

Hopeful days ahead for coconut farmers

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Fluctuation and low price of coconut coupled with the pest and diseases of coconut has brought down coconut cultivation in the country. The situation is improving now with better price and increased production. The time is not far away when coconut farmers themselves decide the price of their produce. Even though many external factors are deciding the price of coconut now, coconut producer companies registered in the country can play a vital role in fixing the price of their produce in future. After a long period of continuous low price, farmers are getting a reasonable price to coconut since 2013. This is a good trend and the farmers have to utilize the same.

As the processing industries require large investment, the individuals are hesitant to set up processing plants. Now the farmer collectives formed in the country are equipped to take up processing. As the Coconut Producer Companies are taking raw materials from their members itself, the profit will reach farmers themselves rather than an individual or a small group making the profits. Once the Coconut Producer companies are coming to the processing sector, the whole coconut sector will get rejuvenated. As the farmers gets assured with high income from the crop, proper care and management will be given to the crop which will increase the productivity of the crop.

This is the right time for the Coconut Producer Companies to take up processing and value addition of coconut. The producer companies should take up methods to improve

the production of the nut right from selection of good quality planting materials to the marketing of processed goods.

Apart from traditional coconut based industries like copra processing, coconut oil extraction and coir manufacturing units, desiccated coconut powder units, packaging of tender coconut water and activated carbon production are getting deep rooted in the country. There is high export demand for virgin coconut oil, desiccated coconut, activated carbon etc. If we analyse the export data, it is found that even though we are exporting more coconut oil than Srilanka the export of oil cake is very less than that of Srilanka. The Producer companies have to move in accordance with the world demand. Apart from concentrating on a single product, the producer company has to concentrate on product diversification.

As we all know coconut is known as Kalpavriksha – each and every part of it needs to be utilized effectively without any wastage. Right from the perianth and stalk of coconuts, diversification can be started. In several houses the dry perianth of coconut is polished and kept which adds extra beauty and is eco friendly.

Our country is the major exporter of coir products and stands third in the export of coir fibre. United States and European Union are the major importers of coir products. Even though India is the major exporter of coir products only less than 10 % of the husk is utilized for fibre extraction. Here lies the scope of the companies.

The fibre can be extracted and the coir pith or coir dust, which is the spongy



residual material of fibre extraction has immense potential as a soil conditioner and moisture-retaining medium for horticultural applications. Now a days the cultivation of horticultural crops is gaining importance under controlled conditions in poly houses where there is wide demand for coir pith. It is also used in pot trays for raising the seedlings and finds great demand in floriculture. The world demand for coir geotextiles which help in preventing soil erosion is also increasing day by day. The coir composites can be used as wood substitute also.

The coconut shell which is mostly used as fuel find a variety of uses. The handicrafts made out of shell are very attractive and expensive. Many diversified handicraft items can be made with coconut shell. India, a favourite destination of tourists can reap a lot from the same. The oil extracted from the shell has medicinal properties. Activated carbon from coconut shell is a major contributor to the export basket.

Virgin coconut oil capsules are getting more popular as it is easily

portable and easily consumable. As virgin coconut oil finds uses for its medicinal properties and also for many other uses, there is world wide demand for the same. Virgin coconut oil fetches high price when compared to coconut oil. In the fast moving world, products like desiccated coconut, coconut milk powder and coconut cream is catching the market. Coconut water also has diversified uses as it can be used in making vinegar, nata- de- coco, ice creams, etc.

The waste water from processing plants can be further utilized for the production of biogas which in turn will meet the power requirement and thereby decrease the cost of production. Coconut producer companies are having much wider scopes through product diversification without the wastage of any part of coconut thereby increasing the income of farmers

The future of coconut will be secure in the hands of Coconut

Producer Companies once they venture into processing and value addition. Coconut Producer Company can go up to higher levels and can contribute to the GDP of the country. They can provide employment to several thousands of people. The careful and judicious use of the available resources need to be ensured for the revival of coconut sector of the country.

Project Approval Committee of TMOC clears 13 Projects



A view of the 44th meeting of the Project Approval Committee

The 44th meeting of the Project Approval Committee (PAC) on Technology Mission on Coconut (TMOC) held at Kochi under the Chairmanship of Shri T.K. Jose IAS, Chairman, Coconut Development Board cleared 13 projects with an outlay of Rs. 40.79 crores and subsidy of Rs.3.45 crores. The projects include three research projects and 10 projects on processing and product diversification.

Under the sub component Processing and Product Diversification, financial assistance will be extended for a desiccated coconut Powder unit having the capacity to process 60,000 nuts per

day, a virgin coconut oil unit with the capacity to process 10,000 nuts per day, two Tender Coconut Water Preservation and Packaging units with the capacity to process 8,000 Tender Coconuts per day, three Coconut Shell based Activated Carbon units with the capacity to 44 MT shell per day and three copra/ball copra units with processing capacity of 61,60,000 nuts per year.

In Kerala, one Tender Coconut Water processing unit with a capacity to process 3,000 Tender Coconuts per day, and 3 Copra / Ball copra, units having the capacity to process 61,60,000 nuts per year, in Karnataka, one Coconut

Shell based Activated Carbon unit having capacity for processing 22 MT/day per day and in Tamil Nadu, one Virgin Coconut Oil unit for processing 10,000 nuts per day, one Desiccated Coconut Powder unit for processing 60,000 coconut per day, one Tender Coconut Water processing unit for processing 5,000 Tender Coconuts per day, 2 Coconut Shell based Activated Carbon units for processing 22 MT coconut shell per day will be extended financial assistance.

Dr. A.G. Gopalakrishna, Scientist, CFTRI (CSIR), Mysore; Dr. Vinayaka Hegde, Head, Crop Protection, CPCRI, Kasaragod; Smt. Usha.K., AGM, NABARD, Regional Office, Thriuvananthapuram; Shri. M.M.Jose, Senior Marketing Development Officer, D.M.I. Kochi; Shri Sugata Ghose, Chief Coconut Development Officer, CDB, Dr A.K Nandi, Secretary, CDB and Shri Hemachandra, Deputy Director, CDB attended the meeting.