Bi-Monthly Vol. 15 Issue 9 & 10 May-June 2025 Rs. 50/-

India's Only Newspaper on Agriculture Industry & Trade having Maximum Presence in National & International Trade Events

AGRITECH INDIA

Media Today Group Publication

एग्रिटेक इंडिया

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INDIA'S POTATO SURGE
CATALYZING INNOVATION, EXPORTS AND AGRI-INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION

India's agricultural sector is undergoing a quiet yet profound transformation, with the potato emerging as a key catalyst. Once viewed primarily as a household staple, the humble potato is now driving modernization across the food industry, spurring technological innovation, and unlocking new export opportunities. As the world's second-largest potato producer, India is steadily shifting from volume-centric farming to a value-driven model that emphasizes advanced cultivation methods, seed innovation, and international trade partnerships.

In 2023, India produced 58.85 million tonnes of potatoes, underscoring the crop's growing role in the country's food economy. Urbanization, rising incomes, and shifting dietary preferences are fueling a surge in demand for processed and convenience foods, setting the stage for strong market expansion through 2028.

Despite its impressive production volume, India's potato-processing industry remains relatively nascent compared to global leaders such as the USA, UK, Canada, France, and Germany. As of 2007–08, per capita consumption of processed potato products in India was just 365 grams—mostly in the form of chips—highlighting a significant gap and untapped potential.

However, this landscape is changing rapidly. Strategic investments by domestic and multinational companies, including ITC, PepsiCo, and MS International, are strengthening infrastructure and boosting processing capacity. These efforts are positioning India not just as a key producer but as an emerging hub in the global potato value chain.

Potatoes have become more than a staple—they are a strategic crop with global significance. In the following sections, we explore how India's potato industry is evolving in response to global trends, and how this transformation is reshaping both domestic and international markets.

Indian Potato Market Scenario

In 2023, the Indian frozen potato products market

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SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS FROM INDIA, INCLUDING WOMEN, AT THE CENTRE OF CO-RESEARCH AND CO-INNOVATION TO BRING BACK NUTRITIOUS CROPS AND FOOD THAT HAVE BEEN "FORGOTTEN"

Rather than mere recipients and beneficiaries of agricultural innovation and knowledge "transferred" by scientists, small and marginal Indian farmers, including women, must be perceived and recognized as key actors and partners in research and knowledge creation. Women especially are the backbone of marginal farmer households in India.

As we celebrate the International Year of Millets, a new

pilot 'Collective Action' stresses the role of these small farmers in agriculture, farming, and contribution to strengthened agri-food systems. Supported by various national and international partners in India, the initiative is based on leadership, ownership and empowerment of small and marginal farmers, including women, as custodians of forgotten food, biodiversity and holders of related knowledge. It provides them with two types of benefits.

Firstly, it contributes to greater food and nutrition security, resilience and climate adaptation. Secondly, it makes them equal partners in

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INSIDE STORIES

KAZAKHSTAN

THE GROWING HEART OF CENTRAL ASIA'S GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

— **M B Naqvi** & **Manish Kumar,**
Media Today Group

In Central Asia's boundless heart, where ancient winds still roam, lies Kazakhstan—a land of breathtaking contrasts and timeless beauty. This vast country is defined by its dramatic natural diversity: golden steppes that stretch endlessly beneath expansive skies, and the snow-capped Altai Mountains rising in silent grandeur, cradling glacial rivers and alpine forests. To the south, sun-scorched deserts shimmer with mystery, while places like the Charyn Canyon echo the beauty of ancient landscapes. From tranquil, turquoise lakes to the blooming apple orchards of Almaty, Kazakhstan unfolds as a living canvas—untamed, majestic, and deeply woven into the soul of Central Asia.

Beyond its scenic splendor, Kazakhstan is also one of the largest and most resource-rich countries in the world—and the largest landlocked nation on Earth. Its landscape is not only visually stunning but agriculturally vital, offering a blend of wide-open plains and fertile northern regions that have made it a global leader in grain production, particularly wheat. The southern zones, meanwhile, support a thriving cultivation of fruits, vegetables, and commercial crops. Despite facing challenges such as harsh winters and semi-arid conditions, Kazakhstan's agricultural sector remains a cornerstone of its economy and rural identity. At the heart of this agrarian strength lies its expanding greenhouse industry, which continues to sustain communities and contribute to the nation's enduring resilience.

Kazakhstan: The Growing Heart of Central Asia's Greenhouse Industry

In recent years, Kazakhstan has hosted many greenhouses conference and exhibitions to attract investments across the world. The growing prominence of the Greenhouses Kazakhstan exhibition reflects a larger trend: the

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INDIA'S POTATO SURGE . . .

reached an impressive value of USD 1.77 billion, reflecting the growing appetite for convenient, ready-to-cook foods among Indian consumers. Projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17% between 2024 and 2032, the market is expected to touch USD 7.23 billion by 2032. This robust growth is fueled by the rising demand for frozen snacks that align with busy urban lifestyles, alongside a rapidly expanding fast-food industry in India, which is currently growing at an annual rate of 25–30%. Within this space, potato-based snacks—including French fries, wedges, and potato-based Indian treats—command a significant 30% share of the fast-food segment, highlighting their widespread popularity.

Potato products like French fries, smileys, potato bites, and their many variations—such as curly fries, lattice cuts, seasoned or batter-dipped options—are among the top-selling items across both domestic and international markets. These processed forms not only offer taste and convenience but also provide strong profit margins for food service operators. Their versatility and popularity have made them a staple in quick-service restaurant menus and retail freezers alike. Dehydrated potato forms such as flakes, granules, and powders also play a critical role, widely used as substitutes for fresh potatoes in a variety of snack applications including Bhujia, Tikki, fabricated chips, patties, and various premix formulations. Their long shelf life and ease of incorporation in food processing continue to enhance their demand across the industry.

Frozen potato products in particular are gaining traction due to their ability to retain the flavor and texture of fresh potatoes while offering extended usability, making them an ideal choice for today's fast-paced foodservice sector. Their appeal is especially strong among children and younger consumers in urban centers, further fueling the demand for quick-fix snacks like fries and wedges.

From a product segmentation perspective, India's potato market continues to be dominated by fresh potatoes, which remain central to traditional Indian cooking. Their versatility and low cost ensure that they are a fixture in nearly every household. On the other hand, the processed potato segment is rapidly expanding, driven by urbanization, higher disposable incomes, and changing dietary preferences.

In terms of end-user segmentation, household consumption currently leads the market. Potatoes are an indispensable part of Indian cuisine, valued for their affordability and adaptability across diverse regional dishes. Meanwhile, commercial sectors such as food service companies and fast-food chains are also experiencing steady growth in potato consumption.

Regionally, North India, particularly states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, remains the epicenter of potato production. These regions benefit from ideal agro-climatic conditions, strong agricultural infrastructure, and advanced cultivation practices, all of which contribute to their dominance in the national potato supply chain.

Drivers of Indian Potato Industry

The Indian potato industry is undergoing a dynamic transformation driven by a combination of structural, technological, and market-oriented factors. One of the most significant drivers is the rising demand for processed foods, particularly products like chips, fries, and frozen potato-based items. Urbanization, a growing middle class, and evolving dietary preferences are fueling this trend, with potato chips consumption alone seeing notable growth in recent years. This shift is pushing processors and farmers alike to adapt to new quality standards and cultivate varieties better suited for industrial use.

At the farm level, technological advancements have played a pivotal role in enhancing productivity and efficiency. The adoption of precision agriculture techniques, including AI-driven pest control, real-time irrigation advisories, and satellite monitoring, has enabled farmers to increase yields while optimizing inputs. Companies like Technico Agri Sciences are helping bridge the gap between traditional practices and modern farming by integrating digital tools with seed distribution and advisory networks. These innovations have led to a significant increase in per-hectare yield, especially in regions such as Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

Another foundational shift is taking place in India's seed systems. Historically reliant on farm-saved seeds, the sector is now moving towards certified, disease-resistant, and genetically improved varieties. Institutions such as the Central Potato Research Institute (CPRI), along with international breeding companies, are introducing high-performance strains tailored to Indian agro-climatic conditions. Industry experts are also advocating for a national seed certification framework, similar to the Netherlands' NAK system, to ensure quality consistency and enhance India's credibility in export markets.

Parallel to improvements in production, the processed potato segment is witnessing rapid growth. Quick service restaurants (QSRs), snack food manufacturers, and exporters are driving demand for high-starch, low-sugar potatoes suitable for frying and freezing. Indian companies are increasingly investing in farm-level R&D, cold chains, and supply chain digitization to meet global standards and expand into markets such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

While processed products are gaining momentum, the table potato segment also holds untapped potential. Currently dominated by unbranded and commoditized offerings, this market is ripe for innovation. With rising consumer awareness around health and hygiene, there is growing interest in branded, traceable, and well-packaged table potatoes. Such branding efforts could help farmers capture more value and encourage the adoption of better post-harvest handling practices.

Regional diversification is also contributing to the sector's resilience and expansion. While states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar remain production strongholds, newer hubs such as Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh are emerging rapidly. These states benefit from better infrastructure, irrigation access, and supportive government policies, making them attractive for investment in cold storage, contract farming, and export-oriented supply chains. Diversification across regions also helps mitigate weather-related risks and stabilize prices.

India's export potential, especially in seed potatoes, remains largely untapped. With cost advantages and favorable climates, the country is well-positioned to serve markets in Africa and Asia. However, the absence of formal trade agreements and internationally recognized certification systems has limited progress. With the right policy support and infrastructure development, India could become a significant global player in both seed and table potato exports.

Challenges for the Potato Industry

The Indian potato industry is undergoing a period of dynamic transformation but continues to face persistent challenges that limit its full potential. A key constraint is the widespread reliance on farm-saved seeds, which results in poor yields, inconsistent quality, and increased susceptibility to diseases. Certified seeds, though more productive and resilient, remain inaccessible to many farmers due to gaps in seed certification and distribution systems.

The supply chain is equally fragmented, dominated by intermediaries and lacking transparency, which leaves smallholders with low margins and limited access to formal markets. Despite being a leading global producer, India processes only a small portion of its potato output, largely due to a shortage of processing-suitable varieties and inadequate cold storage and logistics infrastructure—leading to high post-harvest losses. Price volatility further destabilizes the sector, as farmers often base planting decisions on past trends in the absence of real-time market intelligence, causing cycles of overproduction or scarcity. Climate change, marked by irregular rainfall and temperature shifts, adds further pressure on production stability.

Export opportunities are constrained by regulatory barriers, inconsistent quality standards, and the lack of global certifications and trade agreements, despite India's cost and climate advantages. Domestically, the market remains largely unbranded, offering little room for value addition or traceability.

Moreover, the sector lacks a unified platform to represent stakeholders, coordinate policies, or drive strategic growth. Inadequate storage remains a major bottleneck, with only 30 million tonnes of capacity against 50 million tonnes of production, contributing to wastage and price instability.

Pests and diseases, continue to cause significant economic losses, highlighting the need for sustained investment in pest and disease management research.

Industries Shaping the Potato Industry

The rise of India's potato industry is being significantly shaped by the collaborative efforts of Indian enterprises and multinational corporations (MNCs), who are infusing the sector with investment, innovation, and global market orientation. Indian companies such as ITC Limited, Bhatti Agritech, and AK Exports are at the forefront of developing resilient supply chains and modernizing production capabilities. Simultaneously, multinational players like PepsiCo India, McCain, and Mahindra HZPC are bringing in global best practices, advanced technology, and expertise in seed development, processing efficiency, and export logistics.

These industry leaders are transforming India's potato sector from a volume-based production model into a value-driven ecosystem. For instance, MS International's INR 200 crore investment in its Gujarat processing facility in 2022 exemplifies this shift, resulting in a 30% boost in production capacity with a focus on frozen potato products tailored for both domestic and international markets. Such expansions not only meet the rising domestic demand for convenience and processed foods but also strengthen India's export capabilities, particularly to growing markets in Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Moreover, Indian processors are recognizing the need to compete globally not just on price, but also on quality and consistency. Many have started to invest heavily in on-farm research and development, precision agriculture, and digitized supply chains to meet the stringent requirements of international buyers. This technological integration, driven by both domestic and global firms, is enhancing productivity and traceability across the value chain.

The collaboration between Indian firms and MNCs is thus crucial to elevating the country's status in the global potato economy. By aligning local strengths with international standards and market insights, these players are positioning India as not only a significant producer but also an innovation hub and trusted supplier in the global potato landscape.

Role of Global Potato Summit 2025 in rewriting the success Story of the Indian Potato Industry

The Global Potato Summit 2025, organized by Media Today Group, is poised to be a transformative event in redefining the success story of the Indian potato industry. Positioned as a pivotal milestone in the sector's evolution, this summit will serve as a dynamic platform for stakeholders across the potato value chain—farmers, policymakers, researchers, agribusiness leaders, and global partners—to converge, collaborate, and co-create the future of potato cultivation, processing, and trade. By focusing on innovation, sustainability, and international engagement, GPS 2025 aims to steer India toward becoming a knowledge-driven, value-added global potato powerhouse.

The Summit will feature Live Field Demonstration, offering real-time exposure to cutting-edge technologies that are transforming the potato landscape. This would offers various stakeholders from potato industry to witness advancements in automation, AI-powered precision farming, modern irrigation systems, and next-generation processing techniques. These demonstrations will provide practical insights into how technology can drive higher productivity, reduce costs, and enhance quality—thereby closing the gap between traditional farming and global benchmarks.

GPS 2025 has entered into coveted global collaboration with PotatoEurope and Potato Days, Türkiye, big name in global potato industry that would catalyze India's potato sector growth. These collaborations are expected to bring in world-class expertise in seed certification, disease-resistant breeding, sustainable cultivation practices, and post-harvest management. By aligning India's capabilities with Europe's sophisticated seed systems and Türkiye's integrated export frameworks, the summit will enable India to fast-track its adoption of global standards and expand its footprint in international markets.

Moreover, GPS 2025 will address some of the most pressing issues facing the industry, including climate resilience, senvironmental sustainability, and evolving consumer preferences. By bringing together global thought leaders and institutional experts, the summit will foster dialogue on climate-smart agriculture, regenerative farming, and data-driven supply chains. This knowledge exchange will empower Indian stakeholders to build a more robust, adaptive, and future-ready potato industry.

Conclusion

The Indian potato industry is undergoing a dynamic shift, driven by technological innovation, changing consumption patterns, and strengthening global partnerships. Processed potato products—ranging from French fries and smileys to wedges, lattice cuts, and curly variants—are becoming mainstays in both domestic and export markets. These items, favored for their appeal and profitability, are reshaping the menus of food service providers and contributing significantly to the sector's revenue. As consumers increasingly lean towards convenience foods, such offerings are helping brands capture wider market segments and drive sustained demand.

In parallel, dehydrated forms such as flakes, powders, and granules are seeing growing acceptance as reliable substitutes for fresh potatoes in various snack preparations including Bhujia, Tikki, and fabricated chips. Their longer shelf life and ease of integration into industrial processes have made them valuable assets in large-scale food production. Similarly, frozen potato products have carved out a strong foothold due to their extended usability and consistent quality, matching the flavor and texture expectations of fresh produce. Their rising popularity—particularly among urban youth—has prompted expanded investment in cold chain infrastructure, advanced processing units, and supply chain resilience.

The upcoming Global Potato Summit 2025 stands as a key milestone in this journey, offering a timely convergence of thought leaders, innovators, and stakeholders from across the world. It will provide valuable insights from industry veterans while fostering dialogue on trends such as sustainability, climate resilience, and digitized farming. Notably, the summit's alignment with global initiatives like Euro Potato and Türkiye Potato is expected to unlock new avenues for collaboration—enhancing India's capabilities in genetics, seed quality, and agri-tech while paving the way for robust international market access.

India's potato economy is now transitioning from a commodity-based system to one focused on value, quality, and global competitiveness. This evolution reflects a larger trend—one of increased openness to new technology, scientific innovation, and international cooperation. With policy support, private investment, and collaborative frameworks in place, India is poised not just to meet domestic demand but also to lead globally in processed products, seed exports, and agribusiness solutions. The potato sector's next chapter will not merely be about scale—it will be defined by smart, sustainable, and globally connected growth. ■

Compiled & edited by Manish Kumar & Asim Iqbal, Media Today Group

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SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS FROM INDIA, INCLUDING WOMEN, AT THE CENTRE . . .

research along with research institutes and protagonists of development and innovation. Moreover, when they share common interests and concerns, such as for their traditional foods that have fallen out of the mainstream, the recognition and respect for their values can bring transformational changes beyond their communities – to all societies.

"Innovation is a coping mechanism for small and family farmers to make their farming practices more sustainable," Reema Nanavaty, Executive Director, Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

The Collective Action on Forgotten Foods and Crops is based on strong principles of collaboration, partnership and knowledge exchange that combines farmers' custodianship, insights, perspectives and experiences with innovative research practices.

"Everything that we have done on forgotten food with farmers until now would not have been possible if people from different organizations didn't believe in our mission. We want India to be an example of how to co-design activities that can bring different types of knowledge and actors at the same level," Alessandro Meschinelli, Senior Innovation System Advisor, Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR)

The initiative is facilitated by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR), and led by the Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

"Government, research, education, extension, private sector, civil society, NGOs and other stakeholders need to actively support farmer-led processes of innovation in harnessing forgotten foods to meet the 2030 Agenda, with special reference to SDG1 on eradicating poverty in all its forms and SDG2 on fighting hunger and malnutrition," Prof. M. S. Swaminathan, MSSRF

An innovative process of collaboration was introduced to unleash the potential of forgotten foods, which includes cultivated, semidomesticated and wild species, and traditional varieties. These crops have been produced and consumed for centuries as a valuable source of fibre, oil, and medicinal properties, as well as fodder. Yet, their roles have been undervalued and their importance neglected by markets, research and policies.

"It is a critical to foster co-creation of knowledge through the appreciation of the importance of indigenous knowledge, the integration of farmers' and scientific knowledge, and the support to farmer experimentation and problem-solving research that addresses the needs and priorities of farmers," Pierre Ferrand, Agriculture Officer (Agroecology), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

The Partners' Meeting for a Joint Project Design: Fostering Collective Action on Forgotten Food is taking place from 3-5 May 2023 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It brought together representatives of farmers' organizations, national agricultural research and extension institutions (NARES), government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), regional associations, and international development agencies to initiate partnership and develop a full programme design on forgotten foods.

"The Green Revolution improved India's food self-sufficiency and exports, but at the same time, we have forgotten our local food. Diabetes and cancer are increasing also among farmer communities, largely due to the change of our eating habits," Shri Nitin Shukla, Joint Director, Department of Agriculture, Government of Gujarat

Earlier this year, local consultations with farmers took place in Gujarat, Meghalaya, Odisha and Tamil Nadu. In these farmer-led workshops, farmers themselves identified forgotten crops, solutions for seed selection, conservation and multiplication, value addition, marketing and various culinary applications. They also sought support of key government agencies and international development for this Collective Action.

"Agriculture has the responsibility to feed the world, and forgotten food that is very rich in nutrients is one of the important pieces of the puzzle in agriculture. There was a time when science was not ready to listen, but we now have a chance to correct our agricultural practices and work with farmers to sustain this food for future generations," Carlo Fadda, Research Director, Alliance Bioversity and CIAT.

The outcomes of these consultations are a basis for this international workshop, which will demonstrate evidence, raise awareness and build commitment to initiate a multi-stakeholder platform on forgotten food and crops. The event also considers existing initiatives, such as the United Nations Decade of Family Farming, Farmers' Forum, and National Committees of Family Farming, as well the International Year of Millets initiated by the Government of India.

"Research, government and farmers rarely work together, and this is a unique opportunity to show how we work together in partnership on the programme co-design, K. S. Varaprasad, Senior Technical Advisor, Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI)

The event, as well as the local consultations conducted earlier this year, were precedented by a very inclusive consultative process with farmers and other innovation actors, which led to the development of the Manifesto on Forgotten Foods. The Manifesto guides the global forgotten foods agenda. It situates smallholder farmers as central actors in designing and implementing research programmes on forgotten food to ensure food and nutrition security, support transformation of agri-food systems and adaptation to climate change.

"We are here to unlock the potential of neglected and underutilized crops, because they are for the future as they are helping to reduce poverty. This Collective Action is happening for farmers and with farmers," Ma. Estrella Penunia, Secretary General, Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA)

This national-level initiative in India is a significant step to demonstrate evidence on India's wealth in agrobiodiversity, culture and cuisines. It is envisioned to attract other countries and societies to embrace forgotten food that is healthy and highly nutritious, and contributes to more functional, diversified and sustainable agri-food systems, while also contributing to the propoor transformation of agricultural research and innovation systems.

About Us

GFAiR is an open forum and a movement for change. Together, we are working to make research and innovation in agriculture and food more effective, responsive and equitable, towards achieving Sustainable Development. ■

ABOVE NORMAL MONSOON LIKELY TO SPUR RURAL DEMAND: COMPANIES

The forecast of 'above-normal' south-west monsoon rains by India Meteorological Department (IMD) has raised hopes of robust production of major crops including rice, pulses, cotton, maize and sugar, as well-dispersed and timely rains would ensure improved yields and price stability, major agricultural companies have stated.

They said that this would also help boost rural consumption demand.

"A good monsoon benefits the agrarian economy with improvement in crop yields and farmer incomes, driving positive sentiments. Together with increase in agricultural acreage and timely interventions spearheaded by the government, an above-normal monsoon is expected to boost rural demand in days to come," S Sivakumar, group-head, agribusiness, sustainability and IT, ITC, one of the largest integrated agri-business enterprises.

Companies and experts have said with a significant portion of India's net cultivated area relying on monsoon rains for irrigation, south-west monsoons have the dual responsibility of managing crop production and replenishing key reservoirs.

"The projection therefore of a good monsoon signals a bountiful agricultural season and bodes well not just the country's farmers, but for the agricultural ecosystem as a whole," S Soundararadjane, Chief Executive Officer, Hy-Farm, a major processor of potatoes, said. IMD forecast 'above normal' monsoon rainfall of 105% of the benchmark long period average during June-September this year. The met department had stated that there is an 89% chance of the rains being in the 'normal-to excess' range.

"The impact of robust monsoon extends beyond kharif crops and consistent rainfall replenishes reservoirs and groundwater levels, paving the way for a strong rabi season," Rajavelu NK, CEO, crop protection business, Godrej Agrovet, said.

According to Tarun Sawhney, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Triveni Engineering and Industries, a leading sugar manufacturer said that the adequate monsoon rains would be healthy for sugar output next season which would be adequate for domestic consumption, diversion of ethanol and exports to neighbouring countries.

Meanwhile, Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) said that adequate and well-distributed rainfall especially across key cane-growing regions will be vital for healthy crop development, maintaining crop health and enhancing yield prospects in the coming season.

"It is likely to lead to an increase in acreage for key crops – paddy, maize, cotton, and soybean, driven by higher prices due to factors like eased export restrictions (rice), demand from the ethanol industry (maize), and lower acreages as well as crop damage in the previous year as has been observed in case of soybean and cotton, respectively," Pushan Sharma, director- research, Crisil Intelligence, said.

Sharma said the spatial and temporal distribution of rainfall needs to be watched during monsoon season.

The southwest monsoon after onset over Kerala coast in early June covers the entire country by July. The monsoon rains start gradually receding from the north region from the middle of September. The four months of rain accounts for over 75% of India's annual precipitation. ■

WHY DONALD TRUMP'S TRADE TARIFFS ARE A THREAT TO GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Donald Trump's tariffs will make many things more expensive for his fellow US citizens. The price of imported cars, building materials and some tech will go up – and so will the cost of the food on American dining tables.

The US currently imports around 16% of its food supply, with a large proportion of its fruit and vegetables coming from countries now hit by tariffs.

Mexico stands out. It supplies over half the fresh fruit and nearly 70% of the fresh vegetables consumed in the US.

And even when it comes to home grown produce, the US still depends on imported fertiliser for its crops, with Canada providing up to 85% of its neighbour's supply.

So grocery bills for American families, especially for fresh produce (and processed foods dependent on foreign ingredients) will get higher. But there will also be a noticeable effect on food prices outside the US.

The consequences could be particularly serious for developing economies that rely on stable international prices to secure affordable food imports. The prices of many global staples including maize, wheat and soybeans are benchmarked against US markets so when disruptions occur, they reverberate globally.

Research I conducted with a colleague found that when international prices are disturbed, local food prices, especially in developing countries, go up.

Take global maize prices, which this year rose by 7% between April 2 (Trump's "liberation day") and April 11. Our study suggests this will immediately lead to a similar increase in local maize prices

in places like sub-Saharan Africa.

This is where many of the world's poorest people live, with hundreds of millions in households earning below the World Bank's poverty line of $2.15 (£1.61) per day. When much of that income is spent on food, a 7% increase in the price of maize could be devastating.

Growth market

According to another study, tariffs on agricultural products such as fertiliser will increase global production costs, potentially lowering crop yields and worsening food insecurity.

While the US has reduced tariffs on Canadian potash from 25% to 10%, other fertiliser producers face steeper levels (up to 28% for another major exporter, Tunisia, before Trump's reciprocal tariffs were paused).

This is especially worrying for agriculture in countries like Brazil, India and Nigeria, which are still reeling from fertiliser shortages caused by the war between Russia and Ukraine. As with food costs, US tariffs are likely to drive up prices in the global fertiliser market, making it more expensive for everyone, everywhere.

And when the cost of farming rises, crop production can suffer. This could significantly weaken food production in developing countries that are already battling climate change and volatile markets.

Another study I conducted found that countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia – already struggling with food insecurity – are among the most vulnerable to local food price shocks. These economies depend heavily on food imports and face high exposure to currency fluctuations and transport costs.

If the trade war escalates, farmers in these regions may be forced to abandon staple crops for cash commodities such as cocoa or coffee, deepening their reliance on volatile global markets and reducing their food self-sufficiency. Global inequality will worsen unless things change.

One option would be to protect essential agricultural imports, especially fertilisers and staple foods, from punitive tariffs. This would stabilise prices and protect vulnerable economies. The recently announced 90-day pause for negotiations offers a glimmer of hope, but it must be used wisely to build a more equitable trading system.

In the long term, developing countries need to bolster the resilience of their food systems. My research recommends investing heavily in mechanised agriculture which is resilient to climate change, incentivising farmers with government support, and strengthening regional trade.

The global food system is heavily interconnected. Decisions made in Washington can quickly affect food prices in Lagos, Cairo and New Delhi. And if tariffs go unchecked, they may unleash a silent and subtle crisis – one measured not in GDP, but in millions of empty stomachs. ■

(By Lotanna Emediegwu, Senior Lecturer in Economics, Manchester Metropolitan University)

BRIDGING THE AGRITECH DIVIDE WITH ADVANCED FARMING TECHNOLOGY

— Kumar Tomar

The farming industry is one of the significant pillars of the Indian economy, contributing a significant 16% of India's GDP and engaging more than half of the country's population. However, to date, there has been a slow uptake of advanced technologies in agriculture. While several agritech start-ups have been launched and well-funded by investors, the connection between these ventures and farmers remains a challenge. One of the main problems that these start-ups have to contend with is that of high costs, which tend to be associated with technology.

There are many tools — including those used in precision farming, machinery such as weather stations, and sensors that can be applied to the soil — that hold the future of increased yields and sustainable farming. However, the cost associated with such technologies might be unaffordable for small farmers, who form the largest percentage of India's farming community. Devices such as IoT sensors can cost hundreds of dollars per year, meaning that while a slight increase in yield for such farmers is hard to come by, the devices do not offer value for money.

More than 80% of farmers in India are marginal farmers, cultivating landholdings of less than five acres. These marginal lands are often fragmented into multiple smaller plots, allowing farmers to grow different crops on the same holding.

This fragmentation poses a challenge for agritech solutions designed for large-scale farming. However, satellite-based data solutions can bridge this gap by providing precise, farm-specific insights even for farms having an area of only a quarter of an acre (about 10,000 square feet), enabling even smallholder farmers to optimise their crop management and improve productivity.

The policies of the Indian agricultural sector fluctuate, and some crucial aspects like water — which is a basic necessity for agriculture — are controlled by the state governemnt.

While such interventions as subsidies and grants are useful, they have led to a situation where agritech remains a state-subsidised model rather than a market-driven one.

Many new agritechs have come to depend on these Governemnt partnerships for revenue instead of selling directly to farmers, which has impacted the growth and sustainability of most of them in the private market.

Among the challenges that have limited the embrace of agritech is ignorance among farmers.

It is essential to understand that large-scale farmers might invest time and resources to evaluate and consider adopting new technologies, while smallholder farmers are more likely to make decisions by word of mouth or based on regular practices.

This is mainly due to the poor development of facilities and capacity-building to form

the basis for adopting innovations in farming technologies.

Cost-Effective Solutions

The first area of intervention for farmer uptake can be increased through improved adoption of technologies that are cheaper to develop. Although IoT-based sensors are costly, satellite remote sensing is feasible.

While IoT sensors can cost several hundred dollars and give localised information, satellite technology offers information for the whole farm area at a considerably lower cost — usually less than 5% of the price of sensors. Satellite remote sensing, combined with artificial intelligence and machine learning, can be used to monitor soil nutrient levels, manage pest and disease risks, and support irrigation water management across large areas of farmland.

These solutions are especially practical and accessible for smallholder farmers. In this way, satellite-based solutions represent a constrained set of technological tools whereby agritech companies can propose complete and high-quality products and services at more competitive prices.

Localised Solutions

Given the highly heterogeneous climate of the country and the different farming practices followed across regions, it can be said that a market solution carved in one casting will not fit this agritech market. Start-ups must provide region-specific products. They can, therefore, apply different ways of ensuring their solution reaches farms in varying regions so that farmers can adopt it.

Pricing Models

Long-term, technology must be accessible to small and marginal farmers and useful even for field crops like wheat —especially in terms of the ultimate cost of the technology delivered to the farm. A scholar cited that the cost of any new technology farmers must consider has to be less than or equal to 10% of the total farming cost. This is crucial for adoption.

Affordability is another value that agritech start-ups should embrace, enabling them to offer their products at a cheaper cost and within reach of many farmers. Other revenue models that can be used include fee-for-service or usage plans in which the farmer pays only for what is used.

Fostering Education

Guaranteeing extensive use of such technology — even if it is cheap— requires more education and support. Agritech companies must incorporate education campaigns as a key means of informing farmers about the benefits of using these products.

This might be achievable through human capital development programmes, farmer organisations or local associations. This paper contends that hands-on training and demonstrations enable farmers to overcome hesitance stemming from a lack of familiarity. Current strategies point to the need to make technology simple and easy to use to minimise the chances of farmers being unable to adopt it on the farm.

Government and Private Sector Collaboration

Although major funding is currently being attracted to agritech start-ups via governemnt grants, the long-term model will require the involvement of both public and private entities.

This implies a need for policies that encourage agritech growth while avoiding excessive dependence on state subsidies. This includes strengthening policy content, creating private-sector incentives, and guaranteeing support for farmers transitioning to better technologies. Scaling efforts via public–private partnerships may help deliver appropriate support to farmers.

Final Thoughts

The Indian agritech industry is at a turning point. Although there is hope in the power of technology to transform agriculture, challenges such as cost, accessibility and uptake remain significant. High-end technologies like IoT sensors and UAVs are often too expensive for small and marginal farmers.

However, affordable and scalable solutions — such as satellite remote sensing, regionalised products, optional pricing structures and farmers' sensitisation —are available. When combined with agricultural expertise and AI/ML, satellite remote sensing emerges as a practical and inclusive solution, making advanced technology accessible even to small and marginal farmers.

India, being one of the top agricultural producers globally, has a wealth of insights from its diverse farming landscape. These learnings not only improve Indian agriculture but are also leveraged globally to assist small and marginal farmers elsewhere. ■

The writer is Founder, Co-founder & CEO, Satyukt Analytics. Views are personal

WOMEN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE HONOURED AT PEPSICO INDIA'S REVOLUTIONARI AWARDS 2024

PepsiCo India reinforced its commitment to advancing women empowerment in the agricultural sector, by launching a first of its kind platform, the RevolutioNari Conference and Awards 2024 here in New Delhi. Based on PepsiCo India's philosophy of Partnership in Progress, that reflects its commitment to foster inclusive growth through collaboration with government, partner organizations and communities, the event recognized and celebrated the exceptional contributions of women in agriculture. The event marked the launch of PepsiCo India's RevolutioNari Anthem, underlining its commitment towards its ongoing flagship program RevolutioNari empowering women.

Ten women farmers from across India, were recognized for setting inspirational examples of women who are leading and inspiring many others towards more meaningful contribution to the sector. They were selected after a thorough evaluation of nominations submitted from across the country. An external jury comprising of sector experts headed by Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog, reviewed the submissions under five categories:

- **Breaking Gender Stereotypes & Implementing Best Farming Practices:** Tapasi Pal from West Bengal awarded Gold and Sanju Yogi from Rajasthan awarded Silver
- **Economic Empowerment through SHGs:** Ganapathi SHG from Telangana awarded Gold and Sarayan Farmer Producer Company Ltd. from Uttar Pradesh awarded Silver
- **Innovation in Sustainable Agriculture:** Shivani Kisku from Jharkhand awarded Gold and Manguben Jaga from Gujarat awarded Silver
- **Protection and Promotion of Native Indigenous Food Systems:** Monika Mohite from Maharashtra awarded Gold and Sujata Paramanik from West Bengal awarded Silver
- **Youth Innovators in Agriculture:** Surbhi Kumari from Bihar awarded Gold and Anima Aind from Jharkhand awarded Silver

Present for the awards ceremony and presenting awards to the winners were: Chief Guest Dr. Raj Bhushan Choudhary, Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Government of India; Chief Guest Ms. Smriti Irani, Former Minister of Women and Child Development; Keynote Speaker Ajit Balaji Joshi, Secretary, Dept of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Govt. of Punjab. The Hon'ble dignitaries shared inspiring addresses underscoring the imperative to recognize and elevate women's growing contributions and leadership in agriculture.

Chief Guest, Dr. Raj Bhushan Choudhary, Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Government of India, shared in his address, "With changing times, our farmers have embraced sustainable agricultural practices, and women have emerged as strong pillars of this system, playing an indispensable role in driving progress. Hence, agricultural development is unimaginable without their invaluable contribution. I congratulate PepsiCo India for empowering and recognizing them as key leaders in the industry."

Speaking at the event, Ajit Balaji Joshi, Secretary, Dept of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Govt. of Punjab, shared, "I am incredibly proud to see women's representation in this room surpassing that of men. Organizations like PepsiCo India are instrumental in helping farmers explore opportunities in agriculture, food processing, and beyond. Women's participation in this sector is essential for driving sustainable growth and innovation."

Jagrut Kotecha, CEO, PepsiCo India and South Asia, shared, "At PepsiCo India, we are committed to an inclusive future where women are empowered to lead change. Through our RevolutioNari initiative, which aims to empower 1 million women across India by 2026, we are driving tangible, positive societal impact. As an agri company working closely with farmers for over three decades now; we are committed to enhancing women representation in the sector through this initiative and take immense pride in bringing these remarkable stories to life through the RevolutioNari Awards; our heartiest congratulations to all the winners."

The event was marked by engaging panel discussions, workshops, and knowledge exchanges. Engaging workshops were designed to equip farmers with the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in the evolving agricultural landscape. The panel discussions focused on advancing gender equality and resilience in agriculture. "Policy Perspectives: Advancing Gender Equality in Agriculture" emphasized targeted policies and training to empower women as agents of change. "Empowering Women Through Financial Inclusion, Innovation, and Technology" highlighted the role of innovation in enhancing women's access to resources. "Seed to Smile: Cultivating Resilience for a Better Tomorrow" explored climate-smart practices and farmer empowerment to build a sustainable and resilient future. Over 150 agri sector experts including policymakers, agronomists, opinion leaders, corporates, academicians, etc., attended the RevolutioNari Conference and Awards 2024. ■

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FAIFA RELEASES AGRICULTURAL ROADMAP, PUSHES FOR DIGITAL REFORM

The Federation of All India Farmer Association (FAIFA) released a comprehensive agricultural roadmap on Thursday, calling for enhanced digital infrastructure and sustainable farming practices to boost India's agricultural sector through 2040. The white paper, titled "Indian Agriculture Outlook 2025," was unveiled by parliamentarians Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy and Putta Mahesh Kumar to mark Kisan Divas 2024, highlighting persistent challenges, including low productivity, weather vulnerabilities, and fragmented landholdings.

"Despite government initiatives across crop, livestock, and fisheries sectors, significant hurdles remain in realising Indian agriculture's full potential," FAIFA said in the report.

FAIFA projected that Indian agriculture will likely grow at a CAGR of 5.5% from 2025 to 2030, reaching a total value of Rs.42 lakh crore. Foodgrain production is projected to increase by 25% by 2030, from the current 330 million metric tonnes.

"On the National Farmers' Day, let us resolve to work together-farmers, policymakers, and leaders-to build a future where agriculture thrives, rural livelihoods flourish, and every farmer feels empowered," MP and BJP party president for Andhra Pradesh unit Daggubati Purandeswari said.

The federation, representing farmers growing commercial crops across the country, outlined a three-tiered strategy spanning short-term goals through 2025, medium-term objectives until 2030, and long-term targets extending to 2040.

Key short-term recommendations include strengthening the electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), expanding irrigation coverage, and promoting natural farming practices through an Agristack platform.

For 2025-2030, FAIFA emphasized the need for private sector investment and streamlined market regulations, while long-term goals focus on achieving universal irrigation coverage and implementing precision agriculture technologies.

"The success of these recommendations depends on the collective commitment of stakeholders," FAIFA said, noting that about 180 farmer associations support its initiatives.

FAIFA President Javare Gowda said a proposal to slap 35% GST on tobacco, tobacco products and aerated beverages would adversely impact farmers of cash crops like tobacco and sugarcane.

The Andhra Pradesh-based organisation represents farmers cultivating tobacco, chilli, groundnut, cotton, and oilseeds in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat. ■

NATIONAL HORTICULTURE FAIR 2025 FOR VIKSIT BHARAT

— Dr Sumangala HP, Dr Sujatha. S,
Dr Shnakar Hebbar, Dr Nandeesha & Dr Tusar Kanti Behera

In advancing the horticulture sector in India, the ICAR- Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), stands as a National Premier Institute in innovation, research, and outreach. The institute has also successfully licensed 130 technologies to 675 clients, resulting in the issuance of over 1,550 licenses across various sectors. The National Horticulture Fair (NHF), a flagship annual event organized by ICAR-IIHR, stands as a testament to the institute's leadership and pioneering role in India's horticulture sector. Recognized as one of the country's premier platforms for showcasing horticultural advancements, innovations, and best practices, NHF was launched with the vision of bridging the gap between cutting-edge research and the farming community. It has grown into a dynamic convergence point for farmers, researchers, entrepreneurs, agri-startups, private companies, NGOs, and policymakers, fostering collaborative growth and knowledge exchange over the last 8 years.

The fair is strategically aimed at promoting nutritional security, employment generation, and livelihood enhancement through the dissemination of advanced horticultural technologies. Over the years, it has become a much-anticipated, attracting tens of thousands of farmers from across the country, and playing a crucial role in technology transfer.

By encouraging the adoption of improved horticultural practices, the fair contributes to higher productivity, value addition, and improved market linkages. NHF also embodies India's broader commitment to building a Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by positioning horticulture as a key pillar for food and nutritional security, rural empowerment, and sustainable agricultural development.

The National Horticulture Fair 2025 was organized from February 27 to March 1, 2025, at ICAR-IIHR, Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru, in collaboration with the Society for Promotion of Horticulture (SPH), BESST-HORT (the Technology Business Incubator at ICAR-IIHR), ICAR-ATARI Bengaluru, and other prominent departments, institutions, and organizations committed to promoting floriculture and allied sectors.

The theme for NHF 2025, "Horticulture for Viksit Bharat – Nutrition, Empowerment and Livelihood," focused on promoting nutritionally rich crop varieties, empowering farmers with need-based technologies, and introducing programs targeting socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Emphasis was placed on technologies that are socially compatible, economically efficient, and environmentally sustainable, driving inclusive growth across the horticulture value chain.

Key Highlights of NHF-2025

More than 250 varieties (fruit, vegetable & flowere) developed by ICAR-IIHR were diplyaed along with technologies in the area of crop production, crop protection, post harvest management, value addition, machinery & tools in horticulture crops.

One of the key highlights of the event is the live demonstration of ICAR-IIHR developed varieties and technologies, allowing farmers and stakeholders to witness firsthand the advancements in crop improvement, pest and disease management, and sustainable cultivation practices. In response to the growing interest in urban agriculture, special focus was given to vertical farming and terrace gardening, showcasing viable models for urban horticulture. These demonstrations are especially valuable for urban residents and hobby farmers looking to make the most of limited space while growing their own food.

The Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Protected Cultivation of Horticultural Crops was another major attraction, displaying state-of-the-art practices and infrastructure for growing high-value crops under controlled conditions. This is complemented by more than 250 exhibition stalls featuring innovative technologies across the horticulture value chain, Including products and services from ICAR institutes, SAUs, private companies, startups, NGOs, and FPOs.

To enhance practical skills and encourage entrepreneurship, the fair offered skill-oriented workshops on various topics such as mushroom production, protected cultivation, and terrace gardening. These sessions were designed to offer hands-on experience and expert guidance, empowering participants to apply these techniques on their own farms or urban setups.

In addition, the fair provides constructive and advisory support on field-based problems across arrange of horticultural crops, helping farmers troubleshoot and optimize their cultivation practices. A special segment was also dedicated to the sale of seeds, planting materials, new varieties and hybrids, as well as processed products, tools, equipment, and machinery, offering attendees access to high-quality resource and innovations all under one roof. Special focus was on climate-resilient, environmentally safe, and economically viable horticultural practices.

Media representatives were given a guided tour of key ICAR-IIHR facilities, including BESTT-HORT, the Mushroom Lab, and the Centre of Excellence in Protected Cultivation of Horticultural Crops, offering them a first-hand look at the institute's advanced research and technological capabilities.

In addition to the exhibitions, special workshops and seminars were organized over the three days of the National Horticulture Fair 2025, covering various aspects of horticulture. These sessions included topics on Urban Horticulture, focusing on terrace, rooftop, and vertical gardening; Hi-tech Horticulture with a focus on protected cultivation and vertical farming; Soilless Cultivation methods such as hydroponics, aeroponics, and cacophonic systems; innovative practices like Waste to Wealth through farm composting and kitchen waste management; Value Addition and Waste Utilization of flowers; and practical insights on home- scale packaging and storage of fresh fruits and vegetables. These workshops aimed to enhance participants' understanding and skills in modern, sustainable horticultural practices.

AGRITECH INDIA
एग्रिटेक इंडिया

Editor
Syed Jafar Naqvi
Chief Co-ordinator
M.B. Naqvi
Hon. Advisors
Mr. Gokul Patanaik, IAS
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Mr. Pawanexh Kohli
Production & Marketing Head
Syed M Kausar
Editorial Co-ordinator
Manish Kumar
Layout & Design
Mohammad Iqbal

Admn. & Marketing Office
MEDIA TODAY PVT. LTD.
J-73, Paryavaran Complex, Neb Sarai,
IGNOU Road, New Delhi-110068
Phone : 011-46081634, 8810216208
E-mail : mediatoday2@gmail.com
Web. : www.mediatoday.in

ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES

New Delhi: 8810216208/ 011-46081634
mediatoday2@gmail.com

Mumbai: 9702903993
mtpl.mumbai@gmail.com

Pune: 9881137397
mtpl.pune@gmail.com

Bengaluru: 7019492764
bengaluru.mtpl@gmail.com

SUBCRIPTION:

India : 1 Year : Rs. 1350/- by Courier
2 Years : Rs. 2650/- by Courier
Single Copy in India : Rs.50 by Normal Post

Overseas : US$ 250 for 1 Year
US$ 490 for 2 Years
Single Copy Cost for Overseas : US $35

PAYMENT DETAILS
All the payment by cheque / DD would be made in favour of Media Today Pvt. Ltd. payable at New Delhi. Add Rs. 100/- for outstation cheque.
Accounts Detail:
Beneficiary Name : **Media Today Pvt. Ltd.,** Account No.: **00322320001071,**
IFSC Code: HDFC0000032, **GSTIN** : 07AABCM3465H1Zi
Bank Name & Address: HDFC Bank Limited, Safdarjung Development Area, N.Delhi-110016

Printed, Published and owned by Syed Mohammad Baqar Naqvi, printed at Sonu Printer, B-82, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi 110020 and Published from A-44, 1st Floor, Freedom Fighter Enclave, Neb Sarai, New Delhi - 110068 (India).
Editor : Syed Jafar Naqvi
Vol. 15..... Issue 9&10 ..... May-June 2025

Diversified participation in NHF 2025

Over 250 institutions, including ICAR institutes, State Agricultural Universities (SAUs), private industries, NGOs, FPOs, SHGs, and individual entrepreneurs, participated in the NHF 2025.

The exhibition featured stalls on seeds and planting materials, greenhouse technologies, organic farming and integrated farming systems, plant nutrients and growth modifiers,pesticides, irrigation systems, tissue culture protocols, financial and agri-export services, food processing and packaging, horticultural tools and machinery, market linkages, IIHR-ATIC products, and business incubation services.

The fair was visited by over 75,000 farmer's and stakeholders serving the event as a major platformfor innovation sharing and capacity building in the horticulture sector.

Felicitation of innovative farmers for successfully adopting and scaling IIHR technologies.

As a mark of recognition and encouragement, innovative and progressive farmers who have successfully adopted ICAR-IIHR technologies were felicitated during the National Horticulture Fair 2025. The Best Farmer Award was conferred upon ten outstanding farmers from various states across the country for their exemplary adoption of IIHR-developed varieties and technologies, which significantly enhanced their productivity and income.

These awardees demonstrated success in cultivating improved varieties of fruits, vegetables, and flowers such as tomato, watermelon, chilli, yard long bean, cardamom, gerbera, China aster, okra, amaranthus, grafted brinjal, onion, and mango. Their achievements reflect the transformative impact of IIHR innovations at the grassroots level.

The recipients of the Best Farmer Award included: Pintu Sharma (Tripura), Boda Veeranna (Telangana), Chongtham Khogendro Singh (Manipur), Dadup Lepcha (Sikkim), Rampratap Kushwaha (Uttar Pradesh), Sangram Keshari Pani (Odisha), Kalarani Natarajan (Tamil Nadu), Lokasani Padma Reddy and Gugulothu Babji (Telangana), and Syed Ghani Khan.

Notable achievements included the cultivation of Arka Abhed, Arka Rakshak, Arka Shyma, and Arka Gagan across 16 hectares, yielding high returns of up to Rs.10.8lakh/acre. Other successes featured Arka Tejaswi chilli (Rs.3.75 lakh/acre), Yard long bean with Arka Mangala technology (Rs.4.63 lakh/acre), and integrated farming of cardamom, tomato, and chilli generating Rs.5 lakh per season.

Farmers also benefited from floriculture (China aster), multi-crop vegetable farming, and organic cultivation of diverse fruit crops using IIHR inputs. Many ventured into value- added products from soap nut, establishing successful small enterprises. Exceptional yields from Arka Rakshak tomato, Arka Unnathi brinjal, and Arka Prasanna ridge gourd further showcased the impact of IIHR technologies, with one farmer from Telangana recognized as a model farmer and brand ambassador for ICAR-IIHR hybrids.

ICAR-IIHR taking the Lead:

The successful organization of the National Horticulture Fair 2025 is a result of the visionary leadership and dedicated efforts of Dr. Tusar Kanthi Behera, Director of ICAR- IIHR and Chairman of the Organizing Committee, Dr. S. Shankara Hebbara, Organizing Secretary, and Dr. Nandeesha P, Chairman of the Publicity Committee. During the event, Dr. Behera emphasized that India's horticulture production has surpassed 350 million tonnes, over taking food grain production, and playing a crucial role in ensuring nutritional security and boosting agricultural exports.

With a strong focus on nutritionally rich crops and need-based technologies, the fair aims to empower farmers—especially those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups—by enhancing productivity, income, and livelihoods, said Dr Bahera. The National Horticulture Fair 2025 serves as a platform to showcase innovative varieties and sustainable technologies, reinforcing horticulture's role in achieving Viksit Bharat through nutrition, empowerment, and environmentally safe practices.

Conclusion:

The National Horticulture Fair 2025 has once again highlighted the critical role that ICAR-IIHR plays in advancing India's horticulture sector through innovative research, sustainable technologies, and farmer empowerment. The fair not only served as a dynamic platform for showcasing cutting-edge horticultural varieties and technologies but also emphasized the importance of bridging the gap between research and the farming community. ■

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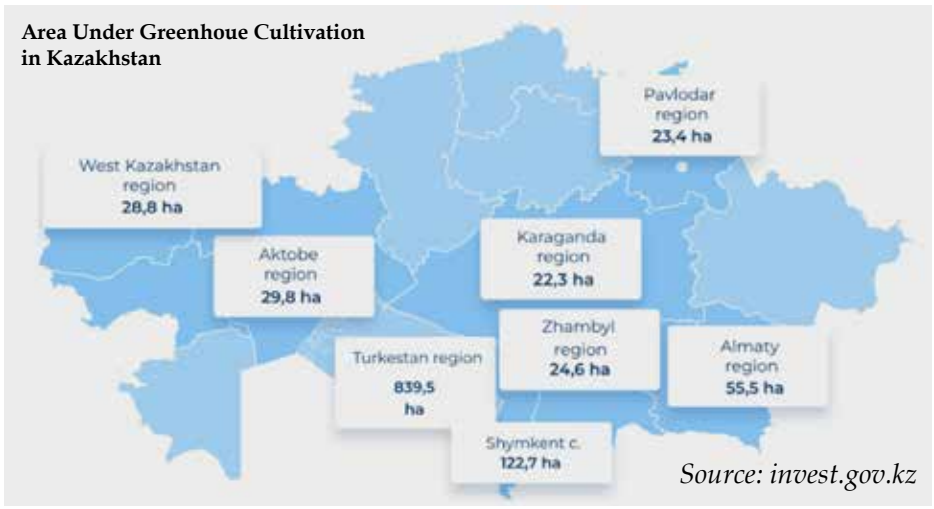
THE GROWING HEART OF CENTRAL . . .



steady rise of Kazakhstan as a powerhouse in protected cultivation. As the largest landlocked country in the world, Kazakhstan combines vast natural resources with a strategic vision for agricultural self-reliance and innovation. While its northern plains lead in global grain production, the southern regions have become fertile ground for fruit, vegetable, and commercial crop cultivation—thanks in large part to the expansion of the greenhouse sector.

Despite challenges of severe winters and semi-arid conditions, Kazakhstan's agricultural resilience is increasingly bolstered by modern greenhouse technologies. These facilities have extended the growing season with improve dproductivity, ensuring food security, and support to local economies. As a result, greenhouses are playing a central role in shaping the country's agri-economic landscape.

Kazakhstan Agriculture: Rising with Greenhouse Innovation

As of 2025, Kazakhstan's agricultural sector is experiencing significant growth, driven by record harvests, increased exports, and substantial government investments. In 2024, the country achieved a decade-high grain harvest of 26.7 million tonnes, contributing to a 12.7% growth in the agricultural sector. Exports reached 16.1 million tonnes, valued at $5.1 billion, with processed products accounting for 52% of this figure.

To further bolster the sector, the government has committed 16 trillion tenge (approximately $35 billion) through the "Strong Agro-Industrial Complex" plan, aiming to double agricultural output by 2028. Initiatives under this plan include diversifying crops, modernizing machinery, and implementing water-saving technologies. Additionally, efforts are underway to expand export markets beyond traditional partners, targeting regions such as the EU, North Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Kazakhstan is also embracing digital transformation in agriculture, integrating technologies like GPS-guided equipment and soil moisture monitoring systems to enhance efficiency and sustainability. These advancements, coupled with strategic investments and policy reforms, position Kazakhstan as an emerging leader in global agriculture.

Greenhouse agriculture in Kazakhstan plays a vital role in ensuring year-round production of vegetables and reducing dependency on imports. The industry is concentrated in the southern regions, particularly Turkestan, Almaty, and Zhambyl, which offer favorable climatic conditions, longer daylight hours, and established irrigation infrastructure and vast expanses of undeveloped arable land suitable for vegetable production.

As of 2023, Kazakhstan had around 1,165 hectares of greenhouses, primarily producing tomatoes and cucumbers, which together account for over 95% of the total output. However, the sector has faced recent setbacks, including a decline in total area due to high production costs and low profitability, prompting the government to introduce supportive measures.

To counter these challenges, Kazakhstan is pursuing significant modernization initiatives. This includes a $100 million investment in a high-tech greenhouse and tomato processing complex in the Shardara region, alongside plans to implement an 8,000-hectare drip irrigation system by 2026. These efforts aim to improve productivity, reduce water usage, and enhance export capabilities.

Government support has been instrumental in sustaining the sector. Measures include subsidies for utility costs during the off-season, microcredit schemes for small-scale farmers, and financial incentives covering a quarter of investment costs in modernized agricultural infrastructure.

Despite being a net importer—especially for crops like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants—Kazakhstan is working toward self-sufficiency. Family farms contribute nearly half of all greenhouse vegetable production, though their smaller scale and limited adoption of advanced technologies have affected yield and efficiency. Industrial greenhouses still represent a minority, but their expansion is expected to bridge the gap between demand and supply. The appeal for foreign investors, particularly from Europe, lies in Kazakhstan's warm climate, reduced bureaucratic barriers, and simplified customs procedures. Dutch companies, in particular, have been active in supplying equipment and expertise, further stimulating technological upgrades in the sector.

Floriculture Thrives in Kazakhstan's Greenhouses

Kazakhstan's flower industry is flourishing, marked by a surge in both imports and local production. In 2024, the country imported 12,300 tons of cut flowers and buds worth $93.5 million—a substantial rise from 8,200 tons valued at $61.2 million the previous year. This growth reflects not only the expanding market but also the deep-rooted cultural affinity for flowers in Kazakh society. Whether for celebrations, proposals, or everyday gestures, flowers are woven into the social fabric of the nation. "There is no real off-season in this business," noted Madi Kairkenov, a prominent figure in the industry, highlighting the daily demand for floral arrangements across Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan imports flowers from over 50 countries. Ecuador remains the leading exporter, contributing 54.3% of total imports—mainly roses and lilies—worth $50.8 million. The Netherlands follows, supplying chrysanthemums and other varieties valued at $17.6 million. Other key players include China, which saw a sharp rise in market share from 1% to 8% in 2024, as well as Colombia and Kenya. While imports currently dominate the market, making up approximately 80–85% of supply, domestic production is steadily gaining ground.

The local flower-growing sector is experiencing significant growth, especially through greenhouse farming. In 2024, Kazakhstan produced over 40 million flowers, more than tripling its output from the previous year. Of these, 33.4 million were cultivated in greenhouses, thanks to technological advancements and targeted investment. Regions such as Almaty, Shymkent, and Taraz are emerging as hubs for high-tech flower farming. Local producers like Zhuldyz Flowers now grow tulips, lisianthuses, and peonies, catering to domestic demand and even exporting to neighboring countries.

This rise in local production is fueled by the adoption of modern greenhouse technologies. The industry has shifted from traditional plastic structures to advanced glasshouses equipped with lighting, climate control, and bio-protection systems. These innovations are helping farmers meet the growing demand for diverse and high-quality flowers. According to Nurlan Adilkhan, President of the Greenhouse Union of Kazakhstan, the market today is rich with variety, with thousands of flower species now available to consumers.

Despite its growth, the industry faces challenges. Logistics remain a critical issue, with high transport costs and risks associated with perishable goods. Weather conditions in supplier countries can also impact quality; for example, floods in the Netherlands led to a significant loss of tulip bulbs this year. Moreover, while opening a flower shop may appear easy due to low entry barriers, sustaining a business requires sound marketing, service, and operational strategies.

Roses, particularly Dutch varieties, dominate the Kazakh flower market, making up around 70% of total sales. The overall market size is estimated to be between $20 million and $100 million, depending on seasonal fluctuations. About 90% of flowers sold in Kazakhstan are imported, with the remainder coming from local producers—an imbalance the government is now keen to address.

As Kazakhstan diversifies its economy beyond oil and finance, agriculture and horticulture have emerged as strategic sectors. The country has abundant arable land—second only to Australia on a per capita basis—which provides a strong foundation for expansion. The government is actively supporting the development of floriculture and landscaping, with plans to boost domestic production of both cut and potted plants. However, currently, indoor ornamental plants are entirely imported, and industrial production in this segment remains untapped.

Dutch expertise plays a pivotal role in Kazakhstan's horticultural development. Dutch companies not only supply flowers, bulbs, and perennials but also share advanced cultivation technologies and breeding knowledge. In South Kazakhstan, the greenhouse sector has grown rapidly, with the area under cultivation expanding to 720 hectares by 2013. The region also boasts record vegetable harvests, showcasing the potential of controlled-environment agriculture.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan's flower industry stands at a promising crossroads. While imports continue to meet most of the country's demand, domestic production is gaining momentum, driven by innovation, investment, and a strong cultural appreciation for flowers. With the right support and infrastructure, Kazakhstan is well-positioned to become a regional leader in floriculture.

Kazakhstan Leads with Greenhouse Reforms

The Government of Kazakhstan has introduced a range of supportive policies and incentives to attract investment in the greenhouse industry and modernize its agricultural sector. Key measures include subsidies covering up to 25% of capital costs for building and upgrading greenhouse facilities, financial support for purchasing essential inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, herbicides, and fuel, and subsidized loans to ease the burden on working capital. Additionally, microcredit programs are available for smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs, making entry into greenhouse farming more accessible. The government is also promoting advanced technologies through support for high-tech infrastructure, such as climate control systems, drip irrigation, and energy-efficient equipment. Simplified customs procedures and reduced bureaucratic barriers further enhance the appeal for foreign investors, particularly those from countries like the Netherlands, known for greenhouse innovation. These combined efforts signal Kazakhstan's commitment to transforming its greenhouse sector into a competitive, sustainable, and export-ready industry.

Kazakhstan on Track to Dominate Central Asia's Greenhouse Sector

Kazakhstan is Central Asia's most promising frontier for greenhouse agriculture, offering a rare combination of natural abundance and policy-driven opportunity. Strategically located between Europe and Asia, the country boasts vast expanses of arable land, abundant sunshine, and a government committed to agricultural modernization. Through generous subsidies, simplified customs procedures, and strong investment in high-tech infrastructure—such as climate-controlled greenhouses and water-efficient irrigation systems—Kazakhstan is creating an ideal environment for both domestic producers and foreign investors. Whether in vegetable cultivation or floriculture, the nation's evolving greenhouse sector presents a fertile ground for scalable, sustainable, and export-oriented growth.

Despite ongoing challenges such as high energy costs and technological constraints, Kazakhstan's greenhouse industry stands at a transformative juncture. Strategic investments in agro-processing, digital farming tools, and rural financing are bridging the gap between potential and productivity. As the country works toward agricultural self-sufficiency and increased regional exports, investor interest continues to rise—particularly from innovation leaders like the Netherlands. With its unique blend of geographic advantage, market access, and policy vision, Kazakhstan is not only warming to greenhouse farming—it is cultivating a future where it becomes a regional powerhouse in controlled-environment agriculture. ■

M B Naqvi, Chief Coordinator, Media Today Group displaying Floriculture Today Magazine with other delegates

HEARTFULNESS INSTITUTE AND PAYPAL UNVEIL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE TO EMPOWER RURAL ENTREPRENEURS

Nitin Gadkari - Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways Inaugurates the Landmark Initiative.

Hon'ble Minister Nitin Gadkari, Road Transport & Highways at Kanha Shanti Vanam, Heartfulness Institue, Hyderabad, inaugurates India's 1st Biochar Center of Excellence, alongside Union Min. G.Kishan Reddy

Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Minister of Road Transport and Highways inaugurated a Biochar Centre of Excellence promoting Rural Entrepreneurship at Kanha Shanti Vanam – the headquarters of Heartfulness Institute, which houses the largest meditation centre in the world, in the outskirts of Hyderabad.

The Biochar Centre of Excellence promoting Rural Entrepreneurship, an initiative by Heartfulness Institute and PayPal will be inaugurated by Shri Nitin Gadkari– Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways in the gracious presenceof Shri Kamesh Patel (Daaji) — President Founder & Guide of Heartfulness Institute along with Shri Nath Parameshwaran, Senior Director at PayPal.

The Centre has been established to provide skill development, and capacity building for rural entrepreneurs in villages for biochar. The initiative aims to encourage women and youth entrepreneurs to set up biochar units, produce biochar, and distribute it to farmers as part of a rural business model. The Centre of Excellence will also offer an end-to-end experience of how biochar is produced, processed, and applied to the soil, enabling participants to visually study and understand its impact on crops, soil, and forests.

Nitin Gadkari – Hon'ble Minister for Road Transport and Highways said, "Small businesses, rural entrepreneurs and farmers form the backbone of India's economy. This unique initiative brings entrepreneurs and farmers together to equip them with modern agricultural technologies and know-how on farming. We want our farmer community to have superior yield, better income, make agriculture dependable and provide economic opportunities for small rural entrepreneurs in the villages. With the Biochar Centre of Excellence and promoting Rural Entrepreneurship at Heartfulness, we are sure to make India more self-reliant in agriculture. This is a wonderful initiative, and we hope that rural entrepreneurs and farmers will benefit from this initiative."

"We must be wise in how we produce crops—not only by adopting modern techniques but also by being sensitive to soil health and nutrition. A Centre of Excellence like this will train rural entrepreneurs, farmers, and agriculturists in sustainable farming, helping them adopt biochar as an effective carbon-sequestering agent for better plant survival rates and afforestation. Our vision is to establish a biochar unit in every village in the country for the benefit of all," added Shri Kamlesh Patel (Daaji) – Founder & Global Guide of Heartfulness Institute.

Nath Parameshwaran from PayPal said, "Helping small businesses and entrepreneurs thrive is a key priority for PayPal globally and in India. We are delighted to partner with Heartfulness Institute in this unique initiative, which aligns with the Skill India vision of Hon. Prime Minister Modi ji. The Centre of Excellence for Rural Entrepreneurship aims to provide economic and upskilling opportunities for rural entrepreneurs, boost farmer incomes, and protect the environment with use of bio-char."

About biochar: The benefits of biochar, which is 100% organic, include permanently improving soil fertility, increasing crop yields by 10-30%, boosting farmers' incomes, reducing water requirements for crops, and enhancing the survival rate of saplings in afforestation. Biochar has been extensively used to rejuvenate barren lands at Kanha Shanti Vanam and in afforestation projects, transforming these spaces into green landscapes and dense forests.Additionally, biochar production and its sequestration in soil generate high-value carbon credits, which are used to subsidize biochar for farmers.

According to statistics, out of the 600 million tons of farm residue produced in India each year, 160 million tons are burned. When this farm residue is converted to Biochar and applied to soil, it remains inert for thousands of years, restoring microbial life. In farmer trials with 144 cotton farmers across Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, cotton yield increased by 17% to 32% in the first year. Improved plant resistance to diseases and greater resilience to climate change have also been observed.

Union Minister Nitn Gadkari and Rev Daaji along with dignitaries take a tour of the organic garden at the inauguration of Biochar Center of Excellence at Kanha Shanti Vanam, Hyderabad

About Heartfulness: Heartfulness offers a simple set of meditative practices and lifestyle changes, first developed at the turn of the twentieth century and formalized into teaching through the Shri Ram Chandra Mission in 1945 in India with a goal to bring peace, happiness, and wisdom to one heart at a time. These practices are a modern form of Yoga designed to support contentment, inner calm, and stillness, compassion, courage, and clarity of thought, as the first step towards a purposeful life. They are simple and easily adopted and are appropriate for people from all walks of life, cultures, religious beliefs, and economic situations, who are over the age of fifteen. Ongoing training in Heartfulness practices continues at thousands of schools and colleges, and over 100,000 professionals are meditating in corporations, non-governmental, and government bodies worldwide. More than 5,000 Heartfulness Centers are supported by many thousands of certified volunteer trainers and millions of practitioners in 160 countries.

About 'Forests by Heartfulness' (FBH): It is an initiative to plant at least 30 million native and endemic trees across India by 2030 under the guidance of a team of agro-forestry, forestry and climate experts. Forests by Heartfulness has also developed its own propriety technology, processes and monitoring mechanisms that promote 'back to nature' plantation methodology for high density, optimal and sustainable growth. Every year, between October and May (which is the non-plantation season), the nurseries raise plant species and trees, the saplings of which are carefully selected. Mass plantation of the saplings occur in monsoons and late winter by the Heartfulness volunteers, NGOs, school children, farmers, and the general public.

The ongoing efforts in last 5 years transformed Kanha from a barren landscape to a thriving ecosystem. It is fast becoming a model for best practices in nurturing India's mega-biodiversity, saving endangered and rare species, creating medicinal gardens, and a sanctuary for wild birds and reptiles.

■

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari shares a light moment with Rev. Daaji at the inauguration of India's first Biochar Center of Excellence event held at Kanha Shanti Vanam, Hyderabad.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari is felicitated by Daaji, Global Guide of the Heartfulness Movement, during the inauguration ceremony of the Biochar Center of Excellence at Kanha Shanti Vanam

CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERNS & ITS IMPACT ON AGRICULTURE AT SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS REGIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE IN BHOPAL

Sustainability Matters brings together policymakers, experts, and farmers to chart pathways for climate-resilient farming; Awards to honour sustainability champions.

As the world grapples with the mounting consequences of climate change, its impact on food systems has become a global emergency. From unpredictable rainfall to rising temperatures, climate volatility is already reshaping agriculture across continents. In this urgent context, India, home to over 100 million farmers, is witnessing increasingly erratic monsoons, declining yields, and worsening water stress. To address these challenges head-on, Sustainability Matters and IndiAgri are organised a high-impact Regional Policy Dialogue on Climate Change & Its Impact on Agriculture on May 10, 2025, as part of the ongoing series.

Solidaridad Network, which works throughout the whole supply chain to make sustainability the norm and enable farmers and workers to earn a decent income, produce in balance with nature, and shape their own future, is the sustainability partner of this event.

The dialogue follows the success of the Sustainable Agriculture Summit & Awards 2024, held in Delhi in August 2024, and reflects a growing consensus that climate adaptation in agriculture is not a choice but a necessity. Experts warn that India's food systems face an existential threat with major declines predicted in yields of rainfed crops like rice by 2050 and beyond if urgent adaptive strategies are not adopted.

"Indian agriculture stands at a crossroads. What we need now is not incremental change, but a bold recalibration of policy and practice. This dialogue is a step in that direction," said Dr Navneet Anand, Executive Director, Sustainability Matters.

Dr Anand informed that hosting the dialogue in Madhya Pradesh is deliberate and strategic choice. "As a state where over 70% of the population is engaged in agriculture, Madhya Pradesh plays a critical role in India's food security matrix. Its extensive cultivation of wheat, pulses, and oilseeds makes it a bellwether for understanding how climate risks could ripple through national supply chains," said Dr Anand.

The one-day event will feature two focused panel discussions titled; 'Climate-Resilient Agriculture: Adapting to Changing Weather Patterns' and 'Sustainable Water Management in Agriculture: Conservation and Productivity'. Many experts including policymakers, agriculture scientists, agri-startup founders, progressive farmers, farmers producers organisations, and grassroots practitioners will join the discussion. An award ceremony will also be held to honour and felicitate those who have made contributions in sustainable agriculture.

"Solidaridad is proud to support this initiative as sustainability partner. We bridge global climate commitments withlocal agricultural realities. The need of the hour is to support farmers not only with knowledge, but also with systems that enable sustainable and regenerative agriculture practices," added Dr Suresh Motwani, General Manager, Solidaridad.

"Policy interventions must be grounded in science, but responsive to the realities of our farmers," said Dr Jay G Varshney, Former Director of the Directorate of Weed Research, ICAR. "This dialogue offers a timely platform to integrate climate science with field-level action."

In addition to the discussions, the event also hosted a Sustainability Awards Ceremony, recognising champions who are driving transformative change across India's agricultural landscape. The awards span eight categories including Climate-Smart Agriculture Champion; Water Conservation Pioneer; Soil Health Champion; Young Agripreneur Award; Community-Led Agriculture Sustainability Award; AgTech Startup of the Year; Biodiversity Guardian Award; Progressive Farmers Recognition. Along with Dr Varshney, Dr Ravindra Kumar Sohane, Director of Education & Extension, Bihar Agriculture University is the Jury for the Sustainability Awards.

The dialogue was organised with Solidaridad as the Sustainability Partner, and receives knowledge support from Forum for Indian Journalists on Education, Environment, Health & Agriculture (FIJEEHA) and the Centre for Environment & Development Studies. Grey-Matters Communications is the official Communications and Event Partner.

Upcoming Regional Dialogues were scheduled for Chandigarh, Patna, and Guwahati, each designed to address region-specific agricultural challenges and climate responses, thereby creating a national repository of actionable insights.

About Sustainability Matters

Sustainability Matters is a cross-sectoral platform advancing meaningful conversations, collaborations, and recognitions in the field of sustainability. The platform operates at the intersection of policy, practice, and people — fostering change across sectors including agriculture, water, energy, urban development, and corporate responsibility. At its core is a belief that sustainable choices today will define the quality of life for generations to come. ■

RETAIL TRACTOR SALES INCREASED BY 7.56%, 60,915 UNITS SOLD: REPORT APRIL 2025

Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations, India (FADA) released retail tractor sales data, revealing a total of 60,915 units sold in April 2025, compared to 56,635 units in March 2024. This indicates a 7.56% increase in tractor sales in India for April 2025.

Brand-Wise Tractor Sales Performance – April 2025

Mahindra & Mahindra Limited (Tractor Division) sold 14,042 tractors in April 2025, up from 12,656 units in April 2024. This marks a 10.95% sales growth, and its market share rose by 0.70%.

Mahindra & Mahindra Limited (Swaraj Division) sold 11,593 units in April 2025, up from 11,037 units last year. The brand grew by 5.04%, but its market share slightly dipped by 0.46%.

International Tractors Limited sold 7,782 units, compared to 7,422 units in April 2024, showing a 4.85% growth. However, its market share fell by 0.32%.

TAFE Limited saw a strong jump in sales, selling 6,838 tractors in April 2025 versus 5,619 tractors last year. This translates to a 21.69% growth, with its market share increasing by 1.31%.

Escorts Kubota Limited (Agri Machinery Group) sold 6,355 units in April 2025, up from 5,872 units in April 2024. The brand grew by 8.23%, with its market share seeing a small rise of 0.06%.

John Deere India Pvt Ltd (Tractor Division) sold 5,020 tractors in April 2025, up from 4,749 units last year. This is a 5.71% growth, though its market share decreased by 0.15%.

Eicher Tractors sold 3,664 units in April 2025, lower than 3,882 units in April 2024, indicating a 5.62% drop in sales and a 0.84% decline in market share.

CNH Industrial (India) Pvt Ltd registered 2,558 units sold in April 2025, compared to 2,417 units the previous year. This reflects a 5.83% sales increase, though its market share dipped by 0.07%.

Kubota Agricultural Machinery India Pvt. Ltd. saw a drop, selling 777 units in April 2025, down from 1,078 units last year. This is a 27.92% decrease, with its market share falling by 0.62%.

Other Brands sold 2,286 tractors in April 2025, compared to 1,903 units in April 2024. This shows a 20.13% growth, boosting their market share by 0.39%. ■

GRAFTING TECHNOLOGY TO FIGHT BACTERIAL DISEASE IN TOMATO CROPS

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University demonstrated grafting technology for safeguarding tomato crops alongside imparting integrated pest and disease management practices at a field at Sattakkalputhur in Kinathukadavu block in the district.

The demonstration followed the successful outcome of research the TNAU under took along with World Vegetable Center, Taiwan, on 'Integrated Pest and Disease Management in Tomato and Lablab Bean' with financial assistance from Plant Health Initiative. The WorldVeg standardized 'Tomato Grafting Technology' using disease-resistant brinjal rootstocks.

According to M. Shanthi, Director, Centre for Plant Protection Studies, TNAU, farmers mostly notice bacterial wilt in tomato crops during the rainy season at an advanced stage of infection when the application of fungicides only adds to the expenses and do not yield the anticipated outcomes. Tomato grafting technology provides an effective solution with minimum external inputs. The disease-resistant brinjal rootstock also offers protection against root-knot nematodes, Prof. Shanthi explained. ■

BEING EXPORTER HOSTS NATIONAL AGRI-EXPORT EVENT IN NASHIK

- Providing aspiring exporters with practical exposure and strategic guidance to unlock the vast potential of India's agro export market.
- The event brought together 155 exporters & aspiring exporters from all over the country.
- The event combined learning with on-ground experiences to bridge the gap between theory & practice in the agri-export space.

Being Exporter, a leading platform for export guidance and support, hosted a national event in Nashik, providing aspiring exporters with practical exposure and strategic guidance to unlock the vast potential of India's agro export market.

The event organized in Nashik, brought together 155 exporters and aspiring exporters from all over the country. The participants engaged in high-impact training sessions and field visits, marking a turning point in their export journey. The event combined learning with on-ground experiences that bridged the gap between theory and practice in the agri-export space.

The first day of the event was dedicated to training modules, where exporters learned how to pitch agro commodities, connect with international buyers, build trust, and structure their processes for scalable and repeatable growth. Through group work, participants developed actionable export roadmaps tailored to their business ambitions.

On the second day, exporters and aspiring exporters embarked on field visits across Nashik, including stops at farmers' markets, packaging houses, warehouses and cold storage. The hands-on exposure offered participants a full-circle view of the export value chain, i.e. from farm to container. During the visit, the local farmers urged the exporters to start buying directly for export, sharing concerns about weak demand and unstable prices.

Speaking about the event, Bhagirath Goswami, Founder of Being Exporter, said, "There is immense potential for exports of agri products and commodities. A growth in exports will not only help exporters but also ensure farmers get the right price and steady income. The participants realized that while export margins in agri products may be modest, the volumes are substantial and the demand is consistent, offering opportunities for every link in the value chain. With this event, we are empowering Indian entrepreneurs to go global while uplifting the farmers."

The two-day event highlighted the three critical pillars for agri-export success, i.e. farmers, infrastructure (such as warehouses and cold storage), and exporters, and the need for synchronization between them to create real impact. Participants expressed immense gratitude to Goswami and the Being Exporter team, describing the event as a confidence booster and a stepping stone to scaling their agro product exports. Being Exporter continues to contribute to the nation's economic growth by equipping individuals with the knowledge.

About Being Exporter

Being Exporter is a platform that helps entrepreneur's starts and grows their export business, especially in the all products Export sector. Founded by Bhagirath Goswami, it offers training, guidance, and real-world exposure to make exports easy and achievable. Being Exporter creates a success story from all backgrounds, farmers, manufacturers, Job professionals, Aspiring exporters, Students, homemakers, and many more, Being Exporter is helping Indian businesses go global while supporting them and boosting the economy and the support they need to succeed in the export market. ■

INDIA ADVOCATES ITS SUSTAINABLE FARMING SUCCESS STORY AT INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Soluble fertilisers have emerged as a critical component in India's agricultural transformation, playing a pivotal role in enhancing nutrient efficiency, improving soil health, and ensuring residue-free crop production. With the sector witnessing steady growth, driven by research-backed innovations and evolving regulatory frameworks, India is strengthening its position as a key player in the global fertiliser landscape.

Against this backdrop, the Soluble Fertilizer Industry Association, India (SFIA India), was invited to present a case at CAC China 2025, the world's largest trade forum for agrochemicals, organised by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT). This 25-year-old annual event serves as a crucial platform where global agro-input companies converge to secure their supply chains and explore emerging trends.

Rajib Chakraborty, National President, SFIA India, presented India's success story in developing sustainable farming through SOMS Fertilizers (SOMS, Soluble Fertilizer, Organic Fertilizer, Micronutrient & Bio Stimulants), a pioneering approach that integrates multiple nutrient sources to achieve high-yield, nutrient-rich, and environmentally sustainable agriculture. SOMS has potential to drastically reduce reliance on subsidised fertilisers, offering a cost-effective and efficient alternative for both farmers and governments worldwide.

"SOMS is a scientifically structured approach that not only enhances nutrient use efficiency and ensures environmental sustainability, but also significantly reduces dependency on conventional subsidised fertilisers. This shift has major financial implications for governments globally, helping optimise subsidy expenditures while promoting long-term soil health," said Rajib Chakraborty.

SFIA India's presence at CAC China 2025 reinforced its commitment to policy advocacy, research collaborations, and supply chain stabilisation within the soluble fertiliser sector. Engaged with over 50 universities, ICAR, CSIR, and multiple research institutions, SFIA India continues to drive regulatory advancements, product innovation, and global partnerships. Notably, a recent collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural

Research, National Research Centre for Grapes, is evaluating SOMS as a viable alternative to traditional fertiliser subsidies, with results expected by mid-2025.

India's contributions, particularly through SOMS, are increasingly recognised as models for sustainable agricultural development. By reducing fertiliser subsidies and ensuring optimal nutrient management, SOMS presents a scalable solution for governments worldwide striving for cost-effective, environmentally responsible agricultural policies. SFIA India remains dedicated to fostering industry collaboration, strengthening India's footprint in the agro-input sector, and shaping the future of sustainable farming. ■

Printed, Published and owned by Syed Mohammad Baqar Naqvi, printed at Sonu Printer, B-180, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi 110020 and Published from A-44, 1st Floor, Freedom Fighter Enclave, Neb Sarai, New Delhi - 110068 (India). Editor : Syed Jafar Naqvi