

MINUTES OF THE 61ST MEETING OF THE SPICES BOARD HELD ON
19th NOVEMBER 2007

The 61st meeting of the Spices Board was held at 2.30 p.m. on 19th November 2007 at Board's office, Cochin.

Shri.V.J.Kurian, IAS, Chairman, Spices Board presided over the meeting.

The following members were present:

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| 1. Shri.Sajan Kurian, | Vice Chairman |
| 2. Shri N. Jehangir, | Member |
| 3. Shri.V.D.Alam, | “ “ |
| 4. Shri.Raj Singh, | Special Invitee |
| 5. Shri.K.George Joseph IAS, | Member |
| 6. Dr.V.Prakash, | “” |
| 7. Dr.V.A.Parthasarathy, | “” |
| 8. Shri.T.Asok Kumar, | “” |
| 9. Dr.K.V.Peter, | “” |
| 10. Shri.S.V.Srirama Reddy, | “” |
| 11. Shri.Balkaran Patel, | “” |

Leave of absence was granted to the following members:

1. Smt.Daggubati Purandareswari, M.P. (Minister of State for Human Resources Development (School Education & Literacy)
2. Shri Anant Kumar Hegde
3. Shri Prashant Goyal, IAS
4. Dr.M.L.Choudhary
5. Dr.Renu S Parmar
6. Shri Rajiv Dhar
7. Agril.Production Commissioner, Govt.of Kerala
8. Dr.U.Venkateswarlu

Absent

1. Shri Viswanath Okte
2. Shri D.M. Kathir Anand

The following officers of the Board were present:

1. Shri.V.K.K.Nair, Secretary
2. Shri.S.Kannan, Director[Mktg]
3. Dr.Charles J Kithu, Director[fin]
4. Dr.J.Thomas, Director[Res]
5. Shri.R.Chandrasekhar, Director (Dev)

At the outset, Chairman welcomed all the members, particularly the new members Shri.Balkaran Patel from Madhya Pradesh and Shri.S.V.Srirama Reddy from Karnataka, who were attending the Board meeting for the first time. Thereafter, the agenda items were taken up for consideration.

Item No.1 : Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 20.6.2007.

Confirmed.

Item No.2: Action taken on the decisions of the meeting of the Board held on 20.6.2007.

Noted.

Item No.3 : Spices Export up by 45% during the first half of 2007-08

The impact of appreciation of rupee on spices exports was discussed. The Chairman clarified that in quantity terms, the achievement was higher by 22% and in dollar terms, it is higher by 45% as compared to previous year. Hence it may be seen that there was no adverse impact of appreciation of rupee on the spices exports.

Dr. V. Prakash pointed out that 20% of the value-addition in spices was only taking place in India, the remaining being in other countries. He emphasized the need for more focus on value-addition in spices exports.

Dr. V. Prakash emphasized the need to give training to the staff of the Spices Board also on the latest trends in technology, exports, banking etc. Dr.Prakash also suggested to monitor the impact of the training programmes.

Item No.7: Training programmes on Quality improvement of spices for the year 2007-08.

There was a suggestion to introduce an Executive Summary in the beginning of the Annual Report. Dr.K.V.Peter suggested that the photographs clubbed together in few pages may be dispersed into more pages as per availability of space, which might be a better way of presentation.

Item No.6: Annual Report of Spices Board for the year 2006-07.

Noted.

Item No.5: Audit Report on Spices Board for the year 2006-07

Chairman informed that the oleoresin industry is mainly importing the spices, especially pepper in the form of light berries and pin heads for extraction purposes and exports thereof. Hence, generally imports do not pose any major threat to the farming community or domestic market. Nevertheless the issues of spices imports have been taken up with Government of India.

Members expressed the view that steps needed to be taken to remove the fears of farmer community on the spices imports taking place into the country. Concern was expressed that even though India is a major producer of ginger, especially in the North-East/Assam, fresh ginger is one of the major items imported, and wondered whether adequate caution is being exercised while allowing spices imports.

Noted.

Item No.4: Review of Import of spices into India during April-September 2007 as compared to April-September 2006

Approved.

Item No.10: Rain Water Harvesting arrangements and lightning arrester at the Spices Board, Head Office building

Board approved the proposal.

The proposal was discussed in detail. It was noted that the proposal was mooted based on the suggestion of the BSI auditors on fire safety angle. It was however suggested that the additional construction proposed may be done in consultation with an expert to design the additional floors so as to suite specific requirements of Quality Evaluation Laboratory. Chairman agreed to the proposal and informed that Board shall be taking action accordingly. Mr Raj Singh suggested that the space made available by the shifting of the laboratory may be gainfully utilized.

Item No.9: Construction of additional 3 floors over the existing canteen building at Head Office, Spices Board, Kochi .

Approved.

Item No.8: Amendment in the Recruitment Regulations and Schedules on account of Re-structuring of stenographic cadre and the introduction of Flexible Complementing Scheme (FCS) for the Scientists in the Board.

Shri.Balkaran Patel requested to conduct the trainings in Madhya Pradesh in Hindi. Director (Dev) confirmed that the training would be conducted in Hindi and the training material will also be supplied in Hindi in Madhya Pradesh.

Board approved the proposals placed before it with regard to training programme for the current year i.e. 2007-08.

Item No.11 : Geographical Indication Registration of spices.

Noted.

There were suggestions to link the GI registration to exports and capitalize on such uniqueness of spice varieties. The steps taken by Tea Board in utilizing GI for tea could be cited as an example in this regard. Chairman informed that steps will be taken to register the GI in the international markets.

Item No.12: E-Auction of Cardamom (Small) at Bodinayakanur and Vandannettu

Noted.

Shri.V.D.Alam suggested to install the facilities, especially computer hardware, with a long-term perspective so that further updations/additions could be possible.

Item No.13: Spices Development in NE Region – Tripartite Agreement among the Board, Govt. of Nagaland and Indian Tobacco Company, Guntur.

Noted.

The Members requested the Board to be cautious so that once the Company withdraws from the programme, it will not affect the farmers. Involvement of more than one company would be safer.

Item No.14: Framework for Cooperation – Agreement between the Board and the International Trade Centre, Geneva

Noted.

Members voiced their concern over sharing of sensitive information with ITC. Dr.V.Prakash suggested to constitute a committee to decide upon what information could be shared and what not before sending the proposal. Dr.Parthasarathy suggested to get the permission of National Biodiversity Authority of India before

Noted.

Item No.17: Establishing Regional Quality Testing Laboratories through ASIDE scheme

Chairman pointed out that IFS, a public undertaking has offered to prepare a detailed feasibility report for the setting up of the Spices Park in Guntur and the Board is in the process of discussing with them about the scope of work and the fees to be paid. The Board authorized the Chairman to do the needful.

Members suggested to provide the facilities in the Spices Parks not only for the exports but also for the domestic marketing. The need for benchmarks for the facilities to be set up was emphasized. It was also suggested to look into the technology used in the processing units to ensure that the same was the latest.

Approved.

Item No.16: Spices Parks at Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh and Guntur in Andhra Pradesh

The Board approved the proposal.

Dr.V.Prakash briefly explained the programme. It was informed that an interactive meeting to obtain the views from the trade, manufacturers, processors etc. of spices was scheduled on 20th November, 2007 and based on these inputs, the Spices Board would formulate a proposal in SFC Memo for consideration of the Government.

Item No.15: Establishing a Centre for Value Addition to Spices at CFTRI, Mysore

entering into an agreement for sharing of information. After detailed discussions, the members suggested to limit the collaboration with ITC, Geneva to the areas of "Market promotion and Market access" in the proposals which might be helpful to us. Chairman agreed to the suggestion to limit the scope of collaboration to only "Market promotion and Market access".

Item No.18: Holding of IX World Spice Congress in Goa in 2008

Noted.

Dr.V.Prakash suggested to give opportunities to the small and medium processors for displaying their products in the exhibition conducted during the Spice Congress. Director (Mktg) informed that Board would write to small and medium processors requesting to send their product samples for display in the Spices Board's stall in the exhibition.

Item No.19: Formation of Indian Institute of Spice Technology (IIST)

The Members welcomed the proposal for formation of Indian Institute of Spice Technology (IIST). It was suggested that youngsters should be attracted to associate with the proposed IIIST. Chairman requested the Members to send their suggestions for preparing the proposal.

Other Items:

Report on Mandatory sampling

Members expressed their concern on increase in the number of samples of chilli in which the Sudan dye/Aflatoxin have been detected by the Quality Evaluation Laboratory of the Board. It might be necessary to ascertain the level at which the contamination occurs. As regards the presence of aflatoxin, it was suggested to popularize the Solar poly houses for drying chilli and solar energy possibly to other spices in the long run.

The meeting came to an end at 5.00 p.m.
