaving India lose its premium position in the International market. Cashew industry in India is likely to rebound; the more it goes down the more it reaches higher.

What according to you is the road map to attain sustainability of cashew production and also have an overall growth in the cashew sector?

CEPCI has formulated a road map to attain sustainability of cashew Industry. We know that the domestic production of RCN in India is not adequate. If we look at the history of cashew processing it can be differentiated into 3 stages; in 1st stage the RCN production was in abundance and most of the RCN processed in India was exported, in 2nd stage when production + imports and exports were at par. In 3rd stage is when production+ imports are very less when compared to that of exports (less than 50%). India is producing about 700,000 tonnes of RCN and it processes 16,00,000 tonnes indicating shortage.

After mechanisation, it has provided a feel of comfort for the producing country to process in their own land with encouragement from respective local governments, which in turn has promoted processing and discouraged RCN exports to countries like India and Vietnam. If this continues and if we are not taking collective measures to improve our production, maybe in another 5-6 years India will be forced to restrict its processing only to the extent of what it produces. So we need to take proactive measures to improve our cashew production and productivity.

If we analyse the demand of cashew at the present rate, ten years down the line the production is estimated to reach 20.25 lakh tonnes of cashew which creates a gap of 18,00,000 tonnes. We need to have a program to improve cashew production, on that front CEPCI has formulated a road map and they have submitted it to the concerned government agency and with the support of State and Central Governments and all other concerned stakeholders of cashew Industry, proposes to implement the road map, which consists of 3 specific areas of development. Starting from 2017, our first step will be encouraging farmers to have a proper pre-harvest management system, irrigating cashew field can improve the yield by 15-20%. Under this first stage we have targeted around 10 lakh ha of cashews and we planning to extend that to over 80% of total area by next 3 years along with that we are looking at area expansion by 25% in next 3 years. Along with these three phase of implementation, we are also planning to rejuvenate the old and senile plantations of India with high yielding varieties, by doing all these maximum changes can be achieved in attaining sustainability in the Indian cashew Industry.

Your views on WCC 2017

I appreciate your efforts in mobilising different stakeholders together, when I say there is a criticism that it concentrates mainly on RCN trade, I must congratulate WCC for choosing the most neglected area of cashew industry. All the very best for the next year, am hoping that next year it would be even more fruitful.