

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1167
ANSWERED ON 30/07/2024

SPICE PRODUCTION

1167. SHRI ANTO ANTONY:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of action taken by the Government to address the quality concerns surrounding Indian spice exports;
- (b) the details of steps taken by the Government to strengthen enforcement mechanisms and ensure adherence to food safety standards across the spice production and export chain;
- (c) the extent to which the Government is assessing the potential economic impact of these quality concerns;
- (d) the details of contingency plans that are in place to mitigate potential losses and protect the livelihoods of Indian spice farmers and exporters;
- (e) the details of action taken by the Government to ensure Indian spices meet European Union (EU) standards and regain market access;
- (f) the steps taken by the Government have a long-term strategy to improve the overall quality and brand reputation of Indian spices in the global market; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (d) The Spices Board has, after conducting root cause analysis, issued 'Comprehensive Guidelines' to all exporters to prevent possible Ethylene Oxide contamination at all stages namely, procurement of raw materials, processing, packing, storage, transportation etc. As part of the guidelines, the Board has issued directions to all the exporters to include monitoring of raw materials procured as well as finished goods as part of the Critical Control Points (CCP) in their Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) and to take steps to prevent contamination of spices, across various stages of the supply chain, including procurement, processing, packing, storage, export etc. The quality evaluation program of the Board has also been updated.

This is in addition to the other ongoing initiatives taken through the Board aimed at ensuring quality of spices exported from India, such as:-

- (i)** Assistance to farmers/ FPOs/ Farmer's clusters to purchase and install post-harvest machines like dryers /curing devices, washing /cleaning / grading machines, distillation units etc. with the objective of improving the quality and safety of spices at the post harvest stage.

(ii) Assisting exporters in setting up/ upgradation of in-house labs, and through programs such as ‘Assistance for implementation of food safety and quality assurance mechanisms / certifications’ and ‘Assistance to exporters for Rapid Food Testing Devices and Kits’ etc.

(iii) Conduct of capacity building programs and campaigns for the stakeholders along the value chain on quality and safety aspects of spices and good practices to be followed at each stage of the value chain.

(iv) Under the Mission Clean Spices initiative, various collaborative projects with Quality Council of India (QCI), the spice industry, and United Nations’ Standards and Trade Development Facility have been taken up aimed at strengthening agricultural practices, building capacity across the spices value chain for expanding exports of safe and high-quality spices, and promoting sustainability.

(v) As part of its quality management system for exports, Spices Board is undertaking quality evaluation of export consignments of select spices to select destinations so as to ensure compliance with the quality specifications of importing countries. The Board has established 8 state of the art quality evaluation laboratories (QEL) across the major production/ exporting centres, and has also empanelled NABL accredited laboratories across India so as to make available testing and evaluation facilities for the quality and safety compliance of Spices & Spice products that are being exported from India to various destinations. The export consignments are screened for known and emerging quality and safety concerns including toxins, contaminants, residues etc. Also, the spices, parameters and destinations under the quality evaluation program of the Board is revised periodically based on the standards of the importing country, potential and emerging risks etc.

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare also implements several programmes to improve the quality of spices at the production stage, through activities including planting material production, pesticide free cumin production, cluster based organic production of high curcumin turmeric varieties, disease free ginger seed production programme, promotion of high density cinnamon cultivation and promotion of GI varieties.

India is the leading producer, consumer and exporter of spices and spice products in the world. In FY 2023-24, India produced a total quantity of around 11.80 million MT of spices and exported over 1.54 million MT of spices during the year, which is around 13 % of the total spice production in the country. A comparison of the total consignments exported from India and rejections incurred from importing countries, during the calendar years of 2022, 2023 and 2024 (Jan-March) revealed that the total rejection was only 0.2% of Indian spice exports. The export of spices and spice products from India crossed an all-time high in FY 2023-24 valued at USD 4,464.17 million.

(e) European Union (EU) is one of the major destination for Indian Spices. Spices Board undertakes mandatory sampling and testing for Ethylene oxide for all Spices & Spice products exported to EU under Codes 0904 to 0910, 1302 & 2103 of the Harmonised System (HS) of Trade Classification. Also, the consignments of spices including Chilli, Turmeric, Ginger, Nutmeg, Mace and Curry Powder, exported to the EU are tested for selected parameters for enabling export. Further, the Board through the Indian Mission attends technical meetings with the regulatory bodies in the EU, for understanding the new and emerging standards/ requirements for spices and taking up the concerns of the Indian spice sector with regard to quality and safety aspects.

(f) & (g) In addition to the ongoing initiatives of Spices Board and Ministry of Agriculture as per details given in reply to (a) and (b), Spices Board as part of the "Sustainability in Spice sector through Progressive, Innovative and Collaborative Interventions for Export Development (SPICED)" has been assisting the exporters of Spices for promoting the Indian Spice Brand in overseas markets by providing an interest free brand promotion loan, supporting participation of exporters in major international trade fairs/ exhibitions (both direct participation and through the Board's pavilion), thereby enabling them to undertake market development and brand promotion activities. The Board is also organizing the biennial World Spice Congress (WSC) a major international exclusive B2B event for spices with participation of more than 1000 delegates, including leading buyers, exporters and other stakeholders.
