

**MINUTES OF THE 91st BOARD MEETING HELD IN VIRTUAL PLATFORM
ARRANGED AT HO, SPICES BOARD, COCHIN ON 30-09-2021**

The 91st Board meeting was conducted at 11.00 am on 30th Sep 2021, in hybrid mode (online & physical) observing the COVID 19 protocol.

The following members were present at Spices Board, Kochi :

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| 1 | Shri A G Thankappan | Chairman |
| 2 | Shri D Sathiyam | - Secretary |
| 3 | Shri Stany Joseph Pothan
Narasimha Rao, Hon'ble MP | Shri GVL
Vice Chairman |

The following members attended online:

- | | | |
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| 4 | Dr C Vanlalramsanga, Economic Advisor,
Deptt. of Commerce, Govt of India | - Member |
| 5 | Shri Ajit Pai, OSD, NITI Ayog | - Member |
| 6 | Dr.Poonam Malakondaiah IAS Spl Chief
Secretary(Agri and allied subjects), Andhra
Pradesh | Member |
| 7 | Shri. Rajendra Kumar Kataria, The
Secretary to Government, Horticulture &
Sericulture Department, Karnataka | Member |
| 8 | Shri S G Medappa, Karnataka | - Member |
| 9 | Shri Rajendra Kasat | Member |
| 10 | Shri Bhojraj, Rajasthan | Member |
| 11 | Ms Annu Shree Poonia, Rajasthan | - Member |
| 12 | Shri T T Jose | - Member |
| 13 | Shri Nandyala Satyanarayana | - Member |

Secretary, Spices Board welcomed the Chairman and all the members to the 91st Board meeting. He invited shri A.G. Thankappan, who has taken charge as the Chairman of Spices Board recently, to chair the meeting.

The meeting was chaired by Shri. A.G. Thankappan. In his speech he gave a brief account of his career so far and assured that in his new assignment as Chairman of Spices Board he would put all efforts for development and growth of Spices Board, its stakeholders especially the farmer community. Mentioning that

'No one can whistle a symphony; it takes a whole Orchestra to play it', he sought support and cooperation from all the Board members for the smooth functioning, growth and prosperity of the Board.

He also informed that as per Agenda there are 25 items for discussion and appealed for a healthy discussion and active participation from all members of the Board. He commended the Secretary, staff of Spices Board as well as stakeholders of spices industry for the successful organization of Vanijya Saptah events in various states in August 2021, especially in Sikkim and Kerala, as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. He recalled that the Programmes were well attended by State and Central government Ministers, MP's, MLA's, other agencies and stated that during the Vanijya Saptah programs he could see that Governments in Central / State were making serious efforts to simplify or revise many redundant or obsolete processes or even laws to provide an easy ecosystem for growth of industries / exports for generating income. Referring to the excellent export performance of spices sector mentioned in agenda Item No.14, he stated that the export performance till July 2021 was encouraging urged all to utilize their potential to the core and achieve the export targets. He exhorted all members to put their best efforts to increase the Board's performance in exports and in the services provided to the stakeholders especially to the farmers/ producers and called for proactive decisions.

After the above address and a round of introduction by all the members, the Chairman invited Secretary and the Directors concerned to present agenda items one by one.

Secretary, Spices Board first briefed the members on the developments that took place in each Department, after the last Board meeting held in May 2021. After a brief discussion on the developments, the agenda items were presented one by one by the Directors of Departments concerned.

Item No.1 : Confirmation of the minutes of the 90th meeting of the Spices Board held at Kochi on 7th May 2021

Since there were no comments on the Minutes of the 90th Board meeting, it was confirmed by the Board.

Item No.2 : Action taken Report as per the minutes of the 90th Board Meeting

Actions taken report circulated concerning agenda items 7, 10 & 12 of the last Board meeting, was noted by the Board.

Item No.3 : Establishment of Spice Complex at Pakyong, Sikkim

During discussion, Secretary added that the Board has stopped taking up establishment of Spices Park on its own, since the State Govt. could submit proposals for establishment of Spices Parks under the new TIES programme of Ministry of Commerce to seek financial assistance, and the Board would extend technical support to the states. However, since this project was an old proposal of the Board which got sanctioned late, the Board has started its implementation recently. To another query on the spices of Sikkim, Secretary informed that Sikkim was the main producer of large cardamom, and all their produces were fully organic. Out of their total 4 districts, 3 districts were identified as spices clusters under One District One Programme. Spices were important commercial crops in Sikkim and large cardamom was the main spice crop. In Sikkim Spice Complex, the Board would focus on providing a processing centre for all spices grown in Sikkim and this complex would also be used as a centre for capacity building for all entrepreneurs.

The Board noted the information.

Item No.4 : Allotment of vacant land in the Spices Parks for establishing the Spice Processing units by private Entrepreneurs

During discussion pertaining to Sivaganga spice park, it was clarified that, as per guidelines, the applicants for plots should have registration as Exporter of Spices

issued by Spices Board and that the applicants were asked to take CRES to be eligible for consideration of plot allotment. It was proposed that, in all parks, upon surrender of plot by any existing holders, the same would be considered for allotment to the wait listed applicants, if any.

The Board approved the proposal.

Item No.5 : Leasing of Common Processing facilities at Spices Park (i) Guna & (ii) Sivaganga

During discussions, the Vice Chairman pointed out that the Puttady spice park was having excellent infrastructure facilities which should be better utilized, for which the Board should ensure that the facilities were leased out to a party who would take care and make available all facilities for the benefit of all stakeholders, especially farmers. He also requested the Spices Board to go for latest technologies and equipment. Secretary informed that the process of selecting a new agency would be completed in two months and regarding upgradation and modernization, the same would be implemented subject to availability of funds.

The Board noted the information

Item No.6 : Status of establishment of Quality Evaluation Laboratory at Spices Park, Jodhpur

Board noted the information

Item No. 7 : Establishment of Online E-Auction Facility

Vice Chairman appreciated this move of the Spices Board and thanked all officials in the Board who put their efforts for this and wanted it to be made as the best e-auction platform.

The Board approved the proposal

Item No.8 : issuance of Auctioneer License for cardamom for the block period 2020-23

The Board approved the item

Item No.9 : Conducting International & Domestic Buyer Seller Meets (IBSM/ BSM) for building direct linkages and other online programs

The Board approved the item

Item No.10 : Status of functioning of Spices Parks.

The Board noted the information.

Item No.11 : Digitization of key interfaces for facilitating trade and enabling ease of doing business

Vice Chairman requested to consider doing away the licensing system for dealer gradually and allow traders with GST to do cardamom trade. Secretary clarified that the Board was in the process amending the Act & CML (Cardamom Marketing and Licence Rule) to replace the 'license' with 'registration' and further simplification of the dealers registration would be considered.

The Board noted the information.

Item No.12 : Proposal for Amendments in Cardamom (Licensing & Marketing) Rule 1987

Secretary informed that Ministry had recently asked the Board to have a relook on all the Spices Board Acts and propose further progressive changes. A Committee was formed by the Ministry, and as per the recommendations of the Committee, further amendments were identified to do away with requirement of registration of each and every cardamom estate for undertaking cultivation of cardamom or selling of cardamom. Similarly the provision of imprisonment was also identified for removal, while retaining and enhancing the provision for fines. He informed that, shortly these recommendations would be sent to the Ministry.

Vice Chairman informed that cardamom should remain as a plantation crop to sustain and aid maximum production of cardamom and that removing cardamom registration should not affect the status of cardamom as the plantation crop. It was informed that the powers given to the states under the Spices Board Act to make rules for registration of estates was identified to be retained.

The item was approved by the Board.

Item No.13 : Proposal for Amendments in Rule related to issuance of Spice House Certificate on Star Rating to Spice processing facilities

The item was approved by the Board.

Item No.14 : Review on export of spices during the previous and current financial year (2020-21) and Apr-Jul, 2021(2021-22)

The Board noted the information.

Item No.15 : Sugandhasree project

The members appreciated the project and wished that it should be expanded to cover more schools irrespective of SC/SC students present therein, so as to develop the culture of farming at a young age.

Shri GVL Narasimha Rao stated that this programme would be very helpful for the national education policy and that the Board should take steps to extend this project to other major spice growing States, by seeking assistance of the State concerned and by making them partner in this activity. Secretary welcomed the suggestions and stated that the Board would consider expansion, subject to the availability of funds.

The Board approved the item.

Item No.16 : Pilot Scheme for raising large cardamom under agro shade net in farmer's field.

The Board approved the proposal.

Item No.17 : Institutional contribution of Spices Board for conducting Plantation Crops Symposium (PLACROSYM XXIV)

The Board approved the proposal.

Item No.18 : Implementation of the Paid-up trial by M/s Bayer Crop Science Limited

It was clarified that the project was for 2 years

The Board approved the proposal.

Item No.19 : Proposal for Bioagent production in ICRI, Saklespur, Karnataka and ICRI RRS, Tadong, Sikkim.

The Board approved the proposal with a total expenditure of Rs.50 lakhs.

Item No.20: Status of consignment samples analyzed by QELs of Spices Board (27th April to 5th September 2021)

The Board noted the information.

Item No.21 : Status of Strengthening infrastructure of QELs

Vice chairman brought to the notice of the Board the long term demand of setting up a Quality Evaluation Lab at ICRI, Myladumpara for the benefit of the cardamom planters, stressing that farmers had to come to Cochin for testing the samples which was very difficult. Shri GVL Narasimha Rao also made a request for setting up a lab at Warangal, a large growing area of turmeric, but the samples had to be taken to Guntur for testing. He stated that the Govt was willing to give land for this, and therefore the Board should consider this demand. On a query on Kolkata lab, it was clarified that it will cover eastern and North Eastern states too.

Secretary further clarified that the existing labs were set up in major export hubs. To set up a lab, around 10 to 15 crores of rupees was required and hence the Board was required to assess the export load from a particular region to ascertain the economic viability of setting up and operating a new lab. Due to paucity of funds the Board was finding it difficult to set up new labs on its own and was

exploring external funds for the same, including seeking financial assistance from MoFPI. In the meanwhile, the Board was proposing a limited accreditation programme, to make available Lab services through existing govt/private labs with required testing facility. Shri GVL Narasimha Rao suggested to make it through a Private Public Partnership programme.

Board noted the information and approved.

Item No.22 : Commencing testing for Pesticide Residue.

Board noted the information.

Item No.23 : Spices Board's scheme for Laboratory Recognition of Private/Other facilities for testing Spices and Spice Products in limited thematic & geographical areas

This was the scheme explained during discussion on the previous agenda item No.21.

Board approved the item.

Item No.24: Schemes of Spices Board for implementation for the period from 2021-2022 to 2025-26

Smt Poonam, Special Chief Secretary, representing the Govt of Andhra Pradesh, informed that Guntur area was the largest chilli producing area in the country, with good export potential. As a support to the farmers and exporters, the Govt was bringing good agricultural practices at the doorstep of the farmers for which Farmer facilitation centres had been established in every village where GAP ie. Integrated nutrient management, integrated pest management, water management practices recommended by the University were being taught to the farmers. Farmers' field schools were also conducted to increase the quality of the product, so that the farmers would get good return on their investment. She enquired whether the Board could support in certification and capacity building of chilli farmers in Guntur area.

While appreciating the initiatives in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Secretary informed that due to limited financial resources available with the Board it would be difficult for the Board to extend financial support to the state, but the Board could effectively converge its programmes like quality improvement training programmes in the same region, and work with State Govt. The suggestion was accepted. Shri GVL Narasimha Rao informed that he was taking steps to set up KVK in this area which would certainly help the farmers in extension activities and to educate the chilli farmers.

Board noted the information.

Item No.25 : Proposal for urgent purchase of vehicles

Secretary informed the members that there was a correction in the agenda notes as the latest version of the agenda was not circulated by mistake. It was informed that 1 vehicle which was more than 15 years old needed to be condemned and that no new vehicles got purchased in the 7 years, and that few of the existing vehicles were not in good condition, warranting frequent repairs. It was also stressed that the Board had offices throughout the country with some of the offices covering huge jurisdiction with a wide range of activities requiring frequent movement of staff. In many states the Board was forced to hire vehicles, often at a very high cost. For the NE region and for field use at least 3 new vehicles were required. Similarly for the Head office one vehicle was required as replacement in lieu of a car which was not in running condition for the last few years.

Shri Ajit Pai enquired what type of vehicle was proposed to be purchased. It was requested to consider purchase 3 Bolero for field use including the NE region and one Scorpio or equivalent Car for HO,

The Board approved the proposal.

**Additional Agenda Item No 1:
Proposal for e – selling of Large Cardamom of the North East**

The Board approved the proposal.

General:

Shri Medappa and Smt. Anu Shree Poonia requested to hold the next Board meeting in physical mode. Chairman conveyed that the next meeting will be held in physical mode.

Shri. Medappa informed that the area fixed for cardamom re-plantation subsidy in Karnataka was very less and requested to provide cardamom re-plantation subsidy for at least 400 hectares. It was informed that the Board was granting subsidy on the basis of applications received from beneficiaries, for which applications needed to be submitted through the Board's regional offices and that eligible applicants would be given the subsidy, subject to availability of funds.

After vote of thanks, the meeting came to a close at 1.30 pm.
