

Malabar Pepper – Ernakulam, Kerala

Malabar Pepper is classified under two grades- garbled and un-garbled. The garbled variety is black in colour nearly globular with a wrinkled surface, the deepest wrinkles forming a network in the dried fruit. The ungarbled variety has a wrinkled surface and the colour varies from dark brown to black.

Malabar pepper has got a sharp, hot and biting taste. It is a warming spice. It is one of the oldest and important spices in the world. The Malabar pepper of Kerala provides a quarter of the world's supply of pepper. Malabar pepper is highly aromatic, with a distinctive, fruity bouquet. Malabar Black Pepper has the perfect combination of flavour and aroma.

Problems

1. Farmers prefer cardamom as it ripens much quicker than pepper. Black pepper starts yielding from third year onwards. Average pepper yield in India is 273kg/ha. Black pepper has an economic life of 20 years and after regular bearing for about 20 years, the vines start declining in yield. Diseases in pepper vines discourage farmers to pursue the crop.

Proposed Interventions

- a. Faster growing varieties through Biotech Research by collaborating with ICAR, and the Pepper Research Station of the Kerala Agricultural University, Kannur for producing disease resistant varieties
 - b. Biotech Research to tackle non-availability of non-orthotropic variants of Pepper, which increases chances to catch diseases
2. Since the pepper production cycle is long (3 years), India imports, processes and reports Pepper.

Proposed Interventions

- a. Cost-Benefit Analysis for Direct Export of MG Pepper
 - b. Technology upgradation for expediting the production cycle
3. Cleaning and Drying of MG Pepper is a long and arduous process and not very mechanized at this point since pepper is largely a side crop.

Proposed Interventions

- a. Pneumatic separators equipped with magnetic separators could be used to remove metallic contaminations, such as iron filings, nails

4. There is limited product diversification of MG pepper currently. Very few product variants such as grounded pepper, fine pepper powder, pepper spray, etc.

Proposed Interventions

- a. Essential oil from pepper for herbal/ayurvedic use (currently done in Vietnam)
- b. Upstreaming across channels pharma, neurochemical applications based on Zinc Nutrient Buffer Power

Sl. No.	Proposed Solutions	Agency
1	BioTech - Faster growing varieties and orthotropic varieties of Pepper	Department of Biotechnology (MoST), Indian Council of Agricultural Research
2	BioTech – Disease-immune varieties	Department of Biotechnology (MoST), Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Pepper Research Station of the Kerala Agricultural University, Kannur
3	Export Promotion for Direct Export as opposed to Re-Export	Ministry of Commerce & Industry
4	Technology Upgradation and Upskilling in Production line	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, RuTAG, NIF
5	Pepper Oil Production and Sales	MOFPI, Ministry of AYUSH