

WELCOME ADDRESS
By
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PRESIDENT
THE SOLVENT EXTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION OF INDIA
At
SEA-AICOSCA COTTONSEED OIL & MEAL CONCLAVE 2024
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Good Evening Everyone,

It is a great pleasure to see you all gathered here in Ahmedabad, a city historically known as the Manchester of India due to its renowned cotton textile industry. Today, it is the perfect setting for the SEA-AICOSCA Cottonseed Oil & Meal Conclave.

On behalf of The Solvent Extractors' Association of India and the All India Cotton Seed Crushers' Association, I extend a warm welcome to our Chief Guest :

- Shri Jagdishbhai Ishwarbhai Panchal, Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Industries, Cottage, Khadi and Rural Industries, Civil Aviation & Co-operation, Salt Industries, Printing and Stationary, Protocol (All Independent Charge)

And to our Guests of Honour

- Shri Pasha Patel, Hon'ble Chairman of the Maharashtra Agriculture Cost & Price Commission, Government of Maharashtra
- Shri Ajeet Kumar Sahu, Joint Secretary (Oilseeds), Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India.
- Dr. Hemant Khoshiya, FDA Commissioner, Gujarat State

I also welcome the senior government officers, distinguished technocrats, esteemed speakers, and every delegate, exhibitor, and patron who has helped make this Conclave a success.

India is the second-largest producer of cotton, next to China, with an annual production of about 5.5 million tons sown on approximately 12.4 million hectares—the world's highest cotton acreage, accounting for around 39% of the global total. However, our cotton yield remains low, averaging around 437 kg/ha compared to the global average of approximately 799 kg/ha.

Cottonseed oil is a unique product known for its excellent frying properties. Globally, the production of cottonseed oil stands at approximately 4.7 million tonnes, with India contributing around 1.2 million tonnes. This makes India one of the major players in the global cottonseed oil market, accounting for about 25% of the world's production. Cottonseed oil is highly preferred by the organized food industry for its oxidative stability, which ensures good flavour and prolongs the freshness of fried snacks and namkeens.

Cottonseed meal, with its relatively low rumen degradability, is an excellent source of bypass protein in dairy and is widely used in cattle feed formulations. Worldwide, the production of cottonseed meal is approximately 14 million tonnes, with India producing around 7.5 million tonnes annually.

Our country faces a significant challenge in edible oil production, importing around 60% of its requirement — about 15 million tonnes — at a cost of over Rs. 1.4 lakh crores in foreign exchange. This dependency poses a threat to India's self-sufficiency in edible oil. Edible oil consumption is a marker of prosperity. With a population growth rate of 1.2% and a 3% annual increase in per capita consumption — currently about 17.5 kg per capita, which is low compared to 25 kg per capita in developed countries — we need at least 1 million tonnes of additional edible oil each year to meet the growing demand.

To address this urgent situation, we urge our esteemed guests to consider the following solutions:

1. Create an Edible Oil Mission: Aim for near self-reliance in edible oil by 2030, reducing import dependency from 60% to below 30%.
 - o Increase the acreage and yield of major oil crops like mustard, groundnut, and palm by ensuring minimum support prices (MSP) for farmers, boosting domestic oil meal consumption, and expanding export markets for de-oiled meal, particularly mustard.
 - o For palm oil, focus on acreage expansion, provide farmers with high-yield saplings, and ensure fair prices for Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFB).
 - o Efficiently utilize secondary sources of edible oil like cottonseed, rice bran, and tree-borne oilseeds.

2. **Establish Sustainable Model Farms:** Showcase best agricultural practices, including seed selection and treatment, and establish modern weather stations to support farmers.
 - o SEA has been engaged in a Model Farm Programme for the past 8 years to increase productivity of oilseeds like castor, mustard, sunflower, and groundnut in states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Karnataka. The results are promising, with productivity and farmer income increasing by 30-40%, in line with the vision of our Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.
3. **Collaborate with R&D Centers:** Partner with research institutes and industry for troubleshooting, support, and value addition. At this conference, we acknowledge and encourage R&D work in cottonseed by felicitating technocrats, academia, students, and industry professionals.
4. **Promote "Make in India":** Establish conducive trade and import policies to foster growth in the oilseed sector.
5. **Address Gossypol in Cottonseed:** Find solutions for gossypol-free oilmeal to increase its usage in feed formulations.

I once again thank our Hon'ble Guests for their esteemed presence.

Now, I would like to invite Shri Sandeep Bajoria to provide deeper insights into this unique cottonseed oil. I am confident that you will leave this Conclave with valuable knowledge and insights to enhance your business acumen.

Thank you and Jai Hind.

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