

Neramac keen on Assam cashew processing plant



PATH AHEAD

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GUWAHATI

THE North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (Neramac), under the department of development of northeastern region (Doner), plans to set up a four-tonne per day cashew processing plant in Assam. It also plans diversification of the juice concentration plant in Tripura to a multi-fruit processing unit and to set up a multi-fruit processing unit at Silchar in Assam. The organisation also plans to set up a central quality assurance & packaging unit with common branding facility for marketing.

Set up in 1982, the organisation has been sourcing and marketing cash crops like ginger, fresh pineapple, cashew nut from growers of the North East. During 2006-07, the company recorded a turnover of Rs 14.95 crore. Neramac, managing director, S Bhattacharjee, told ET: "Ginger was sourced from cultivators through the support price mechanism for marketing in terminal markets at Delhi and Kolkata. Remunerative prices were offered to ginger growers by procuring more than 2,000 mt of ginger. Ginger was procured through the Ginger Growers Cooperative Marketing Federation (Gin-fed) from the Karbi Anglong district of Assam."

He added that the ginger processing plant, set up at the Export Processing Industrial Park (EPIP) at Byrnihat in Meghalaya, has also started primary processing of fresh ginger by washing, grading and packing and also value adding by processing it into ginger oil and ginger powder. It has opened a new area for providing value-added

price to the ginger growers. He further said, to support the cashew growers, Neramac procured more than 200 mt of cashew nuts from the cashew growers of Tripura for value addition by processing and marketing.

Attempts by Neramac in the procurement of pineapple was also encouraging. More than 1,500 mt of fresh pineapples were sourced from farmers of the region and marketed outside. Another 600 mt of fresh pineapples were processed for value addition to produce frozen pineapple juice concentrate by maintaining a cold chain.

The managing director added that Neramac had worked towards sustaining farmers' interest in production by application of the post harvest technology to arrest decline in prices arising from larger output of farm produces. During the first seven months of its operation in 2007-08, the company has already achieved a turnover of more than Rs 15.71 crore. The wonder fruit kiwi, which earlier used to be imported from New Zealand, is now available locally. Kiwi, grown in Arunachal Pradesh, is now sourced and marketed by Neramac to support the Kiwi farmers. The fruit is now available in Guwahati.

Arunachal Pradesh has started producing the Kiwi fruit for some time now. Farmers have taken up Kiwi cultivation taking the benefit of the scheme Technology Mission of the Government of India.

Production of kiwi is also likely to go up manifold in the coming years. Neramac has ventured into marketing for the first time.

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