

## **Gol Committed To Growth of Food Processing Sector: Rakesh Kacker, Secretary – Ministry of Food Processing Industries**

### **Our GOM will work with industry & take care of complete back end cost of food processing industry: Sudhir Kumar Goel, Government of Maharashtra**

Food, a fundamental need for survival, will only see a rise in the future. India, with a large agricultural base, is rightly poised to meet the food needs of the world. If this has to happen, India has a lot to do. An exclusive summit organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the fifth international "Food & Bev Summit 2012" discussed on the ways that India can become the food factory of the world.

Mr. Rakesh Kacker, Secretary – Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Gol said, "Government of India is committed to the growth of the food processing sector. A lot of things are happening in the sector which grew by an average of 8% between 2006 and 2010. This is higher than the growth of the manufacturing sector. Agriculture has also been growing 2-3% which means we are adding more value to agriculture." He informed that his ministry is trying to involve the state governments more and more in their schemes.

While highlighting the problem areas, he said that many of them have been resolved or are in the process of resolving with large budgetary allocations. "The main problems have been related to land. In many projects we have worked closely with state government and removed problems. Cold chains have been doing quite well with 8 already being completed and 10-15 more to be completed by the end of the financial year. We have got a very good response from the private sector and just last month we have got approval for 30 new projects. The government's major area of focus is skill development. Industry needs skilled manpower and we are dedicated to developing that for the food processing industry."

He said that the major thrust for the ministry is to move out of project implementation and leave it to the state government.

Dr Sudhir Kumar Goel, IAS, Principal Secretary – Agriculture & Marketing, (Additional Charge) Marketing Cooperation, Government of Maharashtra said, "I am here on behalf of state government to make a few offers. Firstly we are willing to work with industry in the back end. We will provide all inputs to farmers from where you source all material from them. Anyone willing to have an end to end solution can come up and we can start having discussions immediately. Backend will be entirely our responsibility and it will not eat upon your profit margins. We have enough projects and money allocated into it to take care of that."

He further stated that since government has legalised contract farming, corporates can work without the middle man and deal directly with farmers. "Let us not discuss further on things. Let us sit down at the table and work on how we can do things together and how farmers can benefit and how you can benefit at the same time."

Piruz Khambatta, Chairman, Food & Bev 2012 and Chairman & Managing Director, Rasna said, "Food processing can do to rural India what IT has done to urban India – bring prosperity and growth. Food processing sector can act as a vehicle for 21st century India." Elaborating about this Mr. Khambatta said, "Gol have so many schemes that industrialists have to educate themselves to take advantage of them. 31% of spending done by Indians is on food. You cannot thus get wrong with food processing. We are an agricultural nation and we can expand food processing. There's a huge scientific and management talent and well developed finance market. This sector is a boon for SMEs as you can start a business with very less money. India can rightly be food factory of the world and this can also lead to food security. We need food security more than defence. We need to feed our people. Besides that food processing can control inflation."

He unveiled a 12 point agenda for exponential growth that includes definition of agriculture to include processed food products, regulations to be made conducive for contract farming, corporate farming and cooperative farming, zero goods and service tax GST on food processing, improvement of R&D, market development assistance extended to food processing companies by government etc.

Mr. Pradeep Banerjee, Executive Director – Supply Chain, Hindustan Unilever Ltd said, "The call for inclusive growth is loud and clear. As an industry when we develop our plans to make India the food factory of the world, we cannot forget that inclusive growth has to be at the core. Secondly, we have talked a lot and for a long time. There is now an urgent need for action. And thirdly we need to take Private Public partnership to new heights."

The second session saw an interesting debate where adman Prahlad Kakkar in his imitable humour and style, while chairing a session, taught the Food and Bev industry branding and marketing. He said that though we have great food and bev tradition, we have not known how to build brands from it and take advantage from the same.

In the session, Devendra Chawla, President – Food Bazaar, Future Group said, "Food habits of a people are hard to change and it travels with people. Brands have to be rooted in the country and begin in their own country. How many food brands are we building in India? We need more local brand which we can customise when we move to other countries."

"Food & Bev 2012" is the fourth International Exhibition for the food and beverage processing industry and is providing a platform for companies to market and promote their products and services to food and beverage industry professionals, distributors and importers, supermarket chains, hotels, restaurants, airlines, railways, food service providers and also interact with buyers and delegates on the innovations that could benefit all.

The Retail Pavilion of the exhibition is a platform for the retail chains and institutional buyers to have a face to face interaction exclusively with the exhibitors at Food and Bev 2012. The buyers who are part of the Retail B2B meeting are Aditya Birla Retail Ltd. – More, Future Group, Godrej Nature's Basket, Dmart, Reliance Fresh, The Oberoi Group and Grand Hyatt.

The exhibition that will go on for the next two days will have a special session on the New Safety Regulations by FASE. The third day is open for public visit. The Government of Maharashtra is the host for the exhibition while the Government of Gujarat is the partner state. There is also a wine pavilion in the exhibition.

State participation from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala and Punjab are showcasing their strength in the food sector. International participation is represented by the Holland pavilion where Foodtech, Holland is showcasing their latest technology and trends to the Indian market.

True to CII's commitment for the year to support SC/ST entrepreneurs throughout the year, Food & Bev has a special showcasing of them in the area of food and bev under the aegis of DICCI – Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.