



भारतीय कृषि एवं खाद्य परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

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Report on Pre-launch Consultation Meeting of ICFA



20 May 2015



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Indian Council of Food and Agriculture

REPORT ON PRE-LAUNCH CONSULTATION MEETING OF INDIA'S APEX THINK TANK AND TRADE FACILITATION BODY-ICFA



The pre-launch consultation meeting of India's apex think tank and trade facilitation body-ICFA took place on 20 May 2015. The highlights of the meeting are as follows:

Dr MJ Khan, President, Agriculture Group



He convened the meeting to discuss launching of Indian Food and Agriculture Council, the new think tank for Indian agriculture, exhorted agriculture Industry to look ahead of the curve, unleashing the potential of India's food and agriculture sector. The opportunities for growth, value addition and trade to improve the income of masses have not been appropriately tapped due to lack of an appropriate body which could represent the interests of all the stakeholders at the national level on one hand and position India's food and agriculture sector globally on the other hand, said Dr MJ Khan. He said that key stakeholders in Indian agriculture do not have their voice at national level and following compartmentalized approach due to absence of coordination and a dialogue mechanism among various stakeholders. Elaborating on the mandates of ICFA, Dr Khan said that studies

have been done on similar organizations in different countries such as French Chamber of Agriculture, Chinese Chamber of Food and various organizations in US but ICFA will be different in the structure, mandate and functioning from rest of the world bodies. Besides the trade and industry, ICFA will be equally focusing on farmers and agri-entrepreneurs towards helping them connect with market opportunities, while addressing their policy, technology, trade, marketing, financing and partnership related issues.

Dr RB Singh, Chancellor, Central Agricultural University



He said that there is need for focused approach and narrowing down of council preamble to few activities, which may create big gap between the preamble and activities which are being contemplated. He suggested very strongly having harmonious approach in mission, objectives, goal and activities of the council. The body needs to be more focused on its objectives and to be credible and decide on priorities and activities in line with present needs of the country to be able to serve effectively to the Indian food and agriculture sector globally.

Dr PK Joshi, South Asia Director, International Food Policy research Institute



He emphasized the need for having a national level body as government, policy maker, industry, NGOs, financial bodies, developmental institutions and farmers groups and farmers group think in different directions often with contradictory approaches for the same ultimate cause. He stressed on the importance of bringing agriculture and agri-professionals under one umbrella and integration of all stakeholders under the value chain for strengthening food and agribusiness in the country. He advised to regroup all the objectives in to 3-5 broad group of objectives and focus on promoting understanding, trade, technology transfers, business and investment in agriculture sector. He said that such a body is along felt need.

Mr JNL Shrivastava, ED, IFFCO Foundation, former Secretary Agriculture



He said that it is important to issue common issue of farmers at global level as unlike industry we do not have lobby group in agriculture sector. He urged the need for creating opportunities, understanding and attraction for youth in agriculture and promoting mainstreaming and centrality of agriculture and its importance in the economy and governance. He also recommended taking up

policy research and also the studies of successful farming and agribusiness models for adoption in India.

Mr Ravi Khetarpal, South Asia Director, CABI International



He emphasized the need for having a unique selling point for the council. “We have Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Skill Development, ICAR, FICCI etc focusing on specific areas of work but we need convergence and synergism in research, development, skills up scalin and agribusiness”, said Mr Khetarpal. “We should have policy on emerging crisis and plan to help the farmers should be looked at through proactive policies and not through the general policies”. He advised “Knowledge Management in Agriculture to be one of the objectives of ICFA, as presently do not have single platform in India for common man to get all information. He also opined that ICFA has potential and can facilitate south-south collaboration among the countries.

Mr Raju Kapoor, Director, Dow Agro Sciences



He said that there is need to organize various professional groups, nationally and internationally towards furthering the objectives of the sector. ICFA can help in creating bridge between good skills and industry requirement; connecting technology and agriculture; and taking this integration to the farmers. He opined that council can play a big role in connecting the sub sectors like fertilizers, seeds, agro chemical industry and can act as a single representative body to give better voice to the industry and strives for consensus on major issues and reconciliations of approaches by creating proper understanding on major issues that concern agriculture, farmers, consumer and agribusiness industry.

Dr Rita Sharma, former Union Secretary Rural Development nad Member Secretary, National Advisory Council



She said that we need to have an agricultural think tank, policy watchdog and a policy advocacy body to Indian agriculture. She added that a body like ICFA can fill the agriculture lobbying gap and can create pro-agriculture environment and can give voice to various stakeholders and development bodies. It is perhaps the only unique platform where you are bringing different perspectives, experiences and people with common

thread of agriculture said Dr Sharma, while suggesting 7Ps for its operationalisation: preamble to be clear, prioritization of action agenda, phasing of implementation, platform for everyone, policy, policy focus to serve stakeholders, partnerships with various institutions, nationally and internationally and perspectives of emerging challenges and proactive action.

Mr RD Shroff, CMD, UPL Group and Chairman, Crop care Federation of India



He said that farmers and industry need to work together for driving the growth of Indian agriculture and where both mutually benefit. He said that the proposed agricultural council will have the mandate to provide the institutional mechanism for the industry and farmers to work together while positioning India's food and agriculture strengths globally to facilitate trade.

Mr SK Makhija, Advisor, Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd.



He said that every policy needs to be farmer centric in the country and not be production based for retaining younger generation in agriculture sector. There should be risk mitigation platform as farmers invest more the risk becomes higher. In the final analysis, we should ensure that farmers earn more. He said that the council can play a vital role in promoting centrality of agriculture and creating charm and glamour in order to attract youth and investments in the sector.

Mr KVS Rao, Head-Agri, State Bank of India, New Delhi



He said that there is need to promote up and downstream businesses in agriculture for enhanced value addition, profitability and employment generation. He emphasized on the idea of catapulting Indian agriculture to global status competing globally in cost and quality. He supported the idea of formation of the council and advised for promoting cooperation with other countries and promoting business opportunities for Indian industry as its USP.

Dr Anis Ansari, former Additional Chief Secretary and ACP of UP



He said that Islamic banking is the answer to the farmer woes on indebtedness. He expressed shock and anguish on GoI for not allowing a powerful banking system, which could help Indian farmers effectively, questioning the ideology overtaking economics. He also advised to promote GAP and certification services in food and agriculture, under this council while focusing on policy advocacy to create pro-farmer and pro-technology environment.

Dr Rajaram Tripathi, President, Herbal and Medicinal Plant Growers Federation



He presented a glaring fact that there is no representation of farmers in various associations and boards, while suggesting to create a national farmer's alliance as part of ICFA, merging the Federation of Indian Farmers Alliance which Dr MJ Khan heads. He said that for making farming more remunerative for farmers, ICFA can act as focal body and help in representing various boards and marketing of various other medicinal plants

and other crops.

Mr Vaidyanathan, Director, Syngenta India Limited



He said that ICFA can emerge as a unique body if various industry bodies, FPO and farmers organizations are taken on board. He suggested having a small group of representatives from the industry in ICFA to offer some guidance and perspective to the body. He added that the body can become focal point for conducting studies and organizing conferences, summits and trade fairs, farmers workshops, training and delegation level visits and events at States, national and international levels.

Dr AK Rajput, ED, All India Poultry Association



He highlighted the fact that poultry is neither the part of agriculture nor industry, despite the fact that poultry growth in the last 10 years is doubled and in next 5 yrs it will further increase. He added that a body like ICFA can play a larger role as lot of policy advocacy is required for poultry industry. He also emphasized on processing, value addition and meeting food safety standards for increasing the exports for farmer benefit.

Mr Anil Kakkar, Vice President, Excel Crop Care Ltd



He said that the larger objective of the Council should primarily be a policy advocacy front where industry people can look for direction. It should have both national and international level exposure. He said that we have a lot of fragmented bodies working but adding value to their work can be a bigger objective of the council. We are still in the era of more production and shift is needed towards more quality production. He also urged for bringing small and marginal farmers on the forefront of policy advocacy.

Mr Alok Sinha, Chairman, International Agriculture Consulting Group and former CMD, FCI



He emphasized on the need to connect Indian farmers with the global markets for them to best drive value for their farm produce. Emphasis should be on common platform as agriculture is very diverse subject and larger good is foreseen if this body became thinktank with holistic approach. Organizing conferences, summits, trade events, meetings and events at states, national and International levels by the council can become pressure point for advocacy can become pressure point for advocacy.

Closing the discussion, Dr MJ Khan announced that the new body-Indian Council of Food and Agriculture will be launched in next 3 months time which will act as the policy research, trade facilitation and advocacy body for Indian farmers, food and agriculture. He suggested ICFA management committee to be comprised of about 15 persons and governing body of about fifty eminent persons in the country from policy making, farming community, research, academia, trade, agri-industries, finance and developmental institutions etc. the national body would also give voice at global platform on trade, multinational negotiations and AOA etc as also analyse the developments in various countries of the world and monitor their impact on Indian agriculture and food trade on one hand and influence policy decisions, reforms progress and direction to agriculture on other hand. The council would forge linkages with various bodies and organizations in the farm sector hold meetings with them and dialogues with the government facilitate visits of delegations with various countries and take up research and advocacy work towards furthering the cause of farmers, Indian agriculture and agribusiness.