

Assam's pineapple in Dubai



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Guwahati: In a major boost towards harnessing the export potential of naturally grown fresh pineapples in the North-Eastern (NE) states, APEDA today organised an in-store export promotion programme in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) to promote Assam's pineapples, which is considered the sweetest in the world, among consumers for wider acceptance in countries.

The 'in-store promotion show' of pineapples from Assam, which was organised in association with Dubai's largest supermarket group Lulu Group, is part of APEDA's strategy to promote locally produced agricultural products to the international markets.

Speaking to The Echo of India, Sunita Rai, Asstt General Manager and Regional Head, APEDA North East Region said: 'Organic certified pineapples are directly sourced from the farmers of Assam and showcased at the Lulu hypermarket in Dubai with the assistance of APEDA. The showcased pineapples are procured from Hmarkhawlien village under Lakhipur sub-division in Cachar district, Assam. At the in-store export promotion show, consumers were offered Assam pineapple to taste the sweetness of the fruit.'

Speaking on the occasion, APEDA chairman Dr. M. Angamuthu IAS stressed on promoting processed form of value-added pineapple from north-eastern states to sustain in the global export market for a longer time period. "We need to focus on promoting pineapple sourced from farmers in processed form in the Gulf countries in collaboration with private entities including Lulu Group. It will help farmers in better price realisation of their produce," Angamuthu said, adding that 10-15 aggregators should be identified for expediting hassle-free exports from North Eastern states.

The NE region is geopolitically important as it shares international boundaries with China, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Bangladesh, making the NER a potential hub for the export of agricultural produce to neighbouring countries as well as other foreign destinations.

Notably, Assam's pineapple is one of the most important tropical fruits grown in the Northeastern Region (NER) and the fibre-rich fruit is cultivated in almost all the region. With a production of 338.98 Metric Tonne in 2020-21, Assam ranks second in pineapple production having a share of 18.75 per cent in total production in India. The top ten importing countries of Indian pineapples are UAE, Nepal, Qatar, Maldives, USA, Bhutan, Belgium, Iran, Bahrain and Oman. A quantity of 7665.42 MT of pineapples valued at USD 4.45 million was exported in the year 2021-22.

Prior to Assam making a debut in pineapple export to Dubai in 2019, Tripura was the first North Eastern state to export its 'queen' variety of pineapple to Dubai and Doha in 2018. Tripura's pineapple was also exported to Bangladesh in 2020. With the intervention of APEDA, there has been a significant increase in the export of agricultural produce from NE states like Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Meghalaya in the last few years.

The NE region witnessed a 85.34 percent growth in the export of agricultural products in the last six years as it increased from USD 2.52 million in 2016-17 to USD 17.2 million in 2021-22. The major destination of export has been Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Middle East, the UK and Europe. In the last three years, APEDA organised 136 capacity building programmes on export awareness across different parts of NER. The highest, 62 capacity building programmes were held in NER in 2019-20, while 21 in 2020-21 and 53 such programmes were organised by APEDA in the year 2021-22. Apart from capacity building initiatives, APEDA facilitated 22 International Buyer-Seller Meets as well as trade fairs in NER in the last three years.

APEDA also organised a conference on the Export Potential of Natural, Organic and Geographical Indications (GI) Agro Products in Guwahati on June 24, 2022 to tap the abundant export potential of organic agricultural products from Assam and neighbouring states of NER. APEDA aims to create a platform in Assam for exporters to get products directly from the producer group and the processors. The platform will link producers and processors of Assam with exporters from other parts of the country that would expand the base of export pockets in the North-Eastern states, including Assam, and increase employment opportunities among the people of the state.

Nanda Kirati Dewan

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