

PROCEEDINGS OF THE WORKSHOP ON EXPORT PROMOTION OF FRESH AND PROCESSED FRUITS FROM BANGLADESH

1.0 Introduction

A day-long workshop was organized by the Horticulture Export Development Foundation (Hortex Foundation) to promote export of fresh and processed fruits from Bangladesh and to disseminate the updated status of fruits export from Bangladesh, experience of fruit marketing in Thailand and potentials of minimally processed fruits in Bangladesh among the exporters, traders, farmers, entrepreneurs, scientists, national and international experts, officials of Govt. and Non-Govt. organizations attended in the workshop. The workshop was held on 18 May, 2013 at 9.00 am in the conference room of Hortex Foundation, Sech Bhaban, 22 Manik Mia Avenue, 3rd Floor, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207. A total of 70 diverse participants attended the workshop. The list of participants is shown in **Annex-1**. The workshop had two sessions: inaugural including technical session and plenary session. Activities in each session are appended briefly.

2.0 Workshop sessions

2.1 Inaugural and technical sessions

The inaugural and technical session was chaired by Dr. S M Monowar Hossain, Managing Director, Hortex Foundation. Mr. M Ahsan Ullah, Director, Governing Body of Hortex Foundation and Mr. AFM Fakhrul Islam Munshi, Director, Governing Body of Hortex Foundation were present as the Special Guests in the workshop. Mr. Shubhashish Bose, Vice-Chairman, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and Director, Governing Body of Hortex Foundation was the Chief Guest. The session started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. Mr. Mesbahuddin Mahmood, Deputy General Manager, Hortex Foundation welcomed the honorable chief guest, special guests and the distinguished participants present in the event. In his welcome address, he briefly highlighted objectives of the workshop. Mr. Mahmood requested all the participants to take participation in the open discussion actively to provide their valuable input and suggestion which will be helpful for future implementation of export promotion activities in the Foundation.

2.1.1 Remarks by the special guest

Mr. M Ahsan Ullah, Director, Governing Body of Hortex Foundation in his address as the special guest showed importance of fruits export from Bangladesh and added already we exported jackfruits since year 2000. He mentioned that green coconut has big export potentiality in the Middle East countries. He further emphasized on value added fruits development where different private sectors like PRAN, ACI, Agora and Square Group can play a great role for its diversification and export growth. He suggested that appropriate storage system of fruits should be developed minimizing post-harvest losses. Exotic fruits may come in Bangladesh for way of our learning of new variety development, he added.

Mr. AFM Fakhrul Islam Munshi, Director, Governing Body of Hortex Foundation in his address as the special guest mentioned variety is very important for export market and emphasized to be given on new market exploration and local marketing. He said that databank is needed to identify exportable product opportunity is available in the foreign market. Appropriate methods,

coordination and export specification is very important for exporting any products due to their vulnerable nature, he mentioned. He added that special cargo plane should be arranged for agro-commodity export, if necessary. He further suggested that, our targeted client should be identified in different destinations. Finally, he emphasized on value added product development and export promotion.

2.1.2 Remarks by the chief guest

Mr. Shubhashish Bose, Vice Chairman, Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and Director, Governing Body of Hortex Foundation in his address as the chief guest expressed his satisfaction for arranging this type of workshop at right time and explained Bangladesh export achievements during the present government time. Total of 705 products are exported from Bangladesh and only six types of product shared 92% of its total export, he said. European Union, USA, Canada, Japan and Middle East are the major export markets for Bangladeshi products, he added. He further said that agricultural products are very rich in Bangladesh due to our suitable soil and favorable climate. We want to diversify our export products and market providing more cash incentive facilities to the exporters, he said. He explained that agro based processing plant should be established for value added product development. Govt. has taken different initiatives for growth of fruits and vegetables, leather, pharmaceuticals, paper, agro wood, *agor*, aromatic rice, rubber, herbal and medicinal plants export. He mentioned that there is a tremendous export growth of different processed agro products. He further emphasized that we have to enter into the mainstream export market with quality products fulfilling buyers' requirement. He informed the audience that BanglaGAP is under way to execute by Ministry of Agriculture, GoB with its line agencies. He said that comprehensive trade policy is urgently needed where govt. can easily facilitate the business. We have to facilitate different kinds of products and services for export promotion, he added. He further mentioned that contract crop farming should be introduced and cold storage facilities are to be established at different production areas. We will call an inter-ministerial meeting on setting cool chain facilities in the airport and how to reduce the cost of airlines for carrying different types of agro-commodities, he mentioned.

2.1.3 Remarks by the chairperson

Dr. S M Monowar Hossain, Managing Director, Hortex Foundation, chairperson of the workshop thanked the chief guest, special guests, keynote speaker and the distinguished participants attended in the workshop. He briefly described the present activities of Hortex Foundation including ayurvedic products, honey, fish and *halal* meat export promotion activities which were added in the Hortex's annual work plan and expressed his concern on fruits export constraints. He emphasized that we have to follow the Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) protocol and introduce traceability system, and then we can easily enter into the non-ethnic export market with improved packaged where huge market is prevailing and our billion dollar volume might be achieved by exporting high value agro commodities. He further stated that India, Pakistan and other SAARC countries market should be explored for product and market diversification. We will be reaching middle income group countries very soon, if we promote our agro-commodities export effectively, he added. Finally, he mentioned that this workshop successfully sensitized the issues of export promotion of fresh and processed fruits from Bangladesh and sought cooperation from all the stakeholders in building Hortex as a centre of excellence of agro-commodity export promoter and market linkage development institution in the country.

2.2 Technical session

The technical session was chaired by Dr. S M Monowar Hossain, Managing Director, Hortex Foundation. Three papers were presented in this session. The first paper was presented by Md. Rafiqul Islam, AGM, Hortex Foundation and he made an overview on status of fruit export from Bangladesh with some constraints and recommendations. Dr. Somporn Hanpongpanth, International Marketing Specialist, Supply Chain Development Component (SCDC) of National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP), Hortex Foundation presented the keynote paper of the workshop which was an overview on fruit marketing in Thailand. The keynote paper highlighted issues of total production and areas of fruits in Thailand, major categories of fruits, marketing channels and infrastructure, success story of banana export under one of the biggest multipurpose agricultural cooperative in Thailand on Tha Yang Cooperative (TAC). Dr. Sreekanta Sheel, expert of SCDC of NATP, Hortex Foundation presented the third paper which was potentials of minimally processed fruits in Bangladesh. Contents of his presentation were fruit selection, minimal processing operation, packaging and transportation, quality assurance, marketing potentials, factory requirement with conclusion.

2.3 Discussions on three papers presented in the technical session

Very lively discussion was held on three papers. Mr. Raju Ahmed, General Secretary, Bangladesh Agro Processors Association (BAPA) shared his experiences with the participants and added that fruits production has increased gradually in Bangladesh due to its diversification made by farmers, researchers and extension officials. Mr. Ahmed further suggested that Hortex Foundation can arrange a study on minimally processed agro-products assessing market demand in the country. Mr. S.M Quamruzzaman, Project Director, Integrated Quality Horticulture Development Project, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) mentioned that new fruit like dragon fruit, rambutan, strawberry had been introduced and informed the audience that they successfully supplied quality plant materials to the farmers from Govt. horticulture centre as per their demand. He further emphasized for undertaking more programs ensuring availability of quality fruit saplings in Bangladesh. Mr. M. Ahsan Ullah, Director, Governing Body of Hortex Foundation suggested taking necessary program introducing crop contract farming system fulfilling phytosanitary requirements of importing countries and Horticulture Development Board (HDB) should be developed transferring updated technology easily to the farmers. Dr. Md. Shoraf Uddin, SSO, HRC of BARI suggested taking necessary research program on availability of exportable fruit as per international buyers' requirement. He further mentioned that exported quantity and value of all horticultural crops should be recorded with their name. Mr. Md. Ismail Khan, Proprietor, M/S. Urban Trading Company, Dhaka mentioned that we should know the major constraints of fruit export from Bangladesh. He suggested taking necessary steps for availability of sufficient trolley, improving handling facility and developing cool centre in Hazrat Shahjalal (R.) International Airport (HSIA), Dhaka. He mentioned that Bangladesh Biman authority should have a separate cooling centre at the Airport. He further emphasized visiting Airport to see the actual situation in time of fruits and vegetables export from Bangladesh. Professor Dr. Kamrul Hassan, Department of Horticulture, Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Mymensingh mentioned that government can facilitate establishing cool chain facility. He said that private sectors should come up with specific intervention on cool chain management. He further mentioned that exporters should work in grassroots level establishing Farm to Market Approach ensuring Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).

2.4 Plenary session

The plenary and recommendation session was chaired by Professor Dr. M. A. Rahim, Department of Horticulture, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh. He summarized the day-long activities of the workshop. He mentioned that we have to encourage farmers producing good quality fruits and also exporters for entering global export markets with diversified products fulfilling requirements of the buyers. He emphasized that we should analyze the requirements of global markets. He appreciated the comments and suggestions made by the participants. After threadbare discussion in the session, the workshop recommendations were adopted.

3.0 Recommendations

- A fruit consumption study should be organized assessing the actual per capita availability of fruits in Bangladesh and recommending per capita fruits are needed for children and adult.
- Hortex Foundation can be made major fruits and vegetables supply and value chain study in collaboration with relevant agencies.
- Identify the most appropriate channels of technology transfer developing horticultural product.
- DAE can set horticulture centre for all 64 districts in Bangladesh. At present horticulture coverage area exist in 35 districts.
- There should be some fruit import restriction like rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum*), strawberry encouraging our producers.
- Exotic fruits which are potential to grow in Bangladesh should be introduced through BARI, BAU and as individual.
- Package of fruit production technology should be provided to farmers not on piecemeal basis for higher yield and quality.
- Research institute can show the way to ensure productivity and quality of the fruits.
- We need to promote not only the hybrid fruits but also indigenous fruits. There should be a plan from Hortex, BARI and BAU where nobody can disturb our any species of indigenous fruits.
- Ensure transport facility for farmers marketing their products like mango, litchi, pineapple to minimize post harvest losses during transportation.
- Minimally processed pineapple, jackfruit and dragon fruits can be introduced for value added product development including sweet tamarind and canned pineapple for export.
- Ensure input quality and promote IPM & ripening technology, crop insurance & contract farming system and credit facility.
- Need campaign for farmers, traders, exporters and other stakeholders' motivation ensuring safe fruits for consumption.
- Infrastructures of handling, cool chamber and trolley facilities need to be improved in the HSIA, Dhaka.
- In Bangladesh, there was Horticulture Development Board (HDB) in the past, so that HDB should be revived transferring technology efficiently.
- Hortex Foundation must be strengthened promoting export of fresh and processed fruits including other high value agro-commodities.

4.0 Vote of thanks

Mr. Mitul K. Saha, Assistant General Manager (Supply and Value Chain, Marketing, R&D), Hortex Foundation delivered vote of thanks to the participants for their active participation and also Hortex, SCDC officials and staffs who worked hard for the success of the workshop. Finally, the workshop came to end with the thanks to and from the chair at 5.00 pm.

<p>(Mitul K. Saha) Assistant General Manager Hortex Foundation</p>	<p>(Dr. S M Monowar Hossain) Managing Director Hortex Foundation</p>
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Photo: Workshop conducting, Mr. Mahmood, Mitul K. Saha, AFM Fakhru Islam Munshi, Dr. S M Monowar Hossain, Shubhashish Bose and M Ahsan Ullah



Photo: Participants of the workshop, scientists, experts and entrepreneurs from various organizations