

Members Communique S-15/NHC-14

Date:18-Jul-13

National Horticulture Conference

Dear NCCD member,


The National Horticulture Conference held on 17th July, 2013 at New Delhi discussed the state of horticulture in the country. The conference was participated in by scientists, horticultural experts and officials of the government. The Union Agriculture Minister, Mr. Sharad Pawar inaugurated the Conference. In his inaugural address, while congratulating for the record production in horticulture, the minister highlighted two major components: productivity and production linked cold-chain. The solution to the challenges was expected from improved transfer of knowledge and enhanced technology interventions.


Five NCCD members also were invited to participate the PPP initiatives session. This session involved sharing of the Indo-Dutch & Indo-Israel joint activities & other PPP options including on solar powered pumps. The invites were provided basis first response priority.


Highlights of the Inaugural Session in reference to cold-chain:

- ❖ **Shri. Sanjeev Chopra** (MD-NHM, JS-DAC) outlined the strategies of the Government for the XII five years plan. He highlighted the areas that would get reduced focus and those that would find enhanced support. Cold-chain formed an important segment in the latter. He stressed that improved market linkages were necessary to bring value to farmers and consumers alike. He announced the enhanced scope of NHM which would henceforth subsume under one umbrella other on-going schemes of NHM, NHB, CDB, NBM, CIH and HMNEH. He also announced that new components would be introduced in the relevant schemes while rationalising the cost norms and assistance patterns. Greater responsibility to the States and thrust to Agri-entrepreneurs and FPOs would be provided. Mr. Chopra concluded that while land area would not increase, demand will and increased productivity with an efficient post-harvest supply chain that linked the production to the consumer would be high priority areas in the XII Plan period.*
- ❖ **Shri. Gorakh Singh** (Horticulture Commissioner, DAC) spoke of the requirement & prioritisation of Rejuvenation and High Density Production (HDP) especially in light of lowered area expansion. These and other technology based best practises would be needed to meet productivity increase, necessary to match growing demand. He also mentioned that cold-chains would be necessitated to connect the higher production to markets.*
- ❖ **Shri. Pawanexh Kohli** (Chief Advisor, NCCD) addresses the conference specifically on the topic of Cold-chain, insisting that the current development was not leading to a cold-chain, but leaning more towards cold warehousing. He highlighted that the cold stores developed were mid-points of the cold-chain and hence service only goods that existed*

within the cold supply chain. He inferred that this was the reason imported produce was growing as they originated in the cold-chain, while our domestic fresh produce was not introduced into the chain. He suggested that the critical missing links that needed development were packhouses with precoolers & staging cold rooms, reefer transport systems and cold distribution hubs. He related the cold-chain to a pipeline and said we must expand from storage based models to those that created a supply chain in steady motion. He also suggested that the CIPHET study that quantified post-harvest wastage at Rs. 44000 crores in 2007, involved use of cold storage. He said that a differentiating study on the supply chain that operated without aiding infrastructure and technology could reveal even higher losses to the nation.

 **Shri. Ashish Bahuguna** (Secretary, DAC) announced the need for convergence across all focus areas with the prime intent that scientists, professionals industry and policy makers help develop a more robust horticulture output in the country. He frequently referred to Mr. Kohli's address to reiterate the need for cold-chain that serviced as a pipeline for horticulture and which involved components that created integrity in the supply chain. Mr. Bahuguna asked officers to be more holistic in their development efforts and for a greater knowledge sharing in horticulture, exhorting coordination in efforts, improved information flow and speedier implementation of schemes.

 **Shri. Sharad Pawar** Honourable Minister of Agriculture & Food Processing industries reiterated the necessity to set up Cold chain infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses in horticultural sector. He further required greater focus on increasing productivity through quality planting material, HDP and other best practises. He said, "You have seen the NCCD presentation on the status of cold chain scenario in the country and the road map for addressing the gaps in the sector. We still have a long way to go in establishing a robust cold chain system from farm to fork. Can we look at technology that is relevant to the India context? Can we not take up integrated projects on cold chain in production clusters with linkages to consumption centres? Can we not identify more origin-destination routes for the movement of horticulture produce?" While referring to NCCD's address, he indicated that imported produce was becoming a challenge to our domestic growers, while their produce was not yet taking advantage of market linked cold chain.

 **Shri. Anup K Thakur** (Special Secretary, DAC) gave a vote of thanks to the inaugural speakers and asked the conference participants to fully involve in the technical sessions to develop recommendations to apply under the direction provided by the Hon'ble Minister and Secretary. He too spoke on cold-chain and asked the states to develop specific examples of cold chains for produce specific to their regions, while linking with source and markets in other regions.

