

Recommendations of the Discussion Session
International Seminar on Enhancing Export Competitiveness of Asian
Fruits
May 19, 2006 (9.40 AM – 11.40 AM)

The session was chaired by Dr. Pitam Chandra, Asstt. Director General (Process Engg), ICAR, New Delhi. Discussion took place among the participants, APCAEM officers and the officers of the FAO regional office, Bangkok. On the basis of the discussion, it emerged that the following considerations were necessary while formulating appropriate programmes for Enhancing Export Competitiveness of Asian Fruits by various agencies.

1. All stakeholders in the fruit production to consumption value chain must be duly benefited for sustainable growth in this sector. While producers need to produce what consumers want, the producers must have their due share in the benefits of value addition and exports. Likewise, all other stakeholders must have their due share of added value and earnings.
2. Fruit producers need to be enabled, empowered and incentivised for cost competitive production of high quality fruits and make them available for trade or further value addition with minimum losses.
3. Basic and continuing training of fruit growers about Good Agricultural Practices, post harvest management and marketing will go a long way in enhancing the competitiveness on a sustainable basis.
4. Infrastructure for storage, transport, communication and power need to be created to facilitate the production and maintenance of quality material in the production catchments and rural areas.
5. Networks of accredited food safety and quality testing laboratories need to be created and the value chain stakeholders need to be encouraged to use the network of testing facilities to monitor and ensure food safety and quality throughout the value chain.

6. Food quality and safety standards need to be harmonized at different levels to avoid confusion and logistics for compliance with the standards needs to be worked out.
7. Appropriate technological packages for all stakeholders in the value chain need to be made available. These packages could be country and commodity specific.
8. There is a need for cooperation among the countries of Asia-Pacific region to take advantage of the complementarities in activities related to fruit exports such as sharing of market intelligence, food quality assessment, risk management, etc.
9. It is possible to envision a common food market in the region where intra and inter regional trade could take place. This arrangement could be on the lines of EU market with common facilities and regulations.
10. Fruit producers need to cooperate among themselves in their activities to achieve economic scales of operation. Mechanisms for such cooperations need to be put in place with transparency, equity and amicable dispute redressal.
11. Common standards and product specifications for asian fruits need to be developed to facilitate the trade.

Asian and Pacific centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery of the United Nations may play a proactive role in assisting the member countries in capacity building and catalyzing the policy framework. It may not be possible for the UNAPCAEM to undertake the entire spectrum of activities as outlined above. Therefore, UNAPCAEM may identify and demarcate its role in enhancing the competitiveness of Asian Fruits. Consequently, suitable programmes in this area may be initiated.