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QUALITY CONTROL FOR EXPORTS OF HORTICULTURAL PRODUCE



Dr. S. L. Patil

INTRODUCTION:

Horticulture has to play a vital role in bringing about a socio economic change in the country. Due to the high productivity per unit, horticultural produce provide much better economic return if properly managed besides serving as a good source of foreign exchange.

Through Government of India, horticultural crops have started receiving some attention from Fourth 'Five Year Plan', giving a boost to research and development of fruits, vegetables and flowers. However, the weakest link here in its development is lack of appropriate infrastructure for post-harvest management, particularly, packing, transport, storage and marketing system.

With the recent liberalization of India's trade policies greater trust being laid on the horticulture sector, the time is ripe for exploiting the rich potential in our country.

Abstract

India is a vast storehouse of a variety of fruits and vegetables. India ranks second in the production of fruits and vegetables in the world. Nevertheless, India's share in the global export is near about only one per cent in the case of fresh fruits and vegetables. India's losses are about 30 per cent annually in total production of fruits and vegetables with a worth of Rs. 6000 crores. These losses occur at several stages in the post-harvest management chain, namely harvesting, grading, packing, transport, storage and marketing etc. The total installed capacity for processing fruits and vegetables is equivalent to only one per cent of the annual production amounting to 2 lakh tonnes.

Keywords :fruits, vegetables, harvesting, grading, packing, transport, storage, marketing etc

Short Profile

Dr. S. L. Patil is working as Associate Professor at Head of the Department of Economics in Sangola college, sangola.

The recent changes by the government now allow companies opportunity to make a major contribution to economic development in trade. The infrastructural facilities for export of horticultural produce need a fresh look to understand the subjects in the present context of liberalised economy and globalisation. These include raw material, packaging, storage, processing and transportation. 'Quality' is the keyword in the global scenario. Standard of product has gained an unviable position as instrument of

commercial transactions and building competitiveness in the market place.

The emergence of global market of an unprecedented magnitude has created a demand for globally standardised products. The world is leveling up to world standards commonality. Exchange of goods and services in

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the world market is a complex phenomenon, on the one hand, the purchaser is tempted by quality, originality, price, etc. and on the other, he is uneasy about the possibility of being cheated or disappointed and also about payment difficulties in case of disagreements.

The exporter of goods and services tries to make the most of the given conditions and does not give enough thought to dispelling uneasiness. Reference to standards is one of the most tried and tested methods of allaying such fears, as this is a kind of guarantee, which is familiar to overseas purchasers (Key to export, 2000).

One of the principal provisions of the Code relates to the establishment of a Central Enquiry Point, which is able to answer all reasonable enquiries from interested parties regarding technical regulations, standards, certification systems, etc. adopted or proposed by control or local government bodies. In India, the Bureau of Indian Standards has been nominated as the Central Enquiry Point. Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) provides technical assistance to exporters through various ways (Meena & Yadav, 2001).

Standardisation for Fruit and Vegetables National Standardisation

There are a number of agencies in the country involved in standardisation activities relevant to the fruits and vegetable.

1. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
2. Ministry of Food Processing Industry
3. Directorate of Marketing and Inspection
4. Bureau of Indian Standards.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, through the Central Committee for Food Standards (CCFS) is engaged in preparation of minimum standards for all food items, which are mandatory, enforced under the prevention of Food Adulteration Act. In the areas of fruits and vegetables, standards have been laid down for fruit products as well as associated standards for food colours and additives.

International Standardisation

At the international level, there are two organisations dealing with standardisation work namely, the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC). The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the liaison organisation for ISO and the Directorate General of Health Services is the liaison organisation for CAC.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR STANDARDISATION (ISO)

India is a member on ISO, which is the ultimate and highest body involved in International Standardisation in various areas including agricultural and food products ISO/TC 34 is the Technical committee dealing with food and agriculture and has various sub-committees functioning under it. The following are relevant area of fruit and vegetables

1. Oleaginous seeds and fruits -ISO/TC 34/SC2
2. Fruits and vegetables products-ISO/TC 34/SC3
3. Dry and dried fruits and vegetables -ISO/TC 34/SC 13
4. Fresh fruits and vegetables -ISO/TC 34/SC 14

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (CAC)

The FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission was established to implement the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.

The purpose of this programme is to protect the health of the consumer and to ensure fair practice in food trade, to promote co-ordination of all food standards work undertaken by international organisations and to finalise standards and after their acceptance by various government to publish them in Codex Alimentarius. The Central Committee for food standards in the Ministry of Health is the liaison point for this commission in India. The Ministry has set up the National Codex Committee for co-ordination of this work.

COST OF EXPORT MARKETING

Cost is an important factor, which influences the price. It plays an important role in determining the selling price. There are broadly two types of costs in export marketing.

1. Production Costs
2. Selling and Delivery Costs

Production costs include all the costs, which are incurred on the production; it includes fixed production costs and variable production costs. Selling or Marketing Costs constitute the expenses on holding of stocks, grading, packing, transportation, loading and unloading, weighing, documentation, market fee, commission charges, postage, pre-shipment inspection, insurance, and costs like advertising.

Market costs depend on the market places irrespective of the produce quality. In the case of exporter, everything is borne by the exporter. Some of the special costs incurred in export marketing like, product modification, special packaging, export documentation, hedging cost, transit insurance, credit insurance and cost of credits, etc. Marketing cost is important for calculating market efficiency and producer's share in consumer rupee. However, as a matter of fact, the marketing cost varies among different channels of marketing. This has been reported by many research workers (T. B. Bhogal, 1994).

WTO and Fruit Export

Agriculture is the most heavily protected sector in the global economy. The protectionist policies of the industrialised countries created a large distortion in the world food markets, depressing the world price of agricultural commodities to uncompetitively low levels and generating global market instability. Such a high level of protection naturally hurt other major exporters of agricultural products. Therefore, there began efforts to bring agriculture under the discipline of the GATT. Cairns group in 1986 give high priority to agricultural trade issues in the multinational trade negotiations. These groups

account for one third of the world agro exports. They were instrumented in negotiating the Agreement on Agriculture during the Uruguay Round. There are two major agreements (1) The WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and (2) The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Measures (SPS).

The AoA, which establishes a number of country specific commitment, came into force on January 1, 1995. The implementation period for the commitments is six years for developed and ten years for developing countries. The applicable rules cover three broad areas i. e.

1. Market access
2. Domestic support
3. Export competition

The Agreement on SPS measures set out the basic rules for food safety and animal and plant health standards. The key feature of the SPS Agreement is risk assessment and risk management in determining appropriate measures, which provides an acceptable level of risk to the importer and which can be justified on technical and trade terms.

India and WTO Trade Agreement

WTO Agreement on Agriculture primarily focuses on reduction of tariffs, increased market access, reduction in Aggregate Measure of Support (AMS) in the form of subsidies.

India had bound its tariffs at 100 per cent for primary products, 150 per cent for processed products and 300 per cent for edible oils except for certain items (comprising about 119 tariff lines) which were historically bound at a lower level in the earlier negotiations. Though India is not entitled to use the special safeguard mechanism of the Agreement, which can be used only by countries, which had tariffed, yet it can take safeguard action under the WTO Agreement on safeguard if there is a surge in imports causing serious injury or if there is a threat of serious injury to the domestic

producer. Therefore, despite phasing out of QRs, the possibility of higher level of agro imports is considerably low.

WTO has stipulated that AMS should not exceed 5 per cent of total value of agricultural products in the case of developed countries and 10 per cent in the case of developing countries. However, studies have concluded that AMS in India is much below its ceiling level. Developing countries like India are free to provide certain subsidies, such as subsidizing of export marketing cost, internal and international transport and freight charges etc. In India the product specific support is negative (Rs. 19869 crores), while the non-product specific support is well below the permissible level of 10 per cent. Therefore, India is under no obligation to reduce domestic support currently extended to the agricultural sector. India is making use of these subsidies in certain schemes of APEDA, especially for facilitating export of horticulture product. However, reduction in subsidies will naturally raise international prices and would therefore, help India's agri-exports.

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