



Next Event -2011

Cosamb members study tour to South Korea, China and Hong Kong from 3rd -17th September, 2011.

COSAMB wishes a prosperous Paddy (Sep –Nov, 2011), and Cotton (Sep, 2011- Mar, 2012) procurement season.

Executive Body meeting of Cosamb was held on 14th July, 2011 at Cosamb Office, New Delhi. In this meeting besides the other matter, the discussion in detail was also held on the 'Good and Hygienic practices in Agricultural Marketing with special references to Food Safety'. The Government of India has already established the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India with Head quarter at New Delhi. This authority is in the process of finalizing rules for food safety. The Executive body decided to prepare the guidelines for food safety in relation to the markets in this country, keeping in view the rules notified in this regard by the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India, New Delhi. In the markets may be grain or fruit and vegetables, the food articles after the production flow to the consumer, so it becomes necessary that handling condition must be hygienic, so that the food remains safe and must be acceptable for human consumption.



Chairman and Senior Vice Chairman, Cosamb with other members during Executive Body meeting held on 14th July, 2011 at Cosamb Office, New Delhi.

Internet Based Agricultural Marketing Information System in India

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Prelude

Market information is an important facilitating function in the agricultural marketing system. It facilitates marketing decisions, regulates the competitive market process and simplifies marketing mechanisms. Regular, timely and reliable market information is needed by farmers in planning production and marketing, as well as by other market participants in arriving at optimal trading decisions. In India, where majority of our farmers are small and marginal, marketing information service should ideally be available to all. Removal of inter and intra-state restrictions on storage and movement of agricultural production in the country demand existence of complete and accurate marketing information service to farmers to facilitate better realization of prices for the produce marketed. Use of computers can improve the availability and delivery of information in a user friendly manner to farmers and other market participants.

2. At present in majority of States/UTs the market information service are traditional and all of them have their own system of providing market information to the farmers. These prevailing systems are mostly based on conventional methods due to which communication of information to target groups usually gets delayed losing its relevance. The system is also limited to collecting data on market arrivals and prices on transactions in the Regulated Markets and disseminating through various media like radio, newspapers, blackboard display and public address system at market places. In order to access larger markets, farmers require to also knowing about the market requirement in terms of quality, packing and safety standards and conditions. In the absence of such awareness, their outreach will continue to be restricted to local market places where intermediaries take away a major share of the price.



Cotton market in Punjab

3. Agricultural Marketing in the country is witnessing major changes owing to liberalization and globalization of markets and changing consumption behavior, increase in income levels and changing lifestyles, etc. In this context, agriculture has to be market driven, more cost effective, competitive, innovative and responsive to high tech and IT applications. There is a need to build capacity of each of the beneficiary group viz. the farmers, market functionaries and others involved in the agricultural marketing activities. Undertaking /utilizing marketing research to educate and train farmers in 'Good Marketing Practices' (GMP) and providing for development of service appropriate to local requirements to transform information emanating from various sources in a simple and practically useful manner is considered need of the hour. Provision of market information may also reduce any distrust of Government by the private sector, by making markets more transparent.

4. Dimensions of Market Information Needs to Farmers

<u>Pre-sowing</u>	<u>Pre-harvest</u>	<u>Post-harvest</u>	<u>Market Information</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on agri-inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, • pesticides • Credit • Weather • Soil testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good agricultural practices • Pest management • Time and techniques of harvesting • Packaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post harvest management • Storage • Grading and standardization • Logistics • Market information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative market channels • Commodity prices • Mandi information • Consumer behaviour

Some existing ICT models

5. ICT innovations can be of great help in offering a communication platform for linking farmers to markets. Various IT initiatives in Indian agriculture have been started at national level by Government of India. Some of the popular service models among them are Kissan Call Centers, (www.kisancallcenter.net) and web portal initiative (www.agmarket.nic.in) providing market arrival and prices information in respect of different agricultural commodities across various agricultural markets in India. Under the Government of India's National e-Governance Plan, the AGRISNET, proposed Common Service Centres and Village Knowledge Centres which will help India harness the emerging potential of ICTs comprehensively for the benefit of farmers and all partners of agribusiness offering both synergy and value addition. The commodity exchanges such as MCX and NCDEX and National Spot Exchange are also using ICT

extensively for facilitating commodity trade on electronic platform and acting as virtual markets. Besides national initiatives, States have also come up with various initiatives, eg, in Assam (ASHA) and Kerala (Kissan Kerala and e-krishi) ID Pary, and ITC e-Chaupal, Iksan of Nagarjuna Fertilizers and Chemicals Ltd. Besides, corporates viz., TAFE, Mahindra and Mahindra and several others are adopting new business models backed by ICT. The efforts of Co-operative sector can't be ignored either with examples of Dairy Information Services Kiosk (DISK) of NDDDB and wired village WARANA.

Internet Based System (AGMARKNET) – A new dimension

6. The Central Sector Scheme of Marketing Research and Information Network was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture in March, 2000. The market information network, AGMARKNET (www.agmarknet.nic.in) is being implemented jointly by DMI / NIC using NICNET facilities available throughout the country. The objective of the scheme is to establish a nationwide information network for speedy collection and dissemination of market data for its efficient and timely utilization; to ensure flow of regular and reliable data to the producers, traders and consumers to derive maximum advantage out of their sales and purchases, and to increase efficiency in marketing by effective improvement in the existing market information system. As on 30.06.2011, more than 3000 markets have been covered under the network and market information on arrivals and prices from more than 1900 markets (**Annexure**) are received and disseminated regularly in respect of 300 commodities and 2000 varieties daily in twelve Regional languages. The AGMARKNET portal is continuously being enriched with other information related to agricultural marketing for the benefit of farmers and other market users.

Objectives of the Network

7. The marketing information network, besides collecting and disseminating market information on market arrivals and prices, focuses on collection and dissemination of diversified market related information to promote good agricultural marketing practices to help farmers in better price realization out of the sale of their produce. The objectives of the system are to:

- I. Establish a nationwide market information network for speedy collection and dissemination of market information and data for its efficient and timely utilization;

- II. Facilitate collection and dissemination of information related to better price realization by the farmers. This covers (a) market related information such as market charges, transactional methods, market functionaries, market laws, etc. (b) price related information such as minimum, maximum and modal prices of varieties and qualities transacted, total arrivals and dispatches with destination, marketing costs and margins, etc. (c) Infrastructure related information comprising of facilities and services available to farmers with regard to storage and warehousing, cold storage, direct markets, grading, re-handling and repacking, etc. (d) promotion related information covering accepted standards and grades, packaging, labelling, sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements, pledge finance, marketing credit and new opportunities available in respect of better marketing;
- III. Sensitize and orient farmers to respond to new challenges in agricultural marketing by using IT as a vehicle of extension;
- IV. Improve efficiency in agricultural marketing through regular training and extension for reaching the region specific farmers in their own language; and
- V. Provide assistance for marketing research to generate marketing information for its dissemination to farmers and other marketing functionaries at grassroot level to create an ambiance of good marketing practices in the country;

Components and Contents

8. The components and contents of the system include:
 - a) Supply and installation of the hardware at individual market places, State Agricultural Marketing Boards/Directorates;
 - b) Development of software to be used by market personnel in providing information;
 - c) Development of website – Agmarknet portal at national level : www.agmarknet.nic.in;
 - d) Training market personnel in (i) handling of hardware and Agmarknet software, (ii) research and analysis and (iii) refresher training;
 - e) Internet connectivity to individual market nodes;
 - f) Development of state level portals – supply of servers to state level Director of Marketing or State Agricultural Marketing Board;
 - g) Interactive workshops with Agmarknet nodes personnel, state authorities, market participants and marketing related agencies;
 - h) Preparation of ‘Atlas of Agricultural Markets’ providing information in respect of each commodity, major areas of production, movement and storage and of market and consuming centres, in a way useful to the users;

- i) Preparation of commodity profiles for all major commodities outlining the market requirements in terms of quality, standards, labelling, packing, storage, transportation, regulations, taxation, warehousing, forward and future markets etc. in a user friendly format;
- j) Knowledge transfer system – commodity profiles containing entire market related information for important commodities would be put on CD for mass dissemination in areas where there is no internet connectivity. Information in CD would be in local languages with multi-media features to enable transfer of knowledge to growers/traders. The CDs will contain information for each commodity in respect of:
 - important producing areas and volume of commodities grown;
 - important varieties in demand in national and international markets;
 - phyto-sanitary standards, grading and packaging requirements;
 - wholesale and retail outlets and important trading and consuming centers;
 - marketing regulations related to the commodities;
 - facilities for direct marketing to consumers and processing units;
 - availability of institutional credit, storage, cold storage & warehousing;
 - professional agencies providing marketing services; and
 - marketing related schemes of the government and public sector organizations.



Wheat in the market yard after purchase is over

- k) Research and Updation – the knowledge emanating from research studies conducted for analyzing the prospects and opportunities for agricultural marketing both at domestic and international level will be uploaded periodically on AGMARKNET portal for dissemination;
- l) Net information in Regional language – The State Agricultural Marketing Boards/Directorates of marketing will periodically down load advisory information generated at national level, formulate strategies, translate it into local languages and upload the same onto the state level portals to facilitate market led extension to farming community in local language through internet;
- m) Receiving daily information on arrivals, prices etc. from market centres through e-mail and uploading it to Agmarknet portal for daily display on the website, freely accessible to all;
- n) Generation of reports based on analysis of data available on the portal at national, state as well as market level;
- o) Develop mechanism to transform information on portal into practically useful manner for farmers, facilitating market-led extension; and
- p) Several Ministries in Government of India take decisions directly affecting the process of Agricultural marketing in the country. Several central institutions set up by Government of India viz. National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation (NAFED), Tribal Cooperatives Marketing Federation (TRIFED), National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), National Horticulture Board (NHB), Agricultural Produce Export Development Authority (APEDA), etc., are directly involved in implementing programs to strengthen agricultural marketing in the country and to help farmers in advantageous marketing of agricultural produce. Then there are Commodity Boards and Export Promotion Councils to promote export marketing. All the relevant programs and policies of these institutions need to be disseminated to the farm producers and the target groups to enable them to take full advantage of newer opportunities made available by the Government. Many of these organizations have their independent web sites hosted through NIC or other internet service providers. The AGMARKNET portal will provide linkages to these sites to access marketing related information to all market players through a single source.

Project Coordination and Feedback

9. For proper coordination of the implementation of the system and receipt of feedback for corrections, improvements etc. a committee has been constituted at State level comprising of officers from State Marketing Departments/Boards, State National

Informatics Center and Directorate of Marketing and Inspection. The Committee meets every month to review the progress and remove the operating difficulties. A State level committee comprising of chiefs of State Agricultural Marketing Board, Directorate of Marketing and DMI, Government of India is responsible to go into aspects of transforming information into user friendly advice, preparation of teaching aids for education, training and extension to facilitate better price realization by the farmers. Provision for outsourcing of requisite expertise in any of the activities from operation and management of market node to translating information into practical use/advice is inbuilt in the system. Implementation Committee consisting of Joint Secretary (Agricultural Marketing)/Agricultural Marketing Adviser to the Government of India, representative of NIC and Nodal Officer, Marketing Research and Information Network in the Head Office of the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection is responsible for operation, management and coordination of the project.

Constraints and challenges

10. Though many ICT initiative models exist in the field of agricultural marketing, some are running quite successfully, whereas others have a long way to go. The success of these models depends on how effectively and efficiently farmers are able to make use of these technology initiatives so as to really extract benefit out of these. The very first challenge these models have to meet is that of sustainability. Initially, these projects must be funded by Government and other development agencies, but to succeed in the long run, they need to generate means for revenue generation. The implementation of these innovations at field level suffers due to many barriers such as technological, socio-economic and those related to human resource and their capacity building. Some of the constraints identified are revenue generation, infrastructural gaps such as electricity connection, Internet connectivity, installation and maintenance, commitment of stakeholders, selection and capacity building of operators and awareness among stakeholders. Besides this, social, economic and regional diversity acts as a hurdle in implementation of these projects.

Future Perspectives

11. The scheme is considered as an important flagship of the Government of India Schemes and efforts are afoot to make it of real use/service to the farmers. It is hoped that in course of time it would be a on-line marketing information service useful to all the stakeholders in agricultural marketing system of the country. It has an immense potential to service all the market participants to face the new challenges emerging out of liberalization and globalization of agricultural sector. This system will provide facility of 'electronic' trading or e-commerce on the market information to enable producers to directly transact business with the buyers. This would enable increasing volume of direct trading in standardized quality products across the country, benefiting both the consumers as well as the producers. Efforts are being made to reach the unreached through different service provider viz mobile phone operators using SMS, REUTERS and other media channels at grassroots level.



Unloading of Banana in a market yard

Consolidated Progress Report, June - 2011

S.No.	Name of the State/UT	Computer Provided	Market Nodes	Installation of Computer	Connectivity	Training	No. of Markets Reporting	>=20 Days	Markets Not Reporting	Market Profile Available(No.)
1	Andaman and Nicobar	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
2	Andhra Pradesh	378	334	367	335	347	241	149	93	162
3	Arunachal Pradesh	16	15	14	7	7	0	0	15	6
4	Assam	26	23	23	22	26	9	2	14	22
5	Bihar	60	58	60	38	60	0	0	58	58
6	Chandigarh	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	1
7	Chattisgarh	77	73	77	77	77	63	34	10	51
8	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	2	1	2	2	2	0	0	1	0
9	Daman and Diu	3	2	3	3	3	0	0	2	0
10	Goa	13	10	13	9	9	3	0	7	6
11	Gujarat	324	319	323	167	309	121	47	198	94
12	Haryana	152	150	133	91	133	90	41	60	41
13	Himachal Pradesh	41	39	37	15	24	38	10	1	30
14	Jammu and Kashmir	43	41	41	26	30	5	0	36	3
15	Jharkhand	29	26	28	20	29	18	6	8	26
16	Karnataka	176	171	175	148	145	140	117	31	153
17	Kerala	95	92	90	42	92	56	10	36	11
18	Lakshadweep	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
19	Madhya Pradesh	271	267	221	190	190	118	13	149	132
20	Maharashtra	353	346	353	343	340	231	37	115	227
21	Manipur	6	5	6	6	6	1	0	4	1
22	Meghalaya	13	11	9	8	8	3	0	8	1
23	Mizoram	12	9	12	9	12	0	0	9	0
24	Nagaland	15	14	12	9	9	2	0	12	4
25	NCT of Delhi	13	9	13	13	13	8	3	1	9
26	Orissa	100	91	98	77	81	52	30	39	63
27	Pondicherry	3	2	3	3	3	1	0	1	2
28	Punjab	203	199	203	185	185	140	61	59	163
29	Rajasthan	174	166	170	170	170	101	24	65	83
30	Sikkim	8	7	8	4	4	0	0	7	0
31	Tamil Nadu	213	190	200	137	117	74	9	116	70
32	Tripura	22	21	22	16	22	19	7	2	0
33	Uttar Pradesh	265	257	255	174	248	130	25	127	17
34	Uttarakhand	22	21	22	21	21	13	4	8	18
35	West Bengal	59	56	59	43	40	39	15	17	1
36	H.O.,Faridabad	10	0	9	9	9	0	0	0	0
Total	All India	3201	3026	3065	2423	2775	1717	645	1309	1456

N.B. : Some other markets (computer not provided) are also reporting data from the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Flower Market, Okhla of Delhi is reporting data for Mehrauli, Canaught Place and Fatehpuri.



Cotton testing in a laboratory before the sale

Cotton Testing Laboratories in Punjab State

Cotton is a third main crop in the Punjab State. The arrivals of the Cotton is around 14 lakh bales in 40 markets of Bhatinda, Mansa, Faridkot, Mukarsar, Ferozepur, Moga, Barnala, Sangrur and Ludhiana districts of the Punjab. The APMC's established 19 cotton testing laboratory with equipments of latest technology. These cotton laboratory in the districts of Mansa (Sardulgarh, Bareta, Budhlada, Mansa and Bhikhi), Bathinda (Raman, Maur, Bathinda, Rampura Phul and Goniana), Muktsar (Giddarbaha and Malout), Faridkot (Jaito and Kotkapura), Ferozepur (Abohar and Fazilka), Sangrur (Lehragaga) and Barnala (Barnala and Tapa). The main aim is that the cotton sample be tested before conducting the auction, so that the produce extracts the remunerative price as per quality. After testing this sample, the certificate is issued by the concerned APMC's. The APMC's are testing the farmers sample free of cost. This facility is also extended to the traders. While testing the samples of traders, a nominal charges to recover the cost incurred in the testing is taken. In these laboratories mainly the high volume instrument, trash analyzer, laboratory model gin, moisture meter etc. are installed. The high volume instrument helps to measure the span length, strength and micronaire fineness. The trash percent is checked with trash analyzer. The percent of lint from raw cotton is measured with the laboratory model gin. Moisture contained in the produce is tested with the moisture meter.

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