BCC&I
THE BENGAL CHAMBER

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

PULSE SUMMIT 2016

2016 I KOLKATA

"Nutritious seeds for a sustainable future"

The Bengal Chamber's International Conference on Pulses in the International Year of Pulses 2016, Milan Mela Grounds, Kolkata…

The 68th General Assembly of the United Nations recognised Pulses as an essential source of vegetable protein and an integral part in improving nutrition globally, and hence voted unanimously to proclaim 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP 2016) nominating the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to facilitate the implementation of the year (2016) in collaboration with governments and relevant organizations, non-government organizations and all other relevant stakeholders.

THE NEED

Pulses are a primary source of protein and other essential nutrients like high fibre content, ample quantity of vitamins and minerals. We need broad discussion and cooperation at global, national and regional level to increase awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by the pulse growers, be it large-scale farmers or small land holders.

THE OPPORTUNITY VISUALISED

To offer the pulse stakeholders an unprecedented opportunity to raise awareness and celebrate the role of beans, chickpeas, lentils and other pulses for ensuring nutritional security of the world populace creating linkage with the global pulse trade.

THE PROMISES EMPHASIZED

To foster milestone development in global pulse trade focusing attention on the role that pulses play towards sustainable food production aimed towards global security and nutrition and to believe that such a celebration would create a unique opportunity to encourage connections throughout the food chain that would better utilize pulse-based proteins, enhance production of pulses, better utilize crop rotations and address the challenges in pulse trade.

WHAT WE ARE PLANNING

The Conference would pivot around the following strategies :

(a) Food Security;

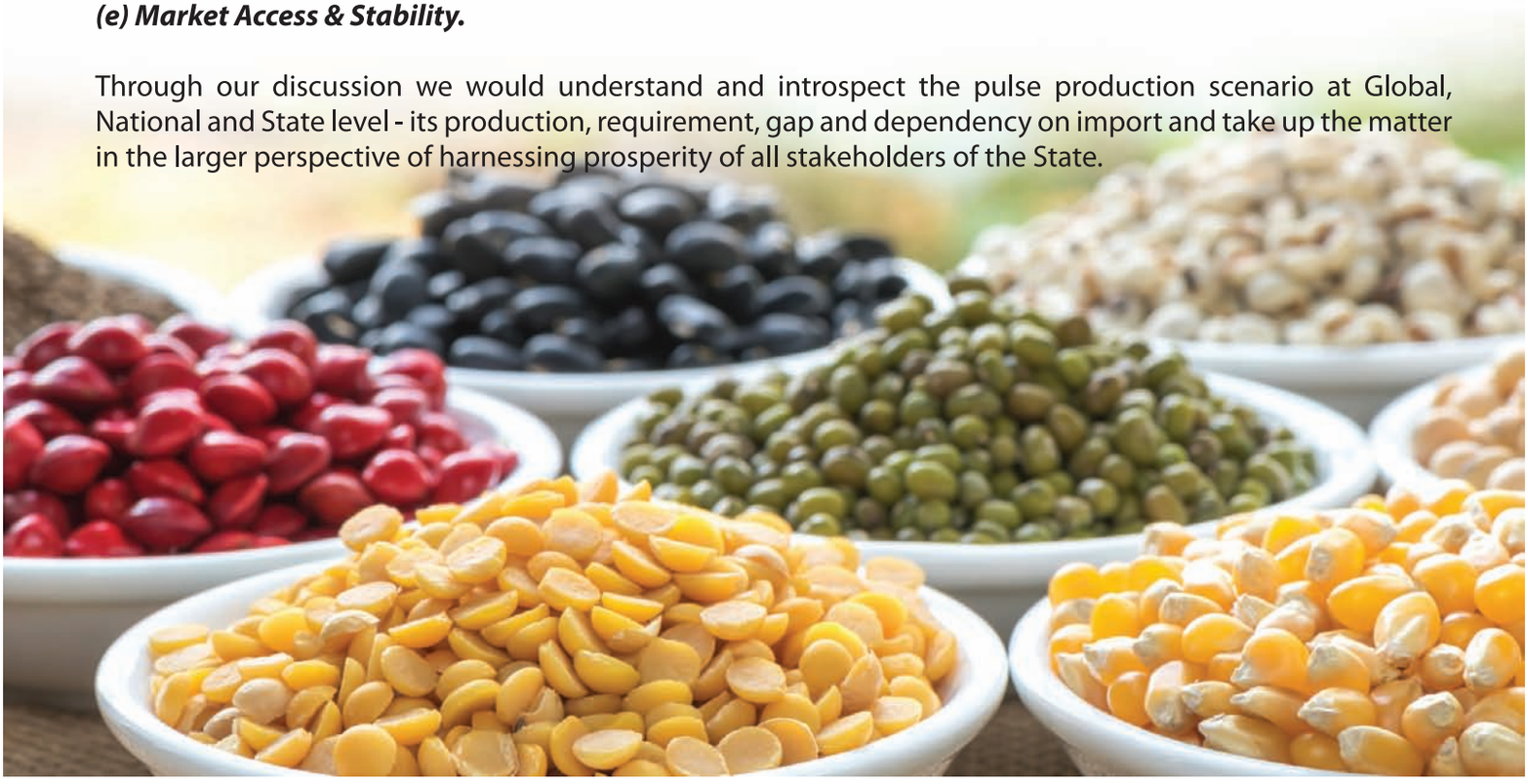
(b) Nutrition & Innovation;

(c) Creating Awareness;

(d) Productivity & Environmental Sustainability;

(e) Market Access & Stability.

Through our discussion we would understand and introspect the pulse production scenario at Global, National and State level - its production, requirement, gap and dependency on import and take up the matter in the larger perspective of harnessing prosperity of all stakeholders of the State.



PULSES – THE BIG PICTURE

Global

Globally pulses are grown in more than 171 countries occupying 72.30 million hectares area and contributing 64.40 million tons with average productivity of 890 kg /ha in the triennium ending 2010-11. The highest productivity recorded was of France (4219 kg/ha) followed in descending order by Canada (1936), USA (1882), Russian Federation (1643) and China (1596).

India

In sharp contrary to this global scenario, during 2012-13, India has put into 23.26 million hectares in pulse cultivation, harvested produce to the tune of 18.34 million tons recording an average productivity of 789 Kg/ha. An important point to make here is that only 16.1% of pulse area are covered under assured irrigation. But India has the largest share about 25% of production, about 31% acreage and 27% consumption of total pulses of the world. Enhancement of productivity and production in our country has been a matter of constraint as we traversed from a meagre productivity of 526 kg/ha during 1984-85 to 789 kg/ha during 2012-13 indicating a lopsided as well as sluggish growth. The pulse availability reduced from 22.1 kg/capita/year in 1951 to 15.0 kg/capita/year during 2012 indicating its availability as quite lower than actual recommendation of World Health Organization of 80 gm/capita/day (29.2 kg/capita/year).

India is importing pulses to the tune of 2.8 million tons (2007-08) to 4.02 million tons (2012-13) to meet up the growing demand. The major pulses growing States of India are MP (5.42 million hectares) followed by Rajasthan (4.20), Maharashtra (3.92), Karnataka (2.46), UP (2.31) and AP (1.67). India is the largest producer, consumer as well as importer too of pulses in the world. Among the pulses, chickpea contributed 48%, pigeon pea 17%, black gram 10%, green gram 7% and other pulses 18% towards total pulse production in India. (Ref: Status of pulses in India by JC Sandhu).

West Bengal

In West Bengal, acreages under pulse cultivation have sharply declined from roughly 5.0 lakh ha to 2.18 lakh ha during 2012-13 basically for expansion of irrigation potential and increase in summer (Boro) paddy. Thus Rabi pulse has become a limiting option in our State. However, much more focused efforts are needed to develop suitable pulses technology for Kharif rice-fallow to expand the base of pulses production in eastern States including West Bengal.

Despite the fact that West Bengal has gradually been pushed to the rear end of pulse production securing 13th position from acreage point of view but in terms of productivity it secures 5th position during 2012-13. Due to concerted effort, West Bengal has bagged prestigious Krishi Karman award during 2011-12 for outstanding performance in both production and productivity of pulses in the Nation.

This is an affirmative indication that thrust can be given on promotion of pulse production, enhancement of its productivity through focussed R&D and thereby minimizing the threat looming large on the front of arsenic contamination, depletion of ground water resources and environmental degradation and related so many issues emanating from Boro paddy cultivation.

The State has had an average acreage of pulses of 1.92 lakh ha during the period from 2007-08 to 2011-12 and the corresponding average acreage has been aimed at 2.3 lakh ha during the period from 2012-13 to 2014-15. Similarly, average production and productivity during the period from 2007-08 to 2011-12 were 1.54 lakh tons and 798 kg/ha respectively and the corresponding figure of those during 2012-13 to 2014-15 are 2.16 lakh tons and 925 Kg/ha.

Considering per capita requirement/day as 40 gm. (without sheath) and considering per capita requirement/year as 14.60 Kg, State demand per year is computed as 13.464 lakh tons and thus the State has recorded a deficit production of pulses to the tune of 11.92 lakh tons and 11.30 lakh tons during the period from 2007-08 to 2011-12 and 2012-13 to 2014-15. The massive shortfall in fulfilling domestic requirement is obviously met up through exogenous supply. This is a glaring example that calls for augmentation of pulse production by devising suitable strategies.

THE NEXT STEPS

Having understood the opportunities and given the emerging challenges, the IYP 2016 may usher in prosperity in West Bengal agriculture in particular as the hope, theme, opportunity and promises pronounced and enshrined in the vision document of the UNO are very much relevant and common in nature. The serious concern of the UN General Assembly laying emphasis and patronizing PULSES, frequently coined as "Poor mans' Protein" in this sub-continent in our daily diet assumes the nature of an inescapable need to reciprocate to the ardent call in organizing and celebrating IYP 2016 in the State of West Bengal for addressing and removing the dietary imbalance, ensuring nutritional security - not just food security, harnessing remunerative returns from farming by rendering direct access to the deficit domestic market for the farmers or export through Indian Pulse & Grain Association as the case might be and as an essential constituent of organic farming even with local cultivators.

In the perspective of the Pulse Conclave held recently in Jaipur last February (17-19), the emphasis was on increased pulse trade, lowering dependency on its import through enhanced research support and engagement, reinforced need to bring rice-fallow land into pulse cultivation and higher production thereof etc.

We, on behalf of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry, have the belief that we can echo the concern of the UN and trigger off actions by creating awareness, enhanced research support and contribute significantly in pulse production and thereby reduce the burden imposed on our consumers as well as the State coffer.