

Executive Summary of Webinar

The Impact of COVID 19 on Food Processing Sector and Road Ahead

The webinar organized by the Agrovision Foundation at 11 am on April 24, 2020, was well attended by senior representatives of both the public and the private sectors from India and abroad as well. Setting the tone for the discussion, Moderator **Ms. Vibha Bhatia of the MMACTIV SciTech Communications** explained the idea of this webinar on **'The Impact of COVID 19 on Food Processing Sector and Road Ahead'**

The webinar has been organized to provide a perspective on the situation, understand current issues of Food Processing Sector and the way forward.

Ms. Bhatia gave a brief introduction of all the eminent participants invited for the webinar

Dr C Anandharamakrishnan Director, Indian Instt of Food Processing Technology (IIFPT)
Dr Raghavrao K S M S, Director Central Food Technology Research Institute, MYSURU
Dr Subodh Jindal, President, All India Food Processors Association (AIFPA)
Mr Nandkishore Kagliwal, Chairman and MD Nath Group
Mr Piruz Khambatta, Chairman and MD Rasana Pvt Ltd
Mr Anand Chordia, Chairman, Food Processing Committee, MMCA, Pune
Director Innovation and Technology, Suhana

Ms Vibha Bhatia introduced

Dr C D Mayee, Chairman, Agrovision Adv Council

Mr Ravi Boratkar, President Agrovision Foundation, Publisher, Agro Spectrum and NuFFOODS Spectrum

Dr C D Mayee in his opening speech took overall review of the situation of impact on Food Processing Sector in India. Dr Mayee further added that Food Processing Industries is suffering a lot and expecting support from Govt. like other sectors. Since Food Processing depend on agriculture, any crisis on Food Processing always impact on Agriculture sector and farmer, hence farmer also should be supported.

Dr.C.D.Mayee further added No Transportation and Non availability of raw material at the Food Processing unit due to no transportation are the 2 important challenges. Both these can be resolved by allowing interstate transportation to carry raw material, this will help to start the units post covid. Dr.C.D.Mayee requested the panellists to discuss the issues on Food Processing

The impact of Covid-19 on Food Processing Sector was discussed in the webinar. The experts' advices and points were noted

1. We have 18 Mega Food Parks, however could not invite investment due to Industrial climate, Restrictions due to COVID, Banks reluctant to support
2. It's assumed that there would be break some economy, demand for processed food would be less and local. Govt. priority would be Food and Pharma. In such situation if we could invite countries like Japan which do not grow any crop, to invest in Food Parks. We can run the MFPs
3. Since Kharif is just on some weeks, we need to be ready with all required material like seeds, fertiliser, pesticides, etc. in required quantity so that the crops for processing would be available for processing.
4. AIFPA is in interaction with Govt on availability of transportation permits and availability of workers
5. 10 fruit crops should come in next season
6. Processors, should fruits are available get it pulped or cut and salt and stock it. This will help to run the unit in season, and to get jobs to workers, make product available for customers and doing business through the season
7. Enquiries increasing from last few days for setting up units.
8. The COVID will help to upgrade overall standard of food industries
9. COVID 19 is also an economic virus
10. Consumer behaviour will change post COVID
11. Food Ind and R&D need to gear up for the change
12. Private sector is very proactive and already started working on appropriate product with nutritional product in affordable cost.
13. Opportunities for MSME for export
14. In food processing we need to be very careful at every stage from start to packaging. Any small mistake/carelessness can create question on entire processing sector.
15. Enquiries from Singapore and South Asian countries for import from India
16. Research institutes should come together and find solution to save perishable
17. Suggestion from AIFPA Mofp to help farmers to save perishables, Maintain supply chain of essential foods, and Monthly support to processing and post-harvest people, To restart the unit give loans @2% based on 3 yrs turnover, Packaging material should be allowed to manufacture and considered as essential commodity.
18. Passes to the staff working in go down should be given, Since the payment is not coming from debtors and bank is not supporting, Govt should pay salaries to the company employees, the same amount should be considered as soft loan to the company, Also for PF payment of the employees, the no should be 1000 instead of 25, GST need to be reduced or/and GST should give loans
19. Processing staff should be treated as essential service employee and should be

protected

20. Agri breeding policy changed from yield to processing quality, will help to grow processable produce.
21. Need to create environment to make India a very viable mfg. place replacing China. This is possible with Think Tank, Task force and Road Map.

Mr Ravi Boratkar in his concluding speech expressed the gratification to have such an elite panel for this webinar. He further said that Food Processing Industry even in this stressed days looking positive and very optimistic about post COVID situation. He appreciated the contribution, the suggestions and the expectations made by the experts in the discussion. Mr Boratkar mentioned that Government is willing to help the sector and giving positive response to the industry leaders, registered participants should send their queries, suggestions which can be sent to Govt for further discussion and action

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