

Agriculture & Industry Survey

India's Leading Business Magazine for Agriculture

Sankalp Santosh Bavalekar

Managing Director - SB Agritech

Explains the nuances of strawberry cultivation and the opportunities. (Page 14)



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P. Srinivas

Founder and Trustee

SOIL - A Trust in Bangalore

By understanding the soil visually and practically helps in improving structure and increasing soil biodiversity. (Page 17)

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Managing Director - Tamil Nadu Rainfed Farmers Producer Company

How to make a failed FPO into a successful one by adopting various methods. (Page 20)

Yelanaduramaiah Lakshmisha

General Manager - Indo-Spanish Tasty Foods

Gherkin is a crop like cucumber used for pickling and export purposes. In India in 80's this crop was introduced, and farmers started cultivating. (Page 25)



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SOIL - A Trust in Bangalore.



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Question & Answer



Moringa

Generally in an FPO how many members can be registered as a group?

Government of India says for hilly areas one hundred members are enough, and in the case of other areas, three hundred members are enough. They have fixed this number under the scheme called ten Thousand FPOs, and it is being formulated by Small Farmers Agri Consortium.

They are advertising as a tender for expression of interest for opening CBBO which are given funds to open FPOs. For the first 3 years, FPOs are helped. The funds are distributed thus.

How can FPOs raise funds from individual contribution?

It is enough if a member pays Rs. One thousand to become a member. With three hundred members, there will be a capital of Rs. Three lakhs, but this amount will not be enough to run the company.

So after 5 years, the FPOs have to find their own funds. Otherwise they have to go for bank loans. The banks need last 3 years balance sheet which should be strong one, otherwise they will not finance. Even nonbanking finance companies will not fund the FPOs. So the FPOs have to work in this direction.

Please tell us about yourself. How did you get interested in FPOs?

I am in this field from 2013. I have met many farmers and done field survey. I have run the company along with other directors. I have made arrangements for getting finance for the farmers and dairy units. But during the pandemic everything failed. We could not run the dairy unit. Without any assistance after the pandemic, it has stopped. Many FPOs have failed because of the pandemic.

CONTACT :

Mr Vasudevan V

Email: makkalaemannar@gmail.com

Phone: 9345103752

Dipankar Verma

Managing Director - Terry Exports LLP

Moringa is a native of India, and it has been there since centuries. It was in late 2015 that the commercial circle started noticing the miracle plant after Time Magazine mentioned about it. Mr. Dipankar Verma, the Managing Director of Terry Exports LLP says that this kindled the curiosity about moringa and its contents. It was identified as the super food which we could recognise as we work with governments, organisations, and NGOs. All the parts of the moringa tree are nutritious. The focus is more on the moringa leaves which are highly nutrient with all vitamins, thiamine, magnesium, and macronutrients such as 30% protein which is rare to find in any other plant base.

The moringa leaves are very nutritious with proteins, carbohydrates, fibre, iron, and other things and hence are highly preferred by the people. We are working with World Food Program to include moringa in the food supply chain so that it can be delivered to regions which are malnourished and least developed, especially the countries in Africa. A scientist informed me that moringa is being included in the food supplied to the children, women, and farmers who are becoming healthy and happy. The leaves can be taken as powder to be sprinkled on salads, smoothies, and in capsule form. We can also make green tea from it. If you want you can add the ingredients to add to the flavour.



Mother Earth has given us lot of superfoods, but moringa is unique as it contains 30% protein and other nutrient to complete our daily nutrition requirements. Mr. Sanchez Machado et al, in their study found that three most important amino acids such as glutamic acid, arginine, and aspartic acid are found in moringa. It is a good source of bioflavonoids which is anti-cancerous and anti-aging to make you healthy and young. It contains plenty of Quercetin, a very essential bioflavonoid to keep us healthy, and more antioxidants compared to blue berries. Moringa can add value to the nutrition index globally and food supply chain to the countries which are in need of this at this time.

Moringa can be used in feed for animals. We can dry the moringa leaves, make them into powder, and give them to cows. If they do not like the taste, add the other feed. We can feed this to chicken, pigs, and other ruminant animals. When we feed the cows with it, the yield of milk increases significantly by 40 to 60%. The overall milk quality is improved, cholesterol level in the milk is reduced, and when the mo-

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takes care of the moringa which can be of great help in tackling climate change.

It is emoting on the food security and climate change side too. We are working with World Food Program which is the UN body to take care of nutrition index, helps to increase it, and can be a great tool. Having moringa in their data base to deliver it to places where it is needed, the least developed countries which are affected by floods, drought, and deep amount of hunger. If they add moringa in the diet in any form, the nutrition index of people will increase significantly. We are working with them on how to inculcate moringa in the food being distributed to those who are in dire need.

Moringa is said to cure more than 300 diseases. There are some numbers on the research papers that it can cure and prevent those diseases. In terms of combination of cure and prevent, it can tackle 300 diseases. But more scientific researches have to be done to check if the number is correct. I had a word with a moringa scientist who said it reduces cholesterol and diabetes, the result very positive with type 2 diabetes, and it reduced up to 30% which is significant and cholesterol too in a significant level.

If someone is having iron deficiency, they can add moringa in their diet as a capsule to add more value to improve the health. You name the nutrient, and moringa has it. I researched on moringa when covid broke out, and I was amazed by the result and written a scientific paper that it can treat covid. It is a scientific driven research. It had earlier in 2003 treated a similar disease outbreak. With high amount of bioflavonoids, it can treat, and scientific study should be done to check if moringa can be used in treating corona.

How is Terry Exports LLP helping companies and governments with their moringa projects?

We have the good amount of knowledge base in terms of moringa in terms of export and quality. We know how to take care of quality and act as consultant with government and other clients on how we should choose the quality as they are going to buy from us. We

ringa mixed feed is given to the cows, their weight increases. In Gulf countries where the animal meat is eaten, it fetches high value. So from the social chain perspective of governments, they are investing in good amounts in the moringa project. When they grow moringa trees in the fields, the cows can graze and get the benefits of moringa leaves.

We know the CFC gas is also known as CO₂, but CH₄ which is methane is more dangerous than CO₂. When the animals eat grains, they let out gas which is CH₄ (methane) which is not good for the environment as it affects our ozone layer which gets depleted. We get sunlight directly which is again not good as we may get diseases due to the unfiltered UV rays. CH₄ is the dangerous gas and when globally released by all the cows, it really impacts the climate of the planet. When we feed moringa leaves to cows, it decreases the release of CH₄ significantly. Moringa leaves can also be used in pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries, help in value addition, reduction of imports, and job creation. If we regularly include it in our diet, many diseases can be cured. We have divided internally the uses of moringa into FEMA, in terms of Food, Environment, Medical, and Animal feeds.

We are helping the government in the plantation projects as the government is taking interest in cultivating moringa. It is a plant that is native to India and grown significantly in African region, and Middle East coun-

tries are taking good interest in this. It grows well in semi-arid temperature as in India, but in countries like Europe or USA, it cannot be grown because of the temperature they have. The soil is not suitable to them, but in South-east Asian region, the moringa grows well. India is taking the lead by growing 80% of the crop and export to other countries. But we in India do not have the same kind of love for moringa as we do for ashwagandha, turmeric, or other plant products.

We are helping Latin American government who wants to use moringa in one of their projects on animal feed. One of the Gulf countries want to plant moringa on a high scale, and we are in Saudi Arabian government for a project which is green initiative. They are planting 10 billion trees to have net zero which means taking the carbon level which is the effect of the greenhouse gases to zero. We can reach net zero to save our planet and Mother Nature and give this to future generations.

It is not enough if we plant trees as we know trees absorb CO₂ and leave out oxygen which is good for earth. But we should take care of what type of trees we plant, how much they absorb carbon sequestration, etc. A recent Japanese study has proved that moringa can absorb 350 times carbon than natural vegetation which is amazing. If we plant around 1 million hectares land with moringa globally, the amount of CO₂ and carbon sequestration would be 5 giga ton which is mind boggling and beneficial. But no government



Moringa

should take care and check reports on micro and macro nutrients, and if it would give a good flavour when boxed properly. One of our clients during the corona outbreak was so happy with the quality, and she checked with 40 vendors before finalising with us. But due to issues like lockdown in May 2020, we were not able to carry out the order. The business also went down. So she chose some other vendor in Cambodia who could deliver in terms of transportation. She asked me if I should go



ahead, and I told her if the parameters are right, we are good to proceed. She waited for a month or two, when things got back to near normalcy, and started with shipping. She finalised and incorporated the moringa product in her beauty products. The consumers are happy with the quality of moringa we have. We are also discussing with Gulf and Latin American countries as both the governments are looking on the animal feed side. We are getting inquiries from the governments also. Apart from Gulf and Latin America, we got queries from one of the southeast country too. So governments are learning to take care of the benefits of moringa now. We were covered by one of the trade magazines of Cuba where we wrote a blog covering the benefits of moringa. We were covered by Netherlands government website also on how we should be marketing moringa and should be taking care in terms of imports and life cycle of moringa. They have specially

mentioned our name. It was appreciated by all.

Do you do contract farming of moringa? Where is the main export market for moringa?

No. We do not do contract farming. We are on the marketing side. So we do not do directly. The main market is global. In countries like USA and Australia, it is expanding. We have been getting it in USA and Europe too. It is a part of plant base which is something going global. It is growing crazily. In India we do not see that kind of eagerness, but down the line, we should be seeing more products that are plant base. In Europe and USA the market is great and swelling every day.

Is Terry Exports LLP exporting to USA and Canada? Can you throw some light on moringa demand and exports to USA?

In terms of demand, it is great and encouraging to see people are getting

aware of moringa. It is not something like turmeric or ashwagandha, but people are becoming aware of it due to information and knowledge and research going on. So people like us back in USA and Europe in the form of podcast, video sharing, blog, or scientific papers sharing the details on the internet.

If you see the google trend over the pandemic, it will show people searching for plant based products, the natural ones. It has got increased during pandemic, it comes as a part of that, and I see demand is increasing. It is encouraging. It also depends on your marketing efforts, communication efforts, how you reach out, what type of market you want to tap, etc. So that is why on the general side, the market is very encouraging.

If someone wants to grow moringa to earn good profit, what is your advice to them?

They can go ahead. It is a farmer-

friendly product, and it needs very less irrigation compared to other products. We get calls from farmers that they want to grow moringa, but where they are selling is something is what we work on. We have seen and come across farmers who grow moringa just because they have heard of it, but they start finding the market, reach out to people, and when they do not find a buyer, or exporter, it becomes a problem. So they should do the research first and then go ahead. In India moringa is used in cuisines, and the moringa powder or capsule do not have the good market as in other countries. It is similar to what we do to turmeric and do not realise its value. The government is doing a great job in this regard, and they are adding to pharmaceuticals so that these products come into the market.

In India where are really successful moringa cultivation and processing units located?

Moringa is grown pan India, but quality is seen in the Southern India. It depends on the soil and other factors. There are very good regions where good quality moringa is grown.

Please tell us about your background and how you got interested in moringa.

After finishing engineering in 2011, I was working with an IT company, but I did not like the job. I was more inclined towards business since childhood. I pursued my Master of International Business to understand the international business. After coming back to India, I came across moringa, got interested about its nutrients, and since the market started becoming encouraging with great demand, I started working on it.

What does your firm Terry Exports LLP do?

We are specialising in moringa exports, distribution, and marketing. We work with companies on B2B side and with government for exporting and supplying for their research, business, and projects.

CONTACT :

Mr Dipankar Verma
E : dipankar.verma@terryexports.com
Phone: 7289919382