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Editor's Note

A well designed package of produces has multiple benefits which include preservation, perfection from post harvest loss during transportation, handling and distribution, value addition to promote marketing attracting buyers with necessary information and building product recognition through image.

Packaging is recognised as strong marketing tool of any produce. Our packaging industry is comparatively young by world standards. It is still dependent on imported raw materials, printing machineries, the pre-press facilities for Off-set and Gravure Cylinders, inks, chemicals and other related items. Meanwhile, many packaging materials specially based on Kraft paper, Duplex board, Plastics, Aluminium Foil, Metal, Glass and Jute are manufactured locally. Quality of locally produced packaging material is good on an average, with tremendous scope of future improvements in respect of its design, texture and cost effectiveness.

Lack of technical manpower to run these industries is a constraint. Training is usually imparted by the materials and machinery suppliers and consultants from abroad. The Technicians do not have any formal education in the area of packaging. Therefore, there is an urgent need of setting up a Packaging Institute in Bangladesh to develop this sector.

Bangladesh needs good packages for both domestic and export market. Hortex Foundation always advises exporters to use standard packages for horticultural crops to maintain freshness of the produce and minimise post harvest loss during transportation and handling.

Exporters ask for good packages at an affordable price. Packages developed by Hortex Foundation of international standards for fruits and vegetables export are sometimes used by the exporters. However, if subsidy is given to the exporters to use the packaging materials certified by Hortex, it is most likely that the volume of export of quality fresh horticultural produces will improve substantially.

Packaging Development for Domestic & Export Market: Bangladesh Perspective

Introduction

Packaging can be defined as a manner of delivering product to the final customer in good condition at reasonable cost. Packaging ensures that the product travels safely from the production line through handling, storage and transportation, until it reaches the ultimate consumer in sound condition. The main functions of packaging are protecting product against quality deterioration (due to number of factors such as heat, water, light, microorganism, gases etc.), appealing products (having good sales), facilitating logistic function (optimal use of container) etc. Attractive and good package design contributes a great deal to the quality image of the product, attracts the consumers and is essential for both successful export and domestic marketing. Packaging design depends on the type of produce, type of protection needed, and the distribution system.



Fruits and vegetable packaging

Harvested fruits and vegetables are living tissues, containing huge amount of water. Main causes of deterioration of horticultural crops include: 1. Compositional Changes, 2. Growth and Development Changes, 3. Bursting and other mechanical Injuries, 4. Moisture loss, 5. Pathological breakdown. Packaging

should protect the freshness of the produces depending on the nature of the food and the consumer's need.

Function of Packaging

Packaging is required for maintaining freshness, providing safety, and protecting products in transport in general. However, the main purposes of packaging are preservation, protection, provision of product information, marketing and distribution of goods.



Hygienic and safety packaging

Preservation:

Packaging holds the product directly. Food packaging is closely entwined with the preservation and storage of foods and therefore forms an integral part of the product.

Protection:

Packaging protects products against spoilage, leakage, breakage, moisture changes, theft and tampering. A package plays the role of ensuring that the product reaches the consumer in a convenient form without spoilage or changes in color, flavor, texture and the nutritive value of the product.

Product Information:

Packaging incorporates to identify the brand, and provide information about the products (weight, measurement, place of manufacture etc), companies, and uses and misuses of the products. It also complies some legal requirement by declaring component of products, date of manufacture, and date of expiry, handling information etc.

Marketing:

The brand name of the product can be fixed on the package so that customer can easily identify the product at the time of purchasing. As packaging is considered one of the marketing tools, good quality printing and packaging can attract the prospective customers.

Distribution:

Good packaging can help a lot to move the product easily and safely in order to distribute the products to the

ultimate customers in the required condition in a timely manner.



Special packaging for papaya

Types of Packages

There are three types of packages, depending on uses and the nature of the products. They are:



Palletizing

Primary Packages:

The container that directly holds the product is called the primary package. Can, bottle, jar, tube, carton, drum, etc. may hold different products.

Secondary Packages:

Any wrappings on the primary packages that help to store, transport, inform, display and protect the product are called secondary packages.

Tertiary Packages:

If a container holds secondary packages in order to group or store or transport the product is called Tertiary packages. Large pallets, containers may be examples of tertiary packages.

Packaging in Bangladesh

Post harvest losses in agricultural sector are very high in Bangladesh. A wide range of traditional packages like gunny bags, woven basket, and bamboo/ wooden crates etc are used for agricultural products in Bangladesh. A study conducted by ITC reveals that post harvest losses is more than 40%, predominantly accounted for defective packaging. If we could save one fourth of those losses through improvement of packaging of perishable commodities, the country could save a huge amount of money.

There is very little work has been done in Bangladesh for the development of packaging sector. Due to the increasing urbanization and long distance between production and main consumers, the importance of packaging has been increasingly growing in Bangladesh. Moreover the demand for good quality packaging is increasing particularly, in readymade garment (RMG), pharmaceutical and frozen food industries.

Packaging of agro food products in Bangladesh is still lagging behind. Most of the food packaging in our local market is still traditional, primitive and to some extent unhygienic. Package of fresh horticultural produces consists mainly of round bamboo baskets, gunny bags and second hand cartons. These cartons usually have no ventilation holes and do not have the necessary strength, which causes bruising of the produce. Most of the exporters use bamboo baskets, gunny bags for packaging vegetables, fruits etc. The irregular shapes of the carton give scope for rough handling by airline staff. Moreover, present packaging is very un-attractive to buyers and represents a very poor image of Bangladesh.

The increasing awareness of nutritive value of food among people and the growing of supermarket culture have enhanced the need for the development of packaging sector in Bangladesh. However, Hortex has developed some quality packaging cartons of international standard and specification suitable for up-stream markets.

Conclusion

The present packaging system in Bangladesh is not up to the mark. Packaging with bamboo baskets, jute bags or used cartons does not meet international standards. Our

country also does not possess adequate skilled manpower in this field. Therefore, we have to develop & equip ourselves in the area of packaging in order to improve supply chain in the domestic market, and compete in the international horticultural markets.

*Md. Mahbub Alam
Business Development Expert
SCDC, NATP, Hortex Foundation*

Zara lebu – most popular lemon in ethnic market

Zara lebu means Zara lemon – most popular and one of the costliest lemons in ethnic market i.e. price of a single lemon can reach up to 1.00 GBP (Great Britain Pound) in UK ethnic market. Usually it is known as a variety of Citron. Citron has so many varieties throughout the world with both sour and sweet pulp.

It is a prominent member in the genus *citrus*, is unlike the more common species like the lemon or orange. While the most popular fruits are peeled in order to consume their pulpy and juicy segments, the zara (citron) are mainly consumed for their thick white rind.



Zara lemon orchard at Shibpur upazela, Narshingdi

Some facts about Zara lemon are appended as under:

Scientific name: *Citrus medica*

Family: *Rutaceae*

Origin: Mediterranean and North East India including the adjacent country of Bangladesh

Morphological Characters (some):

Plant height	5 ft – 8 ft
Stem	8” – 12”
Leaf	Elliptic shape
Fruit shape	Oval
Fruit length	5” -7” (usually)

Fruit width	2.5" - 3" (usually)
Fruit weight (Narshingdi)	250 gm -500 gm
Fruit weight (Sylhet)	Can be grown up to 1kg and more
Seeds	Very rare/absent

Production practices: Information given below based on visit at Moulovibazar and Jaintapur of Sylhet and Chaitanna under Shibpur upazila of Narshingdi district.

Climate: Plants grow under both the sun and partial shade conditions. Sunlight and high rainfalls are favorable for more yields. Plants are day neutral in respect of flowering.

Soil: Soil rich in organic matter is preferred. High land with well drainage system is suitable for its cultivation.

Planting time: Mid June-mid September is better than other period of the year.

Planting system: Plant to plant and row to row distance should be 12 ft x 12 ft. Grafts are usually planted.

Cropping system: Sole cropping are practiced and preferred. But intercropping may be practiced at the first stage (first 2-3 years) of orchard.

Manure and fertilizer: Doses vary from farmer to farmer due to non availability of their recommendation. Application of manure and fertilizer (33 decimal) is mentioned for zara lemon orchard (as described by different growers in Jaintapur, Sylhet and Chaitanna, Narshingdi):

Cow-dung = minimum 50-60 maunds

Phosphate= minimum 20 kg (apply twice in year)

Potash= minimum 5-7 kg (apply 2-3 times in a year)

50% cow dung, TSP and MP should be thoroughly mixed and applied during land preparation before planting. Remaining should be at suitable time with interval.

Intercultural operations: Weeding, mulching, irrigation, draining water and propping are done as and when necessary. Land should be well drained to avoid water logging.

Pest management: Now a days Canker disease is the most vulnerable for all lemon varieties and it causes import restriction for EU market. Apart that *guignerdia* and *cercospora* also effect on lemon export, though our research persons are not ensuring their presence in major production zone. Fruit borer and leaf minor are the major pests of this lemon. Farmers are somehow aware of their control measures.

Flowering and fruiting: Plants start flowering at the stage of 1st-2nd year after planting and can continue yielding up to 15 years. Main flowering time is February-March and after 45-50 days fruits are ready for harvesting.

Harvesting: Harvesting of zara lemon usually started in May-June (peak season) and continued up to July-August. However, some fruits can be found in later also up to September-October. Winter basically counted off season for zara lemon.

Yield: In average 100-120 fruits/plant and their wt. may be 25 – 30 kg, but exception is often when some plants may give only 20-25 fruits in peak season.

Marketing: Price varied from BDT 10.00-12.00 to BDT 100.00 per piece lemon, depending on area, season, availability and size. During the peak season (June – August) in Narshingdi price may fall up to BDT 8.00 per lemon while during off season it can be sold by BDT 100.00 for one piece lemon with more than 1kg weight (exceptional price) in Sylhet. Farmers directly sell lemon to the trader at production site and sometimes sell their produce to the local whole sale market.

It was found at local bazaar at Narshingdi, Jaintapur and Srimangal that some paikers (middle men) buy lemon from whole sale market and then send those to traders/exporters in Sylhet who eventually export straight way to London after grading according to size and maturity. Sometimes they send those to Dhaka trader for export and local market.

Conclusion: Considering its huge consumers demand and commercial value in domestic and export market, production intensification and market development for zara lemon should be taken to consideration for all concern authorities to increase its production and develop supply chain facilities. Also keeping in view the above zara lemon should be listed in crops of Geographical Indication (GI) Bangladesh.

Dr. Debashish Chanda
AGM (Marketing), Hortex Foundation

Hortex News in brief

5th Annual General Meeting



5th AGM; presided over by the Chairman, HF

The 5th Annual General Meeting of Hortex Foundation was held on December 26, 2009. Mr. C. Q. K. Mustaq Ahmed, Secretary, MOA and Chairman, Hortex

Foundation presided over the meeting. Hortex Annual Report for the period of April 2007 – June 2008 along with audited accounts was received, adopted and approved in the meeting. J. Abedin & Co. was appointed as the Auditor of Hortex Foundation for the financial year 2008-09.

Addition of New Staff to NATP

Five new experts viz. Md. Abdur Rashid, Manager (Financial Mgt.); Md. Bazlur Rahman, Marketing Expert; Dr. Md. Abdur Rashid, Training & Communication Expert; Md. Mahbub Alam, Business Development Expert and Engr. A K M Sorwar Alam, Asst. Manager (Procurement) recently joined in Hortex under the Supply Chain Development Component of National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP).

Governing Body Meetings



75th Governing Body meeting

The 75th Governing Body meeting of Hortex Foundation held at its Conference Room on November 9, 2009 was presided over by Mr. C. Q. K. Mustaq Ahmed, Secretary, MOA and Chairman, Hortex Foundation. The meeting discussed and took decision on various important issues including reelection of Governing Body and General Body members for the second consecutive term, the proposal/recommendations made by the committee for amendment of article of association of HF, proposal for staff recruitment of SCDC, Hortex and publication of Exporters Directory of fresh and frozen horticultural produces as a part of export promotion activities.

Cool Chain Support

Hortex Foundation provided 63 round trips of cool chain transportation supports to 13 organizations to carry their agro and other allied products.

Those organizations are: Agrodhut Traders Ltd, Associate Capsules Pvt. Ltd., A.G. Enterprise, Pharma Trade, Homebond Packers and Shippers Ltd., Trade Clippers Cargo Ltd., J. B. Trading Company, Dawn International, Golden Harvest Agro Industries, Agah International, Trade Abroad, Farco Syndicate and Jems International.

Farmers training



Farmers training at different locations of Narshingdi

Hortex Foundation organized 4 (four) farmers and 1 (one) training for trainer's (ToT) program on "production technology and post-harvest handling management practices of cucumber and hyacinth bean for export" at Shaikerchar of Shibpur, Sherpur, Adiaband and Hatubangha of Raipura and Botibond of Belaboo upazilla under Narshindi district in collaboration with Grameen Nari Krishok Daridra Bimochan Attaykallayan Songathan (GNKDBAS). Total 359 female farmers were actively participated in the training program. Hortex had taken initiative for pesticide free production of cucumber and hyacinth bean through introducing sex pheromone trap/leure for fruit flies in cucurbits and trichogramma and bracon flies to protect and control aphids and pod borer. Hortex helped the farmers to establish linkage with the companies namely Ishpahani Bio-tech and Safe Agriculture (Bangladesh) Limited and the participants. Dr. S. M. Monowar Hossain, Managing Director, Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam, AGM (Production) of Hortex Foundation, Mr. Md. Sirajul Islam, Managing Director, Safe Agriculture (Bangladesh) Ltd. and Krishibid Md. Abdur Rhaman, Sr. Scientific officer of Ishpahani Agro Bio-Tech were present in those training programs.

Seminars/Training Participation

During the period Hortex officials attended a number of seminars, workshops, trainings and discussion meetings on various issues of agriculture and export related affairs. Some of them are as follows:

- 7th meeting of working group -3 on WTO related matters at the conference room of Ministry of Agriculture on October 8, 2009.
- Workshop on packaging and packaging clinic sponsored by BQSP at Hotel Lake Castle on October 25, 2009.
- Seminar on EU-Bangladesh Trade: Latest developments and challenges, organized by EU at Hotel Sheraton on November 4, 2009.
- Workshop on Supply Chain Development for agricultural commodities, at BARC auditorium on November 11, 2009.
- Steering Committee on Quality Support Export Diversification Programme at the conference room of Ministry of Commerce on December 9, 2009.
- Meeting of preparation of list of GI commodities at BARC conference room on December 23, 2009.

Production and Marketing Advisory Services

During the period of October to December 2009, advisory services were provided to 22 entrepreneurs, producers, NGOs, researchers, university students, govt. organizations on various aspects of production, post-harvest technology, processing, cool-chain transportation and marketing of horticulture crops at home and abroad. The notable among the recipients of such services are: CRDS, D-Net, ACI Foods Ltd., Khan Enterprise, Bangla Milk Ltd., HMA Mushroom Ltd, Bangladesh Organic Product Manufacturer Association, Bangla Milk, Jhinaidha; Smart Hill Land Development and Management (Pvt.) Ltd. Rangamati; Practical Action, Dhaka; ABC group, Ishpahani Group, RADU, Pabna; HJKS, Gaibandha; Development Research Network, Mohammadpur and R.S. Moonbean Trading Co., Dhaka.

ITC workshop

Hortex Foundation organized a workshop on the “Requirements for Entrance of Bangladesh Fresh Horticultural Produce to the Upstream Markets in United Kingdom” under Project No: BGD/75/21A funded by BQSP-ITC on 30th November 2009 at its Conference Room. The programme mainly included a presentation on the results and findings of the study. The study team interacted and shared results/findings with the participants of the workshop to get their recommendation on the study. Mr. Md. Amir Hossain, Director General, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) was the Chief Guest, while Mr. S.M. Jahangir Hossain, President, Bangladesh Fresh Fruits, Vegetables and Allied Products Exporters Associations (BFVAPEA) was the Special Guest in the workshop. Dr. S.M. Monowar Hossain, Managing Director, Hortex Foundation, chaired the workshop as well as working session. Mr. Rafiqul Islam, Assistant General Manager (Production) delivered the welcome speech and

Mr. Mitul Kumar Saha, Consultant of Hortex Foundation/ITC presented the keynote paper. Dr. Md. Saleh Ahmed, Post Harvest & Quality Assurance Expert, NATP, Hortex Foundation and Dr. Debashish Chanda, Assistant General Manager (Marketing), Hortex Foundation were the designated discussants on keynote paper.



From left: Chairman, Chief Guest and Special Guest of the workshop

About 90 participants attended the workshop of which 9 took part in open discussions. In the last, vote of thanks was accorded to all participants, media personnel, Hortex and NATP official/staff by Mr. Md. Shamsuddoha, Research Assistant, Hortex/ITC for their support and cooperation for making the programme a success.

The following suggestions were made in the workshop:

- Strengthen research and development for increased production, post harvest management and quality assurance of produce;
- Identify export production zones and introduce One Village One Product Idea like Thailand;
- Arrange branding for horticultural produces;
- Establish national standard following the market requirements for market access into the upstream markets;
- Create awareness among the stakeholders through integrated approach of the relevant public and private organizations;
- Establish a National Technical Working Group for GAP standards without any delay;
- Upgrade the laboratory testing facilities for pesticide residues and other contaminants/heavy metals and provide subsidy for testing charges to be paid by the stakeholders and arrange accreditation of laboratories;
- Establish national certification body;

- Develop physical infrastructure (pack house, cool chain, testing laboratory services), improvement in packaging system and quality management need to be put in place to respond the buyers' requirements regarding health and environmental issues;
- Institutional capacity should be build-up to take care on the related issues in government agencies, NGOs and private sectors etc.
- Organize subsidy for encouraging use of improved cartons.

Air Freight of Fresh Produce to Various Destinations

Major destination wise air cargo freight for the perishables by Biman Bangladesh Airlines in the form of SIP rates are given below:

Destination	Current SIP* for perishables
	Air Freight Tk/kg
Rome	125.00
London/Paris	118.00
Jeddah/Riyadh	89.60
Kuwait	87.50
Singapore	77.80
Dubai	76.40
Kuala Lumpur	45.20

Source: Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Cargo Department, January 14, 2010

* SIP : Special Inducement Price

** Air Freight

In addition to the base rate mentioned above, total freight includes Terminal Handling Charge, Scanning Charge and Fuel Surcharge on per kg and Airway Bill charge on per consignment basis.

The rate is applicable for 500 kg or above for Jeddah / Riyadh, Dubai and 250 kg or above for Kuwait, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, London and Paris. If the cargo weight is less than the above, rate will be higher.

Wholesale Market Price of Selected Fresh Produce in Selected UK markets

All prices quoted relate to stated pack weight and reflect the range of prices for class one produce prevailing on the day of collection as quoted by the selected market sources. All prices listed in pence.

Produce	Origin, Pack	Market	Median Price, GB (Range) Pence / pack
Bananas	Dollar, 18 kg	Liverpool	1250 (300)
Bananas	Dollar, 18 kg	Birmingham	1200
Mangoes	Brazil, 4.5 kg	Western International	600
Lemons	Turkey, 10kg	Glasgow	775 (50)
Lemons	Turkey, 10kg	Bristol	850 (100)
Limes	Brazil, 4.5 kg	Liverpool	425 (150)
Limes	Brazil, 4.5 kg	Birmingham	500
Coconuts	Dominica, 25	Liverpool	700
Grapefruit (Red)	South Africa, 15 kg	Liverpool	850 (100)
Lychees	Madagascar, 2 kg	New Covent Garden	300
Lychees	Madagascar, 2 kg	Western International	500
Melons	Honeydew, Brazil, 10kg	New Spitalfields	900
Oranges	Morocco, 15kg	Glasgow	1075 (50)
Papaya	Cote d'Ivoire, 4kg	Liverpool	1000
Pineapples	Brazil, 8	Bristol	800
Pineapples	Costa Rica, each	Belfast	90
Pomegranate	Egypt, 4.5 kg	New Covent Garden	400
Tomatoes	Cherry, Egypt, 9x250g	New Covent Garden	575 (50)
Beans (Fine)	Kenya, 1.5 kg	Bristol	580
Beans (Fine)	Kenya, 2 kg	Belfast	550
Bean sprouts	UK, 6x250g	Bristol	210
Capsicum, Green	Spain, 5kg	New Covent Garden	975 (50)
Cabbage, white	UK, 10 kg	Bristol	350
Carrots	UK, 12.5 kg	Liverpool	450
Cauliflower	France, 8	Belfast	1350
Chillies, Green	Spain, 3 kg	Liverpool	1150
Chillies, Green	Spain, 3 kg	New Covent Garden	1100
Coriander	Israel, kg	Belfast	750
Garlic	China, 10 kg	New Covent Garden	1250
Garlic	China, 5 kg	Birmingham	900
Ginger	Thailand, 13.5kg	Liverpool	1800
Ginger	China, 13.5 kg	New Covent Garden	1900
Mushrooms	Oyster, UK, 1.5kg	Western International	600

Produce	Origin, Pack	Market	Median Price, GB (Range) Pence / pack
Mushrooms	Cups / Buttons UK, 1.5 kg	New Spitalfields	420
Mushrooms	Shiitake UK, 1.5 kg	Western International	1000
Onion	Spain, 20 kg	Glasgow	685
Okra	Thailand, 2kg	Liverpool	850
Potatoes	Cyprus, 20 kg	Birmingham	1500
Potatoes	Spain, 20 kg	Bristol	1320

Source: *Fresh Produce Journal UK*, January 15, 2010

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- To ensure proper quality
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- Capacity 3 ton
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For further details please contact:

**(02) 9141331, 8123433
Admin Department, Hortex Foundation**

EU Market Information

Importers of Fresh Produce in different cities, UK

Name and Contact numbers of the importers	
Greencell Ltd. St Johns House 31/41 Spital Street Dartford, DA1 2DR Tel 01322425585 Email: simon.curry@greencell.com	Jack Walters & Son, South Yorkshire Fresh Produce Centre Parkway Sheffield, S9 4TS Tel; 01142440197 Fax: 01142442614
Westfalia marketing Ltd Unit 16 Princeton mews 167 London Road Kingston upon Thames Surrey, KT2 6PT Tel: 02085494302 Fax: 02085415935 Email: alex.dahan@greencell.com	George Jackson, A11 Fruit Market Blochairn Road Glasgow G21 2XD Tel: 44 (0) 141 553 1711 Fax: 44 (0) 141553 1811
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