



Code Of Hygienic Practices For Sustainable Rural Exporting Horticulture Produce

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Abstract:

It is true that Indian Agriculture is transforming itself as a commercial venture through horticulture. The success of horticulture lies in handling the marketing task, because almost the entire horticulture produce is a marketable surplus, which attitudinal changes of the major players consisting of horticultural producers of our country. The export strategy of Indian horticultural produce can be realized by strictly adhering the code of hygienic practices. This paper focuses on code of hygienic practices for the primary production of horticulture to accelerate Indian export.

Keyword: Horticulture Products, Codex, Export

INTRODUCTION:

Horticulture products comprising of growing and marketing of vegetables, fruits, flowers and ornamental shrubs. India is home for a wide variety of horticultural produce, such as fruits, vegetables and flowers. It has become the second largest horticultural producer in the world. Yet India's share in the world trade of horticulture products is miniscule. India does not enjoy even one percent share in the global trade of horticulture products.

The progress of horticultural export from India for the period between 2000-01 and 2010-11

Year	Quantity (MTS)	Value (Rs. Cr)	Yearly (Quantity)	Change (%) (value)
2000-01	6,23,988	844	-	-
2001-02	7,88,908	988	26.43	17.06
2002-03	9,33,655	1087	18.35	7.99
2003-04	1,29,1,307	1457	38.31	36.55
2004-05	1,29,6,530	1364	0.40	-6.39
2005-06	1,46,5,040	1659	12.99	21.62
2006-07	1,98,3,870	2412	35.41	45.38
2007-08	1,72,4,569	2437	-13.07	01.03
2008-09	2,64,6,268	3659	53.44	50.14
2009-10	2,55,9,528	4517	-03.28	23.44
2010-11	2,07,2015	3588	-19.05	-14.65

[Source: APEDA – 2011]

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India's share in global production of horticultural produce is far higher than its share in global exports. Although part of the reason is India's large domestic market, more importantly, the horticultural produce sector has not leveraged on the export market as a proactive source of revenue, the main reason is Indian rural exporting horticultural producers are lacking in adoption of code of hygienic practices as produced by international standard authorities.

The international market for horticultural produce prescribes the code of hygienic practices for fresh fruits and vegetables (CODEX). In essence, the export – driven strategy on Indian horticultural produce should focus on observing CODEX, which was defined as “an organizational commitment to satisfying customer through the use of an integrated system of tools, techniques and training”.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Banupratap Singh (1992) opines on the agriculture needs, that “India has three distinct advantages over other farm exporters”. Firstly, the availability of a variety of agricultural and allied products. Secondly, proximity of importing countries providing freight advantages. Thirdly low domestic farm prices. Author further suggest that, there is a need for recognizing agriculture as major economic and commercial activity at par with industry and providing it with all the essential facilities, support and incentives, to ensure faster agricultural growth, and stimulate overall growth of national economy and to overcome balance of payment and foreign exchange crisis by augmenting and promoting of export potential of agriculture products. Charles W.L.Hill (1998) opines that one big impediment to exporting is ignorance of foreign market opportunities. More over neophyte exporters often become discouraged or frustrated with the exporting procedures, because they encounter many problems such as delays and pitfalls. The author suggests the ways to overcome ignorance and other problems in gathering information. Government Agencies and export management companies can help an exporter in identifying export opportunities. Many of the pitfalls associated with exporting can be avoided if a company hires experienced export management agencies and consultants. Jaydeep and Tanya Singh (2010) suggested that, to achieve India's percentage share of global merchandise trade within the next five years, the new trade policy (2009-14) should propose measures for improvement in infrastructure related to export, bringing down transaction costs, and providing full refund of all indirect taxes and levies. Shinoj and Mathur (2008) studied the changes in comparative advantage status of India's major agricultural exports vis-a-vis other Asian players during the post-reforms period (1991-2004). The finding showed that, the exports of certain commodities like cashew ,oil, meat products, has been able to maintain its comparative advantage, but several others products like tea, coffee, spices, marine products, etc have been negatively affected. The authors concluded that India has been found losing out its comparative advantage in export of some of the agricultural commodities to other Asian competitors during the period after economic reforms.

CODEX

Scientific research over the last decades has shown that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables to protective against many types of cancers and lowers the occurrence of coronary heart disease. This recognition of the importance of routine consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, together with a marked increase in the year round availability of fresh fruits and vegetables from a global market, has contributed to the substantial increase in consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables over the past two decades. However, the recent increase in reports of food borne associated with fresh fruits and vegetables has raised concerns from public health agencies and consumers about the safety of these products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

The CODEX addresses Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) that will help control microbial, chemical and physical hazards associated with all stages of the production of fresh fruits and vegetables from primary production to packing. Particular attention is given to minimizing microbial hazards.

The code provides a general framework of recommendations to allow uniform adoption by horticulture sectors rather than providing detailed recommendation for specific agricultural practices operations or commodities.

GENERAL GUIDELINES OF CODEX

The general guidelines are included in the General principles of Food hygiene. For the purpose of this code,



the following terms have to be fulfilled.

-Agricultural inputs: - any incoming material (e.g seeds, fertilizers, water, agricultural chemicals, plant support, etc) used for the primary production of fresh fruits and vegetables.

-Agricultural worker: any person that undertakes one or more of the following: cultivation, harvesting and packing of fresh fruits and vegetables.

-Antimicrobial agents: Any substance of natural synthetic or semi-synthetic origin which at low concentrations kills or inhibits the growth of microorganisms but causes little or no host damage.

-Biological control – The use of competing biological (such as insects, microorganisms and / or microbial metabolites) for the control of mites, pests, plant pathogens and spoilage organisms.

-Bio solids: Sludge and other residue deposits obtained from sewage treatment plants and from treatment applied to urban and industrial wastes (food industries or other types of industry).

-Composting – a managed process in which organic materials are digested aerobically or anaerobically by microbial action.

-Cultivation: any agricultural action or practice used by growers to allow and improve the growing conditions of fresh fruits or vegetables grown in the field (with or without cover) or in protected facilities (hydroponics systems, greenhouses).

-Farm any prime or establishment in which fresh fruits and / or vegetables are grown and harvested and the surroundings under the control of the same management.

-Grower the person responsible for the management of the primary production of fresh fruits and vegetables.

-Harvester the person responsible for the management of the harvesting of fresh fruits and vegetables.

-Hazard a biological, chemical or physical agent in, or condition of, food with the potential to cause an adverse health effect.

-Hazardous material any compound, which, at specific levels, has the potential to cause adverse health effects. Hydroponics – a general term for the production of plants without soil in a water medium.

-Manure Animal excrement which may be mixed with litter or other material, and which may be fermented or otherwise treated.

-Micro organisms include yeasts, moulds, bacteria, viruses and parasites. When used as an adjective, the term “microbial” is used.

-Packer – the person responsible for the management of post-harvest processing and packing of fresh fruits and vegetables

-Packing – the action of putting fresh fruits and vegetables in a package. This may take place in a field or in an establishment.

-Packing establishment – any indoor establishment in which fresh fruits and vegetables receive post harvest treatment and are packaged.

-Primary production – those steps involved in the growing and harvesting of fresh fruits and vegetables such as planting, irrigation, application of fertilizers, application of agricultural chemicals, etc.



TYPES OF WATER

Clean water – water that does not compromise food safety in the circumstances of its use.

Potable water – water which meets the quality standards of drinking water such as describe in the WHO guidelines for Drinking Water Quality.

CONCLUSION

Customer – oriented code of hygienic practices for fresh fruits and vegetables (CODEX) practices that lead to profitability and market share is important factor to accelerate export of horticultural produce. Market of developed countries issued CODEX guidelines for the export of horticultural produce. If Indian horticultural producers in rural areas will adopt the CODEX guidelines effectively as a more binding requirements on export of fresh fruits and vegetables is that CODEX must be maintained and certified before export. Since the global demand for horticultural produce increasing faster than envisages, the Indian producer would certainly be more competitive in the long run. Besides, the share of Indian horticultural produce in the global market is not very high there is more scope to increase exports of horticultural produce.

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