

20th WORLD COCONUT DAY

2nd September 2018

"Coconut for
Good Health,
Wealth &
Wellness"

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We are celebrating September 2nd as 'World Coconut Day' every year to acknowledge the importance of coconut the most useful tree in the life of human beings. Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) in its 25th ministerial meeting in 1998 took a decision to observe its foundation day, 2nd September every year as world coconut day. APCC was formed in the year 1969 as an intergovernmental organization under the aegis of Economic and Social Commission Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) for strengthening the regional cooperation among the coconut producing countries. Starting with only three countries India, Indonesia and Philippines the community is now composed of 18 member countries. The first coconut day was celebrated on 2nd September 1999.

The objective of observing coconut day is to create increased awareness on the goodness of coconut and focus national and international attention to this crop and to enhance it's potential to alleviate poverty, encourage investment in the sector and

promote the total development of coconut industry in the coconut producing countries. This occasion recall the significance of coconut in human life and its relationship with the social cultural and economic wellbeing of humans. Coconut is described as 'the tree of life' because of its unique property by providing food, nutrition, drink, health, aesthetic value and other useful household materials. As natural and eco friendly choice, coconut has a future and potential to score on carbon credit also. On World Coconut day the importance of this tree is propagated and its value is made aware in the life of human beings.

Every year APCC announces a theme message for propagating among people to improve the socioeconomic status of coconut industry. The message given by APCC on the first coconut Day in 1999 was "Plant coconut, Eat coconut, Drink coconut and Use coconut". This message is meaningful in the present context also. APCC wishes to continue focus on the daily benefits and usefulness of coconut to



the health and wealth of families and therefore they announced the 2018 Coconut Day theme as “Coconut for good health, wealth and wellness”. Coconut palm is the attribute of health and wealth of people wherever it grows. Being a nutrient rich food item and an economical and ecological sustainable crop, coconut is now getting a wide range of demand all over the world market. Coconut is an important food crop for the major chunk of Indian population. Coconut and coconut products especially Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) is gaining popularity through out the world due to its contributing factor to the health, nutrition and wellness of human beings. This is due to its multiple medicinal and nutraceutical properties being revealed day by day. Popularizing the health, nutrition benefit of coconut oil and coconut products in the national and international level is another focus area identified by the Board. Virgin Coconut Oil is nowadays getting more popular among people as a functional food since it contains ingredients that give health promoting properties over and above its nutritional properties. VCO is also considered as a nutraceutical product because it provides nutrients good for health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. In Philippines, VCO value chain starts from farmers and end with medical shops. Medical shops have also started participating in VCO value chain. The fact that, out of the 90% saturated fatty acids contained in coconut oil 75% is Medium Chain fatty acids which is good for health which is being revealed day by day. More clinical studies need to be conducted. This new development in health sector brought in unprecedented increase in demand of coconut products in domestic and international markets.

In the recent past many new programmes were introduced by Coconut Development Board, in coconut sector which has helped India to improve the coconut situation substantially. Successful implementation of schemes like, demonstration of Integrated Nutrient Management practices (INM) in

farmers field and Replanting and rejuvenation of old, root(wilt) disease advanced trees for productivity improvement, Technology Mission on Coconut, training for palm climbing and coconut management, formation of coconut farmers’ organizations, coconut palm insurance and development of processing technologies for value added products have brought much benefits to the small and marginal coconut farmers in the country. Organized functioning of farmer collectives facilitated by the Board ensured proper management of coconut gardens which also helped in increased production and productivity.

In the eve of celebrating 20th World coconut Day India has emerged as the number one coconut producing country in the world with a considerably high productivity. Still much more remains to be done in Indian coconut sector. Increase in production of coconut was due to productivity factor but the area under coconut also have to be increased to bring about almost equal contribution of both the factors to coconut production. Area under coconut will have to be expanded to non coconut growing states. India is yet to become a prominent export earner in coconut sector. Possibly due to the good domestic demand and an assured market, serious attempt for export was not made so far. New strategies for export improvement are being formulated by CDB to support export promotion of traditional products like coconut oil, coir, desiccated coconut etc. India is the largest consumer of coconut in the world. Almost 95% of production in the country is consumed indigenously.

India celebrates World Coconut Day under the auspices of Coconut Development Board, CPCRI, Department of Agriculture/Horticulture and state Agriculture universities. This year World Coconut Day at national level will be conducted at Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya, Raipur on 2nd September. State level celebrations will also be arranged in major coconut growing states. Coconut day is an occasion to review policies and formulate future plans for this sector. It is also an occasion to find ways and means to make coconut sector a sustainable industry. Devoting one day to this crop have helped to record tangible improvement in creating awareness about the goodness of coconut, a perspective crop for future in the last 19 years. In this back ground let us appreciate APCC for taking the wise decision to celebrate World Coconut Day. On this occasion let us commit ourselves to eat coconut, drink coconut and use coconut for leading a healthy and wealthy life. ■



Asian and Pacific Coconut Community

Jakarta - Indonesia

Statement from the Asian and Pacific Coconut Community (APCC) on the Claim that Coconut Oil is "Pure Poison"

Given during the 48th COCOTECH Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, August 22, 2018

Yesterday, a vicious attack on Coconut Oil was made by Dr. Karlin Michels, Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health, where she claimed that it was "pure poison" and "one of the worst foods" that one can eat. The APCC, which represents 18 coconut-producing countries, refutes this statement as sensationalist, contrary to the truth, and damaging to the welfare of millions of people.

Today, Coconut Oil and Coconut are consumed by over 1 billion people and are the basis of the best cuisines in the world. Clearly, if Coconut Oil and the Coconut itself are "pure poison" as claimed, then the world's population would be at least 1 billion people less. The Coconut has a tradition dating back several thousands of years and is unique in being revered by many cultures as the "Tree of Life". Dr. Michels' claim is an insult to so many cultures.

There is no evidence that Coconut Oil consumption is linked to heart disease, inflammatory diseases and obesity (Kaunitz, 1970; Prior, 1981). In fact, recent studies have shown that Coconut Oil is healthy (Khaw, 2018). On the contrary, people who shifted from their traditional coconut diet have become obese (WHO, 2003).

On the other hand, it is the trans-fats from the Western diet that is the poison. Trans-fats have been estimated to have caused 30,000 premature deaths a year in the US (Ascherio, 1999) and is implicated in diabetes (Willett, 2006). It is the Dietary Guidelines for Americans that has been making the Americans obese since it was first published in 1980 (Cohen, 2015); this diet is making the rest of the world obese as well (WHO, 2018).

"Repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth", such is the practice of propagandists. This attack on Coconut Oil is an old lie that is once again being repeated.

The truth is that Coconut Oil is one of the healthiest oils in the world.

Finally, this irresponsible statement threatens the livelihood of millions of poor Coconut farmers. Dr. Michels should apologize and retract her statement.




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