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CONFERENCE

May 28-29, 2024



Report of the AIFPA-ABC joint National Seminar held on 16th April, 2024 at Multi-Purpose Hall, India International Centre, New Delhi

All India Food Processors' Association in collaboration with the Almond Board of California organised a National Seminar on the theme "Deep Dive into Almonds" on 16th April 2024 at Multi-Purpose Hall, India International Centre, New Delhi was a significant event highlighting the importance & potential of almonds.

The event commenced with a warm welcome by **Dr. Raghav Jadli, President, AIFPA & Director, Jadli Foods India Pvt. Ltd.** He thanked the participants for sparing their valuable time to attend the event and greeted the delegates who joined virtually.

Dr. Jitendra Dongare, Deputy Agricultural Marketing Advisor (SAG), Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Govt. of India inaugurated the event. He emphasized the value of almonds and their potential for value addition. He also encouraged the efforts of the Association for organizing this National Seminar.

Mr. Sudarshan Mazumdar, Director for India, South Korea & Japan at the Almonds Board of California (ABC), provided an informative introduction to the organization. He focused on the formation, function and scope of the Almonds Board of California, shedding light on its pivotal role in advancing the almond industry across the globe.

The Technical Session of the Seminar was a focal point for discussions on Nutrition, Ayurveda, Technical Knowledge about almonds & almond products, and the latest trends in the industry. A number of experts from the industry including **Mr. P.L. Kaul**, Former President, AIFPA participated in the discussion.

Esteemed speakers such as **Ms. Elena Hemler**, (Nutrition Research Program Lead at the Almonds Board of California ABC), **Mr. Guangwei Huang** (Associate Director of Food Research and Technology at ABC) and **Ms. Emily Fleischmann**, (Vice President of Global Market Development at ABC), shared valuable insights during the session.

Ms. Julie Adams, Vice President of Global Technical & Regulatory Affairs at ABC, skillfully moderated the session, ensuring a smooth flow of discussions. Delegates actively participated by posing questions on various topics, including the utilization of almond shells, the impact of soaking on almond digestibility, the neurological properties of almonds, and innovative almond-based products worldwide.

The seminar served as an excellent platform for knowledge exchange between speakers and delegates. It provided comprehensive details on the scope, health benefits, value additions, and market trends of almonds globally.

Indeed, it was a good dive into the world of almonds, and the Association will continue to explore further opportunities in this exciting field and will organized similar Seminars on Almonds later this year at Bengaluru and Mumbai.



GLIMPSES OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR



Welcome Address by Dr. Raghav Jadli, President, AIFPA



Ms. Elena Hemler Nutrition Research Program Lead, ABC making her presentation



Inaugural Address by Sh. Dr. Jitendra Dongare Deputy Agril. Maktg. Advisor, MoFPI, GOI



Sh. Guangwei Huang Associate Director, Food Research and Technology, ABC making his presentation



Special Address by Sh. Sudarshan Mazumdar, Director-India/South Korea/Japan, ABC



Ms. Julie Adams, Vice President, Global Technical & Regulatory Affairs, ABC making her presentation



Ms. Emily Fleischmann, Vice President, Global Market Development, ABC making her presentation



Vote of Thanks by Dr. Subodh Jindal, Immediate Past President, AIFPA



Question and Answer Session



Question and Answer Session



Question and Answer Session



View of Delegates



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*All charges are exclusive of applicable GST			

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Regulatory & Food Safety Updates

Service providers told to adhere with labelling norms for food in flights



The food regulator has asked service providers to adhere with the labelling requirements for prepared food being served in flights/trains and other moving vehicles. According to FSSAI, such Food Business Operators are required to follow the FSS (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2020.

FSSAI has also asked the FBOs to follow the 2022 order wherein it was mandatory to declare FSSAI licence on cash memo/bills of the food products. The FSSAI has directed the flight operators to make passengers aware of the licence number of caterer, manufacturers and flight operators (airlines).

FSSAI has further specified that basic details in case of prepared food such as name of the caterer, FSSAI licence number, date and time of packaging, and use by date and time shall be ensured on the packaging along with other details as applicable as per labelling and display regulations.

Consumers seek transparency on sustainable ingredients amidst challenges in accessing information

In a recent study conducted by ingredients producer Ardent Mills, it was revealed that an overwhelming 85% of consumers prioritize ingredients when making food purchasing decisions. Despite this, over half of consumers face difficulties accessing crucial information regarding sourcing and product origins, highlighting a growing demand for transparency in the food industry.



The Trend to Table report from Ardent Mills found that 83% of consumers regularly scrutinize food labels, with a significant portion paying close attention to both ingredient lists and nutrition profiles. Mr. Matt Schueller, Director of Marketing Insights at Ardent Mills,

emphasized the abundance of information available to consumers and urged food companies to leverage this to their advantage.

However, despite the desire for ethical purchasing, 57% of consumers struggle to find information on sourcing and product origins. Ardent Mills sees an opportunity to help food manufacturers better understand consumer behaviour and adapt to evolving preferences. Schueller noted a shift in consumer consciousness, with an increasing realization that present decisions impact future generations. Sustainability emerges as a critical consideration for consumers, encompassing products, people, and processes. Schueller emphasized the importance of the "people" aspect in sustainability efforts, highlighting consumers' desire for confidence that their choices have a meaningful impact.

While some food manufacturers are prioritizing sustainability to develop innovative products, challenges remain, including the premium pricing of sustainable products. Despite this, nearly 60% of consumers are willing to pay more for foods made with whole and/or less processed ingredients, indicating a growing awareness of the impact of food choices on personal health and the environment. As consumers continue to prioritize transparency and sustainability, food companies are urged to provide accessible and accurate information to empower informed purchasing decisions.

FSSAI creates category for dried fruits, seeds under FoSCoS



After receiving representations from food businesses, the FSSAI has decided to create Food Product category for 'Edible Dried Fruits/ Vegetable Seeds' for the purpose of licensing through FoSCoS.

According to FSSAI, representation was received seeking the information on correct categorisation of 'Watermelon Seeds' under Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011 (FSSR). However, at present, there is no specific standard for 'Watermelon Seeds' or any other Edible Dried Fruits/Vegetable Seeds under FSSR.

An official with the FSSAI headquarters said that the matter was examined by FSSAI and as an interim measure to safeguard the interest of consumers, it was decided that the Product Names will be added in FoSCoS (Food Safety Compliance System) for the purpose of licensing of Edible Dried Fruits/ Vegetable Seeds.

Food Category 4.1.2.2 [Dried fruits. nuts and seeds] for Edible Dried Seeds obtained from Fruits and 4.2.2.2 for Edible Dried Seeds obtained from Vegetables including mushrooms, fungi, roots and tubers, pulses, legumes and aloevera alongwith seaweeds, nuts and seeds, was included as interim measure. FSSAI notification in this regard says that food businesses may apply under the General Manufacturing Kind of Business for the said categories, till such time specific standard is notified by the Food Authority.



Masala row: Govt to do comprehensive analysis of spice products



Concerned over the alleged findings of contaminants in two Indian masala products in Hong Kong and Singapore, the Union Government has decided to do a comprehensive analysis of spice products across India.

Although, the national food regulator, FSSAI already swung into action and ordered the analysis, according to reports, the Government wants to clear the clouds of uncertainty over spice trade. The Government appeared concerned about the impact on spice trade of India which is approximately USD700 million and after the initial reports from Singapore and Hong Kong, now many other countries including Australia and New Zealand have flagged same

concerns about quality of Indian spices.

Meanwhile, in an assessment report by Global Trade Research Initiative, an economic think tank, over half of the spice export is at risk due to the cascading impact of this controversy. The potential repercussions could affect exports valued at \$2.17 billion, representing 51.1% of India's global spice export. The report also suggests that India needs to address the quality issues with urgency and transparency. According to the report, in fiscal year 2024, India's spice exports totaled \$4.25 billion, accounting for a 12% share of the global spice exports.

The major spices exported from India included chilli powder, which topped the list with \$1.3 billion in exports, followed by cumin at \$550 million, turmeric at \$220 million, cardamom at \$130 million, mixed spices at \$110 million, and spice oils and oleoresins at \$1 billion. Other notable exports were asafoetida, saffron, anise, nutmeg, mace, clove, and cinnamon.

Centre allows export of 99,150 MT onion to Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius & Sri Lanka

Government has allowed export of 99,150 MT of onion to six neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, UAE, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius and Sri Lanka. Onion export prohibition has been imposed to ensure adequate domestic availability against the backdrop of estimated lower Kharif and Rabi crops in 2023-24, as compared to previous year and increase demand in international market.



The National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), the agency for export of onion to these countries, sourced the domestic onions to be exported through e-platform at L1 prices and supplied to the agency or agencies nominated by the government of the destination country at the negotiated rate on 100% advance payment basis. The offer rate of NCEL to the buyers takes into account the prevailing prices in the destination market and also international and domestic markets. The quota allocated for export to the six countries are being supplied as per requisition made by the destination country. As the largest producer of onion in the country, Maharashtra is the major supplier of onions sourced by NCEL for export.

The procurement target for onion buffer out of Rabi-2024 under the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) of Department of Consumer Affairs has been fixed at 5 Lakh tons this year. The Central Agencies, viz., NCCF and NAFED are tying up local agencies such as FPOs/FPCs/PACs to support the procurement, storage and farmers registration to begin the procurement of any store-worthy onion. A high-level team of DoCA, NCCF and NAFED had visited Nashik and Ahmednagar Districts of Maharashtra during April 11 to 13, 2024, to create awareness among the farmers, FPOs/FPCs and PACs about the procurement of 5 LMT of onion for PSF buffer.

In order to reduce the storage loss of onions, the Department of Consumer Affairs decided to enhance the quantum of stocks to be irradiated and cold stored from 1200 MT last year to over 5000 MT this year, with technical support from BARC, Mumbai. The pilot of onion irradiation and cold storage taken up last year has been found to have resulted in the reduction of storage loss to less than 10 percent.

FBOs told to file annual returns before last date to avoid penalty



The Indian food regulator has asked food businesses to file the annual returns before the last date, to avoid any penalty. It is advised to all the eligible food business operators to strictly adhere to the timeline for filing annual return. It is to further mention that no request for waiver of penalty in case of delay / non-submission of annual return shall be considered, reads the order issued by the FSSAI.

Clause 2.1.13 of FSS (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011, specifies the condition for submission of annual returns by manufacturers and importers by May 31 of every year for the food business activities conducted during the previous financial year.

The eligible FBOs include manufacturers [including repacker and relabeller], importer and manufacturer-exporters while the last date without penalty is May 31 every year. The Acceptable Mode of Submission is Online through FoSCoS (Food Safety Compliance System) only while the penalty for non-submission is Rs. 100 per day with effect from June 1 and Maximum Penalty is 5 times the Annual Licence Fee.



New Launches

Unilever Launches Knorr Meal Cups to Cater to Busy Working Consumers



Unilever's renowned Knorr brand, celebrated for its assortment of sauces and broths, is set to roll out a new line of microwaveable cups, targeting the burgeoning demographic of working professionals seeking convenient yet wholesome meal options. The initiative, comprising seven rice and pasta variants, aims to address the dietary preferences of individuals seeking healthier choices amidst their hectic work schedules.

The Knorr Rice Cups lineup boasts four delectable flavours, including Three Cheese

Mushroom Risotto, Chicken Flavoured Fried Rice, Garden Tomato Risotto, and Fajita Rice. Complementing these, the Pasta line offers three enticing options: Teriyaki Noodles, Spicy Korean-Style BBQ, and Pad Thai. With the promise of swift microwave preparation in 2.5 minutes or less, these offerings are tailored to meet the needs of on-the-go consumers seeking quick and satisfying meal solutions.

This planned move by Knorr reflects a broader trend within the food industry, where brands are innovating packaging formats to cater to diverse consumption occasions, particularly for individuals with busy lifestyles. Citing research from Ezcater revealing a 40% increase in professionals foregoing traditional lunch breaks, Knorr aims to address the rising demand for convenient yet nutritious meal alternatives.

Gina Kiroff, Chief Marketing Officer at Knorr North America, emphasized the brand's commitment to providing accessible, wholesome meal options for consumers amidst their bustling schedules. The introduction of the Cups line aligns with the evolving needs of young professionals, many of whom are navigating a return to office environments.

While Knorr has traditionally enjoyed success in home cooking with its range of bouillons and rice and pasta dishes, the introduction of microwaveable cups represents a strategic expansion into out-of-home consumption channels, particularly appealing to younger demographics seeking convenient meal solutions. The Cups line not only caters to consumers' time constraints but also addresses growing interest in protein- and vegetable-rich food options.

The popularity of cup packaging extends beyond Knorr, with various food manufacturers leveraging this format to enhance convenience and meet evolving consumer preferences. Examples include Kraft Heinz's "Just Crack an Egg" and Idahoan's Potato Shreds, underscoring the broader industry shift towards portable, on-the-go meal solutions.

Parle Agro Introduces 'Mini Frooti' Targeting Low-Income Households

Parle Agro's iconic beverage brand, Frooti, has unveiled a new offering named "Mini Frooti," featuring a compact 65-ml pack priced at Rs 5. Departing from its traditional triangular packaging, the new Mini Frooti adopts a rectangular shape while retaining the affordability synonymous with the brand.



Accompanying the launch is a vibrant campaign titled "Too Much Fun," featuring Bollywood star Alia Bhatt. While the introduction of Mini Frooti has sparked discussions about sachetization, Parle Agro's Head of Marketing & International Business, Ankit Kapoor, views

it as a strategic approach to cater to the vast market of value-seeking consumers, particularly within the low-income segments of India.

Kapoor emphasizes the significance of the Rs 5 price point, noting its appeal to teens and kids in smaller towns where over 70% of Indians reside. He highlights the brand's commitment to serving this demographic with accessible yet satisfying beverage options.

The Frooti portfolio now encompasses a range of pack sizes, including Rs. 5 and Rs. 10 carton packs, along with PET bottles in various sizes. Kapoor underscores the role of the Rs. 5 pack in expanding Frooti's reach, especially in urban areas, where it is poised to become a popular post-snack dessert for schoolchildren.

Parle Agro's strategy of offering small servings at lower price points extends beyond Frooti to other products like Smoodh, its flavoured milk range. Kapoor attributes these initiatives to extensive consumer research, which underscores the importance of affordability for households with modest incomes.

While many brands opt for premiumization amid inflationary pressures, Parle Agro remains committed to delivering valuedriven propositions. The collaboration with Alia Bhatt in the Mini Frooti campaign reinforces the brand's association with fun and freshness, targeting a diverse audience, including schoolchildren, with its nostalgic appeal and delightful taste.

Kraft Heinz makes fast food sauces better for you



Primal Kitchen, a subsidiary of Kraft Heinz, has announced its venture into the realm of dipping sauces. Established in 2015 with a focus on crafting sauces with fewer additives, Primal Kitchen has since diversified its product line to include salad dressings, marinades, buffalo sauces, and more.

The new line of dipping sauces comes in four enticing variations, each meticulously crafted with clean ingredients. Avocado Lime, tailored for burritos and tacos aficionados, joins Chicken Dippin', ideal for enhancing the flavour of chicken nuggets or sandwiches.

Special Sauce, designed to elevate the classic burger and fries experience, and Yum Yum Sauce, a versatile addition to steak, shrimp, chicken, or vegetable dishes, complete the lineup.

Setting itself apart from conventional options, Primal Kitchen's dipping sauces are formulated with avocado oil and devoid of soy, sweeteners, and seed oils. With less than 2 grams of sugar per serving, these sauces offer a guilt-free indulgence for health-conscious consumers.

Kraft Heinz's acquisition of Primal Kitchen in 2018 for \$200 million signalled a strategic move to diversify its portfolio and tap into the burgeoning market for better-for-you condiments. At the time, Primal Kitchen emerged as a promising startup brand, resonating with consumers seeking healthier alternatives, while Kraft Heinz sought to revitalize its image amidst a period of stagnation.

With ambitions to become a household staple for restaurant-inspired sauces, Primal Kitchen's latest foray into dipping sauces reflects the evolving preferences of consumers. Audrey Burger, head of commercial strategy, emphasized the significance of this expansion, noting the increasing prevalence of dipping sauces in American households.

The rollout of Primal Kitchen's dipping sauces is scheduled to commence in May, with availability at leading retailers including Whole Foods, Thrive Market, Fresh Thyme, and Kroger. As consumers continue to prioritize clean and wholesome ingredients, Primal Kitchen aims to satisfy their cravings with its innovative offerings.

Pluckk launches a line of cold pressed juices

Pluckk, a pioneering digital lifestyle-oriented fresh food brand, has launched its newest line of preservative-free cold-pressed juices. This addition emphasises the evolving market's shift towards fresh products, reflecting the growing demand for health-conscious lifestyle choices.

The current market value of packaged juices in India stands at Rs1100 crore maintaining a steady growth trajectory at 15% per annum.

With an array of 10 flavours including popular ones like Mango, Pomegranate, Pineapple and Valencia, these cold-pressed juices are crafted solely from 100% fruit, offering a guilt-free indulgence without any added sugar or concentrates. These juices also come with a 21-day shelf life achieved through HPP technology



Mr. Pratik Gupta, CEO, Pluckk, said, at Pluckk, we take pride in sourcing our ingredients directly from partner farms, ensuring the highest standards of quality and hygiene.

With consumers increasingly seeking fresh, preservative-free juice options, we are happy to introduce this new category. Pluckk Juices epitomise our brand philosophy of delivering clean label products made from the finest produce, highlighting our commitment to delivering nothing but the best to our customers.

In addition to its own D2C platform, the juices are available on various platforms, including Zepto, Amazon, and Swiggy, as well as esteemed outlets such as Nature's Basket and Foodsquare, making them easily accessible to consumers nationwide.

Its innovative approach to fresh food has garnered widespread acclaim, with presence in six major cities, including Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad, and NCR. By prioritising purity and quality, it continues to redefine the standards within the industry, offering consumers a healthier and more wholesome beverage option.

News Briefs

NAFED Introduces Bharat Brand Rice to Tackle Rising Prices: Available in 5-kg and 10-kg Packs



The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) has announced the upcoming sale of rice under the Bharat brand, packaged in convenient 5-kg and 10-kg packs.

This initiative aims to address the escalating prices of rice in the open market, following the successful efforts with wheat flour and chana dal. Currently, high-quality rice is being sold at exorbitant prices ranging from ₹75-90/kg in various markets, prompting NAFED to intervene with competitively priced options.

Under this initiative, both boiled and raw rice will be offered at a fixed rate of $\gtrless 29/kg$, significantly lower than prevailing market rates.

Mr. R. Punnaiappan from the Koyambedu Wholesale Food Grains Merchant Association highlighted the disparity between wholesale and retail rice prices, attributing it to factors like old stock and alleged exports of paddy to neighbouring countries.

NAFED's strategy involves selling directly to consumers through small autorickshaws, vans, railway stations, bus termini, and Kendriya Bhandar stores, ensuring accessibility.

NAFED's decision to introduce 5-kg bags of wheat flour in response to customer demand underscores its commitment to catering to consumer needs. Additionally, the inclusion of farmers' producers' organizations in the distribution process aims to support local communities.

As consumers demand transparency, suggestions have been made for NAFED to offer different grades of rice, including Basmati, and provide comprehensive details about the products. This move not only addresses immediate market challenges but also reflects a broader commitment to consumer welfare and market stability.

Varanasi's Tiranga Barfi: A Taste of India's Liberation Movement, Now GI Tagged

Varanasi's Tiranga Barfi, a cherished dessert intertwined with India's struggle for independence, has recently been granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, solidifying its unique position in the archives of food heritage.



This recognition not only celebrates the delectable flavours of the barfi but also acknowledges its historical significance as a symbol of struggle and patriotism.

The story of Tiranga Barfi dates back to the 1940s when Mr. Madan Gopal Gupta, the creative mind behind Ram Bhandar sweet store in Varanasi, devised this special sweet. It wasn't just a culinary creation; it served a deeper purpose during India's fight against British colonial rule. He along with other like-minded individuals, made Tiranga Barfi as a means of facilitating revolutionary meetings and secret exchanges of information among freedom fighters.

At a time when the display of the Indian tricolour was strictly prohibited by the British authorities, Tiranga Barfi emerged as a silent protest. Its colours, precisely replicated by using natural ingredients like saffron, pistachio, khoya, and cashew nuts, mirrored those of the Indian flag without relying on artificial dyes. This subtle defiance didn't go unnoticed; the British were often taken aback by the barfi's resemblance to the banned flag.

Tiranga Barfi was more than simply a symbol; it was an instrument for raising awareness and building solidarity. It was widely distributed to the public and functioned as an inspiration for gathering support against British oppression.

Its importance extended beyond its delectable flavour, becoming a beacon of hope and perseverance for the people of India during one of its most trying times.

Tiranga Barfi has just been granted the GI status, joining the ranks of other renowned Varanasi specialties that showcase the region's rich culinary tradition.

This accreditation not only safeguards the barfi's authenticity and purity, but it also raises its national profile. Tiranga Barfi continues to thrill palates across the country, serving as a poignant reminder of India's path to freedom and the resilient spirit of its people.

Ushodaya Enterprises announces strategic investment in FlexiCloud Internet



Ushodaya Enterprises Private Limited, a food production company based out of Hyderabad and a prestigious arm of the Ramoji Group, has announced a strategic investment in FlexiCloud Internet Private Limited, a leading provider of managed cloud hosting solutions based in Kochi. This move marks its tactical expansion into Kerala.

The company excels in delivering advanced managed cloud hosting solutions that focus on high performance, robust security, and exceptional customer support. It is committed to

demystifying complex technology challenges for its clients, ensuring seamless and efficient digital operations. It merges various cloud services under one roof, offering tailored server options, strategic deployment locations, and extensive application management.

Mr. Anooja Bashir, CEO of FlexiCloud, said, our platform is crafted to meet the essential needs of startups and SMEs, providing them with reliable, secure, and scalable cloud solutions. Mr. Karthik Vidyasagar, Chief Investment Adviser at Ushodaya Enterprises, said, we are thrilled to mark our entry into Kerala with this strategic investment. FlexiCloud's dedication to innovation and customer-centric solutions perfectly aligns with our values. We look forward to significant enhancements in our service capabilities through this partnership.

With this investment, the company plans to expand its Platform as a Service (PaaS) offerings in the cloud hosting sector, focusing particularly on incorporating artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies. Ms. Binu Mathew, CFO of FlexiCloud, said, this investment will greatly strengthen our technological resources, enabling us to offer cutting-edge solutions that are both innovative and scalable.

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AIFPA brings out a Monthly E-Newsletter **'Food Pro'** to provide information about current industry happenings, Govt. policy & schemes, events, new technology/product developments, regulatory matters, exports, global news, expositions, company news etc. in the food processing sector. The Newsletter is widely circulated free of cost to all related segments throughout the country, as well as to Foreign Embassies, Indian Missions Abroad, International Chambers and Institutions. **Your advertisement in the Newsletter will give you very high wide-angle visibility. All advertisements are in color as per details below**.

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