

PRESS RELEASE

6th October, 2009

MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES ORGANISES THE 1st STATE FOOD PROCESSING MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries organized a one day Conference of State Food Processing Ministers today at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The Conference was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

Welcoming the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sh. Subodh Kant Sahai, Minister of Food Processing Industries informed that the Conference is being organised as a part of the 100 days Agenda of the Ministry with a view to have detailed consultation with all the stakeholders resulting in formulation of a Short Term and Long Term Action Plan for the development of the sector. Highlighting the Prime Ministers' stress on the need for having a second Green Revolution, Sh. Sahai indicated that food processing can be an effective tool for having such a revolution. He further stated that as food processing industry promotes vital linkages and synergies between two main pillars of the economy – industry and agriculture, it has long been a priority for the government. He pointed out that during the recent economic crises, food processing sectors was amongst the very few sectors that continued to grow and there was no lay off or retrenchment in this sector. It is a sector which can provide economic viability to agriculture and help the country achieve inclusive growth.

India's food processing or evergreen revolution can help realize our huge potential in food production and become a leading food supplier to the world. As the Indian economy grows and family incomes rise, so would the acceptability of ready to eat processed foods.

The Prime Minister, in his speech, stressed that the food processing sector has the potential to be a driver that can transform the rural economy. Recognizing that inadequate infrastructure is a major problem being faced by the sector, he hoped that the flagship Bharat Nirman Programme would transform the rural infrastructure, giving a boost to the food processing

industry. He laid special emphasis on expanding public investment in building rural on-farm infrastructure like primary processing centres, collection centres, cold chains etc. He also welcomed the initiative by the Ministry for formulating a draft Food Processing policy.

The Conference was attended by Ministers and senior officials of all the States/ UTs, Industry Association office bearers, Industrial Units, Research and Academia etc. Among the major issues that were discussed and debated included - government policies and procedures, Vision 2020, reforms in existing legislations, diversification of product portfolio, commercialization, capacity building, credit and related issues.

Sh. K.V. Thomas, Hon'ble MOS(Agriculture) while addressing the gathering stressed on creating a better synergy between the efforts, initiatives and schemes of various Union Government Ministries as well of the State Governments. He assured that effort would be made to develop better processable varieties of fruits/ vegetables make the extension machinery more responsive.

Representatives from states welcomed the holding of the Conference and stressed the need for greater coordination between the centre and states.

The Conference also had parallel session of group discussions where specific views relevant to the sector on specific issue like infrastructure development, Government policy formulation, Quality Issues, improving credit availability to the food processing sector, taxation issues obstructing the growth to the sector were discussed in greater detail. Sh. Arun Maira, Member, Planning Commission presided over a Session whereby these various groups presented the outcome of their discussions before the gathering.

On the basis of the recommendations of the groups and the suggestion received in the Plenary Session, the Ministry proposes to formulate a road map and Action Plan for achieving exponential growth of the sector and make India the food factory of the world.

Sh. N.N. Meena, Hon'ble MOS(Finance) addressed the valedictory session applauding the vision of MoFPI to organize such a large stake holders consultation exercise to chalk out a plan for the exponential growth

of the sector. He assured the gathering that there would not be any dearth of credit availability for the accelerated growth of the sector.

In the Valedictory Session, Dr. P.I. Suvrathan, Chairman, FSSAI stressed on improving the quality of food products and aligning them to the international standards so as to attain better competitiveness in the international market and marking available better quality and hygienic food to our people in the country. He explained in detail the plans of FSSAI to implement the Integrated Food Law, which was incidentally, formulated and got approved by this Ministry of Food Processing Industries in 2006.

VOTE OF THANKS

by Secretary, Food Processing Industries

The first ever Conference of state food processing ministers was organized by this Ministry as a part of its 100 day agenda. The overwhelming response that the Conference has received from all the stake-holders would act as a big morale booster and act as a catalyst for all the stakeholders to strive to do more and act in a coordinated manner for the growth of the sector.

The presence of Hon'ble Prime Minister rightfully set the agenda of the Conference. His presence proved to be a great motivating force for all of us. We would always be guided by his vision for the sector that he laid out for us so clearly.

I would like to thank Sh.Subodh Kant Sahai, Hon'ble Minister for Food Processing Industries for having conceived the idea of organizing this Conference. He is indeed a great visionary and has been instrumental in the phenomenal growth of the food processing sector in the country. Under his leadership, the Ministry has taken up a number of path-breaking initiatives that have given a tremendous boost to the sector. On behalf of all the stakeholders, I would once again like to thank and compliment Sh.Sahai for this initiative.

I would like to thank all the state food processing ministers, senior officers, task force members, farmers and industry delegates who have spared their valuable time to attend the Conference and gave their very valuable suggestions and sharing their vision for the growth of the sector. I would, on behalf of all, extend to them our heart-felt gratitude for having graced the occasion and giving valuable suggestions for a roadmap for the future.

I would specially like to thank Sh. K.V. Thomas, MOS(Agriculture), Sh. N.N. Meena, MOS(Finance), Sh. Arun Maira, Member, Planning Commission, Sh. Rakesh Bharti Mittal, CII, National Council on Agriculture and Food Processing, Sh. T. Nand Kumar, Secretary, DAC, Sh. U.C. Sarangi, Chairman, NABARD, Sh. Amit Mitra, Secretary General, FICCI, Sh. Dinesh Rai, Secretary, MSME, Sh. P.I. Suvrathan, Chairman, FSSAI, Sh. Chaman Kumar, AS&FA, Sh. M.K. Jalan, MD, Keventa Agro and other delegates who addressed the Conference.

At the end, I would like to express my sincere thanks for all the officers of the Ministry of Food Processing who worked very hard in making the Conference a success. It was indeed a very difficult task, since this was the first time ever that a Conference of this magnitude was organized by the Ministry solely.
